

Japan

Inflows of foreign nationals to Japan in 2009 reached 297 000 (excluding temporary visitors), a 14% decrease compared with the previous year. The number of new entrants with the status of residence for the purpose of work totalled about 57 100, a decrease of 15 100 (20%) from the previous year. This has been the fifth consecutive year of decline in the entries of foreign workers. The most important category of entry for employment was “entertainers” (31 000). Skilled labour and intra-company transferees account for about 5 000 entries each, which represents a significant decline compared with 2008, by 21% and 28%, respectively.

A major group among temporary migrants are international students (65 000, up from 58 000 in 2008), about 90% of whom come from Asia, especially China and Korea. According to the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) in May 2010, the total number of foreign students was 141 800, a 7% increase compared with the previous year and a 15% increase compared with 2008.

Trainees are invited to Japan, and the economic downturn lead to a decline in the numbers. The number of incoming trainees supported by the Japanese International Training Co-operation Organisation peaked in 2007 at 65 000 before falling by 6% in 2008 and a further 18% in 2009, to reach 50 000. The numbers for the first ten months of 2010 indicate a further decline, in the order of 5%. The number of status changes from trainee to technical intern remained stable in 2009, around 62 000. In total, at the end of October 2009, technical interns accounted for 112 000 employees, and students authorised to work for another 97 000 employees.

The number of registered foreigners slightly declined in 2009, to 2.2 million, about 1.7% of the population. The largest origin groups are Chinese (31%), Koreans (27%) and Brazilians (12%). The number of Brazilians in Japan fell by more than 14% in 2009, as reduced employment opportunities led some to return to Brazil.

Since 2007, employers must report when hiring foreign workers (except “special permanent residents”). According to these reports, there were 562 000 foreign workers employed in Japan at the end of October 2009. The bulk of these were of Japanese descent (so-called *nikkeijin*).

The number of overstayers hit a record high of almost 300 000 in 1993 and has decreased since then. It fell by a further 19% in 2009, to 92 000. The government attributes part of this decline to greater enforcement and new fingerprinting techniques introduced at the border control in 2007.

Although there is no regularisation in Japan, undocumented foreigners may obtain special permission to stay on a case-by-case basis. The Ministry of Justice issued about 4 600 of these special permits in 2009, a 46% decline compared with 2008.

In the context of the economic downturn and its impact on foreign residents in Japan including those of Japanese descent, the government of Japan established an “Office for the Co-ordination of Policies on Foreign Residents” within the Cabinet Office in January 2009. In addition, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare implemented several measures to facilitate immigrants’ integration into the labour market, as well as return migration. In April 2009, the government launched a voluntary return programme, providing financial incentives to return to their home countries to unemployed foreign workers of Japanese ancestry and their dependents. Beneficiaries are barred from returning to Japan with the same visa type. This programme ended in March 2010. About 21 700 persons participated in this programme, the vast majority (93%) from Brazil.

In January 2009, the government released a package of support measures (“Immediate – Short-Term – Support Measures for Foreign Residents in Japan”) for foreign residents in Japan, including those of Japanese descent, who are having difficulties in leading their daily lives in Japanese language, such as education, employment. Support measures – including the establishment of service centres in areas with high foreign population and language courses for unemployed foreigners, especially those with Japanese ancestry – have also been strengthened to support the re-employment of unemployed foreign workers. The package also included educational measures for the children of foreign residents. Amid the ongoing difficult economic condition, in April 2009, further measures were taken to support foreigners of Japanese descent (“Promotion of Support Measures for Foreign Residents in Japan”). Moreover, the Japanese government established the “Basic Policy on Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent” in August 2010. The Basic Policy indicates that the government should properly accept foreign residents of Japanese descents as members of Japanese society and prevent them from being excluded from society.

In March 2010, the fourth Basic Plan for Immigration Control was approved. The new plan includes strategies to favour highly-qualified immigration to Japan, both through recruitment and through increasing the number of international students. A target of 300 000 foreign students has been set, more than twice the current number. The plan also includes measures related to stricter border and residence control.

Further information:

www.immi-moj.go.jp/english

www.mhlw.go.jp/english/index.html

www8.cao.go.jp/teiju-portal/eng/index.html

Recent trends in migrants' flows and stocks

JAPAN

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Inflows	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.8	2.6	297.1			
Outflows	1.7	2.3	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.9	262.0			
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type	Thousands		% distribution		Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners					
<i>Permit based statistics (standardised)</i>	2008	2009	2008	2009						
Work	33.7	23.4	34.4	35.7						
Family (incl. accompanying family)	35.4	27.5	36.3	42.1						
Humanitarian	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6						
Free movements	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0						
Others	28.2	14.2	28.9	21.6						
Total	97.7	65.5	100.0	100.0						
Temporary migration	2005	2008	2009	Average						
<i>Thousands</i>										
International students	41.5	58.1	66.1	51.9						
Trainees	83.3	101.9	80.5	92.1						
Working holiday makers	4.7	6.5	6.5	6.0						
Seasonal workers	..	..	..	..		
Intra-company transfers	4.2	7.3	5.2	5.9						
Other temporary workers	110.2	45.6	41.6	61.2						
Inflows of asylum seekers	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average	Level				
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1 388			
Components of population growth	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Total	0.5	0.4	..	..	0.8	..	..	
Natural increase	1.8	0.0	-0.5	..	1.0	..	..	
Net migration	0.3	0.0	-1.0	..	-0.1	..	..	
Stocks of immigrants	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
<i>Percentage of the total population</i>										
Foreign-born population	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign population	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.7	2 185			
Naturalisations	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level			
<i>Percentage of the foreign population</i>										
Total	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.7	14 785			
Labour market outcomes	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average					
<i>Employment/population ratio</i>										
Native-born men	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born men	..	..	..	..	..	..
Native-born women	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born women	..	..	..	..	..	..
<i>Unemployment rate</i>										
Native-born men	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born men	..	..	..	..	..	..
Native-born women	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born women	..	..	..	..	..	..
Macroeconomic indicators	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level			
<i>Annual growth in %</i>										
Real GDP	2.9	1.9	-1.2	-5.2	1.5	0.0				
GDP/capita (level in USD)	2.7	1.9	-1.0	-5.1	1.3	0.1	26 647			
Employment (level in thousands)	-0.2	0.4	-0.4	-1.6	-0.4	-0.1	62 819			
<i>Percentage of the labour force</i>										
Unemployment	4.7	4.4	4.0	5.1	5.0	4.3				

Notes and sources are at the end of the chapter.

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