

Korea

Long-term inflows to Korea declined by 22% in 2009 to reach 243 000. The decline in permanent-type labour migration, which had been the driving component of the growth in migration to Korea in the years prior to the crisis, was particularly pronounced. Only about 100 000 persons entered under this title, a decline by more than a third from 2008. Family migration remains limited in Korea and tends to be more stable. It declined slightly from its 2008 level of 33 000 to 29 800 in 2009. It now represents slightly less than a fourth of total permanent-type inflows.

Temporary labour migration to Korea reached 21 500 in 2009. This represents a 33% decline compared to 2008 and a 44% drop compared with the peak year in 2007. New entries of trainees and of international students reached 11 300 and 15 800, respectively. While the number of international students has been slightly increasing, that of trainees declined by about 18% compared with 2008.

The foreign population reached 2.35% of the total population in 2009, with about half of this total consisting of workers in low-skilled jobs (525 000). Many of them are persons of Korean ancestry from China and the Russian Federation. Citizens of China represent more than half of the foreign population, followed by citizens of the United States (123 000) and Vietnamese (91 000).

The total number of foreign students increased more than three-fold between 2005 and 2009, from 24 800 to 81 000. The number of highly-skilled workers and professionals also increased over that period, from 25 800 to 41 000, but it is the stock of low-skilled workers which increased the most, from 175 500 to 511 000.

In 2009, a total of 26 800 foreigners acquired Korean nationality. The number of naturalisations has more than tripled since 2006 and, for the first time in 2009, exceeded the number of Korean citizens who lost their Korean nationality (mainly Koreans who obtained US, Japanese or Australia citizenship).

The number of overstaying foreign nationals in Korea stood at about 178 000 in 2009, which represents about 15% of the total foreign population. The number had fluctuated around 200 000 over the past decade, but declined by more than 11% in 2009. In particular, the percentage of overstayers among the low-skilled foreign workers has declined with the introduction of the Employment Permit System and the opportunities it provides for employers to recruit low-skilled workers from abroad at normal wages and working conditions.

As of December 2009, about 125 000 migrants entered Korea for marriage, a slight increase compared with 2008. The vast majority (87%) were women. The main origin countries are China (53%), Viet Nam (24%), Philippines (5%) and Japan (4%). In practice, this means that despite the fact that only a little more than 2% of the Korean population are immigrants, the number of children who have at least one foreign-born parent in the future is likely to resemble that of a country with a much larger immigrant population.

In March 2010, the foreign workforce policy committee decided the 2010 quota for foreign workers. The quota was initially set to 24 000 for the period from March 2010 to February 2011. In light of the economic recovery, it was increased by an additional 10 000 in July 2010. At the same time, the quota for H-2 permits which is dedicated to Ethnic Koreans was eliminated. Most of the permits are allocated to the manufacturing sector (28 100).

For further information:

www.immigration.go.kr

www.eps.go.kr

www.kostat.go.kr

www.moj.go.kr

Recent trends in migrants' flows and stocks

KOREA

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Inflows	3.9	5.5	6.4	5.0	3.8	6.0	242.8
Outflows	1.9	5.5	4.4	4.8	2.6	4.4	236.4
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type	Thousands		% distribution		Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners		
Permit based statistics (standardised)	2008	2009	2008	2009			
Work	157.6	104.1	81.0	74.9			
Family (incl. accompanying family)	32.8	29.8	16.8	21.4			
Humanitarian	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1			
Free movements	..	..	..	..
Others	4.2	5.1	2.2	3.6			
Total	194.7	139.0	100.0	100.0			
Temporary migration	2005	2008	2009	Average 2005-09			
<i>Thousands</i>							
International students	9.0	15.1	15.8	13.6			
Trainees	4.4	13.6	11.4	10.4			
Working holiday makers	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3			
Seasonal workers	..	..	..	..
Intra-company transfers	8.4	..	..	8.4			
Other temporary workers	24.7	32.6	27.2	30.7			
Inflows of asylum seekers	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	324
Components of population growth	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Natural increase	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Net migration	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Stocks of immigrants	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
<i>Percentage of the total population</i>							
Foreign-born population	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign population	0.4	1.1	1.8	1.9	0.7	1.6	921
Naturalisations	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
<i>Percentage of the foreign population</i>							
	..	3.3	1.7	..	..	..	..
Labour market outcomes	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
<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	8.8	4.0	2.3	0.2	5.5	3.3	..
GDP/capita (level in USD)	7.9	3.7	2.0	-0.1	4.8	3.0	23 407
Employment (level in thousands)	4.3	1.3	0.6	-0.3	2.2	0.8	23 506
<i>Percentage of the labour force</i>							
Unemployment	4.4	3.7	3.2	3.6	3.8	3.4	..

Notes and sources are at the end of the chapter.

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