

Sweden

The trend of increasing immigration to Sweden continued in 2009 in spite of the economic downturn, with inflows reaching a new record high of 102 000. The largest component of the inflow was returning Swedish citizens, followed by citizens from Iraq, Somalia and Poland. In parallel, total emigration declined by 13% compared with the previous year, resulting in an overall net migration of almost 56 000 persons. Preliminary figures for 2010 on the basis of residence permits indicate a decline in immigration for that year.

On 15 December 2008, new rules came into force which greatly facilitated recruitment of labour from non-EEA countries. About 14 500 first-time work permits were granted in 2009 under the new framework, an increase of almost 50% compared with 2008. Almost 50% of the permits went to workers in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and fishing. The single most important origin country was Thailand, accounting for almost half of all labour migrants, followed by India and China.

Among the new rules for labour migration introduced in late 2008 was the provision that a refused asylum seeker may be granted a residence permit for work if he/she found a job for at least six months. By the end of 2009, there were about 1 300 applications for a work permit from former asylum seekers, of which about 450 were granted permits.

About 24 000 persons applied for asylum in Sweden in 2009, about the same number as in 2008. There has been a large decline in the number of asylum seekers from Iraq in recent years, from 18 600 in 2007 – half of the total number of asylum seekers in that year in Sweden – to 2 300 in 2009. Preliminary figures for 2010 suggest a significant increase in asylum seeking for that year, mainly driven by a large increase in asylum seeking of Serbians, who are now the single most important origin country.

Unaccompanied minors who have come to Sweden without a legal custodian are a growing concern for policy. In 2009, their number was 2 250, an increase of 49% compared with 2008. Three-quarters of the total were from Somalia and Afghanistan. Most unaccompanied minors are boys between the age of 15 and 17.

On 1 January 2010, the Swedish Alien Act was amended to fulfil the requirements of the EU's Asylum Qualification Directive and Asylum Procedure Directive. The changes imply that persons who are granted a residence permit as a refugee are now automatically granted refugee status. Previously, they had to apply separately for a declaration of refugee status.

Since May 2010, people who wish to apply for a Swedish residence permit may now submit their applications to a Swedish mission abroad in the country where they are asylum seekers.

The Swedish Migration Board has been developing a set of measures to shorten the handling times for asylum seekers. As a result, the average processing time of asylum application declined from 9 months in 2008 to 7 months by the end 2010.

A new maintenance rule came into force on 15 April 2010. It essentially implies that labour migrants from non-EEA countries who have had a permanent residence permit for less than four years must be able to support themselves and have adequate housing if they want their family to join them from abroad.

A new Act on the introduction of new arrivals entered into force on 1 December 2010. Key elements include an introduction benefit to create stronger incentives to work and to participate actively in introduction activities, greater diversity of service providers and measures aimed at a better utilisation of migrants' skills. The Public Employment Service has a central responsibility and a co-ordinating role for the integration of new arrivals. The target groups covered by the Act are refugees, others in need of protection and their family members.

A number of other initiatives have also been taken in the area of integration. Sweden introduced a new law in September 2010 that enables municipalities to pay a performance-based bonus to newly-arrived immigrants who complete their studies in "Swedish for Immigrants" with a passing grade within 12 months. A number of universities and colleges are assigned to arrange supplementary courses for non-EEA nationals with a foreign university degree in areas such as health care, law, teacher education, etc. A joint project by the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education and the Public Employment Service aims at validating foreign professional qualifications in numerous occupations. Efforts are made to match new arrivals with vocational mentors to improve the prospects of acquiring jobs that correspond to the individual's education and professional background. Initiatives are also taken to promote immigrant entrepreneurship through mentoring, counselling and microcredit.

For further information:

www.migrationsverket.se/info/start_en.html

www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/8281

Recent trends in migrants' flows and stocks

SWEDEN

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Inflows	4.8	5.6	8.9	8.9	5.1	8.2	82.4			
Outflows	1.4	1.7	2.1	2.0	1.6	2.0	18.3			
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	0.8	2.7	1.1	3.8						
Family (incl. accompanying family)	33.7	34.7	47.5	48.7						
Humanitarian	11.2	11.1	15.7	15.6						
Free movements	25.3	22.8	35.7	31.9						
Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0						
Total	71.0	71.3	100.0	100.0						
Temporary migration	2005	2008	2009	Average				Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners		
<i>Thousands</i>				2005-09						
International students	10.8	14.1	16.7	12.8						
Trainees	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6						
Working holiday makers						
Seasonal workers	0.5	3.7	7.3	2.8						
Intra-company transfers						
Other temporary workers	4.8	13.6	10.9	8.7						
Inflows of asylum seekers	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average	Level				
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
	1.8	1.9	2.6	2.6	2.9	2.8	24 194			
Components of population growth	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Total	2.5	4.0	8.0	9.1	3.4	7.2	85			
Natural increase	-0.3	1.0	2.0	2.4	0.2	1.7	22			
Net migration	2.8	3.0	6.1	6.8	3.1	5.5	63			
Stocks of immigrants	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
<i>Percentage of the total population</i>										
Foreign-born population	11.3	12.5	13.9	14.4	11.8	13.4	1 338			
Foreign population	5.3	5.1	6.0	6.4	5.2	5.7	595			
Naturalisations	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level			
<i>Percentage of the foreign population</i>										
	9.0	7.8	5.3	4.8	7.4	6.8	28 562			
Labour market outcomes	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average					
<i>Employment/population ratio</i>										
Native-born men	75.8	76.2	77.9	75.6	76.5	77.0				
Foreign-born men	59.6	63.7	69.9	66.7	63.9	66.8				
Native-born women	73.2	72.6	74.5	72.8	74.0	73.5				
Foreign-born women	54.7	58.4	58.7	58.0	58.0	58.3				
<i>Unemployment rate</i>										
Native-born men	5.1	7.0	5.1	7.5	5.1	6.1				
Foreign-born men	13.5	15.1	11.5	16.2	12.5	13.6				
Native-born women	4.3	6.9	5.5	6.9	4.4	6.2				
Foreign-born women	11.2	13.7	12.9	14.5	10.3	13.4				
Macroeconomic indicators	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level			
<i>Annual growth in %</i>										
Real GDP	4.5	3.2	-0.6	-5.3	3.0	1.0				
GDP/capita (level in USD)	4.3	2.7	-1.4	-6.1	2.6	0.3	30 872			
Employment (level in thousands)	2.2	0.8	1.2	-2.0	0.7	0.9	4 499			
<i>Percentage of the labour force</i>										
Unemployment	6.9	7.7	6.2	8.3	6.7	7.1				

Notes and sources are at the end of the chapter.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932441686>