

Definition and measurement

Immigrants are, in the first instance, defined as those who are foreign-born. In general, the foreign-born population is substantially larger than the share of foreign nationals. More information on the origin and characteristics of the immigrant population in OECD countries, and on data sources, can be found in OECD (2010). 2009 PISA data, used here to consider the migrant status of 15 year-old school pupils and their parents, is described in SS3 below.

Migrant integration is an issue for many OECD governments, both to enhance employment and because a lack of integration risks social tensions. Immigrant integration is mainly an issue in Western Europe. For some OECD countries like Greece, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and Turkey, where people are attracted by better prospects elsewhere, emigration – especially of the young and the skilled – may be a more pressing policy issue.

In 2008 OECD countries differed considerably in the size of their migrant populations. Overall, around 12% of the OECD population were foreign-born in 2008. Two-thirds of OECD countries had immigrant populations exceeding one in every ten people in their population (Panel A, GE3.1). The share of the foreign-born was highest in Luxembourg, Israel, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand, where it exceeded one in five of the population. By contrast, foreign-born populations were negligible in Mexico, Chile and Turkey, all of which are relatively low income countries.

The foreign-born share rose in all countries of the OECD between 1995 and 2008, excepting in Israel (Panel B, GE3.2). Ireland and Spain have had large rises, while rises in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom have been around or below OECD average rates. Israel had a large fall in the foreign-born share, mainly due to the fact that older

Israeli cohorts had a very high proportion of foreign-born people.

Children of immigrants account for a significant part of the youth population in OECD countries. The rate is substantially higher than the number of children born overseas (GE3.2). In Luxembourg in 2009, 57% of 15 year-olds had at least one parent born abroad. The figure exceeds one in three children with a migrant parent in Australia, Switzerland, New Zealand, Canada and Israel, and one in five for 14 OECD countries in total. Differences between the two measures of “immigrant” children can be large. For example, in France one in four children aged 15 have at least one migrant parent, but only one in twenty children are actually born abroad.

Over the period 2000 to 2009, most countries had an increase in the proportion of children with at least one migrant parent, with the biggest rises – in excess of 8 percentage points – coming in Ireland, Spain and Portugal (GE3.3). Some countries – including Germany, Switzerland and Sweden – even experienced falls in numbers of foreign-born students but rises in numbers of students with foreign-born parents.

Further reading

OECD (2010), *International Migration Outlook*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

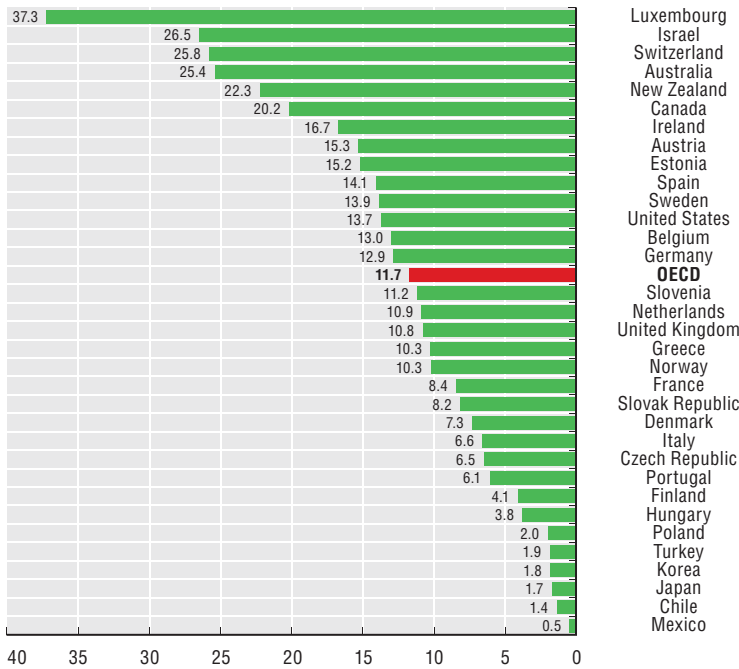
Figure note

Figure GE3.1, Panel A: Data for Chile, Italy, Japan and Korea refer to the foreign population. 2000 for Mexico and Turkey, 2001 for Greece, 2002 for Chile and Poland, 2003 for Germany, 2005 for Estonia, 2007 for Belgium, Hungary, Israel and Slovenia. Figure GE3.1, Panel B: Changes are not available for Chile, Estonia, Greece, Poland, Slovenia and Turkey. Change refers to 1995/2000 for Mexico, 1995/2003 for Germany, 1995/2007 for Belgium, Hungary and Israel, 1996/2008 for Ireland and New Zealand, 1998/2008 for Austria and the Czech Republic, 1999/2008 for France and 2001/08 for the Slovak Republic.

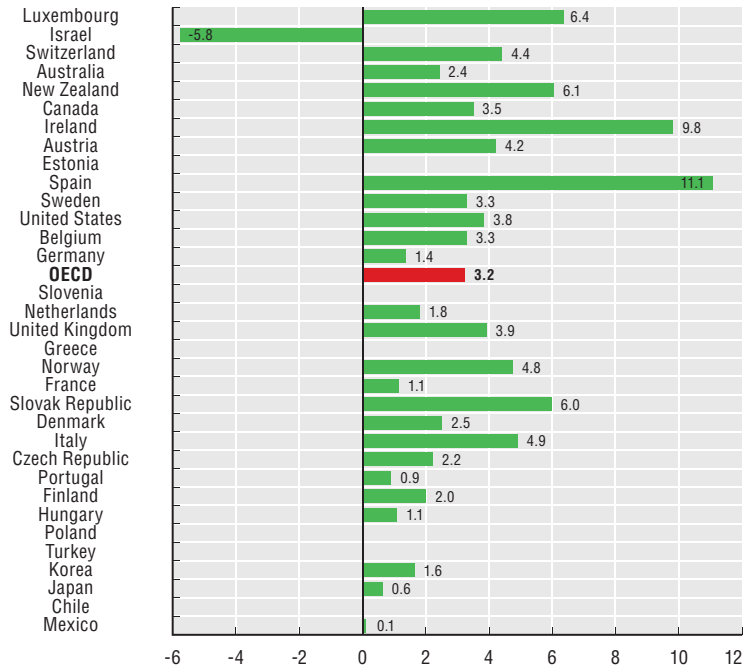
Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

GE3.1. The foreign-born population is a large minority in some OECD countries and increased significantly over the last 13 years

Panel A. Foreign-born population, as a percentage of the total population, 2008 (or latest year available) (↘)

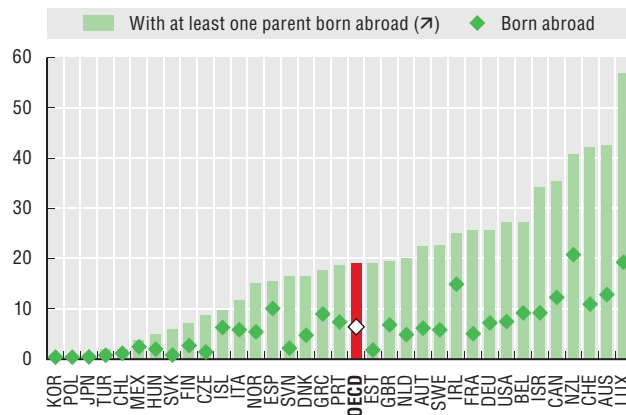


Panel B. Change in the share of the foreign-born population (1995-2008), percentage points



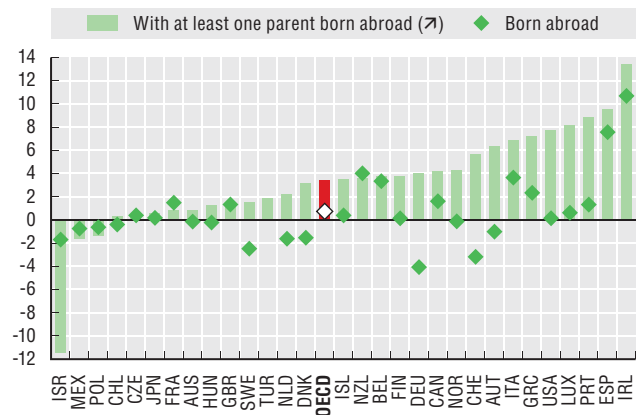
GE3.2. One in five 15 year-old school pupils has at least one parent born abroad

Percentage of 15 year-old school pupils with at least one parent born abroad and percentage of 15 year-old school pupils born abroad in 2009



GE3.3. Significant increase in the number of 15 year-old school pupil with at least one parent born abroad

Percentage point changes in the share of 15 year-old school pupils with at least one parent born abroad and of 15 year-old school pupils born abroad, 2000-09



Source: OECD (2010), *International Migration Outlook*, OECD Publishing, Paris (www.oecd.org/els/migration/imo); OECD Database on Population and Vital Statistics; Eurostat; Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas; INE Chile; Central Bureau Statistics; CBS Israel; UN Population Division; OECD PISA 2000 and 2009 (www.pisa.oecd.org).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932381722>