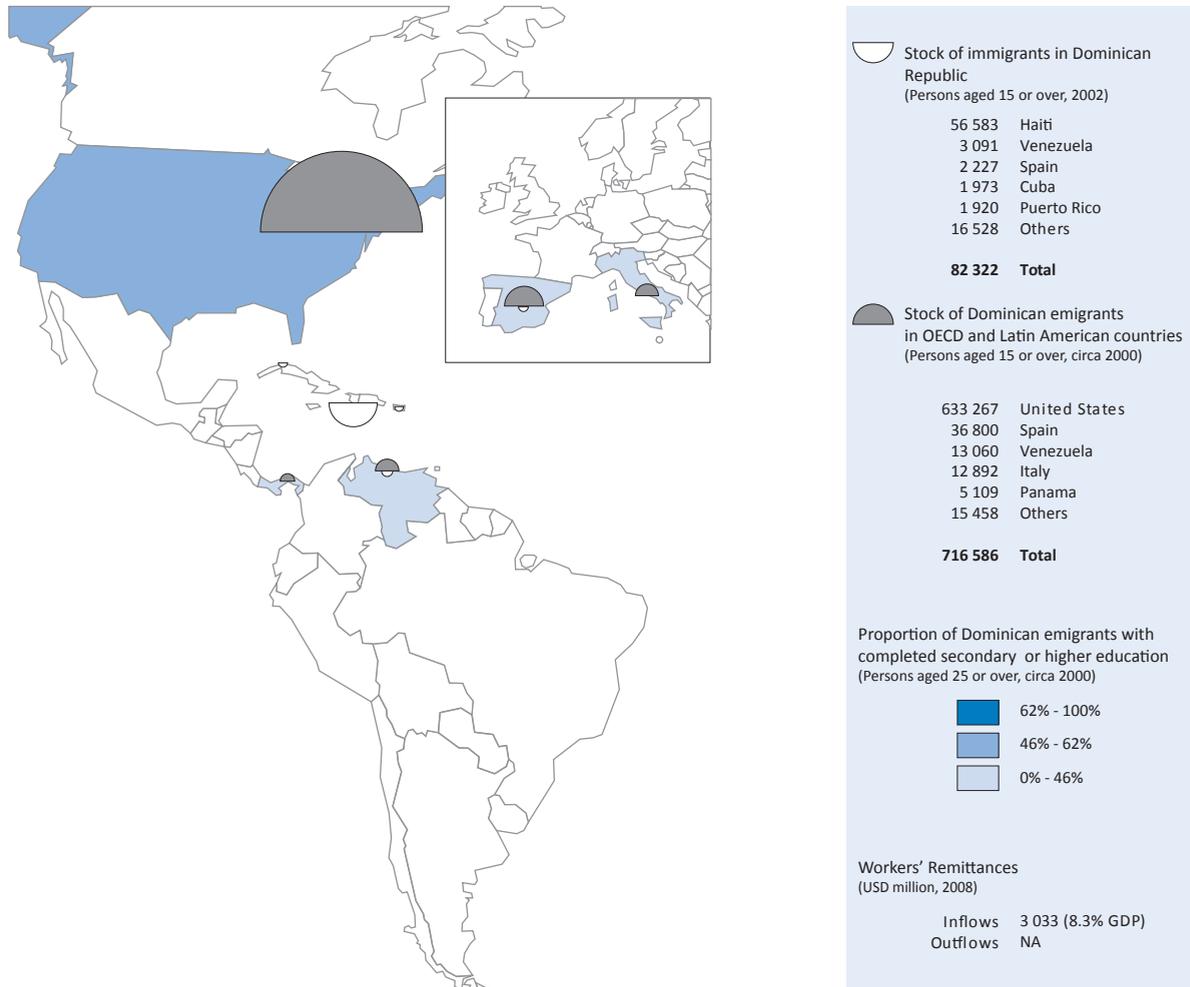


DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Dominican Republic

Historically, the Dominican Republic has always been a destination for Haitian migrants. In the last three decades a growing number of Dominicans have migrated abroad, primarily to the United States.

Figure 1. Stock of Migrants and Level of Education of Dominican Emigrants to OECD and Latin American Countries



Note: This figure reports the stock of migrants recorded in national censuses and workers' remittances in balance-of-payments data. It will therefore not reflect unrecorded formal or informal flows, which may be material.

Source: For details on definitions and sources, please refer to the Statistical Annex.

- The Dominican Republic** is a net emigration country, with approximately 13% of its population currently living abroad. Since the late 1980s Dominicans began to emigrate in larger numbers, principally to the United States and European countries such as Spain and Italy.
- Immigration** from Haiti has been significant historically. Workers from Haiti were initially attracted by labour shortages and relatively higher wages in sugar plantations.
- The Dominican** population in the United States shows a medium educational profile. Around 50% of Dominican immigrants in the United States have completed secondary education.

Migration History and Policy Developments

Historically, the Dominican Republic has been a country of destination. Starting in the second half of the 19th century, cane-cutters were recruited to work in Dominican sugar plantations, mainly from English-speaking Caribbean countries and Haiti. Labour immigration from Haiti was actively encouraged during the United States' occupation of the Dominican Republic (1916-24), as a consequence of the expansion in the sugar industry under American rule.

Regulation of immigration flows from Haiti followed increasing tension surrounding the definition of the border between the two countries beginning in 1937. Due to labour shortages and growing interest of the government in the sugar plantations, a series of bilateral agreements (*convenios*) were signed between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, allowing the entrance of Haitians for specified periods. Gradually, permanent Haitian settlements around sugar plantations (known as *bateyes*) were also established.

During the 1960s, political and economic turmoil led to an increase in Dominican emigration, notably towards the United States. During this period, Dominican migrants moved through a variety of channels, benefiting from the easing of visas and immigration restrictions in the US Immigration Act of 1965 and support for asylum seekers and refugees. A large portion of this migration was also unauthorised.

The last three decades have seen the Dominican Republic move decisively to being a country of origin. Dominican emigration accelerated from 1980 in response to economic crises. The 1980s also witnessed a reduction in the importance of sugar production in the Dominican economy, encouraging many Haitian immigrants to move to other sectors including construction, trade, manufacture and domestic service.

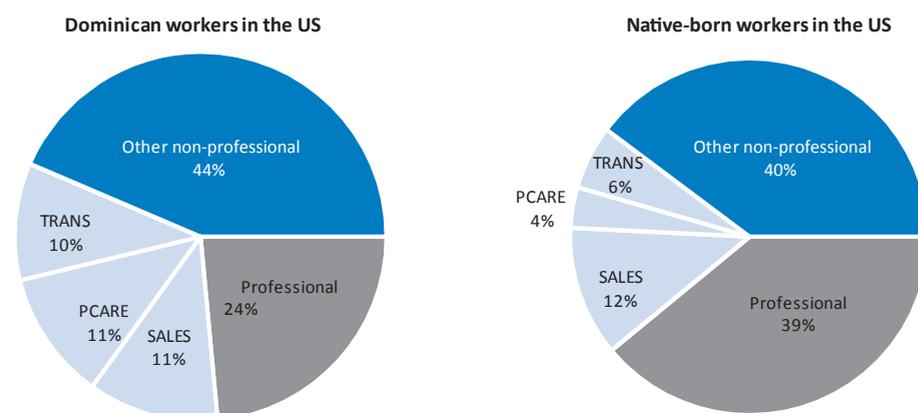
Despite the sustained growth and political stability exhibited by the Dominican economy during the last decade, emigration has not decreased. In the latest census round, it was estimated that 716 586 Dominicans lived abroad (13% of the population), of whom around 633 000 were in the United States. A more recent estimate (2008) in the American Community Survey put this figure at more than 1.3 million (including Dominicans born in the United States). In addition to the continental United States, Dominicans have also established sizeable communities in Spain, Italy and Puerto Rico.

The Dominican government has implemented initiatives to strengthen its links with the diaspora, among them the Constitutional amendment recognising dual nationality (1994), the extension of the right to vote to overseas Dominicans (1997) and the proposed Constitutional draft establishing seats for Senators and Deputies representing Dominicans abroad. Within the country, the precarious conditions faced by Haitians have been also a subject of increasing political awareness, leading the governments of both countries to sign a declaration against clandestine recruitment and illegal migration in 2000. Moreover, the 2004 General Migration Law (Act No. 285) and the ongoing National Regularisation Plan also focus on the regulation of undocumented immigrants in the country.

Labour Market

Dominican migrants and native-born workers in OECD countries have similar patterns of labour-force participation rates. For instance, 68.1% of Dominicans in the United States are employed or actively seeking work, very close to the corresponding 65.4% figure for US workers.

Figure 2. Distribution of Workers by Occupational Categories
(Percentages, 2009)



Note: The professional category comprises professionals and technicians, items from 001 to 395 of the Census Occupation Code (COC). Other abbreviations used are PCARE: Personal care and service; SALES: Sales and TRANS: Transportation and material moving.

Source: OECD Development Centre calculations, based on the US Current Population Survey.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/717114631018>

Despite this evidence of effective labour market integration, there are still challenges to be met. Dominican immigrants show a higher concentration in low-skilled positions than their native-born counterparts. Figure 2 shows the distribution of Dominicans and native-born workers in the United States according to occupational categories. More than 76% of Dominicans are in non-professional positions compared with only 61% for native-born workers. In particular, immigrants show a higher concentration in sales, personal care and transportation occupations.

This labour market composition and the lower levels of educational attainment among Dominican migrants compared with the native-born population may help to explain the income differences observed between Dominican and US workers in some studies (Hernández and Rivera-Batiz, 2003).

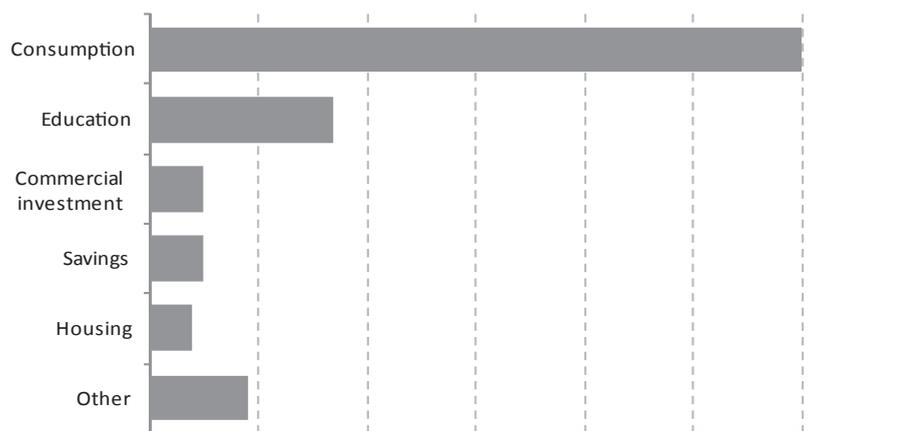
Despite the fact that most Dominican immigrants work in low-skilled positions, an increasing number of high-skilled migrants can be found in the United States. The 2008 American Community Survey estimates that there are around 90 000 Dominicans with bachelor or professional degrees.

Relationship with the Country of Origin and Integration in the Host Country

From the 1990s onwards the Dominican Republic experienced significant growth in remittance inflows, reflecting the growth of Dominican emigration. Remittances increased from USD 0.8 billion in 1995 to USD 3.1 billion in 2008 (representing 5.0 and 6.8% of Dominican GDP, respectively). However, since 2007 the growth in remittance flows has been gradually slowing, and even declined in the first quarter of 2009.

Figure 3. Principal Use of Remittances in the Dominican Republic, 2004

(Percentage of total current expenditures)



Source: IDB/MIF (2004b).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/717115440606>

The 2007 National Survey of Households (ENHOGAR) indicated that remittances are an important source of income, with approximately 17% of total Dominican families receiving some form of international monetary transfers. The monthly average transfer was USD 100, equivalent to 16% of the typical household income.

In 2004, the IDB conducted a survey to study how migrants' families use the remittances they receive in the Dominican Republic (IDB/MIF, 2004b). As shown in Figure 3, remittances are spent mostly on consumption items (60%). Lesser but also significant amounts were destined to education (17%) and commercial investment (5%).

Bankarisation of money transfers in the Dominican Republic is significantly small. According to ENHOGAR data, 92% of total recipient households use licensed money transfer companies to receive the money, while only 1% do so through commercial banks. Remittances in the Dominican Republic are currently regulated by the Financial and Monetary Law No. 183 (2002), which controls the operation of foreign exchange and money transfer companies.

Following nearly three decades of large-scale emigration to the United States, transnational ties – including but not limited to remittances – have solidified an identity among the Dominicans. The political, cultural and social dimensions of these linkages are reflected in the establishment of US branches of the main Dominican political parties, the participation of Dominicans in political positions in the United States, the increasing participation of the overseas community in Dominican elections and the existence of civic and social associations abroad.