

Recently, sharp increases in international migrant numbers have been accompanied by significant changes in the composition of migrant groups, the origin country and the destination. Against this backdrop, the collection and utilisation of accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies remain a key objective, as stipulated in the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration” prepared under the auspices of the United Nations. For the origin countries, obtaining access to accurate information on the size and characteristics of their diaspora is a challenge. It is nevertheless a prerequisite for preparing and implementing policies aimed at leveraging the competencies and resources offered by their nationals abroad for sustainable economic and social development.

In order to address this need, the OECD, with the support of the French Development Agency (AFD), has in recent years developed a database on immigrants in OECD countries (DIOC) which compiles statistics on migrant stocks based on country of birth. This **Migration Data Brief** presents the findings drawn from the most recent update of these data for 2015/16, which reveal some unprecedented developments and cast a new light on some of the structural trends revealed in previous datasets.

The new immigrants

Global trends in migration towards OECD countries between 2000/01 and 2015/16

Key Findings

- In 2015/16, the number of migrants aged 15 and older in OECD countries stood at 120 million, compared to 78 million in 2000/01
- 54% of worldwide migrants reside in the OECD and this share has been increasing in the past 15 years
- Migrants share in OECD population (15+) reached 12% in 2015/16 (+3 percentage points compared to 2000/01)
- Mexico remains the top origin country for migrant communities in the OECD area, with slightly less than 12 million people, but India and China have become the second and third main origin countries of immigrants in the OECD area with almost 5 million persons each
- Migration from Eastern Europe also increased significantly. The number of Polish migrants to the OECD increased by 79% in the past 15 years and that of Romanian migrants more than tripled
- In 2015/16, the United States was still the main destination country, receiving 39% of all migrants residing in OECD countries. Germany is second with 10% of the total, while the United Kingdom, Canada and France received 6% to 7% of all migrants residing in OECD countries
- Between 2000/01 and 2015/16, the share of migrants with a high level of education rose from 27% to 35% for those born outside of the OECD area, and from 21% to 30% for those born in an OECD country
- In 2015/16, there were more tertiary-educated immigrants in OECD countries than low-educated immigrants
- The rate of emigration of tertiary graduates is always higher than the rate for the lower levels of education. Islands and landlocked countries have the highest emigration rates for tertiary graduates
- Some countries in Central America, the Caribbean and Africa have emigration rates for the high-educated of over 40%, and this rate is over 20% in about 30 countries
- There is a clear difference between the emigration rates of tertiary graduates by gender. In non-OECD countries of birth, the emigration rate is close to 20% for tertiary educated women and 16% for tertiary educated men

Data for understanding the dynamics of migration to OECD countries

The Database on Immigrants in OECD countries (DIOC) is a unique tool providing an overview of the numbers and socio-economic characteristics of foreign-born populations living in OECD countries. DIOC data, which have been updated every five years since 2000/01 using censuses, population registers and representative surveys, give an insight into the dynamics of migration in terms of both the origin country and the destination. They also make it possible to assess changes in emigration rates and the brain drain from all countries worldwide towards the OECD.

These data cover immigrant numbers in terms of age, gender and educational attainment, as well as key variables in terms of international migration and integration such as nationality, length of residence, employment status and profession.

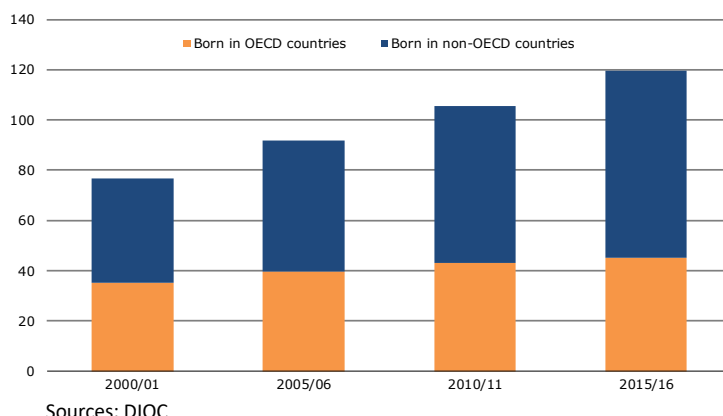
Continued growth in the number of migrants in OECD countries, driven mainly by immigration from non-OECD countries

In 2015/16, the number of migrants aged 15 and older in OECD countries stood at 120 million, compared to 77 million in 2000/01, representing a 55% increase in 15 years. This is significantly higher than the United Nation's estimate for worldwide growth in migrants aged 15 and older, which rose from 154 million in 2000 to 223 million in 2015, i.e. an increase of 45%. According to the same estimates, the number of migrants aged 15 and older in non-OECD countries increased by 39%. The number of migrants in OECD countries also grew faster than the population, with the population aged 15 and older in OECD countries increasing by 14% between 2000 and 2015. Accordingly, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of migrants in the population (15+) of OECD countries in the past 15 years, from 9% to 12%.

Beyond this trend for the period as a whole, growth in the migrant population in OECD countries has slowed significantly in recent years. The number of migrants aged 15 and older increased by 20% between 2000/01 and 2005/06, then by 15% between 2005/06 and 2010/11, and then by 13% between 2010/11 and 2015/16. As Figure 1 shows, there was a much higher increase in migration from non-OECD countries (+78%) compared to migration from OECD countries (+29%). The general trend is therefore for much faster growth

in "South-North" migration than in "North-North" and "South-South" migration.

Figure 1. Share of migrants (15+) in the OECD, by OECD country of birth versus non-OECD country of birth, 2000/01 to 2015/16 (in millions)



An upturn in immigration from India and China, and in intra-European mobility

Since the start of the 21st century, the main origin countries for migrants based in OECD countries have changed significantly (Table 1). Even though Mexico remains the top origin country for migrant communities in the OECD, with 11.7 million people (most of whom, in reality, are concentrated in the United States), several other origin countries dropped significantly down the ranking between 2000/01 and 2015/16, notably the United Kingdom and Germany which fell second to fifth and from third to seventh respectively. Italy, which was the fourth-placed origin country in 2000/01 fell to 12th in 2015/16, while Turkey fell from sixth to tenth. At the same time, several countries experienced a spectacular progression, in terms of both their place in the ranking and their migrant numbers, in particular China, India, Poland, Romania and the Philippines. In 2015/16, India and China were ranked second and third respectively in the list of the main origin countries for migrants residing in OECD countries, with 4.8 million and 4.6 million migrants respectively, over one quarter of whom arrived during the previous five years, which reflects the strong recent surge in immigration. Migration from Eastern Europe also increased significantly, against a backdrop of greater opportunities for mobility within the European Union, as reflected in the increase of the number of migrants from Poland (+79% between 2000/01 and 2015/16) and from Romania (+213%), and the significant share of recent migrants in their number.

Table 1. Numbers of migrants (15+) born in the top ten origin countries and living in OECD countries, from 2000/01 to 2015/16 (in millions)

2000/01		2005/06		2010/11		2015/16		Main origin countries 2015/16	Growth 2000/01-2015/16 (%)	Share recent immigrants, 2015/16 (%)
Mexico	8.3	Mexico	10.8	Mexico	11.3	Mexico	11.7	Mexico	41	7
United Kingdom	3.3	United Kingdom	3.4	United Kingdom	3.7	India	4.8	India	145	26
Germany	3.2	Germany	2.9	China	3.6	China	4.6	China	123	27
Italy	2.4	Poland	2.9	India	3.6	Poland	3.9	Poland	80	18
Poland	2.2	India	2.8	Germany	3.5	United Kingdom	3.7	United Kingdom	12	10
Turkey	2.1	China	2.7	Poland	3.3	Philippines	3.5	Philippines	83	16
China	2.1	Turkey	2.6	Philippines	3.0	Germany	3.5	Germany	12	15
Russia	2.0	Philippines	2.5	Romania	2.7	Romania	3.5	Romania	213	20
India	2.0	Russia	2.4	Turkey	2.6	Morocco	3.0	Morocco	77	10
Philippines	1.9	Italy	2.3	Morocco	2.6	Turkey	2.5	Turkey	19	8
Total top 10	29.4	Total top 10	35.4	Total top 10	39.9	Total top 10	44.9	Total top 10	53	15
Total	78.1	Total	91.9	Total	105.7	Total	119.6	Total	53	16

Source: DIOC.

Note: Growth between 2000/01-2015/16 calculated for the ten leading origin countries in 2015/16. Recent migrants refer to those who have been in the destination country for 5 years or less.

Little change in preferred destinations

Contrary to the changes witnessed in terms of origin countries, the ranking of the main destination countries for migrants within the OECD area remained virtually unchanged between 2000/01 and 2015/16, with the top ten countries welcoming between 85% and 90% of the total migrant population (Table 2). In 2015/16, the United States was still the main destination country, receiving 39% of all migrants residing in OECD countries, a proportion which has increased regularly since 2000/01. Germany maintained its second place with 10% of the total, while the United Kingdom, Canada and France received 6% to 7% of migrants residing in OECD countries. The most noticeable changes in the list of the main destination countries over the reference period concerned are the sharp increases in the

immigrant population in Italy (+174% between 2000/01 and 2015/16) and in Spain (+175%), due in part to greater mobility within the European Union.

During the more recent period, between 2010/11 and 2015/16, different trends emerged in the main destination countries. The number of migrants in Australia, Germany and Canada increased by over 15%, and by almost 25% in Italy, while the pace of growth was slower in the United Kingdom, France and particularly in Spain. These changes only partially reflect the inflow of refugees into some OECD countries in recent years, as some sources of the data used in DIOC do not always incorporate the number of people entering a country immediately. This time lag is potentially significant with regard to refugees, who typically secure their status several months after their arrival in the country as asylum seekers.

Table 2. Numbers of migrants (15+) in the ten main OECD destination countries, 2000/01 to 2015/16 (in millions)

2000/01		2005/06		2010/11		2015/16		Main destination countries 2015/16	Growth 2000/01-2015/16 (%)	Share recent immigrants, 2015/16 (%)
United States	31.4	United States	38.6	United States	40.9	United States	46.2	United States	47	14
Germany	7.8	Germany	10.1	Germany	10.4	Germany	12.0	Germany	53	20
France	5.6	France	6.4	United Kingdom	7.4	United Kingdom	8.1	United Kingdom	80	21
Canada	5.4	Canada	6.1	France	6.8	Canada	7.7	Canada	44	13
United Kingdom	4.5	United Kingdom	5.9	Canada	6.7	France	7.4	France	32	11
Australia	3.9	Australia	4.1	Spain	5.1	Australia	5.8	Australia	50	19
Italy	2.0	Spain	3.8	Australia	5.0	Italy	5.5	Italy	174	8
Spain	1.9	Italy	2.8	Italy	4.5	Spain	5.3	Spain	175	12
Israel	1.8	Israel	1.8	Switzerland	1.9	Switzerland	2.2	Switzerland	54	43
Switzerland	1.5	Switzerland	1.5	Israel	1.7	Israel	1.7	Israel	-2	5
Total top 10	65.7	Total top 10	81.2	Total top 10	90.3	Total top 10	102.0	Total top 10	55	15
Total	78.1	Total	91.9	Total	105.7	Total	119.6	Total	53	16

Source: DIOC.

Note: Growth between 2000/01-2015/16 calculated for the ten main destination countries in 2015/16.

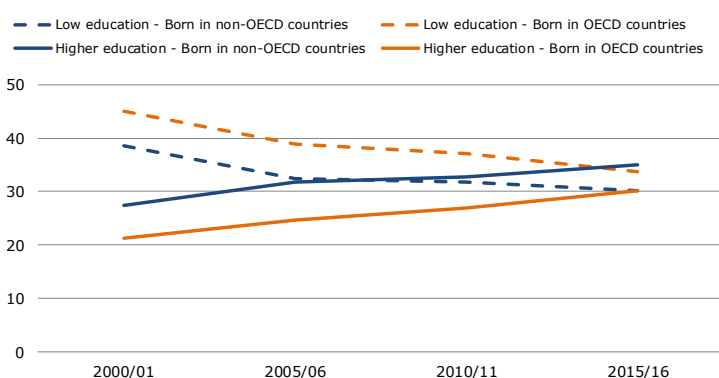
A significant increase in the educational attainment of immigrants

One of the noticeable outcomes of all four rounds of the DIOC database is the continuous increase in the level of education of migrants residing in OECD countries, and the simultaneous decline in the proportion of poorly educated migrants (Figure 2). Between 2000/01 and 2015/16, the share of migrants with a high level of education rose from 27% to 35% for those born outside of the OECD, and from 21% to 30% for those born in an OECD country. In the meantime, the share of non-OECD migrants with a low level of educational attainment decreased from 38% to less than 30% and from 45% to 34% for those born in an OECD country. In 2015/16, there were more tertiary educated foreign-born migrants in OECD countries than low-educated migrants, which is a complete reversal of the situation in 2000/01.

The high proportion of high-educated foreign-born migrants in OECD countries compared to OECD migrants can be explained in part by the closer geographic proximity to a large number of OECD countries (European countries, North American countries, Australia – New Zealand), and by the existence of free-movement zones (see the European Union), both of which are factors in making it comparatively easier for the less educated to move. In addition, many OECD countries have selective immigration policies, which have a proportionally greater impact on migrants from non-OECD countries.

In total, between 2000/01 and 2015/16, the number of tertiary-educated migrants increased by around 20 million, equivalent to half of the total increase in migrant numbers, while the number of low-educated migrants rose up to five million.

Figure 2. Share of low- and high- educated migrants, by group of countries of birth, 2000/01 to 2015/16 (%)

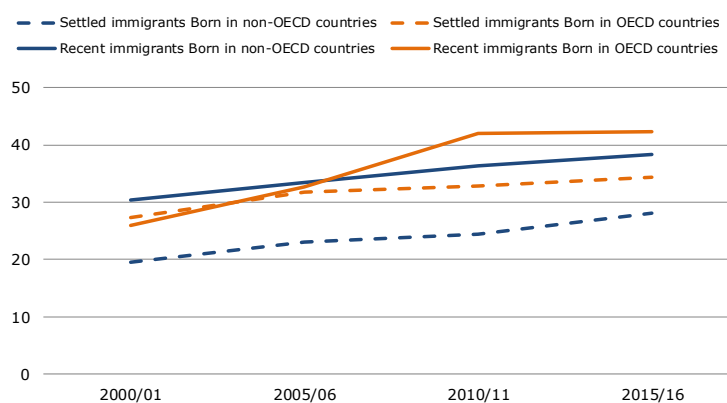


Sources: DIOC.

When the length of residence is factored in, it reveals a different trend in tertiary-educated migration from OECD countries compared to non-OECD migrants. In 2000/01, the proportion of high-educated migrants

was virtually identical among recent migrants and long-standing migrants born in OECD countries. However, over the past fifteen years the average level of educational attainment of recent immigrants has risen at a faster pace. This difference was not observed for migrants from non-OECD countries, which suggests that it mainly reflects an increase in the temporary migration of highly educated individuals from one OECD country to another, with a substantial proportion returning to their origin countries (Figure 3). It is likely that much of this trend is due to intra-European mobility.

Figure 3. Share of high-educated migrants, by group of countries of birth and duration of stay, 2000/01 to 2015/16 (%)



Source: DIOC.

Note: Recent migrants refer to those who have been in the destination country for 5 years or less, while long-standing migrants are those who have lived in the country for more than five years.

Small developing countries remain the most affected by the emigration of tertiary graduates

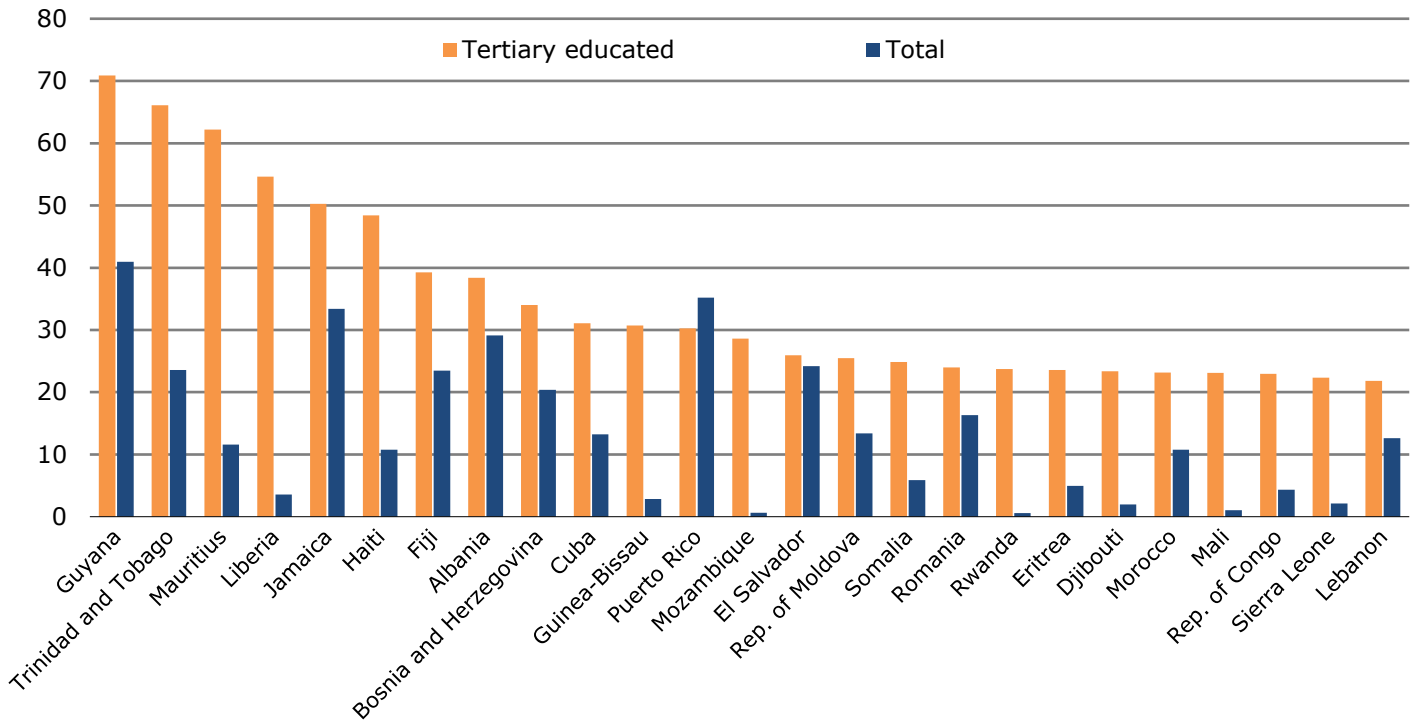
Along with the increase in temporary mobility of tertiary graduates within the OECD, some countries could be suffering from the long-term, and even definitive, emigration of their most educated nationals. In this respect, there are no big surprises in the most recent data because it is still small, developing countries, in particular islands and landlocked countries, which have the highest brain drain emigration rates (Figure 4).

Accordingly, some countries in Central America, the Caribbean and Africa have emigration rates for the high-educated of over 40%, and in around 30 countries this rate is over 20% (with the exception of countries where the 15+ population does not exceed 500 000 inhabitants). In some of these countries, the rate of overall emigration is also very high while in others it remains very low, which reflects high selectivity in terms of emigration, with only the best educated managing to emigrate to OECD countries. It should also be noted that the data available, which concern

countries of birth, do not establish where the migrants pursued their studies. In some countries, a non-negligible proportion of what is referred to as high-skilled emigration is actually the result of higher education being carried out abroad.

In contrast, in densely populated countries where the average rate of educational attainment of the population has increased significantly in recent years, such as China and India, the emigration rates of the high-educated are very low (less than 2% for China, and 3.5% for India), even with their high numbers of highly skilled emigrants.

Figure 4. Overall rate of emigration and rate of emigration of tertiary graduates in the 25 countries with the highest emigration rates of tertiary graduates, 2015/16 (%)



Source: DIOC.

Note: Excluding countries where the 15+ population is below 500 000 inhabitants. The rate of emigration of is calculated as being the ratio between the number of emigrants living in OECD countries and the total sum of the resident population and emigrants living in OECD countries.

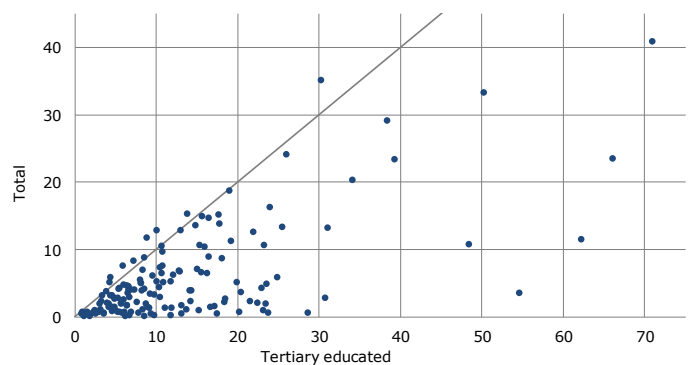
Conclusion

Overall, as Figure 5 reveals, with the exception of a few countries, the rate of emigration of tertiary graduates is always higher than the rate for the lower levels of attainment. That said, this distinction is much clearer in the poorest origin countries, where the emigration rate of the poorly educated is traditionally very low (Figure 6).

There is little probability that this population, with its limited human capital and often very high liquidity concerns, is going to obtain employment in OECD countries. Additionally, and the opportunities of being able to finance a possible long-distance migration are rare. The emigration rate of the low educated then increases in middle-income origin countries, before falling in the richest origin countries. This “migration hump” is observed among those with an intermediate level of education (upper secondary attainment), albeit with an emigration rate which is higher overall. However, in terms of tertiary graduates, there is a monotonic decreasing relationship between GDP per

capita in the origin country and the rate of emigration. Tertiary graduates from the poorest countries therefore have the highest probability of residing abroad.

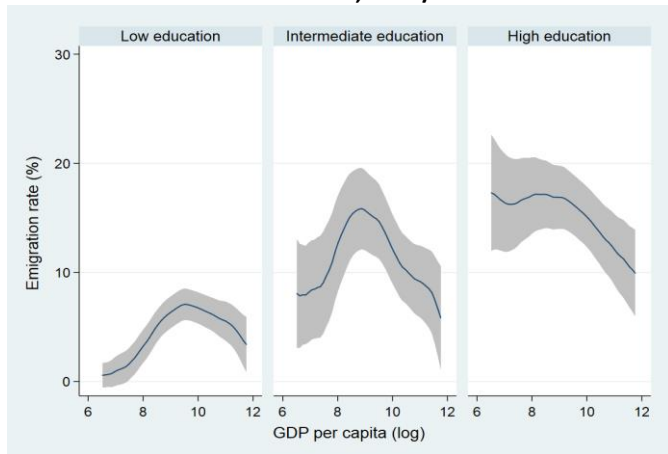
Figure 5. Total emigration rate and emigration rate of tertiary graduates by country of birth, 2015/16 (%)



Source: DIOC.

Note: The rate of emigration of is calculated as being the ratio between the number of emigrants living in OECD countries and the total sum of the resident population and emigrants living in OECD countries.

Figure 6. Rate of emigration based on GDP per capita, by level of educational attainment, 2015/16

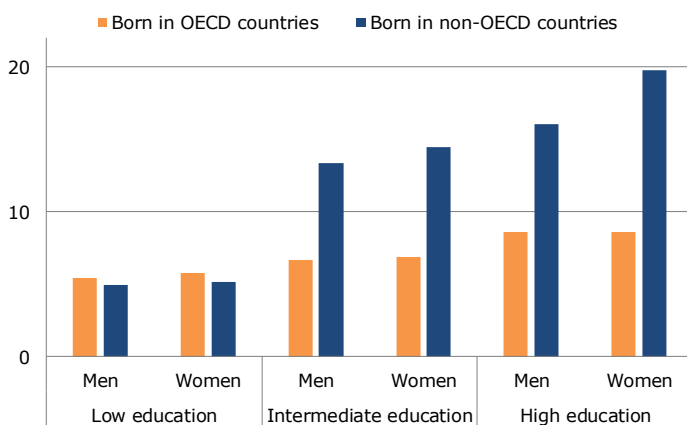


Source: DIOC; GDP per capita, PPP: World Bank.

Note: Local regression of the emigration rate on log GDP per capita. The shaded area corresponds to the 95% confidence interval. The emigration rate is calculated as the ratio between the number of emigrants living in OECD countries and the total sum of the resident population and emigrants living in OECD countries.

There is nevertheless a clear difference between the emigration rates of tertiary graduates by gender, in particular for graduates from non-OECD countries. As Figure 7 shows, after taking into account educational attainment, there is little difference in the rate of emigration of men and women born in OECD countries. Among the low educated, the emigration rate is 5.4% for men and 5.8% for women. Among the high educated, the rate of emigration of men and women is almost identical at 8.6%. Conversely, in non-OECD countries of birth, while there is little difference in the emigration rate for men and women with low or intermediate attainment, there is a marked contrast among the high educated, with an emigration rate of 19.8% for women and 16% for men.

Figure 7. Rate of emigration by level of education, by group of countries of birth and gender, 2015/16



Source: DIOC.

Note: The rate of emigration of is calculated as being the ratio between the number of emigrants living in OECD countries and the total sum of the resident population and emigrants living in OECD countries.

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Useful links

www.oecd.org/migration

<http://www.oecd.org/fr/els/mig/dioc.htm>

<https://www.afd.fr/en>

<https://www.afd.fr/fr/page-programme-de-recherche/demographie-et-societe?prevId=3004>