

## Immigration to EU Member States down by 6% and emigration up by 13% in 2008

EU Member States received a total of 3.8 million immigrants and at least 2.3 million emigrants are reported to have left one of the EU Member States in 2008<sup>1</sup>.

Compared with 2007<sup>2</sup>, immigration to EU Member States is estimated to have decreased by 6% and emigration to have increased by 13%.

The scale and patterns of immigration differ from one Member State to another. This issue looks at the main international migration inflows into the EU Member States, EFTA and candidate countries in 2008.

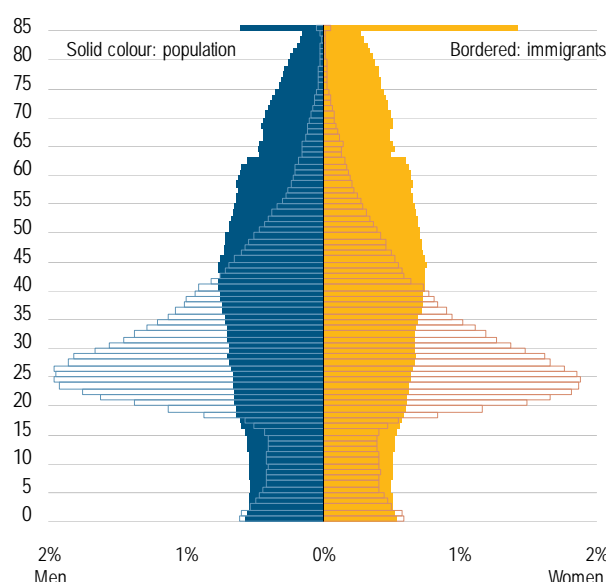
### International migration as one of the key drivers of population growth in EU Member States

International migration plays a significant role in the size and structure of the population in most EU Member States. The increase in the total population of EU Member States in recent years was mainly due to high net migration. From 2004 to 2008 the population of EU Member States increased, on average, by 1.7 million per year, solely because inflows outweighed outflows. Although immigration to the EU Member States fell in 2008 and emigration increased, they still resulted in net migration which contributed 71% of the total population increase.

In many EU Member States immigration is not only increasing the total population but also bringing a

much younger population. The age structure of the total population of EU Member States on 1 January 2009 and of immigrants to EU Member States in 2008 is illustrated by the age pyramid in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Age structure of the population on 1 January 2009 and of immigrants in 2008, EU-27



EU-27 immigration data excluding BE, EL, CY, RO and UK

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [migr\\_pop2ctz](#), [migr\\_imm2ctz](#))

The provisional immigration and emigration figures for 2009 indicate that the downward trend in immigration to EU Member States which started in 2008 continued in 2009<sup>3</sup>. A similar trend has also been observed in most EU Member States in the statistics on residence permits issued for work and family reasons to non-EU citizens<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Total immigration/emigration to/from the EU Member States' have to be distinguished from 'total immigration/emigration to/from the EU as a whole'; the former also includes international migration between the EU Member States.

<sup>2</sup> 2007 migration data are not completely comparable with 2008 data since several EU Member States changed their methods, data sources and definitions in order to improve and harmonise migration data (for further details see the [Eurostat Metadata page](#)). Detailed analysis of comparable data showed that the impact of these changes on immigration and emigration, compared with 2007, is marginal.

<sup>3</sup> For details see: Eurostat, [demo\\_gind](#).

<sup>4</sup> For details see: Eurostat, [migr\\_resfirst](#).

## Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom reported the highest immigration in 2008

In 2008 the EU Member State recording the largest number of immigrants was Spain (726 000). Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy also received more than half a million immigrants each. These four countries took more than two thirds (67 %) of all immigrants to any of the EU Member State in 2008. Germany reported the highest number of emigrants (738 000, resulting in negative net migration), followed by the United Kingdom with 427 000 and Spain with 266 000. Emigration was also important for Romania and Poland.

Most EU Member States reported more immigration than emigration in 2008, but in Germany, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and the three Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) emigrants outnumbered immigrants.

There are familiar problems with measuring emigration; in particular, it is more difficult to measure people leaving a country than those arriving. Mirror statistics analysis (comparing 2008 immigration and emigration data from the EU Member States) confirmed that this is true of many countries.

Because it is difficult to measure emigration reliably, the analysis in this issue focuses mainly on immigration data.

**Table 1: Immigration by groups of citizenship, EU-27, EFTA and candidate countries, 2008**

Country	Total (in thousands)	Nationals		Non-nationals					
		in thousands	%	in thousands	%	of which			
						EU MS citizens		non-EU citizens	
						in thousands	%	in thousands	%
<b>EU-27</b>	<b>3,800 s</b>	<b>600 s</b>	<b>15 s</b>	<b>3,200 s</b>	<b>85 s</b>	<b>1,400 s</b>	<b>43 s</b>	<b>1,800 s</b>	<b>57 s</b>
BE	150.8 p	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
BG	1.2	1.1	93	0.1	7	0.0	1	0.1	99
CZ	77.8	1.7	2	76.2	98	17.6	23	58.5	77
DK	57.4	19.9	35	37.5	65	20.0	53	17.5	47
DE	682.1	108.3	16	573.8	84	335.9	59	237.9	41
EE	3.7	1.7	47	1.9	53	1.0	51	0.9	49
IE	63.9	17.9	28	45.6	71	32.1	70	13.5	30
EL	:	:	:	74.7	:	25.7	34	49.0	66
ES	726.0	33.8	5	692.2	95	193.3	28	498.9	72
FR	216.9	64.0	30	152.9	70	63.9	42	89.0	58
IT	534.7	38.2	7	496.5	93	212.9	43	283.7	57
CY	14.1	1.1	8	9.8	70	6.5	66	3.4	34
LV	3.5	0.9	27	2.5	73	1.6	63	0.9	37
LT	9.3	6.3	68	3.0	32	0.4	13	2.6	87
LU	17.8	1.0	5	16.7	94	13.9	83	2.8	17
HU	37.5	2.0	5	35.5	95	17.7	50	17.9	50
MT	9.0	1.2	13	7.8	87	4.5	57	3.3	43
NL	143.5	40.2	28	94.3	66	55.4	59	38.9	41
AT	110.1	15.3	14	94.4	86	55.3	59	39.1	41
PL	47.9	35.9	75	12.0	25	3.1	26	8.9	74
PT	29.7	9.6	32	20.1	68	4.1	20	16.1	80
RO	:	:	:	10.0	:	:	:	:	:
SI	30.7	2.6	9	28.0	91	2.1	7	25.9	93
SK	17.8	1.4	8	16.5	92	8.5	52	7.9	48
FI	29.1	9.2	32	19.7	68	7.3	37	12.3	63
SE	101.2	17.9	18	83.0	82	30.4	37	52.6	63
UK	590.2	85.1	14	505.2	86	197.7	39	307.4	61
IS	10.3	2.8	27	7.5	73	6.4	86	1.1	14
LI	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
NO	58.1	6.4	11	51.7	89	32.2	62	19.5	38
CH	184.3	22.7	12	161.6	88	113.6	70	48.0	30
HR	14.5	12.5	86	2.0	14	0.5	27	1.5	73
MK	1.1	0.2	21	0.8	79	0.1	15	0.7	85
TR	:	:	:	19.7	:	6.0	30	13.7	70

s = Eurostat estimate; p = Provisional value.

Immigration data for EL, RO and TR include non-nationals only.

Break in time series for immigration data in 2008 for CZ, DK, EE, EL, PL, SI, UK and NO; for details see the [Eurostat Metadata page](#).

Some national data on immigration are based on unharmonised definitions and do not include all categories of immigrants; for details see the [Eurostat Metadata page](#).

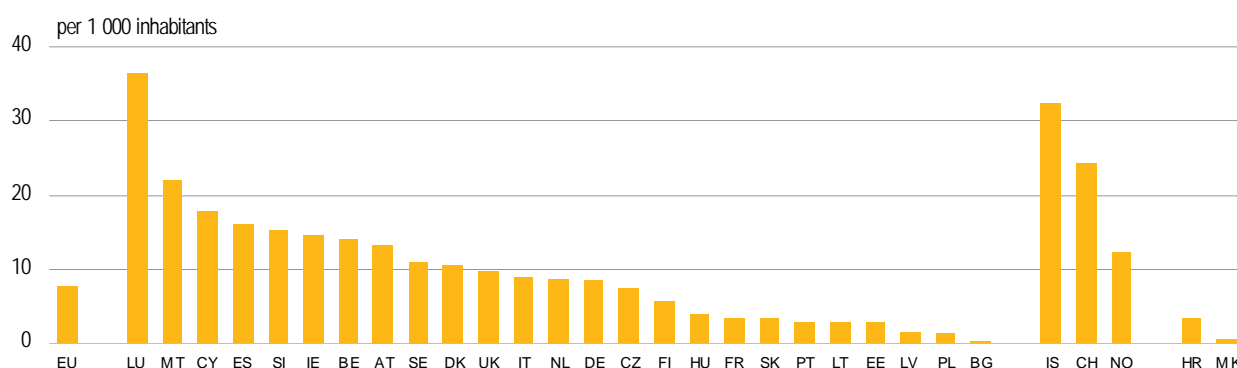
EU-27 totals are rounded as they are based on estimates; the individual values do not add up to the total due to rounding and to exclusion of the 'unknown' citizenship group from the table.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr\\_imm1ctz](#))

Relative to the size of the resident population, Luxembourg (with 36.3 immigrants per 1 000 inhabitants) had the highest immigration in the EU in 2008, followed by Malta with 21.9 and Cyprus with 17.8 immigrants per 1 000 inhabitants. Immigration was also high in the EFTA countries, far exceeding the EU Member States' average of 7.6 immigrants per 1 000 inhabitants.

Luxembourg, the country with the highest immigration per capita and one of the smallest countries in the EU in terms of population, also reported the highest rate of emigration in 2008, with 20.6 emigrants per 1 000 inhabitants. Overall, the highest rate of emigration among the countries reporting in 2008 was in Iceland, where almost 29 residents per 1 000 inhabitants left the country.

**Figure 2: Immigration (per 1 000 inhabitants), EU-27, EFTA and candidate countries, 2008**



Immigration data for EL, RO and TR include non-nationals only and are therefore not included; no data for LI.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [demo\\_gind](#), [migr\\_imm1ctz](#))

## Over half a million migrated to their country of citizenship in 2008

Not only foreigners immigrate to a particular Member State, but also nationals, i.e. citizens of that Member State. Immigration by nationals includes both returning migrants and citizens born abroad who are immigrating for the first time. In 2008 EU Member States reported that more than half a million immigrants, or 15 % of the total, were nationals. The figures reported on nationals might be slightly overestimated due to the inclusion of non-resident children<sup>5</sup>.

In 2008 the share of nationals among immigrants differed from one Member State to another<sup>6</sup>. The EU Member States reporting the highest shares in 2008 were Poland (75 %), Lithuania (68 %) and Estonia (48 %).

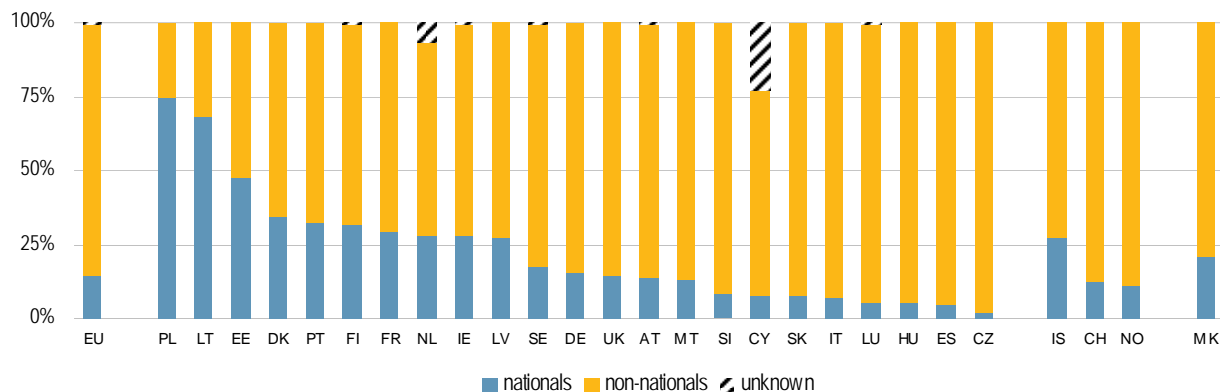
By contrast, the Czech Republic, Spain, Hungary, Luxembourg, Italy, Slovakia, Cyprus and Slovenia reported very low shares, with nationals making up under 10 % of immigrants (see Figure 3).

The share of non-nationals among immigrants to EU Member States in 2008 was 85 %. More than half of them (57 %) were citizens of non-EU countries and the rest (43 %) were citizens of EU countries (see Table 1).

<sup>5</sup> Some countries also include in the immigration flows children born abroad but registered in their country of citizenship, irrespective whether they become residents or not. If these children do not become residents, they should not be included in immigration flows. However, in some countries they are.

<sup>6</sup> Comparison excluding countries with missing data (BE and LI), countries with incomplete data (EL, RO and TR) and countries highly overestimating nationals in immigration data (BG and HR).

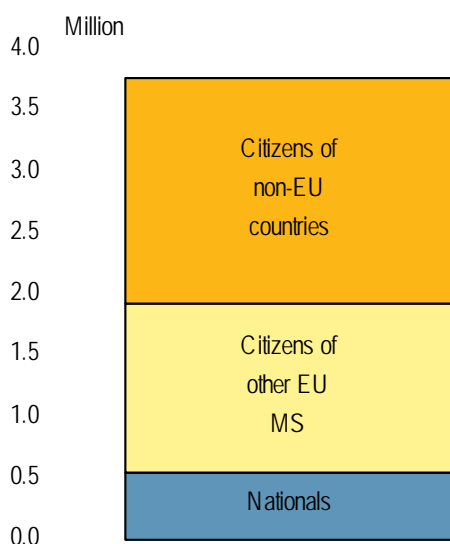
**Figure 3: Share (%) of nationals and non-nationals among immigrants, EU-27, EFTA and candidate countries, 2008**



No data for LI; no immigration data by basic citizenship groups for BE; immigration data for EL, RO and TR include non-nationals only and are therefore not included; immigration data for BG and HR highly underestimate non-nationals and are therefore not included.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr\\_imm1ctz](#))

**Figure 4: Immigration by citizenship groups, EU-27, 2008**

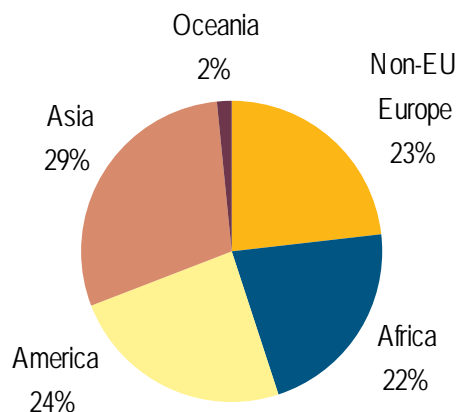


Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr\\_imm1ctz](#)) and Eurostat estimates

The breakdown of non-EU nationals immigrating to one of the EU Member States in 2008 by the continent of their country of citizenship was quite evenly balanced, with the exception of Oceania.

Estimates suggest that the biggest group of non-EU nationals migrating to one of the EU Member States in 2008 was formed by citizens of countries in Asia (29%), followed by North, Central and South America (24%) (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Immigrants to EU Member States by continent of country of citizenship, EU-27, 2008**



Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr\\_imm1ctz](#)) and Eurostat estimates

## Romanians the biggest group of immigrants to EU Member States

In 2008 EU Member States received nearly two million migrants of other EU nationalities. Among them Romanians ranked first, followed by Poles and Germans (note that these migrants were not necessarily previously residing in their country of citizenship). If returning nationals

(see category 'EU citizens (excluding nationals)' in Table 2) are excluded from the analysis, Romanians still ranked first, followed by Poles and Bulgarians. EU Member States received 384 000 citizens of Romania, 266 000 citizens of Poland and 91 000 citizens of Bulgaria.

**Table 2: Top ten citizenships of immigrants to EU Member States, 2008**

EU citizens (including nationals)		EU citizens (excluding nationals)		Non-EU citizens	
country of citizenship	in thousands	country of citizenship	in thousands	country of citizenship	in thousands
Romania	384 <sup>1)</sup>	Romania	384	Morocco	157
Poland	302	Poland	266	China	97
Germany	196	Bulgaria	91	India	93
United Kingdom	146	Germany	88	Albania	81
France	126	Italy	67	Ukraine	80
Italy	105	France	62	Brazil	62
Bulgaria	92	United Kingdom	61	United States	61
Netherlands	81	Hungary	44	Turkey	51
Spain	61	Netherlands	40	Russian Federation	50
Belgium	48	Portugal	38	Colombia	49

1) At least 384 000.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr\\_imm1ctz](#)) and Eurostat estimates

The main destinations of Romanian citizens in the EU were Italy and Spain. Italy received 46% of all Romanians migrating to another EU Member State in 2008 and Spain 19%. The main destination of Polish citizens in the EU was Germany, which received 45% of all Poles migrating to another EU Member State, i.e. 120 000 persons.

More than half of German, British, French, Dutch and Spanish citizens immigrating in 2008 were nationals returning after migrating. This was also the case for Austrian, Irish, Swedish, Danish and Finnish citizens.

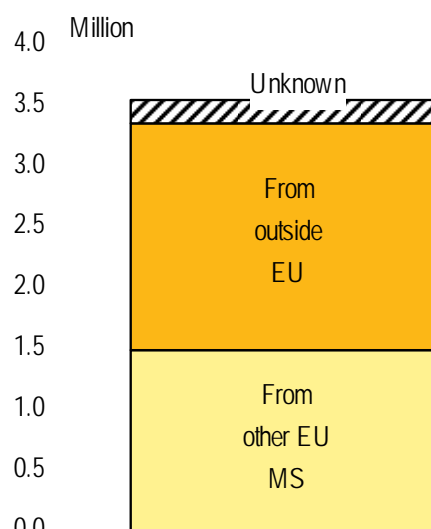
The remaining 1.8 million immigrants to EU Member States were non-EU nationals. Among them, the biggest group were Moroccans, the only one exceeding 100 000, followed by citizens of China, India, Albania and Ukraine. The majority of Moroccans migrating in 2008 went to Spain (60% of all Moroccan migrants or almost 94 000 in absolute terms) or to Italy (24% or 37 000). In the same year Spain also received the largest share of all Chinese immigrants to the EU (28% or 27 000 in absolute terms). The United Kingdom was the main destination for citizens of India.

## 1.9 million, or 55% of all immigrants to the EU, had previously been residing in countries outside the EU

Not all immigrants to EU Member States in 2008 had previously been residing outside the EU. Eurostat estimates that 45% of them were already residing in the EU and the remaining 55% outside. These immigrants from outside the EU can be further subdivided on the basis of the level of development of their previous country of residence, as measured by the human development index (HDI)<sup>7</sup>. According to this indicator, half the immigrants to the EU were previously residing in medium developed countries, slightly fewer in highly developed countries (44%) and only 6% in less developed countries.

<sup>7</sup> This index is calculated by the United Nations (UN) under the UN Development Programme. It is a composite index incorporating statistical measures of life expectancy, literacy, educational attainment and GDP per capita. The Eurostat list of countries by level of development, based on the UN's 2006 classification, was used in order to reflect this structure. In this index countries are classified as highly, medium or less developed. Since the countries are evolving, each year they are reclassified, based on the new values for the statistical indicators included in the index (for details see the UN site at: <http://hdr.undp.org>).

**Figure 6: Immigrants by groups of country of previous residence, EU-27, 2008**



EU-27 excluding BE, HU and UK.

Source: Eurostat ([migr\\_imm5prv](#)) and Eurostat estimates

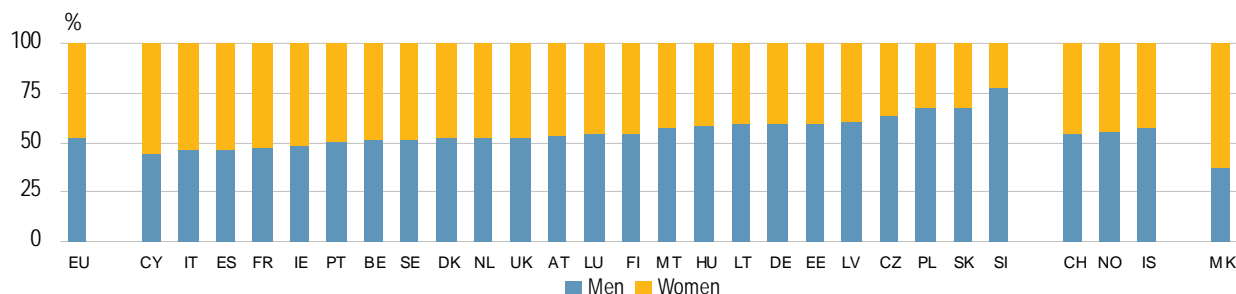
## Almost as many women as men immigrants

In 2008 there were more men than women in migration flows to and from EU Member States in general. Around 48% of immigrants were women. By contrast, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, France and Ireland reported that women outnumbered men among immigrants. In Cyprus this was mainly down to females with Filipino, Sri Lankan and Vietnamese citizenship, whereas in Italy and Spain women outnumbered men in the biggest group of immigrants (with Romanian citizenship in the case of Italy and Moroccan citizenship in Spain). In Italy women also predominated strongly among immigrants holding the citizenship of Ukraine, Moldova,

Poland and Russia and in Spain among citizens of Pakistan and Senegal.

Data on the reason for migration are not collected as part of the annual International Migration Statistics Data Collection. It is therefore not possible to analyse whether men and women migrate for different reasons. However, analysis of the 2008 Labour Force Survey data from an *ad hoc* module on migration showed that for foreign-born men aged between 25 and 54 employment was the primary reason for migration, whereas half of foreign-born women reported family-related reasons to migrate (for details see the Eurostat [on-line database](#), LFS *ad hoc* modules).

**Figure 7: Immigrants by sex, EU-27, EFTA and candidate countries, 2008**



No data for LI; immigration data for EL, RO and TR include non-nationals only and are therefore not included; immigration data for BG and HR highly underestimate non-nationals and are therefore not included.

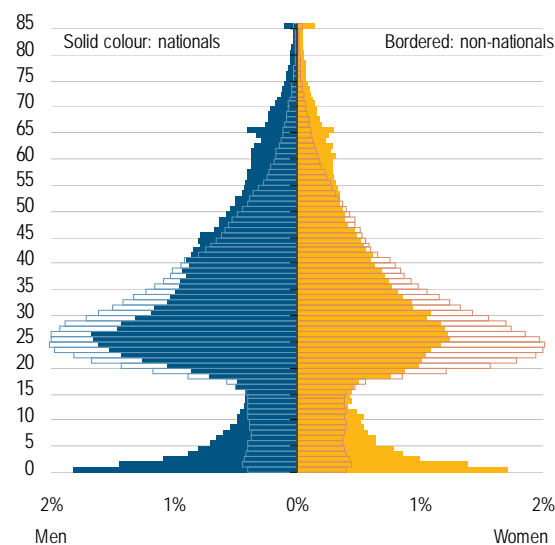
Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr\\_imm1ctz](#))

## The average age of immigrants to the EU Member States was younger than that of the population of their country of destination

In 2008 immigrants to EU Member States were, on average, younger than the population of their country of destination. While the median age of the total population of all EU Member States was 40.6 on 1 January 2009, the median age of immigrants in 2008 was 28.4. Among immigrants there were noticeable differences in the age distribution of nationals, EU nationals and non-EU nationals. Non-EU nationals were the youngest, with a median age of 27.5 years, followed by EU nationals on 29.3 years. Nationals were the oldest with a median age of 30.2 years.

84% of all immigrants to EU Member States in 2008 were of working age (15-64). The share in the 15-64 age group was highest among non-national men (87%) and lowest among women returning to the country of their citizenship (71%).

**Figure 8: Age structure of immigrants by basic citizenship groups, EU-27, 2008**



EU-27 excluding BE, EL, CY, RO and UK.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [migr\\_imm2ctz](#))

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

### DATA SOURCES

The data used for this publication are provided by the national statistical institutes (NSIs) of the EU Member States, EFTA and EU candidate countries as part of the annual International Migration Statistics Data Collection conducted by Eurostat. Detailed data are presented if supplied by the NSI. Where necessary, Eurostat estimates have been used.

Reporting countries use different data sources to produce statistics on international migration flows. Most reporting countries base these statistics on administrative data sources such as population registers, registers/databases of foreigners, registers/databases of residence permits, databases of work permits and databases on asylum applications or asylum granted. Some countries use sample surveys (like special migration-related surveys, the Labour Force Survey, household surveys, etc.) in order to estimate international migration flows. Some use the last available census data and estimation methods to produce migration statistics, especially on the characteristics of migrants (citizenship, country of birth, country of previous/next residence, etc.). For further details see the [Eurostat Metadata page](#).

### DEFINITIONS AND COVERAGE

The migration data collected by Eurostat refer to long-term international migration (for further details see [Regulation](#) (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on migration and international protection). Migration data reported by the individual countries and included in this analysis are not completely comparable (neither between countries nor over time). For the 2008 migration data several countries (for example, CZ, DK, EE, EL, PL, SI, UK and NO) changed their methods, data sources and definitions in order to improve and harmonise migration data.

Some countries reported that coverage of international migrants is not complete because they are not yet in a position to include all types of international migrants (such as asylum-seekers) or in some cases even nationals in the inflow or non-nationals in the outflow. Others reported undercoverage due to arrivals or departures unreported to the national registration systems.

However, some countries reported overcoverage of migrants because they have not yet introduced the criterion of 12 months of actual or intended stay for defining an international long-term migrant. For details of national methods and coverage see the Annex on the [Eurostat Metadata page](#).

### ABBREVIATIONS

For the purpose of this publication EU means EU-27, i.e. Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT),

Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK).

EFTA means the European Free Trade Association, i.e. Iceland (IS) (also an EU candidate country), Liechtenstein (LI), Norway (NO) and Switzerland (CH). EU candidate countries means Croatia (HR), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (MK) and Turkey (TR).

### GLOSSARY

*Immigration* means an action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a country for a period that is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months, having previously been usually resident in another country.

*Immigrant* means a person undertaking immigration.

*Emigration* means an action by which a person, having previously been usually resident in the territory of a country, ceases to have his or her usual residence in that country for a period that is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months.

*Emigrant* means a person undertaking emigration.

*Usual residence* means the place at which a person normally spends the daily period of rest, regardless of temporary absences for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage or, in default, the place of legal or registered residence.

*Citizenship* means the particular legal bond between an individual and his or her State, acquired by birth or naturalisation, whether by declaration, choice, marriage or other means under national legislation.

*National* means persons who are citizens of the country in which they reside.

*Non-national* or *foreign citizen* mean persons who are not citizens of the country in which they reside, including persons of unknown citizenship and stateless persons.

*Citizen of EU Member State* or *EU national* mean persons who are citizens of an EU Member State.

*Non-EU citizens* or *non-EU nationals* or *third-country nationals* mean persons who are usually resident in the EU-27 and who hold the citizenship of a country outside the EU-27.

*Immigrants per 1 000 inhabitants* means the ratio between the number of immigrants in the calendar year and the mid-year population of the receiving country, for a given year, multiplied by 1 000.

*Net migration* means the difference between immigration to and emigration from a given area during the year (net migration is positive when there are more immigrants than emigrants and negative when there are more emigrants than immigrants).

*Median age* means the age that divides the population into two groups of equal size.

## Further information

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Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Data on "International migration flows – Immigration, Emigration"  
<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/data/database>

Further information about "International Migration and Asylum"  
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