



# Facts and Figures on International Migration

*No country of the world remains unaffected by international migration flows. They are all either countries of origin, transit or destination for migrants, or all three simultaneously. Like other flows, whether financial, commercial, or flows of information or ideas, the rising tide of people crossing frontiers is among the most reliable indicators of the intensity of globalization.*

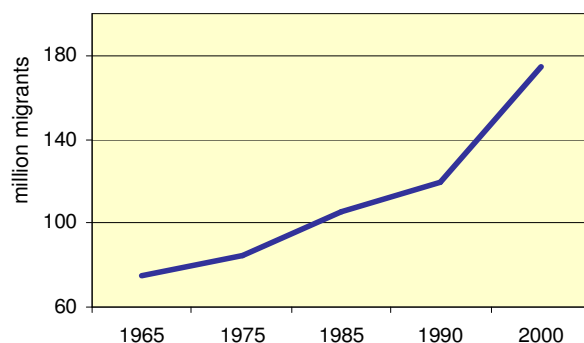
## Migration Policy Issues

No. 2, March 2003

- International migrants
- Migrant stocks by world region
- Migrant stocks by country
- Immigration and emigration countries
- Highly skilled workers
- Irregular migration
- Foreign labour force
- Migrant remittances

### International migrants

At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one out of every 35 persons worldwide is an international migrant. The total number of international migrants is estimated at some 175 million persons (2.9% of the world population). Some 48% of all international migrants are women. Over the last 35 years, the number of international migrants has more than doubled.

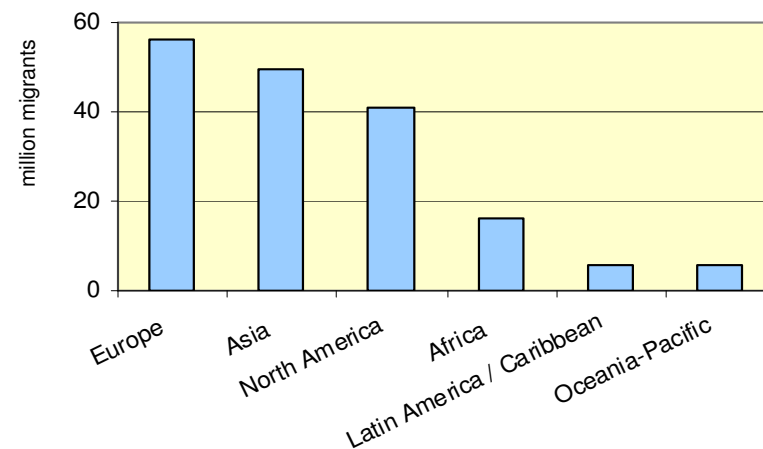


### Migrant stocks by country

The United States (35 million) and the Russian Federation (13.3 million) top the list of the 15 countries with the largest international migrant stocks in 2000. This list includes countries from all world regions: Germany (7.3 million), Ukraine (6.9 million), France (6.3 million), India (6.3 million), Canada (5.8 million), Saudi Arabia (5.3 million), Australia (4.7 million), Pakistan (4.2 million), United Kingdom (4.0 million), Kazakhstan (3.0 million), Côte d'Ivoire (2.3 million), Iran (2.3 million), Israel (2.3 million).

### Migrant stocks by world region

In total numbers, Europe (56.1 million), Asia (49.7 million) and North America (40.8 million) are the regions with the largest migrant stocks in 2000. The African migrant stock amounts to 16.2 million persons, representing 2.1% of the total population. The migrant stock in Latin America and the Caribbean totals 5.9 million people, representing 1.1% of the population. Oceania-Pacific topped the list of world regions with the largest proportion of migrants as compared to the total population (19.1%), followed by North America (13%), and Europe (7.7%).

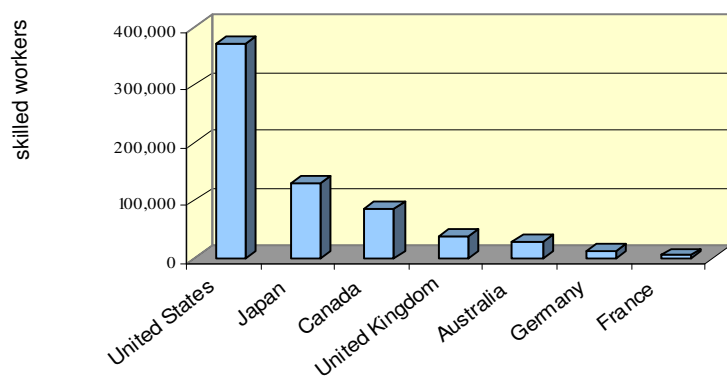


## Immigration and emigration countries

While all of the 10 major emigration countries between 1970 and 1995 were to be found in the developing world, not all of the 10 major immigration countries were developed countries. Over this period, the leading net immigration countries were the United States (16.7 million immigrants), the Russian Federation (4.1 million), Saudi Arabia (3.4 million) and India (3.3 million). Mexico (6.0 million emigrants), Bangladesh (4.1 million), and Afghanistan (4.1 million) were the main emigration countries.

## Highly skilled workers

The United States (1999: 370,000 persons), Japan (2000: 129,000) and Canada (2000: 86,200) experienced the largest annual inflows of highly skilled workers among the world's high-income countries. The United Kingdom (2000: 39,000), Australia (1999-2000: 30,000), and Germany (2000-2001: 11,800) followed.



## Irregular migration

Irregular migration continues to be a complex phenomenon on which accurate and reliable data are not readily available. Some 700,000 to 2 million women and children are estimated to be trafficked across international borders each year. Approximately 500,000 persons enter the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand illegally every year. Estimates of persons entering countries of the European Union by irregular means vary from 120,000 to 500,000 annually. People smuggling is a very lucrative business generating billions of USD in revenues every year. The fees paid to migrant smugglers increase proportionally to the distance covered between country of origin and destination.

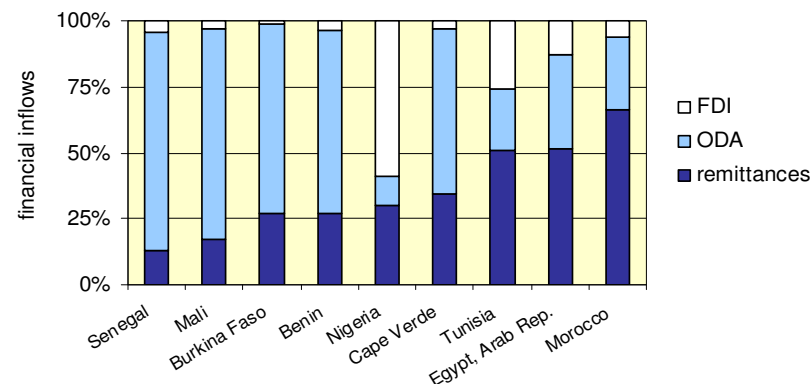
**Source:** *World Migration 2003 - Managing Migration. Challenges and Responses for People on the Move.* IOM World Migration Report Series, vol.2, Geneva.

## Foreign labour force

Among OECD countries, the highest numbers of foreign workers in 1999 were found in the United States (16.68 million), Germany (3.57 million), Australia (2.37 million), France (1.53 million), and the United Kingdom (1.1 million). The proportion of foreign workers in the labour force is highest in Luxembourg (57.3%), Australia (24.6%), Switzerland (18.1%), the United States (11.7%), Austria (10.02%), Germany (8.75%), and France (5.8%).

## Migrant remittances

For developing countries, migrant remittances continue to be a major source of national income. Worldwide, India (USD 11.5 million), Mexico (USD 6.5 million) and Egypt (USD 3.7 million) received the largest amounts of money from their diaspora. However, due to its often informal character, the total volume of remittances is difficult to establish. Over the last 20 years, annual official remittance flows to many African countries surpassed inflows of Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment. For example, as a proportion of total financial inflows, remittances amounted to 66% in Morocco, 51% in Egypt and Tunisia, 35% in Cape Verde, 30% in Nigeria, and 27% in Benin and Burkina Faso.



The Migration Policy Issues Series is prepared by:

**mprp**

IOM - Migration Policy and Research Programme

17 route des Morillons, C.P. 71, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland  
Tel: +41.22.717 91 11, Fax: +41.22.798 61 50, E-mail: MPRPdpt@iom.int, Internet:  
<http://www.iom.int>