

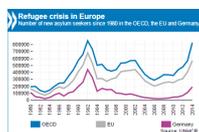
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Comprehensive and co-ordinated international response needed to tackle refugee crisis

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22/9/2015 - OECD countries are facing an unprecedented refugee crisis and the situation requires a comprehensive and co-ordinated international response to address the immediate needs of asylum seekers and the longer-term challenge of helping them integrate. This is the main message of two new OECD documents, the [2015 International Migration Outlook](#) and a [Policy Brief on the Refugee Crisis](#).

Launching the reports in Paris, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said: "European leaders need to step up to the challenge so that Europe as a whole emerges stronger economically, socially and politically. Europe has the experience and the capacity to respond."



Until the end of August, the European Border Agency FRONTEX counted more than 500 000 illegal border crossings, nearly double the 280 000 recorded for the whole of 2014. Europe will probably record more than one million asylum applications in 2015. Up to 450 000 of these are expected to obtain a status of humanitarian migrant and eventually settle.

"The human cost of this refugee crisis is appalling and countries need to quickly agree a fair allocation of refugees within Europe, and ensure that such vast numbers of troubled people receive shelter, food and support. It's essential that they also address the medium and long-term policy responses to this crisis," said Mr Gurría. "An emerging challenge will be the integration of the many new refugees who will remain in European host countries. We need to scale-up and adapt programmes so that refugees can integrate as quickly as possible in their new homes and make best use of their skills. We should all remember that migration is not a liability, but an asset." ([Read the full speech here](#))

In the short run, processing and supporting such large numbers of asylum-seekers will pose daunting challenges and will be costly, the OECD says. In the medium- to long-run, much will depend on how well refugees are integrated. This will require intensive efforts to provide language training, assess individual skills, address health and social problems, and working with employers and unions to help boost refugees' chances of employment. Past experience of refugee crises suggests that if properly supported in their integration efforts, migrants can contribute significantly to the development of our countries.

The International Migration Outlook also stresses that most migration to Europe and the OECD still occurs through legal channels, outside of the asylum system. For 2014, it estimates about 4.3 million permanent entries to OECD countries, up 6% from 2013 (less than one fourth is free mobility within EU). While humanitarian migration had the largest increases in recent years, in absolute levels the increase was much stronger among free mobility flows within the European Union. Free mobility also remains the second most important entry category, after family migration.

Not only has migration picked up, there are also some positive signs regarding improved labour market outcomes of immigrants, notes the report. Overall, the employment rate of immigrants in the OECD increased by 1.3 percentage points between 2011 and 2014.

The International Migration Outlook also includes a special focus on health care professionals. In 2014, about 2.7 million doctors in the OECD were foreign-trained, accounting for more than one in four doctors in the United Kingdom and the United States and more than one in three or more in Ireland, Israel, New Zealand and Norway. A third of all doctors originating from low-income countries is an expatriate in an OECD country.

Read OECD's Secretary-General op-ed on the refugee crisis: <http://www.oecd.org/migration/we-should-not-be-afraid.htm>

For more information, journalists should contact the [OECD Media Division](#) (tel. + 33 1 45 24 97 00). For the latest information on OECD's work on migration including the International Migration Outlook 2015, visit: <http://www.oecd.org/migration-insights/>

Working with over 100 countries, the OECD is a global policy forum that promotes policies to improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

Also Available

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