



World Migration in Figures

*A joint contribution by UN-DESA and the OECD to
the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, 3-4 October 2013*

Introduction

Reliable information on migrants and migration is essential to develop evidence-based policies, to inform public opinion, and to combat widely held misconceptions. How many migrants are there? What are their main characteristics? How do migrants contribute to host and origin societies? How does the role of immigrants evolve over time? These and other basic questions must be answered to plan future migration, to leverage the opportunities of migration, and to address its challenges.

On 3 and 4 October 2013, the United Nations General Assembly will convene the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. On numerous occasions, Member States have called for improving the evidence-base on international migration and its linkages to development. The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are working together to close this knowledge gap. This contribution brings together the latest evidence on global migration trends¹ with detailed information from the Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC).²

Key findings

- Despite the economic and financial crisis, global migration continues to rise. Yet, the growth in the global migrant stock has slowed down since 2007.
- In 2013, the number of international migrants born in the South who lived in the North, or “South-North migration”, almost equaled the number of migrants born in the South who resided in the South, or “South-South migration”.
- The proportion of female migrants ranged from 52% in the global North to 43% in the global South in 2013. Six out of every ten international migrants under the age of 20 resided in developing regions. Conversely, about seven out of every ten migrants aged 60 and above lived in the developed regions.
- The number of tertiary educated immigrants in the OECD increased by 70% in the past decade to reach 27 million in 2010/11. About 30% of all migrants in the OECD area were highly educated and one-fifth of them were originating from India, China or the Philippines.

- Migrant workers, notably men, have been hard hit by the economic crisis. In 2010/11 there were 7.1 million unemployed foreign-born in the OECD, corresponding to an average unemployment rate of 11.6%.
- Emigration rates to OECD countries were on the increase, notably in Europe and Latin America. Emigration rates of the highly-skilled exceeded total emigration rates for most countries of origin, reflecting the selective nature of migration.
- One in every nine persons born in Africa with a tertiary diploma lived in the OECD in 2010/11. Corresponding figures for Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia are one in 13 and one in 30, respectively. The risk of “brain drain” is more acute in countries with small populations and island states, but lower in populous non-OECD countries.

Global migration levels and trends³

Some 232 million international migrants are living in the world today. Since 1990, the number of international migrants in the global North increased by around 53 million (65%), while the migrant population in the global South grew by around 24 million (34%). Today, about six out of every ten international migrants reside in the developed regions (Table 1).

Table 1. International migrant stock (millions)

	1990	2000	2010	2013
World	154.2	174.5	220.7	231.5
Developed regions	82.3	103.4	129.7	135.6
Developing regions	71.9	71.1	91	95.9
Africa	15.6	15.6	17.1	18.6
Asia	49.9	50.4	67.8	70.8
Europe	49	56.2	69.2	72.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	7.1	6.5	8.1	8.5
Northern America	27.8	40.4	51.2	53.1
Oceania	4.7	5.4	7.3	7.9

Source: United Nations (2013), *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision*.

During the period 2000-10, the global migrant stock grew twice as fast than during the previous decade. During the 1990s, the global migrant stock grew at an average of about 2 million migrants per year. During the decade 2000-10, the growth in the migrant stock accelerated to about 4.6 million migrants annually.

However, since 2010, the increase in the migrant stock has slowed down. In the aftermath of the global economic crisis, the annual increase in the global migrant stock fell to about 3.6 million since 2010.

Since 2000, the migrant stock in the South has increased more rapidly than in the North. Between 2000 and 2010, the average annual growth rate for the migrant stock in the South was 2.5% per annum. In the North, the annual growth rate was around 2.3%. Since 2010, the annual growth rate has fallen to 1.8% in the developing regions and 1.5% in the developed regions.

Compared to the global population, the number of international migrants remains relatively small. In 2013, international migrants comprised about 3.2% of the world population, compared to 2.9% in 1990.

While the proportion of international migrants continues to rise in the North, it remains stable in the South. In 2013, international migrants accounted for nearly 11% of the total population in the developed countries, up from less than 9% in 2000. In the developing world, the proportion of international migrants to the total population remained under 2%, due to significant population growth and higher return levels.

About half of all international migrants reside in ten countries. In 2013, the United States of America hosted the largest number of international migrants (45.8 million or 20% of the global total), followed by the Russian Federation (11 million), Germany (9.8 million), Saudi Arabia (9.1 million), the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom (7.8 million each), France (7.5 million), Canada (7.3 million), Australia and Spain (6.5 million each).

The large majority of countries have witnessed an increase in the number of migrants. Between 2000 and 2013, the size of the international migrant stock grew in 165 countries or areas, while it declined in 63 countries or areas (Annex 1 Map 1).

While women comprise about 48% of all international migrants, considerable differences exist across regions. The proportion of female migrants is the highest in Europe, (51.9%), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (51.6%), Northern America (51.2%), Oceania (50.2%), Africa (45.9%), and Asia (41.6%). The small proportion of female migrants in Asia is the result of the high demand for male migrant workers in the oil-producing countries of Western Asia.

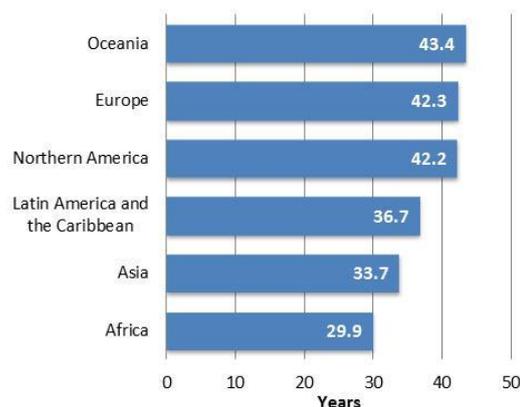
Refugees account for a relatively small proportion of the global migrant stock. In 2013, the total number of refugees in the world was estimated at 15.7 million, representing about 7% of all international migrants. Nearly nine of every ten refugees in the world had found asylum in developing regions.

South-South migration slightly exceeds South-North migration. In 2013, some 82.3 million international migrants who were born in the global South resided in the global South, slightly exceeding the number of international migrants born in the global South who were living in the global North (81.9 million).

On average, migrants residing in the global North are nine years older than migrants living in the global South. Africa and Asia hosted the youngest migrants with a median age of 30 and 34 years, respectively. In Europe, Northern America and Oceania, where international migrants tend to

stay rather than return, the median age was significantly higher (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Median age of international migrants, 2013



Source: United Nations (2013), *Trends in International Migrant Stock: the 2013 Revision*.

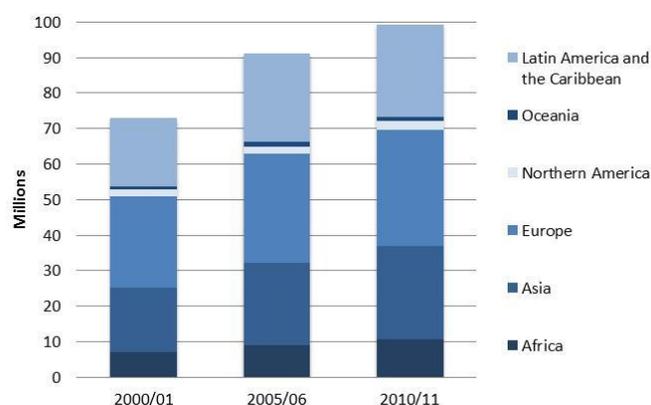
In 2013, the global number of young migrants has reached 34.8 million. Between 1990 and 2013, the developing regions witnessed their migrant population under the age of 20 increase by 10% compared to 3% in the developed regions. Currently, the developing regions host 62% of the global migrant stock under age 20.

Between 1990 and 2013, the number of older migrants has increased from 26 to 37 million worldwide. During this period, the number migrants aged 60 and above increased by 66% in the developed regions compared to only 8% in the developing regions. As a result, about 70% of all older international migrants resided in the global North as of 2013.

Migration in OECD countries

In 2010/11, about 100 million persons aged 15 years old and over were living outside their country of birth in the OECD (Figure 2). This represented a 36% increase from its 2000/01 level and a 9% increase in comparison with 2005/06. The slower growth of migrant stock in the OECD in the second half of the decade reflects the decline in migration flows due to the economic crisis which hurt many developed economies in 2007-08.

Figure 2. Number of migrants aged 15 and over in OECD countries, by region of origin (2000/01-2010/11)



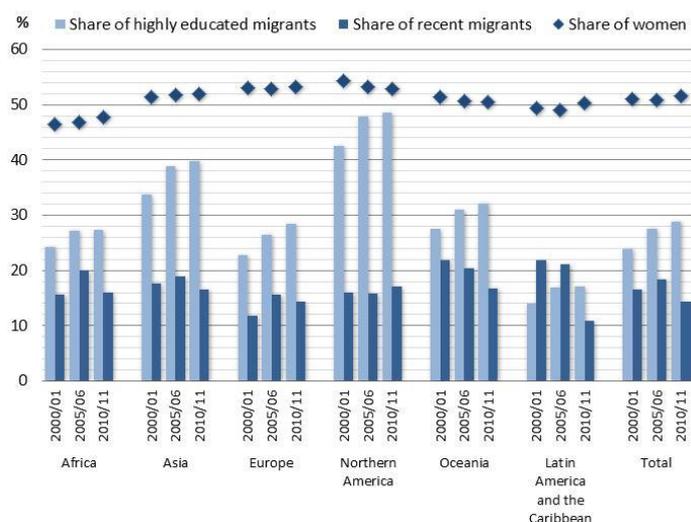
Source: DI0C 2010/11, www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm.

Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia together make up half of all migrants in OECD countries. In the past decade, the number of international migrants from Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean grew by 44% and 36% respectively. The number of migrants from Europe increased by 30% as a result of EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007. They accounted for one-third of all migrants in 2010/11. However, the African migrant community grew more than any other community: 53% in the past ten years.

Half of migrants in the OECD come from 16 countries. Mexico topped the list with 11 million emigrants, followed by China (3.8 million), the United Kingdom (3.5 million), India (3.4 million), Poland (3.2 million) and Germany (3.2 million). The Philippines, Romania, Morocco, followed by Viet Nam and Algeria, were among the main non-OECD countries of origin.

One out of seven migrants have arrived within the past five years (Figure 3). The number of recent arrivals increased between 2000 and 2005, but dropped significantly in the second half of the decade. In particular, recent migration from Latin America and the Caribbean declined due to the impact of the economic crisis in their main destination countries, notably Spain and the United States of America.

Figure 3. Characteristics of migrants aged 15 years old and over in OECD countries, by region of origin (2000/01-2010/11)



Note: Highly educated migrants are defined as persons who have completed tertiary education. Recent migrants are those who have been in the destination country for five years or less.

Source: DIOC 2010/11, www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm.

The proportion of highly educated immigrants in OECD countries is rising sharply. The number of tertiary educated immigrants in OECD countries showed an unprecedented increase in the past decade (+70%), reaching 27.3 million in 2010/11. About 4.7 million, or 17%, of them arrived in the past five years. This trend is mostly driven by Asian migration as more than 2 million tertiary educated migrants originating from this region arrived in the OECD in the past five years.

Altogether, India (2 million), China (1.7 million) and the Philippines (1.4 million) account for one-fifth of all tertiary educated immigrants in OECD countries in 2010/11. The number of tertiary educated migrants originating from Africa increased to reach 2.9 million in 2010/11. The number of

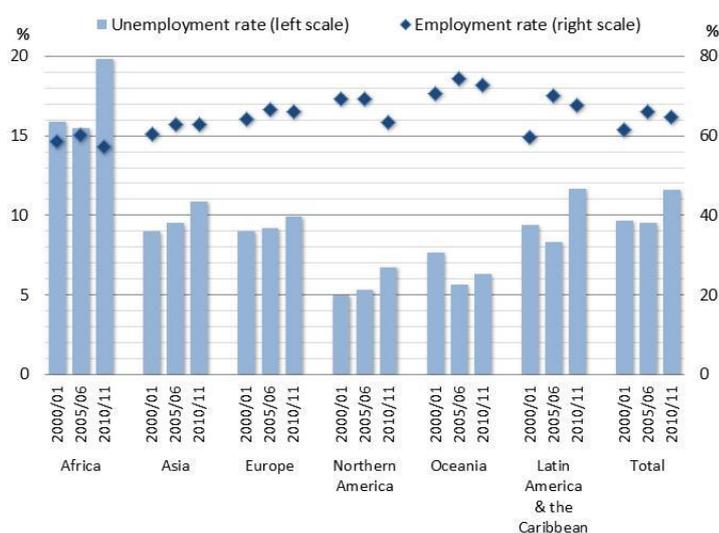
tertiary educated African migrants who arrived in the past five years (450,000) even exceeded that of Chinese migrants (375,000). Among non-OECD countries of origin, Romania (109,000), Brazil (75,000), Colombia (71,000) recorded the largest number of recent arrivals of tertiary educated emigrants. Germany (169,000), the United Kingdom (165,000), Poland (165,000), France (147,000) and the United States (120,000) ranked among the main countries of origin of recent tertiary educated immigrants from within the OECD.

One in every three international migrant aged 15 and above has limited education. The number of international migrants with no more than lower secondary education in OECD countries increased by 12% in the past ten years, mainly as a result of a high demand for low-skilled workers as well as non-labour related migration flows. The highest share of low-educated migrants in 2010/11 was recorded for migrants born in Sao Tomé and Príncipe (73%), Cape Verde (68%), Mali (67%) and Guinea-Bissau (66%). The share of low-educated migrants among recent migrants was stable for those originating from Africa and Latin America but decreasing for migrants from other regions.

Some 55 million persons in OECD countries aged 15 and over are working outside their country of birth. Between 2000/01 and 2010/11, an additional 16 million international migrants were employed in the OECD, representing about 70% of the overall employment growth during that period.

Migrant workers have been hard hit by the economic crisis. In 2010/11 there were 7.1 million unemployed foreign-born over the age of 15 in the OECD corresponding to an average unemployment rate of 11.6%. Migrants originating from Africa saw their unemployment rate increase by 4.3 percentage points in the past five years to reach 20% in 2010/11. The increase was also sizeable for Latin American migrants (+3.4 percentage points) although their unemployment rate remains below 12% (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Labour market outcomes of migrants (15-64) in OECD countries, by region of origin (2000/01-2010/11)



Source: DIOC 2010/11, www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm.

Migrant men have been particularly affected by the economic crisis. Many migrant men, who were employed in the construction and manufacturing sectors, have been laid off. In 2010/11, unemployment rates exceeded 25% for male migrant workers from Armenia, Bolivia, Gambia, Georgia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Morocco. Male migrant workers from Albania and Bulgaria experienced a 10 percentage point increase in their unemployment rate since 2005/06, due to deteriorated labour market conditions in Southern Europe.

Emigration rates and brain drain

Emigration rates to OECD countries are higher than ever before, notably for Latin America and the Caribbean. Almost 6% of all persons born in Latin America and the Caribbean were living in OECD countries in 2010/11. This figure increased by half a percentage point in the past ten years, corresponding to approximately 7 million additional emigrants. The emigration rate for Latin America and the Caribbean was more than twice the rate for Africa and almost seven times that for Asia (Annex 2).

The highest emigration rates to OECD countries are recorded for small countries and island states. Tonga (41%), Guyana (39%), Jamaica (32%), Albania (29%), Barbados (29%), Trinidad and Tobago (23%), Belize (21%), Fiji (20%), El Salvador (19%), and Malta (18%) are the ten countries with the highest emigration rates to OECD countries. The proportion of emigrants aged 15 and above residing in other OECD countries exceeded 10% for Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and Portugal.

Since 2000, the highest increases in emigration rates have been recorded by European countries. The emigration rates to OECD countries increased significantly for Albania (+9.1 percentage points), Romania (+8.3 percentage points), the Republic of Moldova (+6.3 percentage points), Bulgaria (+4.6 percentage points) and Lithuania (+4.5 percentage points). Ecuador was the non-European country recording the highest increase (+4.5 percentage points between 2000/01 and 2010/11).

One in every nine tertiary educated persons born in Africa resides in OECD countries. Corresponding figures for Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Asia were one in 13, one in 20 and one in 30, respectively.

“Brain drain” is particularly acute in small countries and island states in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (map 2). In 2010, close to 90% of highly skilled persons born in Guyana lived in OECD countries. Similarly, more tertiary educated persons were living outside Barbados, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago than in these countries. The proportion of highly educated persons residing in OECD countries was also significant for Jamaica (46%), Tonga (44%), Zimbabwe (43%), Mauritius (41%), the Republic of the Congo (36%), Belize (34%), and Fiji (31%). In contrast, most OECD countries as well as non-OECD countries with large populations, including Brazil, China, India and Russian Federation, had low emigration rates of the highly-skilled (below 3.5%).

Over the past ten years, the emigration of the highly-skilled has increased for some countries, while decreased in others. While the absolute number of tertiary educated emigrants in OECD countries has increased for all countries of origin, in some cases the highly educated population in the country of origin rose faster than the number of the highly educated emigrants. This was the case for many countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) which invested heavily in tertiary education in the past decade. The increase in the number of graduates in populous countries, such as China, India or Indonesia, more than compensated the increase in the outflow of highly educated migrants. In contrast, the emigration rate of highly educated persons from the Republic of Moldova, Zambia and Zimbabwe increased by more than 10 percentage points since 2000.

For virtually all countries of origin, the emigration rate of the highly-skilled exceeds the total emigration rate reflecting the selectivity of migration by educational attainment. This was the case for 137 of the 145 countries of origin with available data (95%). In 2010/11, Burundi, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Papua New Guinea, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia had emigration rates of the highly-skilled which were more than 20 times the total emigration rates.

“Brain drain” is more pronounced for women than for men. In many countries of origin, the share of tertiary educated women who were living outside their country of birth was higher than for men. This difference reached 10 percentage points in 2010/11 for the Maldives, the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Togo.

1. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision (POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2013)*

2. Preliminary results of the 2010/11 update of the Database on Immigrants in OECD and Non-OECD Countries (DIOC), conducted jointly by the OECD, the World Bank and the International Migration Institute of the University of Oxford. Data presented in this publication only cover selected (25/34) OECD destination countries. More information on metadata can be found [here](#). Detailed data will be released [here](#). The work of the OECD is supported by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

3. The data cover international migrants of all ages. Where possible, the migrant stock is defined as the population who was born abroad. If information on the place of birth was not available, the number of international migrants is based on the foreign population, that is, those having foreign citizenship.

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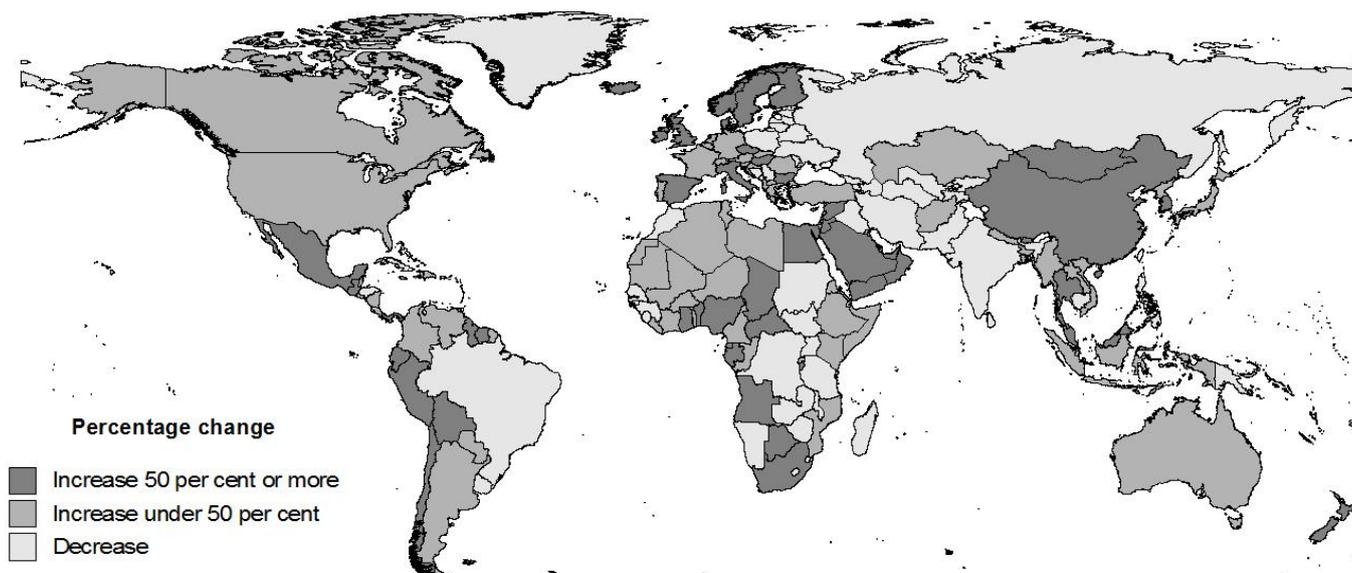
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Useful links:

www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/
www.oecd.org/migration/

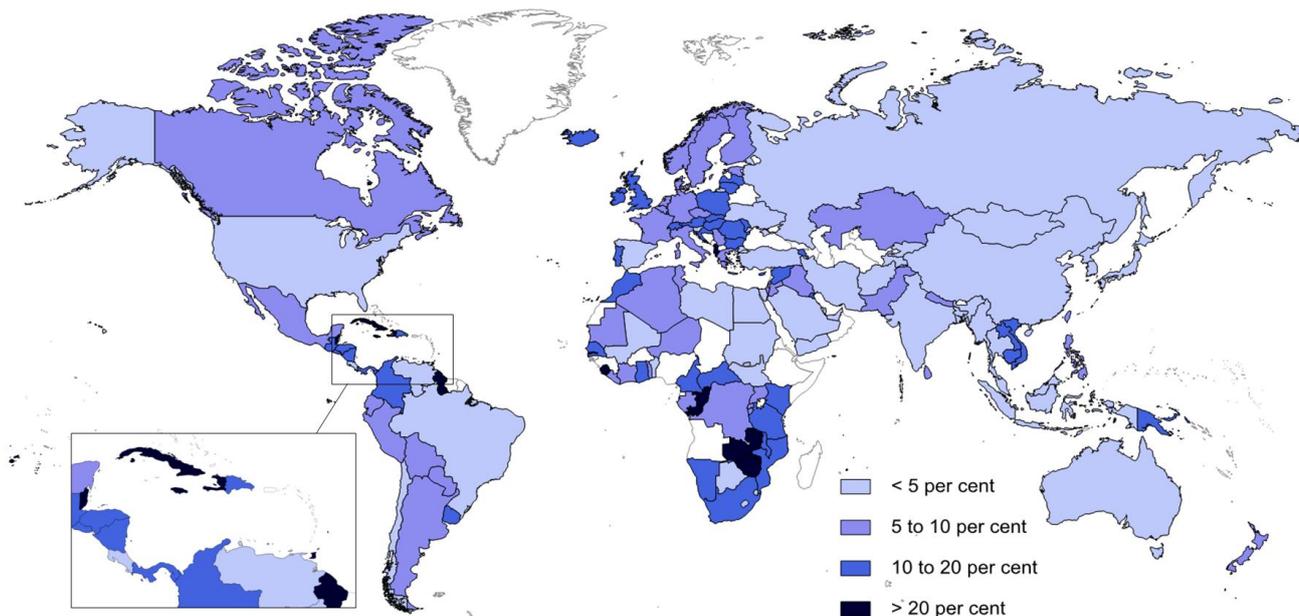
Annex 1

Map 1. Change in the international migrant stock, 2000-2013 (percentages)



Source: United Nations (2013), *Trends in International Migrant Stock: the 2013 Revision*.

Map 2. Emigration rates of the highly-skilled to the OECD, 2010/11 (percentages)



Source: DIOC 2010/11, www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm.

Notes: This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of territory, city or area. The boundaries on the maps included in this document do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Annex 2. Emigrant population 15+ in the OECD in 2010/11 by country and region of birth

Country and region of origin	Total population				Female population			
	Emigrant population (thousands)	Highly educated emigrant population	Emigration rate	Emigration rate of the highly educated	Emigrant population (thousands)	Highly educated emigrant population	Emigration rate	Emigration rate of the highly educated
AFRICA	10,490	2,856	2.4	10.8	5,017	1,260	1.8	8.8
Morocco	2,630	392	9.9	14.6	1,214	161	9.1	15.9
Algeria	1,504	306	5.5	9.2	734	140	5.4	8.0
South Africa	540	281	1.6	11.6	277	141	1.6	10.6
Tunisia	507	94	5.8	8.9	215	38	5.0	7.1
Egypt	395	193	0.7	3.2	149	71	0.5	2.7
Ghana	337	103	2.2	14.3	165	43	2.1	15.6
Kenya	255	108	1.1	12.8	136	52	1.2	17.3
Senegal	248	48	3.1	14.0	89	19	2.2	15.1
Zimbabwe	193	89	2.3	43.6	103	46	2.4	50.8
Congo, Democratic Rep. of	190	60	0.5	6.5	100	27	0.6	10.9
Cameroon	159	66	1.5	14.7	85	29	1.5	15.0
Côte d'Ivoire	140	39	1.2	5.2	71	17	1.2	7.2
Mauritius	132	42	11.7	41.0	69	18	12.0	38.5
Sudan	97	31	0.4	3.0	41	12	0.3	2.1
Uganda	95	45	0.6	7.6	49	21	0.6	8.1
ASIA	26,329	10,436	0.9	3.3	13,678	5,276	0.9	3.7
China	3,862	1,655	0.4	1.8	2,103	871	0.4	2.2
India	3,441	2,080	0.4	3.2	1,613	923	0.4	3.8
Philippines	2,854	1,417	4.5	7.4	1,764	904	5.5	8.9
Turkey	2,550	251	4.3	3.7	1,224	104	4.2	3.8
Viet Nam	1,879	524	2.8	10.3	989	250	2.9	10.8
Republic of Korea	1,453	637	3.4	3.5	833	343	3.9	4.6
Pakistan	1,088	378	1.0	5.5	468	143	0.8	5.6
Kazakhstan	935	134	7.4	6.0	500	78	7.5	7.4
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	845	424	1.5	4.0	384	185	1.4	3.8
Japan	660	371	0.6	0.9	416	227	0.7	1.1
Iraq	555	151	2.7	6.1	247	65	2.4	7.1
Sri Lanka	553	168	3.2	5.7	261	71	3.1	4.4
Bangladesh	528	179	0.5	3.2	220	63	0.4	3.1
Thailand	515	153	1.0	2.6	374	105	1.4	3.2
Afghanistan	347	71	1.8	4.8	155	31	1.6	11.4
EUROPE	32,759	9,270	5.0	5.3	17,465	4,957	4.9	5.0
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	3,505	1,384	6.5	10.8	1,765	652	6.4	8.6
Poland	3,195	884	8.9	15.5	1,761	520	9.4	14.5
Germany	3,162	1,168	4.2	8.4	1,761	608	4.6	10.1
Romania	2,643	483	12.7	18.4	1,442	272	13.3	19.5
Italy	2,309	401	4.4	7.9	1,076	173	4.0	6.5
Russian Federation	1,953	660	1.6	1.0	1,130	417	1.7	1.1
Portugal	1,492	147	14.2	12.9	733	76	13.5	11.2
France	1,291	573	2.5	5.3	694	301	2.6	5.2
Ukraine	1,136	433	2.9	2.8	703	271	3.2	2.9
Albania	977	82	28.7	26.7	465	43	27.2	27.5
Spain	738	212	1.9	2.3	401	112	2.0	2.3
Netherlands	728	284	5.0	8.3	358	120	4.9	7.5
Ireland	679	227	16.1	17.4	372	131	17.2	18.0
Greece	655	143	6.4	5.8	309	59	5.9	4.9
Serbia	562	61	6.1	6.1	290	28	6.2	5.7
NORTHERN AMERICA	2,406	1,164	0.9	0.8	1,273	608	0.9	0.8
United States of America	1,224	590	0.5	0.5	624	305	0.5	0.4
Canada	1,163	566	3.9	5.4	638	299	4.3	5.4
OCEANIA	1,314	422	4.4	4.8	664	221	4.1	5.2
New Zealand	538	164	13.9	8.8	262	87	13.3	9.3
Australia	317	157	1.8	2.6	167	81	1.9	2.8
Fiji	159	46	20.5	31.3	84	24	21.6	40.2
Tonga	46	6	40.9	44.1	23	3	40.0	45.5
Papua New Guinea	29	11	0.7	17.9	16	6	0.8	21.6
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	25,837	4,399	5.7	7.4	13,002	2,465	5.4	7.4
Mexico	11,249	867	12.1	6.0	5,169	450	10.9	6.6
El Salvador	1,228	125	19.5	19.6	599	67	18.6	20.6
Colombia	1,217	365	3.4	10.5	704	214	3.8	11.7
Cuba	1,205	345	11.4	20.2	626	182	11.7	18.7
Ecuador	1,140	160	10.3	8.3	598	92	10.7	9.4
Brazil	998	267	0.7	2.4	577	164	0.8	2.5
Dominican Republic	996	168	12.6	11.9	581	106	14.3	13.1
Jamaica	920	272	32.3	46.3	518	173	34.5	45.9
Peru	833	252	3.8	5.3	463	143	4.2	5.4
Guatemala	807	79	8.9	17.2	334	38	7.1	16.3
Haiti	665	157	10.2	73.9	360	80	10.7	66.9
Argentina	583	223	1.9	5.6	293	117	1.8	4.3
Honduras	523	62	9.3	13.8	252	34	9.0	14.0
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	419	200	2.0	4.0	232	114	2.2	3.8
Guyana	354	109	39.4	92.7	193	61	40.2	91.4

Source: DIOC 2010/11 <http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm>.