

MIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In most OECD countries, employment rates for immigrants are lower than for the native-born persons. However, the situation is more diverse if one disaggregates employment rates by educational attainment.

Definition

The employment rate is calculated as the share of employed persons aged 15-64 in the total population (active and inactive persons) in the same age range. In accordance with ILO definitions, employed persons are those who worked at least one hour or who had a job during the reference week. The educational classification shown is a regrouping of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) categories. Generally speaking, “low” corresponds to less than upper secondary education, “intermediate” to upper secondary education and “high” to tertiary education. The latter includes high-level vocational education feeding into technical or semi-professional occupations.

Comparability

All data for the European countries are from the European Union Labour Force Survey. The Current Population Survey (March supplement) and the 2006 Census are used respectively for the United States and Canada. Even if employment levels can at times be affected by changes in the survey design (this is the case for France since 2004) and by survey implementation problems (e.g. non-

response), the employment rates are generally consistent over time. However the comparability of education levels between immigrants and the native-born and across countries is approximate. The educational qualifications of other countries may not fit exactly into national educational categories because the duration of study or the programme content for ostensibly equivalent qualifications may not be the same. Likewise, the reduction of the ISCED classification into three categories may represent some loss of information regarding the duration of study, the programme orientation, etc. For example, high-education qualifications can involve programmes of durations varying from two (some short, university-level technical programmes) to seven years or more (PhDs).

Overview

Labour market outcomes of immigrants and natives vary significantly across OECD countries and differences by educational attainment are even larger. In all OECD countries, the employment rate increases with educational level. While people with tertiary education find work more easily and are less exposed to unemployment, access to tertiary education does not necessarily ensure that immigrants and native-born will enter the labour market in the same way. In all OECD countries, employment rates are higher for the native-born population than for the foreign-born. The gap is particularly high for Eastern and Northern Europe countries such as Poland, Germany, Sweden, Austria. This differences can be partly explained by difficulties immigrants face regarding language proficiency and recognition or acceptance of competences and diplomas acquired abroad.

The situation is more diverse for persons with low educational attainment. In the United States, Luxembourg and some of the southern European countries like Greece and Italy, foreign-born immigrants have much higher employment rates than their native-born counterparts; the reverse is true for the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Denmark and Sweden. This gap in favour of the foreign-born population in southern European countries may be explained by the strong demand for workers for low-skilled jobs that are no longer taken up by the smaller cohorts of young native-born workers.

Source

- OECD (2008), *International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2008*, OECD, Paris.

Further information

Analytical publications

- OECD (2008), *Jobs for Immigrants (Vol. 2): Labour Market Integration in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2007), *Jobs for Immigrants (Vol. 1): Labour Market Integration in Australia, Denmark, Germany and Sweden*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *A Profile of Immigrant Populations in the 21st Century: Data from OECD Countries*, OECD, Paris.

Websites

- OECD International Migration Statistics, www.oecd.org/els/migration/statistics.



Employment rates of native-born and foreign-born population by educational attainment

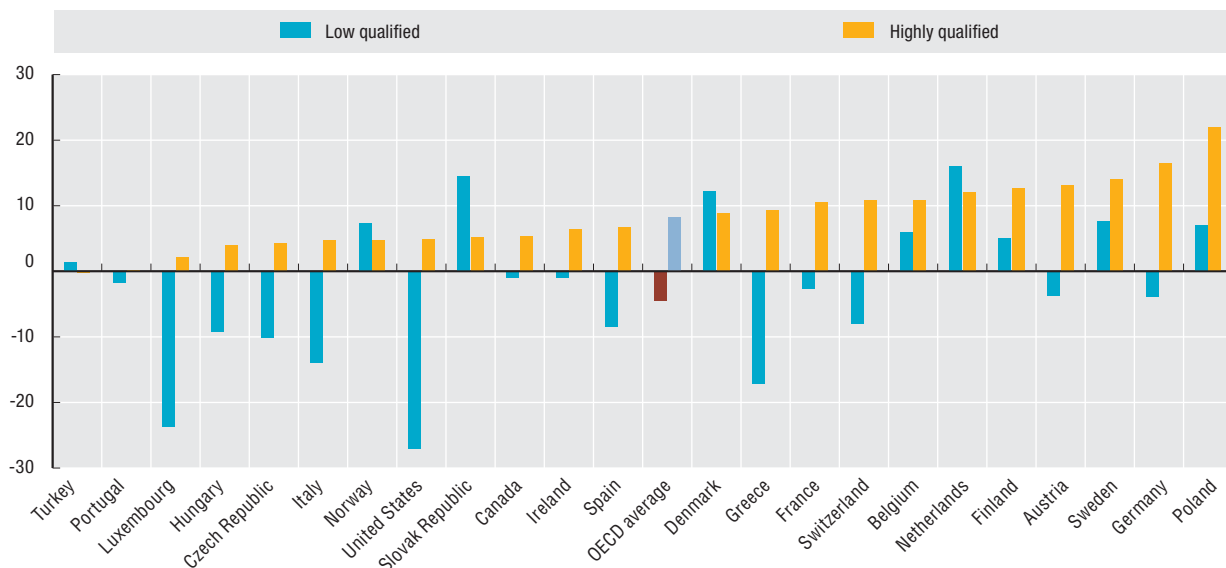
As a percentage of total population, 2006

	Native-born			Foreign-born		
	Low education	Intermediate education	High education	Low education	Intermediate education	High education
Austria	47.7	75.6	88.0	51.4	68.2	74.8
Belgium	41.1	66.6	83.7	35.2	53.3	72.9
Canada	50.6	75.5	82.7	51.6	68.9	77.4
Czech Republic	22.9	72.0	84.0	33.1	67.5	79.8
Denmark	61.5	81.0	87.8	49.3	63.2	78.9
Finland	47.4	73.6	85.6	42.4	65.8	72.9
France	46.5	69.8	79.3	49.1	60.6	68.8
Germany	43.0	72.4	87.8	47.0	64.3	71.3
Greece	48.6	61.4	82.7	65.8	65.6	73.3
Hungary	27.5	65.2	81.3	36.9	59.8	77.3
Ireland	48.9	73.7	86.8	49.9	72.7	80.2
Italy	45.1	67.6	78.6	59.0	70.2	73.9
Luxembourg	37.8	62.5	85.6	61.5	65.2	83.4
Netherlands	60.7	80.5	87.2	44.6	64.2	75.2
Norway	56.4	80.4	89.4	49.1	68.5	84.6
Poland	23.3	58.4	81.9	16.3	32.9	59.9
Portugal	65.9	63.5	84.5	67.5	71.3	84.4
Slovak Republic	14.5	67.5	83.9	..	58.4	78.7
Spain	55.3	65.9	81.9	63.8	73.6	75.3
Sweden	54.7	81.1	88.3	47.0	66.5	74.3
Switzerland	55.3	80.7	92.7	63.3	74.4	81.9
Turkey	41.8	50.2	72.7	40.4	56.8	73.0
United States	35.2	71.7	83.7	62.3	71.6	78.8
OECD average	44.9	70.3	84.4	49.4	64.5	76.1

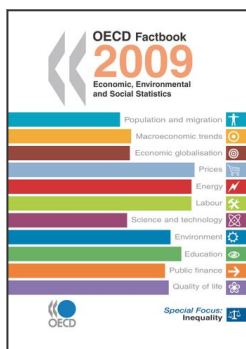
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/540612721044>

Gap in employment rate between native-born and foreign-born population by educational attainment

Percentage points, 2006



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/534528687433>



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