

## MIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT

In most OECD countries, employment rates for immigrants are lower than for 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) of the same age. In accordance with ILO definitions, employed persons are those who worked at least one hour or who had a job but were absent from work during the reference week. The educational classification shown is based on 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. Tertiary education includes high-level vocational education feeding into technical or semi-professional occupations.

### Comparability

Data for European countries are from the *European Union Labour Force Survey*. Data for the United States and Canada are from the *Current Population Survey* (March supplement) and the 2006 Census, respectively. Even if employment levels can at times be affected by changes in survey design (this occurred in France in 2004) and by survey

implementation problems (e.g. non-response), data on employment rates are generally consistent over time. However, comparability of education levels between immigrants and the native-born population and across countries is only 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 what appear to be equivalent qualifications may not be the same. Likewise, the reduction of the ISCED classification into three categories may result in some loss of information regarding the duration of study, the programme orientation, etc. For example, high educational qualifications can include programmes of durations varying from two years (in the case of short, university-level technical programmes) to seven years or more (in the case of 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 guarantee equal employment rates for immigrants and native-born persons. In all OECD countries, employment rates are higher for native-born persons with high educational qualification than for foreign-born persons with the same qualification. The gap is particularly high for countries such as Poland, Germany and Austria. This difference can be partly explained by language proficiency problems and difficulties with the 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 southern European countries such as Greece and Italy, foreign-born immigrants with low educational qualifications have much higher employment rates than their native-born counterparts. The reverse is true for the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. This higher employment rate of the foreign-born population with low educational attainment in southern European countries may reflect the strong demand in these countries for low-skilled jobs that are no longer taken up by the smaller cohorts of young native-born workers.

### Sources

- OECD (2009), *International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2009*, OECD, Paris.

### Further information

#### Analytical publications

- 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.
- OECD (2008), *Jobs for Immigrants Vol. 2: Labour Market Integration in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal*, OECD, Paris.

#### Web sites

- OECD International Migration Statistics, [www.oecd.org/els/migration/statistics](http://www.oecd.org/els/migration/statistics).



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

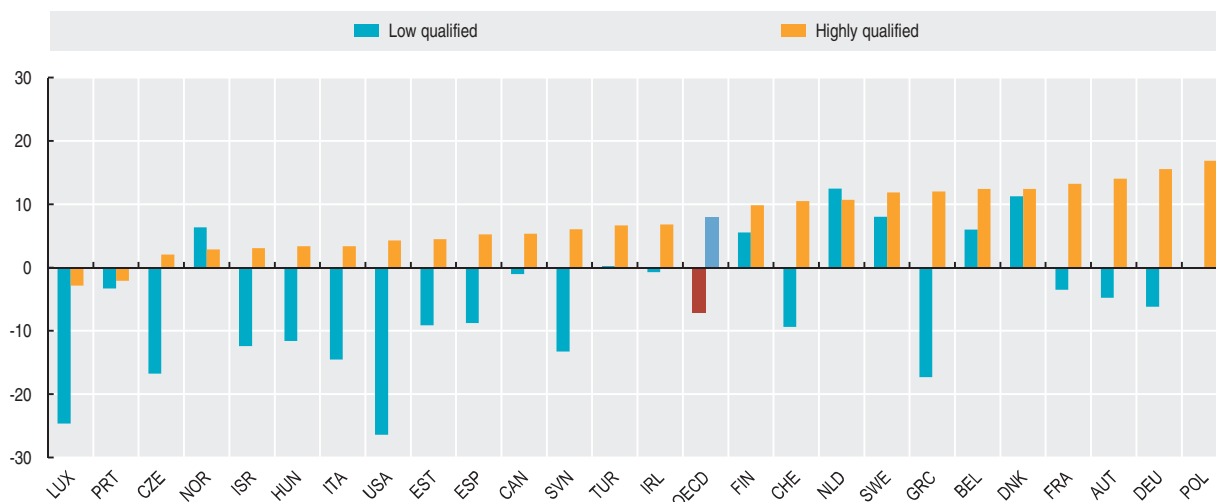
As a percentage of total population, 2007

	Native-born				Foreign-born			
	Low education	Intermediate education	High education	Total	Low education	Intermediate education	High education	Total
Austria	49.8	76.6	89.2	72.8	54.6	69.7	75.1	65.0
Belgium	41.4	66.9	85.0	63.5	35.4	55.8	72.6	50.9
Canada	50.6	75.5	82.7	73.0	51.6	68.9	77.4	70.5
Czech Republic	23.7	72.6	84.1	66.1	40.5	72.4	82.0	67.3
Denmark	65.0	82.6	88.6	78.8	53.7	69.1	76.2	62.5
Finland	46.4	74.2	85.5	70.5	40.9	72.8	75.6	63.5
France	46.6	69.8	81.3	65.3	50.1	64.3	68.0	58.5
Germany	43.2	74.2	87.9	70.9	49.4	67.7	72.3	61.0
Greece	48.7	61.7	82.6	60.9	66.0	65.8	70.6	66.6
Hungary	27.2	64.7	80.1	57.2	38.8	67.3	76.7	64.5
Ireland	48.9	73.7	87.4	68.2	49.6	75.9	80.6	72.9
Italy	45.1	67.5	77.9	58.0	59.7	71.0	74.5	65.9
Luxembourg	39.3	61.6	81.8	59.2	64.0	66.2	84.7	71.1
Netherlands	61.8	81.1	88.0	77.0	49.3	65.8	77.3	62.4
Norway	57.8	81.7	89.6	77.2	51.5	72.6	86.7	69.9
Poland	24.9	61.1	82.9	57.1	68.8	29.3	66.0	36.8
Portugal	65.5	63.9	83.9	67.3	..	71.8	86.0	73.1
Slovak Republic	14.6	69.0	83.0	60.7	..	69.8	..	66.0
Spain	55.1	66.6	83.4	64.5	63.9	74.3	78.1	70.3
Sweden	54.9	82.5	89.5	76.2	46.9	68.4	77.6	63.1
Switzerland	55.4	81.3	92.6	80.4	64.8	75.0	82.1	73.7
Turkey	41.5	50.0	72.9	45.8	41.3	55.8	66.3	48.7
United States	35.1	71.6	84.2	69.8	61.5	72.2	79.9	71.2
OECD average	45.3	70.9	84.5	67.0	52.5	67.0	76.7	64.2
Estonia	32.7	74.6	87.6	68.6	41.8	73.6	83.1	74.5
Israel	27.6	56.0	83.0	56.3	40.0	63.3	79.9	66.7
Slovenia	41.6	70.7	87.8	67.8	54.8	72.7	81.8	68.0

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/823685188133>

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

Percentage points, 2007 or latest available year



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/817830358176>



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