

# Executive summary

This publication presents the largest data collection on characteristics and outcomes of immigrants and their children, covering all EU and OECD countries, across 83 indicators covering labour market, education, living conditions, and social integration. These countries are home to a large and increasing number of immigrants, 54 and 141 million foreign-born, respectively, an increase of 20% each over the past decade.

Immigrant populations differ largely across countries in their sizes and lengths of residence, but also their average ages, education levels, languages, concentrations in densely populated areas and predominant entry categories. These differences largely shape integration outcomes.

In most countries and most indicators, immigrants – especially those born outside the EU – and their children lag behind the native-born and their peers with native-born parents. However, there has been substantial progress over the last decade especially in labour market integration of immigrants, despite the disproportionate decline at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis followed by a quick recovery to pre-2020 levels. This improvement is attributable to a mix of factors such as better integration policies, more favourable labour market conditions than a decade ago, and higher educational levels of recent arrivals. In 2020, 39% of immigrants arrived in the five preceding years in the EU were tertiary-educated and 50% in the OECD, compared with 25% and 35%, respectively, ten years earlier. There was also some improvement in the host-country language mastery of recent arrivals in Europe and the United States, where this trend was particularly strong. This is also an area where the improvement of integration outcomes of immigrants along with duration of residence is highly visible, with 70% of immigrants in the EU with ten years of residence or more having at least an advanced proficiency in the host-country language, compared with 40% of recent arrivals (United States: 74% vs. 63%).

While these results are encouraging, immigrants have generally not, however, caught up with the native-born. More than one-third of all foreign-born in the EU have not attained levels beyond primary education, almost twice the proportion among the native-born. What is more, immigrants struggle to find employment where they fully use their skills. Compared to their native-born peers, immigrants with educational tertiary degrees are less likely to work peers in all countries and are more likely to be overqualified for their jobs almost everywhere. However, host-country degrees reduce overqualification differences with the native-born by 75% EU-wide, and by even more in countries outside the EU.

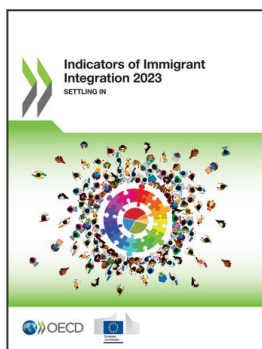
About one in four young people under the age of 35 is either foreign-born or has foreign-born parents. The outcomes of the native-born children of immigrants aged 15 to 34 follow similar trends as those of foreign-born adults. They also reflect inter-generational improvement, notably lower gaps in educational attainment levels compared to their peers with native-born parents than their parents have vis-à-vis their peers. Youth with immigrant parents are catching up in the labour market, and despite the COVID-19 crisis, their employment rates are now generally higher and unemployment rates lower than a decade earlier. Children of immigrants have also improved their PISA reading scores in both the OECD and the EU, while those of their peers with native-born parents have stayed relatively stable, thereby closing part of the gap, which is nevertheless still high in most countries in Latin America and Europe. What is more, participation of children of immigrants in pre-school has risen virtually everywhere, narrowing, or even closing the attendance gap with children of native-born in many countries.

There was also improvement in other areas. Native-born views on migration have become more favourable in most countries over the last decade. However, there has not been significant improvement in living conditions, which remain an area of concern. Fewer foreign- than native-born own their homes and a disproportionately large share lives in substandard conditions. For example, more than one in six immigrants live in overcrowded accommodation in both the OECD and the EU – a rate that is 70% higher than that of the native-born, and the differences have widened over the past decade in EU countries. In four out of five countries, immigrants are also more likely to live below the relative poverty line of their country of residence than the native-born. Income inequality is larger among foreign- than native-born.

In both the EU and the OECD, about 15% of the foreign-born population is over 64 years of age, a smaller share than among the native-born. Nevertheless, elderly migrants are a growing group in most countries, both in absolute terms and as a share of the total immigrant population. Elderly migrants are more likely to live in (relative) poverty than their native-born peers in most countries, and this incidence has increased over the last decade. Poorer living conditions also remain a key challenge for young children with foreign-born parents. In most countries, the poverty rate of children living in immigrant households is at least 50% higher than that of their peers in native-born households.

Immigrants' social integration is a growing concern, but difficult to assess. Immigrants have lower participation in voluntary organisations than the native-born in most countries and are more likely than the native-born to trust the police and legal system in two-thirds of the countries. The perception of discrimination is a key indicator of social cohesion. It has increased over the last decade in the EU, New Zealand and Canada, particularly among women. Moreover, native-born with foreign-born parents are more likely than foreign-born adults to feel discriminated against based on ethnicity in most countries.

In EU countries, public perception about migrants and their contribution in society is often at odds with available evidence. For example, while there was an increase in the share of highly educated among non-EU migrants, this was not perceived as such in most countries. Likewise, in most longstanding immigration destinations in Europe, while the public suggested that the educational outcomes of children of immigrants were declining, these have strongly improved over the last decade.



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