

Foreword

In the OECD area, there were about 82 million migrants at the turn of the millennium, and immigration flows have remained high since then. Worldwide, there are about 191 million migrants and displaced persons and some 30-40 million unauthorised migrants. These figures have been steadily growing along with the number of host countries and countries of origin. Between 1990 and 2000, a net average total of some 2.5 million migrants moved from the less developed to the developed regions of the world every year. The largest inflows were in Northern America with an average of 1.4 million migrants annually, followed by Europe, which absorbed around 0.8 million each year.

It is hard, if not impossible to forecast the scale and direction of future migration, but the indications are that flows from the developing world to OECD countries will increase, or at least remain constant, in the coming decades. They will be influenced to a large extent by structural changes – technological, demographic, economic, environmental, political, labour-market-related, etc. – but also by shifts in developed countries' policy stance. Indeed, OECD migration policies will be faced with a double challenge: on the one hand, to exert some form of control over the flows with a view to facilitating the economic and social absorption of new arrivals, and on the other to reap and enhance the benefits that international migration can bring for the economy and society, especially in the light of ageing populations. In attempting to get to grips with this complex future, decision makers will need to be better informed about the factors likely to “push” emigration from developing countries, *e.g.* poverty, lack of employment prospects, environmental disasters, and civil strife. Equally, however, they will require a better understanding of the likely evolution of factors “pulling” migrants to OECD countries, such as higher living standards, education and employment opportunities, ageing populations, potentially significant skill shortages.

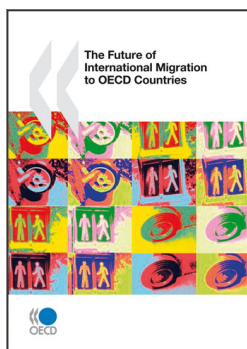
Surprisingly little in-depth research has been carried out to date to help decision makers in government, business and society at large better understand the complexities and wider consequences of future migration flows. At the end of 2007 the OECD's International Futures Programme (IFP), which reports directly to the OECD Secretary-General, and is charged with

identifying and developing emerging policy issues and strengthening cross-Directorate work in the Organisation, embarked on a 15-month project on the future of international migration through to 2030. The project was advised and financially supported by a steering group consisting of: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada; Ministère de l'Immigration, de l'Intégration, de l'Identité nationale et du Développement Solidaire, France; Office fédéral des migrations, and Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie (SECO), Switzerland; Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, Province of Quebec, Canada; the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB); the Russell Sage Foundation, United States; the Rockefeller Foundation, United States; and Manpower Inc., United Kingdom. Additional expert advice was sought from representatives of other international organizations, multinational enterprises and research institutions, and also government experts drawn from the fields of immigration, education, labour, foreign affairs, and local community affairs. These were brought together for a final experts' workshop which took place at OECD Headquarters in December 2008.

The aim of the IFP project was threefold: to explore the main factors determining the global migration landscape over the next 20-25 years, to discuss different scenarios to 2030 to help assess how migration flows might evolve in the coming years, and to work through some of the more important economic and social implications. In this way it was hoped to stimulate reflection among policy makers and businesses about the possible future context and consequences of international migration – a “big picture” perspective – and to assist them in their long-term strategic thinking on these issues. The IFP secretariat's intention was to establish where the gaps are in the assessment of future developments and identify where more work needs to be done in the field of international migration.

This publication presents a digest of the outcome of the work that the IFP secretariat undertook over the last 15 months. The work includes a broad overview of push and pull factors determining future migration flows; insights into likely developments in various non-OECD regions; and five different future scenarios developed in conjunction with foresight experts. A large number of pertinent tables and graphs are included.

The project was designed and directed by Barrie Stevens and Pierre-Alain Schieb. Anna di Mattia co-ordinated the project and also prepared and contributed to this publication. Research assistance was given by Ioana Valeanu. Rossella Iannizzotto and Anita Gibson provided secretarial and logistical support. Specialised departments in OECD, notably the Non-member Economies and International Migration Division of the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS), the Education Department (EDU), and Club de Sahal (SAH) cooperated on this project. A complete list of steering group members can be found in Annex A.



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