

## Sweden

Foreign-born population – 2019	
Size: 2 million, 50% women	<i>Main countries of birth:</i>
19% of the population	Syria (10%), Finland (8%),
Evolution since 2007: +53%	Iraq (7%)

In 2018, Sweden received 124 000 new immigrants on a long-term or permanent basis (including changes of status and free mobility), -6.9% compared to 2017. This figure comprises 24.4% immigrants benefitting from free mobility, 13.4% labour migrants, 41.9% family members (including accompanying family) and 20.3% humanitarian migrants. Around 14 000 permits were issued to tertiary-level international students and 9 100 to temporary and seasonal labour migrants (excluding intra-EU migration). In addition, 54 000 intra-EU postings were recorded in 2018, an increase of 22.4% compared to 2017. These posted workers are generally on short-term contracts.

Syria, Afghanistan and India were the top three nationalities of newcomers in 2018. Among the top 15 countries of origin, India registered the strongest increase (1 600) and Syria the largest decrease (-7 000) in flows to Sweden compared to the previous year.

In 2019, the number of first asylum applicants increased by 27.8%, to reach around 23 000. The majority of applicants came from Syria (5 000), Eritrea (1 200) and Iran (1 000). The largest increase since 2018 concerned nationals of Syria (+2 400) and the largest decrease nationals of Georgia (-100). Of the 21 000 decisions taken in 2019, 29.2% were positive.

The temporary law passed in July 2016 which, amongst other things, restrict the possibility to obtain residence permits, has been prolonged and applies until June 2021. Under this act, refugees and persons eligible for subsidiary protection are granted a temporary residence permit and opportunities for family reunification remain more limited than under the ordinary Alien's act. In addition, internal border controls have been prolonged.

An amendment to restrict daily allowances for asylum seekers choosing to live in areas with socio-economic challenges entered into force in January 2020. The Swedish Migration Agency started to list those areas in July 2020. The government has proposed to introduce a new ground for entry and stay for highly qualified persons who want to come to Sweden to look for a job or start a business. This proposal, which is the object of an ongoing inquiry, is a deviation from the general system for labour immigration, which makes no distinction between high-skilled and other labour migrants.

The government has allocated new funding for Swedish language training for immigrant parents who are away from the labour market taking care of children. The

government agreement includes a proposal to set up an Intensive Introduction Year for newly arrived immigrants. In addition, the government decided that the acquisition of Swedish citizenship will be conditional on passing a Swedish language test, as well as a test on basic knowledge of Swedish society. Civic orientation courses are organised by the municipalities and now have a minimum duration of 100 hours, instead of 60 hours previously.

New rules on residence permits for research and higher education studies, as well as for trainees and au pairs, now apply following the transposition of an EU Directive. Residence permits should be granted to students for at least one year, or for the time of conducting studies (renewable, with possibility of extending their stay to look for a job or set up a business).

Due to the pandemic, the Swedish Government decided in mid-March to stop temporarily non-essential travel to Sweden from countries outside the EEA and Switzerland. Exemptions from the entry ban include Swedish citizens, foreigners with a residence permit returning to their homes and certain health care professionals and seasonal workers. Due to the entry ban, the Migration Agency decided that visa applications should, as a rule, be rejected. The Migration Agency also suspended resettlement of refugees during the spring. Oral interviews for asylum or residence permits were stopped from 30 March until 14 April. After that, interviews have in some cases been reinstated, but with precautions.

The government has presented a range of measures to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic, affecting immigrants. Labour market measures include temporary reinforcement of the unemployment insurance, increased funds for the Public employment service and for active labour market policy measures as well as funds for summer jobs for youth. The duration of a subsidised job will be extended by an additional year for those who already have such jobs.

For further information:

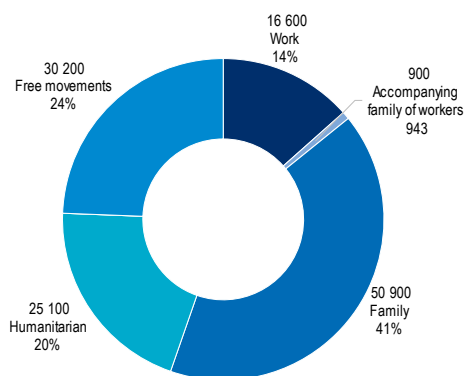
<https://www.migrationsverket.se>

<https://www.scb.se/en/>

<https://sweden.se/migration/>

## Key figures on immigration and emigration – Sweden

**Long-term immigration flows**  
2018 (Source: OECD)



**Temporary migration**  
(Source: OECD)

**Temporary labour migration (non-EU citizens)**

	2018	2018/17
Working holidaymakers	1 210	+ 87%
Seasonal workers	4 990	+ 62%
Intra-company transfers	..	..
Other temporary workers	2 560	+ 13%

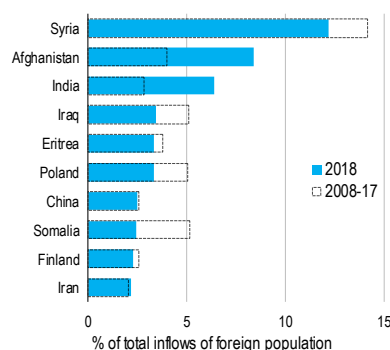
**Education (non-EU citizens)**

	2018	2018/17
International students	13 920	+ 4%
Trainees	390	+ 13%

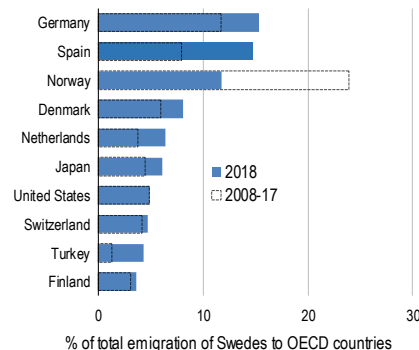
**Humanitarian**

	2019	2019/18
Asylum seekers	23 150	+ 28%

**Inflows of top 10 nationalities**  
(national definition)



**Emigration of Swedes to OECD countries**  
(national definition)



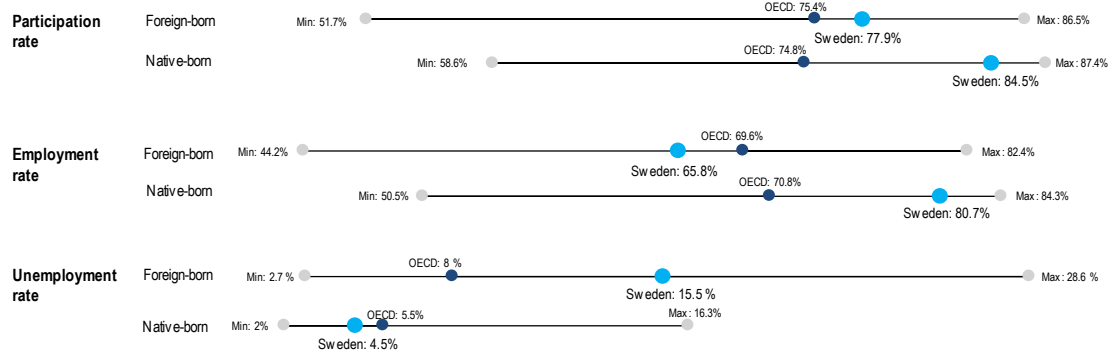
**Components of population growth**

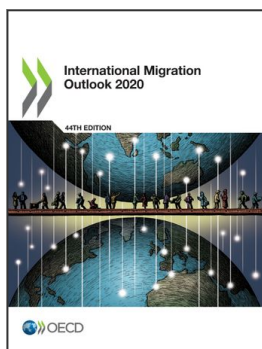
	2019 Per 1 000 inhabitants	2019/18 difference
Total	9.5	-1.3
Natural increase	2.5	+0.2
Net migration plus statistical adjustments	7.0	-1.5

**Annual remittances**

	Million USD	Annual change %	Share in GDP %
Inflows (2019)	3 259	+3.6	0.6
Outflows (2018)	2 023	-1.6	0.4

**Labour market outcomes**  
2019





**From:**  
**International Migration Outlook 2020**

**Access the complete publication at:**

<https://doi.org/10.1787/ec98f531-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2020), "Sweden", in *International Migration Outlook 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/3eb065d2-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and 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 any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.