

**European Population Papers Series No. 16**

**International Labour Migration:  
Migrants in the labour force**

**Philippe Wanner**  
Switzerland



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## II. Migrants in the labour force

*Philippe Wanner*

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## II. Migrants in the labour force

*Philippe Wanner*

### Executive summary

The growth and diversification of migratory flows towards Europe are bringing new challenges for European societies, especially their economies. These challenges relate in particular to the integration of migrants into the labour market. This report looks at the main trends in working population migration in European countries, based on analysis of the numbers of foreign workers employed in the various national economies. Although the general trend over the last 25 years has been an increase in the number of economically active foreigners, some countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland saw a reduction in the number of migrants in employment between 1994 and 2002, which can be put down to naturalisations, retirement of older migrant workers, reductions in immigration flows, increased unemployment and a change in migration patterns with an increasing trend towards non-economic migration. In spite of the barriers to employment that may exist, foreign populations are relatively well integrated in the labour market in quantitative terms, and activity rates for foreign males exceed those for nationals in many countries. In contrast, except in southern Europe, employment rates for foreign women are lower than those for nationals, probably because of the retention of customs from their countries of origin concerning the apportionment of responsibilities between spouses, but also because of the difficulties the wives of first-generation immigrants encounter in finding attractive employment. As far as levels of training are concerned, it is interesting to note the under-qualification of migrant populations in European countries, except perhaps in southern Europe, which still applies in spite of the recent rise in migration by highly qualified workers. This factor probably helps to explain the major differentials in unemployment rates among immigrant groups broken down by country of origin, with the likelihood of unemployment being five times higher or more among non-EU foreigners. Two reasons can be put forward here: firstly, labour market integration measures and antidiscrimination policies that are often inadequate or ineffective and, secondly, the concentration of foreign workers in specific sectors of the economy where opportunities for promotion are limited and security of employment is sometimes lacking. These various findings suggest a need for economic and integration policies to take greater account of the situation of foreigners on European labour markets.

### 1. Introduction

Over the last forty years, migratory flows to Europe have become substantial. The aggregate migratory balance of the Council of Europe member states increased tenfold between the 1960s and the 1990s, which means that there was a sharp increase in immigration from the rest of the world. Within Europe itself, migration between states has also increased very rapidly. Today, immigration in Europe is running at a level similar to that of the United States and issues connected with foreign labour and its integration are assuming increasing importance.

All the states of the European Community are now characterised by net positive migration. In other words, whereas they were for a long time countries of emigration and sources of labour for western Europe, the southern European countries are becoming countries of immigration. The migratory pattern is varied among non-EU member States, among the Council of Europe member states, only Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Ukraine and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” had a negative migratory balance in 2001 (Council of Europe, 2002). At the same time, the proportion of population accounted for by foreign nationals has increased in virtually every European country, reaching 36% in Luxembourg (as against 18% in 1987), 20% in Switzerland (17.4% in 1971) and more than 9% in Germany and Austria (3.9% and 2.6% respectively in 1971 – Council of Europe, 2002). Immigration could continue in these countries, in particular following the forthcoming EU enlargement.

Migrant and foreign populations have different reasons for migrating, different residence conditions and different life situations. There is no longer just one model of migration, as was the case forty years ago, but situations which vary considerably from one country to another (Zlotnik, 1998). In particular, in the host country there can be seen to be a diversification of the origins of the migrant communities, the preponderant factors shaping migratory flows between countries being historical links between and geographical proximity. The reasons for migration are also becoming more disparate, since today, as compared with 30 years ago, migration is less directly associated with work. However, whilst the main reason for migration is changing and changes the distribution, it is nonetheless true that a major proportion of foreign migrants<sup>1</sup> end up on the labour market in the medium term. Moreover, migrants' work situations vary greatly, owing to the increasing diversity of occupational qualifications. As a result, migrants are exposed in different ways to occupational risks, unemployment and precarious economic situations. Whilst some groups are in a good situation others find themselves in very precarious situations. These differences involve different sets of problems in terms of the integration of foreign populations and raise a number of questions relating to migrants' situation on the labour market.

In Europe, where it is expected that the available workforce will decrease (United Nations, 2002) and that budgetary issues connected with an ageing population will increase (Coppel et al., 2001), migration is also assuming preponderant importance in the debate on the economic consequences of demographic change. Central to that debate is the question of the necessity of migration to offset ageing (United Nations, 2000; OECD 1991), counter the decline in the labour force (Feld, 2000; Punch and Pearce, 2000) and keep occupational and social insurance schemes functioning (OECD, 1997). Whereas since the 1970s the main countries of immigration have developed migration policies designed to reduce the flow of economically active migrants or to select particular groups with specific skills or origins, future demographic developments could noticeably alter the situation. For these reasons, the importance of research on migrants in the labour market is clear.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper the masculine form is used as a generic term. All the aspects explored in this text refer to male and female migrants and foreigners.

These points will be expanded upon in this report around four themes: the first section describes the methodology, the second deals with the size of the economically active migrant population in Europe. The third section deals with the socio-economic situation of foreigners and their integration into the employment market. The fourth section sets out different factors for assessing the impact of migrants on the labour market, whilst the last section examines how migrant integration might be promoted.

## 2. Data and concepts

Whereas the size of the population of foreign nationality is relatively well known in Europe because of population registers and censuses, that is not true of the work force of foreign origin. This is because existing statistical tools do not reveal the sometimes frequent transitions between gainful activity and non-activity, with the result that it is sometimes difficult to estimate – in the case of the foreign and indigenous populations alike – what the proportion of active and non-active persons is. The active population is mobile and likely to change country rapidly in response to the economic context. The available statistics differ sometimes significantly depending on their source – censuses, labour-force surveys, registers of inhabitants or foreigners, administrative data on permits granted, etc.

In this study we have largely reproduced information derived from labour-force surveys, which, in most countries, constitute the only information currently available. It should be noted, however, that those surveys are not always suitable for recording foreign populations' activity patterns, owing in particular to the limits on sample size.

It should be noted, however, that those surveys are not always suitable for recording foreign population's activity patterns, owing in particular to the limits on sample size, and this causes a certain amount of frustration during analysis. This is particularly the case in countries where the proportion of foreigners is so small that there are not enough of them in the survey samples to permit detailed analysis. Again, the people questioned in labour-force surveys are not always representative of the foreign population, since they are selected from speakers of the host country's language. Less integrated populations do not find their way into these surveys.

One reason for failure to understand the role of immigration on the labour market is the lack of accurate measurement tools for use when comparing countries with different statistical systems. Unfortunately we are unable to include data from the most recent census round (the early 2000s); these were not yet complete or had not been published when this report was drafted. In the future this data will help improve knowledge about migrants in the work force in Europe.

In the absence of systematic information on migrants' status, nationality constitutes the most relevant variable for quantifying labour originating from foreign countries. It is used in this analysis as an indicator of migrant status, in which the behaviour and characteristics of foreigners – classed according to their nationality – are compared with those of nationals. However, the distinction between nationals and foreigners hides big differences depending on the country of origin and these have not been addressed in this study. However, where possible, distinction between foreigners of the European community and the rest of the world have been made.

Nationality, as an indicator of origin, depends, however, both on the requirements for obtaining the nationality of the host country (level of naturalisation) and on the numbers of second-generation migrants, who may be on the labour market as foreigners without having migrated during their lifetime. Naturalisation procedures in different countries may distort the picture of migrants' impact on the labour market when only data on nationality are available. These procedures vary widely from country to country, with annual naturalisation rates approaching 9 per 100 foreigners in the Netherlands for example, as opposed to less than 1 per 100 in Luxembourg. In some countries, including France, the Netherlands and Sweden, the size of the population with foreign nationality only provides an approximate indication of the migrant population (Table 1)

**Table 1. – Proportion of foreigners and persons born abroad around 2000**

Country	Proportion of foreigners	Proportion of persons born abroad
Switzerland	20.9	25.1
Austria	9.4	9.4
Belgium	8.4	8.6
Germany	8.9	9.0
France	5.5	10.6
Luxembourg	37.3	37.2
Netherlands	4.1	9.9
Sweden	5.4	11.2

Source: Council of Europe 2002 and other years; OECD, 2001a; United Nations 2002 for the proportions of migrants (figures are estimates).

### 3. Foreign population in the employment market

#### 3.1. Current situation

In Europe, more than 20 million people (around 3% of the population) live in a country other than the one whose nationality they have. Most of these foreigners live in western Europe. In order to have a more accurate picture of the impact of migrants on the population (cf. also Haug et al. 2003), that figure can be increased by the approximately 3.3 million migrants of foreign origin who were naturalised between 1985 and 1996 (Salt, 2002) and by several hundreds of thousands of unregistered irregular migrants. This makes a total of at least 25 million people of foreign origin living and sometimes working in European countries. Available estimates suggest that there are about 7.9 million foreign workers (Salt, 2001). But that figure does not include undeclared workers, of whose numbers it is hard to make a reliable estimate.

The numbers and proportion of foreigners differ quite substantially from country to country. Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Switzerland have a migrant population exceeding one million (Table 2). Leaving aside small countries (Andorra and Liechtenstein), Luxembourg (36%) and Switzerland (20%) have the highest percentages of foreigners.



Germany (3,5 million), France (1,6 million), Italy (750 000), Switzerland (700 000), Belgium (380 000) and Austria (370 000) in that order, have the largest economically active foreign populations. At the other end of the scale, countries like Finland or Hungary had less than 50 000 foreign population at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In relative terms, the proportion of foreign labour is highest in Luxembourg (1 in 2 active people), followed by Switzerland and then by Austria, Belgium and Germany. The lowest proportions of foreign labour are to be seen in the eastern European countries, southern Europe – in Spain one active person out of every 100 is a foreign national – and in Finland where only 1.2% of the active population consists of foreign nationals.

The figures shown in table 2 should be treated with considerable caution in a context where increasing numbers of foreign workers do not need a work permit, legislation on the registration of active foreigners varies widely, and statistical data differ greatly from one country to another. The figures vary according to source (censuses, population registers, etc.)<sup>2</sup>. To aid comparison with other reports, we have reproduced and completed here the data published in OECD's SOPEMI reports, but draw the reader's attention to the fact that these figures are open to debate.

**Table 2. - Numbers of economically active foreigners and proportion of foreign labour, by country**

	Foreign population				Active Foreign population			
	Numbers		In % of the total population		Numbers		In % of the total active population	
	1994	2002	1994	2002	1994	2002	1994	2002
Austria <sup>1</sup>	714	761	8.9	9.4	368	390	9.6	10.1
Belgium <sup>1</sup>	920	862	9.1	8.4	335	382	8.1	8.7
Czech Rep. <sup>1</sup>	104	201	...	2.1	91	169	1.7	3.2
Denmark	189	267	3.6	5.0	48	72	1.7	2.5
Finland	62	99	1.2	1.9	18	41	0.7	1.6
France	3597	...	...	5.6	1590	1592	6.4	6.1
Germany	6691	7319	...	8.9	3543	3460	9.0	8.7
Greece	145	...	1.4	...	66	171	1.6	3.8
Hungary	138	116	1.3	1.1	20	28	0.5	0.7
Ireland	91	182	2.5	4.7	41	64	2.9	3.7
Italy	684	1271	1.2	2.2	307	748	1.5	3.6
Luxembourg <sup>1</sup>	128	162	31.8	36.9	106	146	51.0	57.3
Netherlands <sup>1</sup>	780	668	5.1	4.2	290	268	4.0	3.4
Norway	162	186	3.8	4.1	59	82	2.7	4.1
Portugal <sup>2</sup>	157	191	1.6	1.9	78	92	1.6	1.8
Spain <sup>1</sup>	461	896	1.2	2.2	122	327	0.8	1.8
Sweden	537	476	6.1	5.3	186	181	4.1	4.1
Swiss	1332	1458	19.0	20.1	740	701	18.9	18.1
United Kingdom <sup>2</sup>	2037	2503	3.5	4.2	1030	1240	3.6	4.2

<sup>1</sup>. 2001 <sup>2</sup> 2000. For the active population : Ireland, United Kingdom : Labour Force Survey 2000; Finland, Czech Rep., Norway : Labour Force Survey 2001 ;

<sup>2</sup> Switzerland may serve as an example: whereas the central register of aliens shows 701,000 persons of foreign nationality in active employment in 1999, the Swiss survey of the active population for the same year estimates the number of such persons at 956,000 (OFS, 2002).

The data include apprentices, vocational trainees and seasonal workers, but exclude the unemployed.

Note that the number of active persons of foreign nationality decreased between 1994 and 1999 in Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Sweden (the total foreign population declined in that period in the last two countries). This development is due to the large number of naturalisations, the gradual return to countries of origin of some of those who migrated with the "traditional" flows from southern Europe, the retirement of a number of older migrants, increased unemployment owing to economic downturn and, in the case of candidates for immigration, fewer opportunities for migration as a result of the short-term economic difficulties in the 1990s. In contrast, the number of active foreigners has increased in Italy, Spain and Greece – countries which for a long time were providers of manpower to western Europe – and also in the Czech Republic and to a lesser extent in Hungary.

### **3.2. Trends in foreign labour since 1945: economic and political context**

The foreign population and the foreign workforce have increased in Europe since the end of the Second World War and did so even more markedly in the 1960s (King, 1996). As a result, the number of foreigners increased eightfold in Germany between 1955 and 1974 and more than threefold in Switzerland between 1950 and 1974. Numbers more than doubled in France and Belgium over the same period. Until the early 1970s, a large proportion of migrant populations was made up of permanent or temporary workers, responding to the booming economy's increasing demand for labour. The number of foreign workers in the EEC (Europe of six member states: Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands) from Austria, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden was 7.5 million in 1973 (International Labour Organization, 1973, cited by Salt and Clark, 2002). As a result, worker migration, after the Second World War, was almost unprecedented in the history of Europe (Tapinos, 1994).

Around 1975 the situation regarding migrants on the European labour market changed rapidly following the petrol crisis and showed a contrasted picture. In some countries where migratory policy was based essentially on the "guest worker" there was a marked falling off in foreigners' numbers, with workers returning frequently to their countries if they lost their jobs. That was seen in Switzerland, where the size of the foreign population decreased from 1.08 million in 1971 to 914,000 in 1981, Sweden, Norway and, later, Germany (Table 3). In other countries practising a migration policy favouring long-term residence of the migrant population (the United Kingdom, for example) or with migration not always linked to obtaining a work permit or caused by historical factors (the Netherlands, for instance) the foreign population continued to increase, and the main consequence of the economic crisis was an increase in unemployment in foreign communities (Salt et al., 1994; Gesano, 1999). In these countries there was a rapid transformation of the relationship between the unemployed – rising- and the working population – decreasing – without any change to the size of the foreign population.

**Table 3. - Trend in foreigners' numbers in various European countries between 1971 and 2001**

Country	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Austria	195.4	270.8	288.2	308.8	439.2	726.3	761.2
Belgium	663.1	835.0	860.6	846.5	904.5	909.8	861.7
Denmark	99.8	90.9	101.6	117.0	160.6	222.7	258.6
France	4127.0	3442.0	3714.0	3594.0	3608.0	...	...
Germany	3054.2	4566.7	4453.3	4378.9	5342.5	7173.9	7298.8
Italy	121.7	...	210.9	318.7	566.2	737.8	1270.6
Luxembourg	62.5	91.3	95.8	101.6	115.4	138.1	162.3
Netherlands	246.5	350.5	520.9	552.5	692.4	725.4	667.8
Norway	76.1	67.5	82.6	101.5	143.3	160.8	184.3
Spain	148.3	165.0	183.1	242.0	278.7	499.8	895.7
Sweden	411.3	409.9	421.7	388.6	483.7	531.8	477.3
Switzerland	1080.4	978.6	914.9	977.0	1129.5	1363.6	1424.4
United Kingdom	...	...	1638.0	1785.0	1892.0	1995.0	2503.0

France: 1974 rather than 1971; Italy and the United Kingdom: 2000 rather than 2001.

Source: Council of Europe, 2002; Salt 2002b.

Whilst it remained stable, or even decreased slightly in the 1980s – albeit with sharp variations from one country to another (cf. Table 4) – the foreign population in gainful employment reverted, from 1990 on, to its upward trend in virtually all European countries, with some downward trends due to cyclical reasons. France and the Netherlands are exceptions: the foreign active population there declined between 1990 and 2000 (United Nations, 2002; OECD 2000). Between 1988 and 2000, the number of foreign workers in Europe ultimately increased, according to an estimate by Salt (2001), by more than 30% .

**Table 4. - Foreign employees in Europe between 1975 -1989**

	FRG	France	United Kingdom	Belgium	Netherlands
<i>Employees, '000s</i>					
<i>Total</i>					
1975	2091	1900	791	230	113
1980	2041	1208	833	213	190
1985	1555	1260	821	187	166
1987	1557	1131	917	177	176
1991	...	1506	828	303	197 <sup>1</sup>
1995	...	1604 <sup>2</sup>	865 <sup>2</sup>	325	221
2000	3546 <sup>3</sup>	1578	1229	346	235 <sup>4</sup>
<i>EC</i>					
1975	849	1045	347	174	59
1980	732	653	406	159	84
1985	520	640	395	141	76
1987	484	569	345	130	86
1991	...	690	398	...	88 <sup>1</sup>
1995	...	612 <sup>1</sup>	395 <sup>2</sup>	...	98
2000	...	608	483	...	116 <sup>4</sup>
<i>Outside EC</i>					

1975	1242	855	444	56	54
1980	1309	555	427	54	106
1985	1035	620	423	46	90
1987	1073	562	575	47	90
1991	...	816	430	...	107 <sup>1</sup>
1995	...	792 <sup>1</sup>	470	...	123
2000	...	970	654	...	119 <sup>4</sup>

Source: Eurostat, cf. H. Werner (1991), OECD, (2002a) ;

<sup>1</sup> 1990 <sup>2</sup> 1996 <sup>3</sup> Reunified Germany <sup>4</sup> 1998.

Although in Europe during the 1975-2000 period there were interruptions to trends and developments varied from one country to another, overall there was an increase in the foreign active population. This may seem paradoxical in view of the increase of unemployment and the more restrictive migration policies pursued after borders closed to worker immigration (in the former Federal Republic of Germany in 1973, in France and in Belgium in 1974). The few data available indicate that from then on the proportion of workers in migratory flows was relatively small – less than 10% in Belgium and approaching 30% to 40% in Switzerland and Germany. This paradox can be mainly explained by arrivals joining their families, migrants' children and asylum-seekers also eventually entered the labour market.

#### 4. Socio-occupational characteristics of foreign workers

##### 4.1. Activity rates

In spite of the barriers to employment, which may be very restrictive in the case of some groups of foreigners such as refugees, asylum-seekers and even more for people without authorisation to be in the country, foreign populations are now relatively well integrated in the labour market. Activity rates for foreign males between 20 and 64 years exceed those for nationals in Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy and Spain. They are significantly below those for nationals in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland and the United Kingdom. In contrast, with the exception of the southern European countries (Greece, Portugal, Spain) and the Slovak Republic, the activity rates of women of foreign nationality are lower than those of nationals (Table 5). Activity rates are closely linked to the age structure of nationals and foreigners, even within the 20-64 age group considered here. In countries where people retire early and activity rates between 55 and 64 years are low, over-representation of natives within the age-group may explain differences in activity rates. In view of the low numbers involved, a standard indicator cannot be calculated for all countries, and this limitation should be borne in mind when results are interpreted.

**Table 5. - Activity rates for 20-64 year-olds by sex and origin 1999-2000**

	Men		Women	
	Nationals	Foreigners	Nationals	Foreigners
Austria	80.5	86.1	63.1	63.4
Belgium	74.1	73.0	58.2	40.7
Czech Republic	80.4	88.6	64.4	61.6
Denmark	85.6	73.2	77.2	53.8
Finland	79.8	81.1	74.4	58.0

France	75.6	76.4	63.5	48.5
Germany	80.1	77.9	64.8	49.9
Greece	78.9	89.3	50.3	57.6
Ireland	81.1	76.1	55.7	54.4
Italy	74.8	89.0	46.3	52.1
Luxembourg	75.5	77.9	74.3	56.7
Netherlands	84.8	67.2	66.4	44.6
Norway	86.0	84.5	77.7	70.7
Portugal	83.7	81.3	66.7	68.5
Slovak Republic	76.6	79.5	62.6	63.9
Spain	77.2	83.8	49.8	57.3
Sweden	80.5	65.1	75.3	59.4
Switzerland	93.0	89.6	74.8	68.4
United Kingdom	84.9	76.2	69.2	56.0

Source: OECD, 2001. Data from Labour Force Surveys.

The low numbers of foreign women on the labour market as compared with female citizens of the host country, warrant particular attention in so far as the activity rate for women is an indicator of integration of the foreign population (Tribalat, 1995). The fact that in western and northern Europe foreign women are less often in work than local women may be due to a number of factors, the first of which is importation of the socio-cultural model in the case of communities from countries with a "traditional" division of occupational and family tasks between the couple<sup>3</sup>. Likewise, where migration is dictated by the husband's career – this was long the pattern but is gradually on the decrease – the woman may have difficulty in finding work that matches her training (Morokvasic, 1993). Werner (1994) notes other household factors in low activity rates for foreign women, that women of foreign nationality are likelier to be married with one or more children and that the average number of children is higher in foreign households).

On the basis of the data available, there are grounds for suspecting relatively large disparities in female activity rates depending on nationality, migratory status (first generation of migrants, second generation of migrants) and length of residence in the country. In Sweden, for example, professional activity rates are highest among nationals of western and northern European countries, lowest among eastern Europeans and non-Europeans (Lie, 2002). In Switzerland, activity rates are highest among nationals of neighbouring countries and the south of Europe (83,7% of Portuguese and 81,4% of Spaniards have work – Wanner, 2003) and is lowest for nationals of non-EU Europe (70,5% of Turks and 71,6% of Yugoslavs have work). In Finland they are highest among Germans and British nationals and are particularly low amongst people from developing countries. (Statistics Finland, 2002).

It may also be observed that the figures in this section do not take undeclared work into account. Depending on the country, a relatively large number of economically active migrants might be engaged in undeclared domestic work or ambulant trade (Ambrosini, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> This factor also explains the higher activity rate of foreign women, as compared with nationals, in the countries of southern Europe.

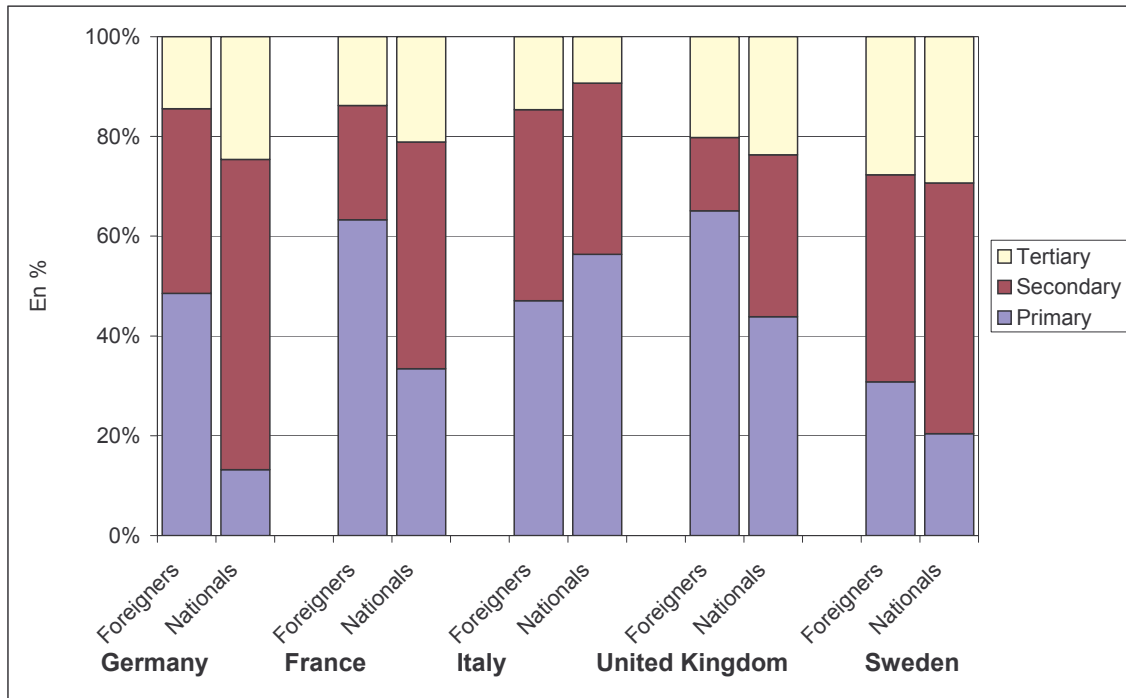
## 4.2. Level of training

In most European countries, economically active foreigners have, on average, a lower level of training than nationals (Coppel et al., 2001). However, as a result of the recent increase in migration of skilled workers and the increasing presence in the foreign active population of migrants' children, often better qualified than their parents, foreigners' average level of training is steadily rising.

The training differentials between migrants and nationals vary from country to country. According to data taken from labour-force surveys, there are almost three and a half times more people with only primary schooling in foreign communities than among nationals (Graph 1). In France, the number is almost double that. In contrast, in Italy, migrants are better qualified than nationals; in particular there is a lower proportion of people with only primary schooling among migrants and a higher proportion with further education.

Various factors may explain these differentials and the different patterns observed from country to country. One of the main factors is policy in recruitment of migrant workers. As mentioned above, recruitment has always been selective in terms of training: sometimes it is migration of highly-skilled workers that is encouraged, and sometimes – as in the 1960s – migration is mainly of non-skilled labour. The other factor affecting working-age foreign nationals' general level of training is sometimes a lesser availability of training pre-migration, in particular for migrants coming from countries where the training infrastructure is less developed. On the basis of the small number of studies available, this is the case for nationals of southern European countries or of non-EU European countries who migrate to western Europe having lower levels of training than nationals (Penninx et al., 1994; Wanner and Fibbi, 2002; Lie, 2002). Some German data show that foreign national from EU countries or North America – in particular women – and also nationals of eastern European countries have much the same level of training as nationals and may even be better qualified (Bender et al., 2000). This may be explained by the fact that they have had good opportunities of access to tertiary education in their country of origin and by a selective migration favouring the departure of trained people.

**Graph 1. - Distribution according to the level of training and nationality in various countries in 2000.**



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey. Taken from Coppel et al., 2001.

Foreigners' level of training changes rapidly depending on migration policy. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany have recently fostered immigration of highly-skilled people from, in particular, eastern Europe. In Germany, a "green card" system has been introduced so as to attract highly-skilled workers (Salt, 2001) and bilateral contracts have been signed with a number of countries of the former communist bloc so as to enable the most skilled nationals of those countries to obtain employment contracts (OECD, 2001a). Italy is talking about introducing measures to facilitate entry of migrants with high level technological skills. In the United Kingdom, skilled migration has increased (from 12,700 entries in 1992 to 18,700 in 1998) following the introduction of immigration facilities for the highly qualified. Programmes for the recruitment of skilled workers also exist in France, Norway and Switzerland (OECD, 2001b). As a result of those trends, there is often a dual pattern to level of training among foreign nationals as compared with nationals of the receiving country, with disproportionately large numbers of both unskilled/low-skilled migrants and highly-skilled migrants.

#### 4.3. Residence status

Depending on their residence status, foreigners are likely to come up, to a greater or lesser extent, against possible occupational difficulties. In addition to the two main categories - the short-term residence permit, which is generally linked to having employment, and the permanent permit, which, as well as allowing migrants to plan medium term professional activities, gives them access to social protection and occupational insurance schemes - mention should be made of two other types of residence: clandestine or illegal residence, where lack of a permit results in total



insecurity both with regard to the length of stay and in the case of illness or accident (social protection is often patchy), and asylum-seeking residence, where resident status is sometimes granted, generally for a period limited to the processing of the application, but paid work is not always allowed.

At present, there are no comparable country statistics enabling workers to be classified on the basis of residence status. However, this may take very varied forms depending on the country: historically, the United Kingdom is characterised by a high proportion of permanent residents whose residence is guaranteed on a long-term basis and is generally accompanied by residence of the family; however, recently, temporary migration has increased as a result of a rise in the number of workers arriving on short-term permits or "working holiday permits". Other countries, such as France, Germany and Switzerland, have long given preference to short term "contract workers", with varying degrees of success (OECD, 1998).

As a result of the very nature of the relevant population, the situation with regard to illegal workers is hard to assess. Data on putting illegals on a legal footing (for example, 44,000 in Spain in 1985, 118,000 in Italy in 1987 and 220,000 in Italy in 1989 – Kuijsten, 1994) give a rough idea of the scale of the phenomenon. The study by Delaunay and Tapinos (1998), which points to the difficulty in estimating this population, suggests that the numbers of illegal workers could exceed 1 million in Europe. There are said to be 300,000 in Greece, which would exceed the foreign active population holding permits. Brochmann (1996) suggests that almost 15% of immigration to western European countries is illegal. Salt and Clarke (2003) offer more detailed information on the extent of clandestine migration.

#### 4.4. Sector of activity and position in the undertaking

Irrespective of the host country, foreign nationals account for a large proportion of the workforce in manufacturing, construction, the hotel and catering sector, health and community services, and domestic work (Table 6). This limitations of this table should however be noted, especially the fact that cross-border workers are not included in the figures, though they too provide an external input to the economy. Similarly, the distribution of foreigners is probably uneven within the sectors of activity, and there is concentration in certain areas. Distribution is also uneven at different steps of the hierarchy. Finally, the data do not permit distinction by sex, and this limits the scope of analysis.

**Table 6.- Distribution of foreign workers by sector of activity in percent**

	Agri- culture	Mining and industry	Construc- tion	Wholesale and retail trade	Hotel and catering	Education	Health and communi- ty services	Domestic work	Administ- ration	Other services
Austria	1.4	27.5	12.0	12.5	11.6	2.7	11.3	0.8	1.4	19.0
Belgium	1.7	23.6	8.0	15.3	6.9	3.3	12.4	0.8	9.2	18.9
Czech Rep.	1.9	24.3	8.8	27.4	4.3	6.3	10.4	0.9	3.4	12.3
Denmark	3.1	19.5	2.4	12.8	7.1	5.4	26.8	0.0	3.8	19.2
Finland	4.3	16.8	3.6	14.3	10.2	10.0	19.0	0.5	0.6	20.8
France	3.0	19.6	17.3	11.9	6.9	3.1	8.7	7.1	2.6	19.7



Germany	1.5	33.7	9.0	12.5	10.6	2.7	12.3	0.6	2.1	15.0
Greece	3.4	18.4	27.2	10.9	8.6	2.0	4.2	19.6	0.8	5.0
Hungary	2.7	24.5	6.1	20.4	3.5	10.8	13.5	0.0	3.9	14.6
Ireland	2.5	18.8	7.6	8.8	12.3	7.3	15.2	1.4	1.7	24.4
Italy	5.4	30.3	9.4	11.0	8.5	3.2	6.7	10.9	2.5	12.0
Luxembourg	0.8	10.3	15.6	13.1	8.0	2.5	9.3	4.0	11.2	25.2
Netherlands	2.4	24.4	4.3	13.9	6.1	5.9	12.4	0.2	4.1	26.3
Norway	1.8	18.2	4.8	13.3	7.1	7.7	25.4	0.5	2.9	18.3
Portugal	2.7	17.3	25.2	10.0	9.6	5.8	10.3	6.8	1.7	10.5
Slovak Rep.	7.6	22.7	3.5	13.8	0.0	12.9	17.0	0.0	4.9	17.6
Spain	7.8	10.9	9.4	12.6	14.9	5.1	8.1	18.0	0.9	12.3
Sweden	1.8	21.4	1.9	12.7	8.5	9.5	23.1	0.0	2.1	19.1
Switzerland	1.4	23.1	9.8	16.5	5.5	4.6	17.1	1.6	3.3	17.2
United Kingdom	0.3	13.8	5.1	11.6	9.9	8.3	20.2	1.6	4.2	25.1

Source: Workforce survey OCDE, 2001a

Different patterns are observed from one country to another depending on the economic structure of the country. In Luxembourg and Belgium, where international organisations are headquartered, there is a higher proportion of foreigners in administration than in other countries where access to civil service posts is sometimes restricted for foreigners ; in southern countries there is a high percentage of foreign workers in the construction industry and domestic work. They play an important role in commerce in Hungary and the Czech Republic and in the hotel and catering sector in Spain, where the tourist sector is strongly developed. In northern Europe, some 25% of the foreign active population is employed in health and community services. There are very large numbers of foreign nationals in mining and industry in Germany and Italy.

As the economy becomes more oriented to the service sector, the distribution of foreigners according to the sector of activity changes. In Germany between 1987 and 1993, the number of foreigners in commerce and services has doubled, whereas there was only been a slight increase in manufacturing industry and agriculture (Frey and Mammey, 1996). Similar trends have been observed in the Netherlands, where there has been a marked increase in the foreign population employed in the services sector and a decrease in that employed in industry (Penninx et al., 1994).

In western Europe there are generally large concentrations of people from developing countries in the secondary sectors (Coleman, 1994), whereas nationals of European Community countries or North Americans tend to be employed in the services sector and skilled work. The United Kingdom has an uneven occupational distribution of nationalities, with European Community nationals being over-represented in the construction industry, transport, the civil service and health, whereas foreigners from other countries are found in the retail trade, the hotel and catering sector, finance and domestic work (Dobson et al., 2001).

Due to the lack of data, the sectors of activity of illegal workers are hard to describe with any accuracy; according to the OECD (2000b), agriculture, construction, tourism and domestic work are the sectors with the highest proportion of workers without papers.

Type of occupation has been the subject of a few studies. They generally show not only that migrants are more frequently employed in manual jobs, as some rather old German data show (Table 7), but also that they generally have more difficulty in gaining positions of responsibility.

**Table 7. - Distribution of active persons according to their socio-occupational status and nationality: Germany 1984-1992**

	1984		1988		1992	
	National	Foreign	National	Foreign	National	Foreign
Unskilled manual	4	25	4	24	4	17
Semi-skilled manual	12	45	11	37	11	40
Skilled manual	18	20	18	27	21	26
Low-level non-manual	9	4	10	3	5	3
Medium-level non-manual	33	3	35	6	37	7
Administrative employee	12	0	10	0	10	0
Self-employed	12	4	12	4	12	7
	100	101	100	101	100	100

Source: Frey and Mammey, 1996.

Factors other than level of training may explain the low numbers of foreign nationals in positions of responsibility (self-employment, higher-level non-manual work – see Table 7). They include less recognition of vocational training acquired in the country of origin (Flückiger and Ramirez, 2002), effects linked to differences in age structure, number of years' experience and presence in organisation – this may be shorter following migration which often means a professional interruption and discrimination linked to nationality. For these reasons, the income of foreign workers could be lower than that of nationals for an equal level of training and with the same level of responsibilities. Little statistical information is available on this subject.

In countries with a high proportion of ethnic businesses or in which the small-business sector is preponderant, a relatively large number of foreign nationals may be self-employed. This is the case for instance in the United Kingdom, where there is a higher percentage of self-employed persons among foreigners – who generally run small, businesses, principally in the fields of food, catering and the retail trade – than amongst nationals (14% as against 12% - Table 8). Self-employment is generally facilitated in the United Kingdom, where there are longstanding migrant communities, community networks make it easier to start family businesses and self-selection among migrants influences the employment situation (Stark, 1991, Chiswick, 2000). The Czech Republic and Ireland are other countries in which foreigners are more frequently self-employed than nationals (Table 8). In the Czech Republic, regime change following the fall of communism created opportunities – as it did in other east European countries – and encouraged entrepreneurial activities within various foreign communities (for example Vietnamese commercial activity). In contrast, in other countries self-employment may be restricted by regulations requiring certification of professional competence in the host country or through only partial recognition of qualifications obtained in other countries. In such cases, the proportion of self-employed persons is generally lower amongst foreigners than amongst nationals. The situation in Greece is special: foreigners are generally employed as paid labour in an economy where almost half of nationals have self-employed status.

**Table 8 - Proportion of self-employed workers in European countries, by nationality, in 2000**

	Nationals	Foreigners	Difference Nationals- Foreigners
Austria	14.5	5.2	9.3
Belgium	17.3	17.2	0.1
Czech Rep.	14.4	22.2	-7.8
Denmark	9.3	8.6	0.7
Finland	13.8	12.4	1.4
France	12.3	10.3	2.0
Germany	10.9	9.8	1.1
Greece	43.0	8.7	34.3
Iceland	18.3	7.7	10.6
Ireland	19.0	19.7	-0.7
Italy	28.4	18.5	9.9
Luxembourg	10.8	6.7	4.1
Netherlands	11.5	10.0	1.5
Norway	7.7	9.1	-1.4
Portugal	27.0	20.6	6.4
Spain	21.7	22.6	-0.9
Sweden	11.4	12.5	-1.1
Switzerland	20.3	8.9	11.4
United Kingdom	12.0	14.1	-2.1

Source: OECD, 2001b

#### 4.5. Unemployment rates

Until the 1970s, the unemployment rate among foreign workers was relatively low in many immigration countries. This was due to the favorable economic climate, but also to the need for the recent migrant worker to find work in order to obtain a residence permit or to have leave to remain in the country and the need to transfer money regularly to the family remaining in the country of origin. These reasons could constitute a motivation to take a job no matter what the conditions. (Tribalat et al., 1991). However, as from the 1980s, unemployment became higher amongst foreigners than amongst nationals, and higher still amongst foreigners from countries outside the European Community (Table 9). The available statistics, which have been taken from labour-force surveys, show a particularly large differential between two groups, regardless of country, except perhaps in Greece. In Belgium, for example, the unemployment rate for non- EU foreigners is five times higher than for nationals. It is seven times higher for non-EU foreigners in Denmark than nationals, four times higher in the Netherlands, three times higher in Finland and twice as high in the United Kingdom. In addition the differentials between nationals and non-EU foreigners are more marked for men than women.

In the case of foreigners from countries of the European Union, although unemployment rates are slightly higher than for nationals, they are very much lower

than for foreigners from other parts of the world. This is probably due to the fact that migration from EC member states is an older phenomenon, the qualifications of nationals of those countries are higher and, owing to the rules on freedom of movement, those nationals can emigrate to another country of the EU when the economic situation is adverse (Werner, 1994).

**Table 9 - Unemployment rate in 2000 in various European countries, by nationality and gender**

	Nationals	UE nationals	Non-EU nationals	Total countries
<b>Men</b>				
Belgium	4.5	10.5	28.4	5.5
Denmark	3.2	...	27.0	3.6
Spain	6.1	6.3	11.5	6.2
Finland	7.0	...	24.5	7.1
Greece	5.9	...	7.0	5.9
Netherlands	1.0	...	7.0	1.2
Norway	2.0	...	14.5	2.2
United Kingdom	4.0	4.5	9.8	4.2
Switzerland	2.3	3.6	9.0	3.2
<b>Women</b>				
Belgium	6.6	11.2	27.2	7.2
Denmark	4.1	...	25.6	4.5
Spain	13.1	13.3	18.7	13.2
Finland	7.8	...	24.1	7.9
Greece	13.4	...	14.9	13.5
Netherlands	2.3	...	...	2.4
Norway	2.0	...	11.2	2.3
United Kingdom				
	3.2	6.0	7.1	3.4
Switzerland	3.3	6.1	17.8	5.0
<b>Total</b>				
Belgium	5.4	10.7	28.0	6.2
Denmark	3.6	...	26.4	4.0
Spain	8.9	8.6	14.5	9.0
Finland	7.4	...	24.3	7.5
Greece	8.8	...	10.0	8.9
Netherlands	1.6	...	6.4	1.7
Norway	2.0	...	12.8	2.3
United Kingdom	3.6	5.2	8.7	3.8
Switzerland	2.8	4.6	12.7	4.0

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey; for Switzerland, 2000 Census; in italics, data based on a limited number of cases.

Amongst the foreign population the rate of unemployment can vary greatly, for example in Finland in 2001, according to the Ministry of Economy, the rate of unemployment was 77% amongst Irakians, 64% amongst Iranians, but below 10% for Germans and North Americans. (Statistics Finland, 2002). There are different reasons why non-Europeans, and foreigners generally, should have particularly high unemployment rates. One of the prime reasons frequently mentioned is the training differentials between nationals and foreigners, particularly the low level of training amongst foreigners arriving in the receiving country just after finishing their

schooling (Stalker, 1994) or having their schooling interrupted by migration. Another factor is that migrants from distant countries often have limited linguistic skills that are an obstacle to employment, in particular in the tertiary sector. Gurak (1987) and Dumont (1989) further point to the difficulty which "secondary" migrants following their active spouse to a new country have in finding an occupation appropriate to their training.

Other factors in high unemployment include the racial or cultural discrimination which some groups of migrants suffer (Werner, 1994) and the adverse image which they sometimes have as regards productivity and cost of employment (Penninx et al., 1994). Unemployment differentials may also be explained by barriers to paid work in the case of some categories, such as refugees and asylum seekers. Stalker (1994) also identifies structural factors, in particular the fact that the sectors which have lost most employees are those which employed the largest proportion of foreigners. Immigrant populations' assets from the employment standpoint, in particular great flexibility and great adaptability to work that does not match their training (Gesano, 1999), are not enough to overcome the barriers.

According to OECD (2001b) foreign nationals in Europe suffer more from long-term unemployment. Exceptions to this are southern Europe, where migration is more frequently associated with status of activity, the United Kingdom, where candidates for migration may be selected in the emigration country on the basis of the opportunities which community networks have identified in the host country, and Luxembourg.

#### 4.6. Other demographic characteristics

Very little information is available about the composition of the foreign workforce in terms of demographic criteria. The data provided here is for this reason already old. However, the nationalities of foreign workers are relatively well-known. German-speaking Europe is characterised by the dominant position of workers from former Yugoslavia, Turkey and, with the exception of Austria, Italy (Table 10). As a result of its geographical position, Austria has relatively large numbers of Hungarians and Poles (for the most part they are seasonal workers). France has large numbers of Portuguese and north African workers. Moroccans are the main group of economically active foreigners in Italy, Netherlands and Spain. In the Scandinavian countries foreign workers are of relatively varied origin. Historical links, geographical proximity, migration policies and agreements between countries may explain the diversity of situations as regards the origins of foreign labour.

**Table 10. - Persons active in the labour market (by nationality) and proportion of women (by country) around 1998.**

Nationality	Total ('000s)	% women		Total ('000s)	% women		Total ('000s)	% women
<i>Austria, 1999<sup>1</sup></i>			<i>Belgium, 1997</i>			<i>Denmark, 1998</i>		
Former Yugosl.	77.1	43	Italy	96.9	34	Turkey	14.1	38
Turkey	47.7	27	France	40.4	40	Former Yugosl.	11.3	40
Bosnia-Her.	24.2	53	Morocco	38.5	22	United Kingdom	7.6	29

Croatia	23.2	37	Netherlands	35.8	33	Germany	6.8	41
Hungary	9.0	20	Spain	20.9	39	Norway	6.3	57
Poland	8.7	26	Turkey	19.1	26	Sweden	5.7	56
<i>France, 2000</i>			<i>Germany, 1997</i>			<i>Italy, 1995</i>		
Portugal	353.1	42	Turkey	745.2	31	Morocco	47.9	11
Algeria	215.0	35	Former Yugos.	348.0	38	Philippines	27.7	69
Morocco	204.3	30	Italy	246.5	29	Tunisia	19.5	7
Turkey	81.5	25	Greece	134.2	39	Albania	18.2	14
Tunisia	77.5	27	Portugal	58.9	35	Former Yugos.	17.7	23
Italy	73.8	32	Spain	52.5	38	Senegal	13.6	2
<i>Netherlands, 1997</i>			<i>Spain, 1999<sup>1</sup></i>			<i>Sweden, 1999</i>		
Morocco	35.0	23	Morocco	65.2	19	Finland	52.0	60
Turkey	29.0	14	Peru	13.4	65	Former Yugos.	28.0	43
Belgium	23.0	43	China	10.7	36	Norway	19.0	58
UK	23.0	35	Dominic. Rep.	10.2	83	Denmark	13.0	38
Germany	14.0	29	Equator	8.7	67	Iran	8.0	38
Spain	11.0	27	Philippines	7.0	66	Poland	2.0	30
<i>Switzerland, 1999</i>			<i>United Kingdom 2000</i>					
Italy	179.3	33	Ireland	206.0	53			
Former Yugos.	80.4	35	Africa	140.0	47			
Portugal	76.5	43	India	61.0	57			
Germany	61.3	37	United States	61.0	44			
Spain	51.7	39	Italy	55.0	45			
Turkey	33.3	35	Australia	54.0	43			

Source: Labour Force Surveys. Taken from OECD – SOPEMI (various years) <sup>1</sup> Excluding workers from the European Community

Economic activity in foreign communities is principally male. The percentage is 69% among Turks, 62% among former Yugoslavs and 71% among Italians in Germany (Table 10), 58% among Portuguese, 65% among Algerians and 70% among Moroccans in France and 67% among Italians in Switzerland. The only notable exceptions are that migratory flows of trainees or economically active persons from adjacent countries or of domestic personnel may be predominantly female. This is the case with the Irish workforce in the United Kingdom, which is 53% female, the Bosnian workforce in Austria (53% female), the Norwegian and Swedish workforces in Denmark (57% and 56% respectively); women also account for 69% of economically active people from the Philippines in Italy, 83% and 65% respectively of Dominicans and Peruvians in Spain and 60% of Finns in Sweden.

As for the age profile, there is generally a lower proportion of older workers (55-64 years old) among foreign communities (Table 11). France and the United Kingdom, which are characterised by older migratory flows, are exceptions. Younger people (15-24 years old) are found in disproportionately large numbers in the economically active population in southern European countries, Netherlands and United Kingdom, but in disproportionately small numbers in Belgium, France, Hungary and Sweden.

**Table 11. - Distribution of active persons by nationality and age in 2003**

	Nationals			Foreigners		
	15-24 years	25-54 years	55-64 years	15-24 years	25-54 years	55-64 years
Belgium	21.3	60.2	18.6	19.8	65.6	14.7
Bulgaria	19.7	57.3	23.0	0.0	71.4	28.6
Cyprus	23.0	53.4	23.7	29.4	61.8	8.8
Denmark	23.0	49.8	27.3	30.0	56.3	13.8
Spain	25.2	55.0	19.8	33.2	59.1	7.7
Finland	21.9	50.7	27.3	23.5	61.8	14.7
France	21.1	56.8	22.1	15.5	60.1	24.4
Greece	20.2	53.1	26.7	30.0	59.0	11.0
Hungary	24.2	54.5	21.3	22.7	63.6	13.6
Italy <sup>1</sup>	20.0	59.0	21.1	25.3	66.0	8.7
Norway	23.6	50.2	26.2	25.3	57.3	17.3
Netherlands	26.8	52.4	20.8	32.9	57.6	9.4
Portugal	26.0	51.1	22.9	36.6	57.7	5.7
Czech Rep.	23.3	51.4	25.3	20.3	56.8	23.0
United Kingdom	24.1	51.6	24.2	31.6	53.9	14.5
Sweden	21.1	48.3	30.7	19.4	58.3	22.2
Switzerland <sup>1</sup>	23.5	50.1	26.4	27.3	55.5	17.3

Source : Eurostat. Labour Force Surveys 2003. <sup>1</sup> 2002

Following the substantial migration in the 1960s and 1970s, France has the foreign workforce with the greatest length of stay: 71% of economically active foreigners have been in 1995 present there for more than ten years. Lengthy foreign residence is also a feature in Belgium (Table 12). At the other extreme, almost all the foreign workforce in Italy and Greece have been there less than ten years<sup>4</sup>. This is because migratory flows to those countries are of recent date.

**Table 12. - Distribution of the foreign population born abroad by length of stay, active persons aged 15-64, 1995**

	Stock ('000s)			In %		
	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	10 years or more	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	10 years or more
Austria	66	128	130	20.4	39.5	40.1
Belgium	29	27	118	16.7	15.5	67.8
Denmark	10	16	25	19.6	31.4	49.0
France	77	120	494	11.1	17.4	71.5
Greece	40	16	12	58.8	23.5	17.6
Ireland	14	7	20	34.1	17.1	48.8
Italy	40	28	0	58.8	41.2	0.0
Luxembourg	9	11	24	20.5	25.0	54.5
Netherlands	70	76	110	27.3	29.7	43.0
Spain	36	48	35	30.3	40.3	29.4
Sweden	17	61	65	11.9	42.7	45.5
United Kingdom	227	225	539	22.9	22.7	54.4

Source: OECD 1998

<sup>4</sup> 1995 data



## **5. Impact of migration on the labour market**

The data given above clearly show that in most European countries foreign labour has recently increased its share of the labour market, for example as expressed in percentages of active persons. They also suggest that active migrants play a substantial and growing role in the economy of European countries, especially in German-speaking Europe. The economic development of countries like Luxembourg, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany has been partly fuelled by migrants, and is today still heavily dependent on them. In other countries where the migrant inflow is more limited, migration has so far played a minor role on the labour market, but one that may expand in view of demographic trends forecast for the next fifty years.

Estimating the impact of migration on the labour market is no easy task because the mechanisms involved can act in such different ways. A substantial literature has focused on the relationship between migratory flows and the economies of immigration countries – the labour market, unemployment, wages, GDP – but their results show no clear convergence, varying according to the method and indicators used and the period studied. It is difficult to present an overall picture of these studies, and sometimes equally difficult to assess the relevance of the different approaches they reflect. Section 4.1 presents some of the main studies in this field. Later (section 4.2), we shall look in greater detail at some sectors where the foreign labour force is strongly represented before going on to discuss the hypotheses of labour market segmentation on the basis of origin, and substitution of migrant labour for native-born labour. The complimentary nature of these approaches enables a review of the current role of migrants in the labour market.

### **5.1. Theoretical and empirical estimates of the impact of the migration of active persons on the labour market**

Models and studies of migration designed to assess the relationship between population and development have often focused on the impact of migration on the development of source countries rather than on economic growth in receiving countries. With the development of migratory flows between south and north and between east and west and in view of expected political changes (especially enlargement of the European Community), recent empirical studies have examined the impact of migration on the economies of receiving countries. They have focused on economic growth and native wage levels (see eg Coppel et al., 2001; Macura, 1994; De Rugy and Tapinos, 1994; Straubhaar and Zimmermann, 1993; Borjas, 1993; Borjas 1994 for a review of the North-American literature; Bauer and Zimmermann, 1999 and Tapinos, 1994, for a general survey of European studies), on productivity (Macura, 1994; Simon, 1989), on the employment of native and foreign workers and on unemployment. All these studies are based on the hypothesis that labour migration could, in accordance with economic theory, lead to a drop in wages caused by labour market disequilibrium (job-seekers in excess of labour demand by the economy), theory then being tested empirically by modelling. The hypothesis whereby a migratory flow of workers is, at least during an adaptation period, coupled with a rise in unemployment in the host country, has also been tested using modelling techniques.



Several of these studies agree in finding that migration has a relatively slight impact, if any, on the host country's economy (cf. for example Borjas, 1999). The hypothesis of a fall in the average wage and a rise in unemployment does not seem to be widely corroborated – although authors like Dustmann and Fabbri (2003) suggest otherwise – whilst per capita economic growth does not seem to vary significantly either way following migration.

Termote (1996) points to one disadvantage of the economic studies, namely that they present a general picture of the overall impact of migration on a country and its resident active population, whereas a distinction needs to be made between migration's impact on migrant groups on the one hand and native groups on the other; Termote also recommends focusing analysis on the local rather than on the national level, migrants usually being concentrated in urban areas. If this is done, estimated impacts can differ widely between different groups and different urban areas. Coppel et al (2001) note in a study published by OECD that "immigration can confer small net gains to the host country. However, the benefits are not necessarily evenly distributed and some groups, in particular those whose labour is substitutable with immigrants, may lose". North-American studies show that whilst migration only has a marginal impact on the average wage level, under competitive conditions it leads to a fall in immigrants' wages.

Virtually all European countries have an unemployment rate above 5%, and it is sometimes feared that continuing migration could lead to a rise in unemployment of the native population. This does not seem to have been empirically corroborated in Europe (OECD, 2000c). Mühleisen and Zimmermann (1994), among others, using data from the German Socioeconomic Panel, failed to show any significant rise in unemployment linked to migratory flows in the 1980s, a finding confirmed by research using different methods and data (Gang and Rivera-Batiz, 1994). According to Bauer and Zimmermann (1999), while immigration has no observable effect on the unemployment rate, it may slightly increase the duration of unemployment.

Each European country has its own rate of immigration and its own socio-demographic migrant structure, and the labour market effects of migration are closely linked to these parameters. Bauer and Zimmermann (1999), for example, note that the effect of migration on the labour market depends on whether immigrants are substitutes or complements to native workers. The authors considered that unskilled migrants can substitute for natives, whereas skilled migrants may complement skilled natives (cf. section 4.3). If this hypothesis is correct, the more skilled the migrant inflow, the more positive its impact on the receiving country. Those western European countries with policies tailored to the migration of skilled workers should record a more positive impact than the southern European countries which still receive an inflow of low-skilled migrants. Other potentially relevant factors in addition to skill differentials are migrants' sex, age, country of origin, legal status and settlement patterns.

Studies based on economic modelling omit two positive effects that migratory flows may have on a country's labour market: firstly, immigrants – especially first-generation immigrants – are usually more flexible than the native-born population, more adaptable to changing conditions, and more responsive to structural changes in the economy; secondly, migration not only responds to the needs of an economy, it creates demand for goods and services, with a beneficial effect on the economy and on employment.

## 5.2. Activity sectors relying on foreign workers

Economic analysis has usually focused on a country and an economy as a whole, failing to differentiate between the situation in different sectors. It has been shown that some production sectors in immigration countries are highly dependent on foreign labour (Tribalat et al., 1991), while others rely essentially on the native-born labour force. Some figures from the main immigration countries will serve to highlight the role of migrant workers in certain sectors. In Germany, foreign workers make up 37% of the labour force in the hotel and catering sector. In Switzerland, 33% of the labour force in the construction sector are foreigners, and 41% in catering (OFS, 2002). In the hospital sector, around 44% of kitchen staff and 69% of caretaking and cleaning staff are foreign nationals. Also in Switzerland, foreigners account for 61.2% of the labour force in cleaning and 59.4% in plastering (Wanner, 2003). In the UK, 27% of health professionals are foreign nationals (Dobson et al., 2001). Without foreign labour, these sectors of the economy would probably not function or would function at a slower rate.

The largest concentrations of migrant workers are found in low-skilled jobs and sectors. The overall improvement in education and training and wider access thereto in western Europe, combined with better professional integration of women since the 1960s and 1970s have led to segregation of migrants in low-skilled jobs. This being so, it is somewhat paradoxical that some countries should have introduced policies to attract highly-skilled migrants just when migrants settled in low-skilled jobs are gradually approaching retirement age.

## 5.3. Foreigners on the European labour market: substitution or segmentation of the economy

A key issue in the debate on the labour market effects of migration hinges on the following question: does migration create a labour force responding to a specific need, i.e. not substituting for the native-born labour force; or does it generate unemployment by providing a labour force substitutable for the receiving country's active population and prepared to work for lower wages? Most of the economic analyses and data cited above seem to support the first alternative, i.e. segmentation of the labour market. Migrant workers occupy highly specific segments of the economy, doing jobs and occupying posts for which there are few native-born candidates, if any.

During the second half of the twentieth century in western Europe, migration was largely based on the idea of segmentation. Migrants were sought for their special skills (for example in the construction sector) or to meet specific needs (seasonal work). They were low-skilled and were routinely kept out of jobs sought after by native-born workers. Piore (1979) suggested that there was complete segmentation of the labour market between nationals mainly employed in interesting jobs and immigrants doing jobs that were usually lower paid and more unpleasant. With the increase in long-term migration and family migration, growing numbers of asylum-seekers and the relative downturn in worker migration, the situation has gradually changed. Migrants no longer simply meet specific labour market needs, they have frequently become well integrated people, in some cases born in the country (second generation), wishing to leave behind their migrant status and seek an occupational status identical to that of nationals. This being the case, the hypothesis of substitution

is called in question, its application shifting to certain categories of migrants. Stalker (1994) observes that now it is mainly clandestine workers who do the jobs that nationals avoid and who work in conditions that are unacceptable to the native-born labour force or to migrants with work permits.

While the segmentation hypothesis is still relevant, albeit losing ground, authors like Garson et al. (1987) regard substitution between nationals and foreigners as possible. A firm's decision to employ one worker rather than another, in conditions of competition, is governed by factors such as profit maximisation (for example, the opportunity to pay migrants lower wages). These authors regard substitution as being of limited extent, although existing in industries involved in technological change (see also Tribalat et al., 1991).

#### **5.4 Intermediate conclusions**

To conclude this section, let us return to the paradox of increasing immigration to European countries and the generally accepted idea that migration has little impact on the labour market. In the second half of the 20th century migratory flows played an important role in demographic trends in European countries and had a direct impact on production and performance of national economies. Migrants comprise more than a third of the labour force in some sectors and actively contribute to their development. These remarks notwithstanding, modelling shows that migration has slight and in some cases non-existent effects on the economy, the labour market and unemployment rates. There is a need for the methodological limitations associated with these approaches to be superseded and for more detailed evaluations to be made.

The impact of migration on the labour market cannot be shown by exclusive reference to indicators like the unemployment rate, the average wage and the growth rate of a specific sector or economy. Issues related to discrimination on the labour market and wage and job security differentials between foreigners and nationals also need to be examined. The labour market impact of migration can only be regarded as positive if migration does not lead to discrimination and if migrant workers integrate successfully. These issues are bound up with the management of migratory flows, especially with the integration of migrants on the labour market, a priority for European states which is discussed in the following section.

When the effects of migration on a receiving country's labour market are being assessed, it should not be forgotten that emigration can have important consequences in migrants' country of origin (brain drain, loss of a big share of the young labour force, etc.). In the past, some European emigration societies lost substantial amounts of their labour force. Today, though most European countries are immigration countries, with the exception of some states of central and eastern Europe, this aspect of the question seems to call for more systematic study, especially at a time when new migratory flows are set to appear following EU enlargement.

### **6. Factors of integration on the labour market**

The integration of foreigners on the labour market is a priority for immigration countries and a theme that has given rise to an abundant literature. Authors have attempted to define labour market integration by reference to other types of integration (social, cultural, juridical - Vermeulen and Penninx, 2000; Cagiano de

Azevedo, and Sonnino, 1995), to propose indicators for measuring integration (Council of Europe, 1997), and to measure the integration levels of foreign populations. Labour market differentials between native-born and migrant workers – often disadvantageous to the latter – have been highlighted in a number of European studies. These differentials concern access to posts of responsibility and to wages corresponding to the worker’s skills (Lhéritier, 1992; Werner, 1994; De Coulon et al., 2002; Flückiger, 2002), access to jobs (Nayer and Smeeters, 1998; Ouali, 1997), and job security. They show, with variations from one country to another, the inequalities that handicap migrants in these fields.

There are a variety of reasons for these differentials: different skill levels, with, as noted above, frequent over-representation of less-skilled migrants, inadequate recognition of qualifications and experience acquired in the source country, professional experience sometimes interrupted by migration. The fact that migrants sometimes have to do jobs other than those for which they have been trained may also be relevant. Discrimination and barriers may act as a brake on integration, possibly with legal backing (eg, restricted access to certain professions or jobs) or may play a more insidious role (discrimination).

Factors influencing integration can be broken down into individual factors (characteristics of migrants), labour market factors, and institutional factors (content of policies). Among individual factors, Werner (1994) cites qualifications, personal motivation, family income, flexibility and adaptability to a new environment. Another important factor is fluency in the language spoken in the host country. For populations of foreign nationality or origin, place of birth (in the host country or abroad), place of education, and date of arrival in the country (length of stay) also seem to be significant. National and ethnic affiliation is important, since levels of integration and discrimination vary according to the migrant’s origin.

Among factors specific to the receiving country, the native-born population’s – especially the employer’s – perception of the migrant worker has a strong bearing on the extent of integration and the discrimination which he/she may experience. This perception by the receiving country can be explained in terms of the relations between the main actors involved, ie employers and migrant workers. Without claiming to be exhaustive, the following factors might be considered important: the conditions in which migrants and non-migrants are prepared to work (hourly wage, job security, etc.), “statistical” discrimination reflecting powerful social stereotypes that can modify the employer’s perception, and discrimination conditioned by preferences (attitudes of employers and other workers, customers and consumers).

In this context, institutional factors may help to ensure equality of opportunity for all by combating discrimination directed against certain groups and offering migrants the tools they need for effective integration (for example language training schemes – cf. Council of Europe, 2000 for a list of recommended measures). However, when the law sets out to protect the host population and restrict access of some migrants to the labour market, it may also limit the possibility of integration.

An overview of political practice in Europe can be found by consulting the EIRO comparative study, which presents information about the existing range of integration policies. According to the study, there is a big gap between countries wishing to protect their native-born labour force via policies designed to restrict foreign workers’ access to the labour market, and countries implementing measures clearly intended to promote integration.

While it is not possible to examine in this study the full range of integration policies in European countries, some interesting examples may be noted. Among countries whose policies are designed to protect the native-born labour force, Austria allows migrants from non-European countries only restricted access to the labour market. A foreign national may be employed only if no Austrian citizen is available to fill the job (a similar condition is in force in other countries such as Switzerland) and if the job falls within the quota of foreign workers to be employed in Austria, fixed at 8% of the total labour force by the *Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz* (Aliens Employment Act). The second condition has a particularly adverse effect on migrants' living conditions. Some 60,000 to 70,000 foreigners legally resident in Austria (mainly women and young people) were refused a work permit in 2001 because of this law, which created much insecurity (Adam, 2002).

Other policies with an adverse effect on integration may be cited. In Austria, one such policy creates insecurity of resident status in case of unemployment. Unemployment for more than a certain length of time may lead to non-renewal of the residence permit, in other words compulsory return to the source country. This measure is bound to exert considerable pressure on a worker losing his job; he must find new employment very quickly and is likely to have to take any job that is going, even if it is badly paid and does not correspond to his training or expectations.

Another type of policy restricting integration constructs barriers around certain occupations. Belgium for example restricts access to self-employed work for non-European foreigners (Nayer and Smeeters, 1998). Until 1990, it also barred foreign workers from recruitment to various public sector posts. Switzerland and Austria do not allow asylum-seekers to work, limiting their capacity to be self-supporting and to integrate socially and economically in the host country. In Spain, a work permit is linked to a specific economic sector, thus restricting job mobility. Until 1 July 2002, Switzerland did not allow foreigners with an annual resident's permit to move around, so that if they became unemployed or wanted to change jobs they were at a disadvantage in comparison with nationals.

Other countries show a clear determination via their migration policies to combat discrimination on the labour market and to promote integration. Among them are Sweden, where clear cases of discrimination can be brought before the courts under the Act on Measures against Ethnic Discrimination in Working Life. Since 1986 Sweden has had an Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination.

Differences between countries' integration policies regarding migrants' status in the workplace are also substantial. In some countries integration is regarded as a necessary qualification for remaining in the country, and in others it is highly encouraged. In Austria, foreign employees who have lived in the country for less than 5 years must attend a German-language course; if they fail they risk losing their residence permit. A different kind of incentive to take language lessons exists in northern Europe. In Denmark, not only is language training free but a successful effort to be integrated into society is rewarded (the time required for naturalisation is reduced from 7 to 5 years to reward good job performance – Jorgensen, 2002). In Sweden, migrant workers have the right to learn Swedish during working hours (Berg, 2002). In most other countries, including Italy, Spain and Switzerland, language training and schemes to encourage migrants' social integration and participation in community life are organised by local authorities or non-governmental organisations, in some cases funded by the state.



While these integration policies have usually been developed to manage traditional patterns of migration, they must now adapt to a new situation. Increasingly important questions are arising in connexion with second-generation migrants, who receive schooling in the host country but often face difficulties when they enter the labour market. These difficulties may originate in discrimination connected with their original nationality, eg there may be gaps in their schooling because of their social background. Belgium is an example of a country actively working on the labour market integration of second generation foreigners (Nayer and Smeeters, 1998). In other countries, more attention will probably need to be given to this issue in the future.

## Conclusions

This study reviews the situation of migrants in the labour force in the Council of Europe member States. It is mostly based on data obtained in surveys. At this stage, two elements should be recalled. The first concerns the data available and the second the main characteristics relating to integration in the labour market.

The data available about the status of foreigners and migrants on the labour market are incomplete and in some cases difficult to interpret for methodological reasons as noted above. European labour market statistics are not fully geared to a mobile, minority population which is not always well integrated. They are not designed to capture the complexity of the migration phenomenon or to facilitate in-depth analysis of the labour force classified on the basis of migrant status (source country, place of birth, generation of migrant, etc.). The inadequacy of the data is particularly unfortunate at a time when migratory flows towards Europe are diversifying. An effort needs to be made to complete and harmonise data on active migrants and other fields relating to migration (for example, analysis of migratory flows). Such an investment is indispensable if comparable data is to be obtained at state level on the situation of migrants in the labour market and in order to follow its evolution over time and its impact on integration.

Though the gaps in the statistical data are frustrating, the information analysed in this study clearly highlights the specific characteristics of active migrants compared with nationals. In all countries foreigners have a significantly higher rate of unemployment than natives, and this rate is higher for foreigners from countries outside the European Community than for nationals of EC countries. The rate of unemployment of different national populations – sometimes reaching 50% for some communities in Finland – question the capacity of European states to enable their migrants to integrate professionally and socially in the host country. Inequalities of access to employment between nationals and migrants and of access to responsible posts can lead to social segregation of certain migrant populations following from problems of poverty.

The unemployment rate is an indicator that pinpoints the difficulties of integrating migrant communities into the labour market. Many reasons connected with the labour market or specific policies could be put forward to explain this high risk and other inequalities between migrants and the native-born population. States should prioritise integration and anti-discrimination policies on the labour market which have a direct impact on migrants' labour market status, and these should be continuously adapted to changes in migratory flows. Despite the absence of data one could put forward the theory that high unemployment is not the only specificity facing migrant populations and that there are other barriers to employment; in particular for asylum seekers who have

difficulty obtaining jobs relative to their qualifications and in climbing the hierarchy in their profession, even in keeping their job during difficult economic periods.

These characteristics relate to training differentials, jobs occupied, migrants' position in firms, the likelihood of unemployment and women's activity rate. Each European country is faced with its own specific migratory situation, involving flows governed by the country's history, its relations with other countries, its geographical position and its political choices. Reflecting the different migrant situations in each country, national integration policies are naturally very varied. Their impact on the integration of foreigners into the work force is very variable and therefore the situation of migrants in Europe can be more or less positive depending on the host country. Given the demographic evolutions – in particular the aging population – the role of migrants on the work force in Europe is growing and it is therefore necessary to reflect more systematically on the appropriateness of national integration policies for the needs of the labour market. Of course, such an evaluation of national integration policies can only be undertaken if the available data is comparable over time and place, and unfortunately this is not yet the case.

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