

IUSSP 26th International Population Conference

Topic 6: International migration

Session 210: International migration: methods and data

Karam 3, Ouzoud Area

Friday, October 2

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Demographic pattern of international immigration in the European Union

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Abstract: The Eurostat database on international migration even if not yet complete in terms of coverage and not fully harmonised in terms of definitions, already includes a lot of useful information on international migration. The pattern of international immigrations in the European Union (EU) is described by using data collected on years 2002-2006 with some necessary adjustments and estimations. We take a look on composition of immigration flows in the EU considering age, sex and country of citizenship of immigrants. Immigrants to the EU Member States are grouped as returning nationals, other EU citizens and non-EU citizens. We will try to show what the EU data reveal on the international immigration of these citizenship groups and we will conclude that the overall demographic pattern of immigration in the EU is the result of rather different patterns of immigration to every Member State as well as different characteristics of immigrants having different citizenships.

Introduction

On the light of current demographic developments the international migration is playing increasing role in most of Member States of the European Union (EU). As the vast majority of migrants are young people, the immigration is shaping the demographic composition of populations. The future population changes in the EU will be in some extent influenced though the age and gender composition of the current immigration flows. As immigration brings both economic and social challenges to the countries receiving immigrants it is in different way important for the countries concerned. In this perspective and in the conditions of free movement of people within the EU, the international migration has become a top priority for European policy.

Eurostat, the Statistical Agency of the European Communities is responsible on providing necessary statistics for that policy. Within the framework of joint migration data collection for several other international bodies – UN Statistical Division (UNSD), UN Economic Council for Europe (UN ECE) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) – Eurostat is collecting annual data on international migration flows and on stocks of population relevant to migration in the UN ECE area. It must be noted that this data collection is based on official national statistics on international migration as the data come directly from national statistical institutions. International bodies involved in assembling the data from countries have long worked for harmonising international migration statistics. However, as revealed the European

founded research project THESIM dedicated on the harmonisation of the data as well as some other recent or ongoing research projects in the EU, like PROMINSTAT, despite of efforts done for harmonisation and improving the availability these data the international comparability and availability for cross-European analysis is still clearly weak (Poulain M et al., 2006). In 2007 as an attempt to ensure significant improvement in this area a regulation was set in force for collecting data from countries in EEA (European Economic Area). Starting from data for 2008 countries are obliged to supply a fixed minimum of harmonised statistics on international migration according to this regulation. Thus concrete efforts are expected from every country so that the required data will be available, reliable and comparable, including indispensable metadata. However, such improved data will only be available for analysis at the end of 2010.

Fortunately, the Eurostat database on international migration even if not yet complete in terms of the coverage and definitions already includes a lot of useful information on international migration. We believe that these data are enough reliable in order to draw an overview of the demographic pattern of the international migration flows when using the set of data collected by Eurostat over several recent years and adding some estimations. We also believe that analysing these data can help to understand and improve the comparability of migration data at the international level.

From the viewpoint of the European policy, international immigrations in the EU involve broadly three categories of people: return migration of nationals, immigration of other EU citizens subject to the free movement, and non-EU citizens who need authorisation for living in the EU. When the free movement of people within EU enables its' citizens to migrate in the EU as easily as nationals to return to their home country, the main demographic characteristics of returning nationals and EU citizens immigrating to a foreign country in the EU can be rather different. Assumingly, these characteristics are also different for immigrating non-EU citizens.

In this contribution we take a look on composition of the above mentioned categories of immigrants particularly considering age, sex and country of origin of immigrants. We use data on immigration flows collected by Eurostat from Member States covering years 2002-2006 with some necessary adjustments and estimations. So, we will try to show what the EU data reveal on the international immigration and we will conclude that the overall pattern of immigration in the EU is the result of rather different patterns of immigration flows to every Member State as well as different patterns of the flows having different country of citizenship.

Increase of immigration has slowed down in the EU

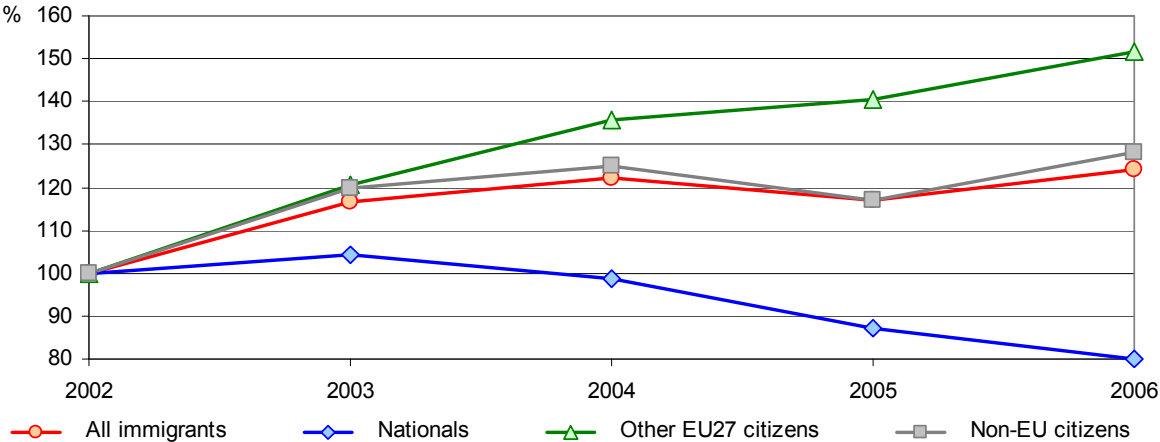
In 2006 about 3.5 million persons immigrated in a new country of residence in the 27 EU Member States according to Eurostat estimates¹. Among these 1.7 million were EU citizens including about 0.5 million nationals returning to the home country, and 1.8 million citizens of non-EU countries. The total number of immigrations in the EU has been increasing within the last five years period (from 2002 till 2006). In 2006 the number of immigrants was nearly a quarter higher than in 2002. The annual average increase was more than 100 000 during this

¹ Due to missing data, non-comparable definitions and different inclusion of population groups in national level, for the EU as whole the overview on immigration is not possible without some adjustments and estimations. Estimates on annual total number of immigrants and numbers by citizenship groups were done based on all available data from the EU Member States.

period. However, in the last three years this increase has slowed, even turning into a small decrease in 2005. When disaggregating immigration flow into the groups of citizenship significant decrease can be observed in case of return immigration of nationals while the immigration of EU citizens to other Member States is continuously increasing (Figure 1).

The biggest rise in immigration was in Ireland and Spain: in Ireland the number of immigrants doubled in 2006 compared with 2002 while Spain received three quarters more immigrants in 2006 than in 2002. In absolute numbers Spain had biggest increase – from 480 000 to 840 000 immigrants during five years. Despite the general increasing trend in the EU, several countries including Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, experienced a decline in the number of immigrants over the whole or part of the period. In 2006, total immigration to these three countries was respectively by 14, 17 and 11 percentages lower than in 2002.

Figure 1. Relative change of the immigration by citizenship groups, EU-27. 2002=100%



Source: Eurostat estimates.

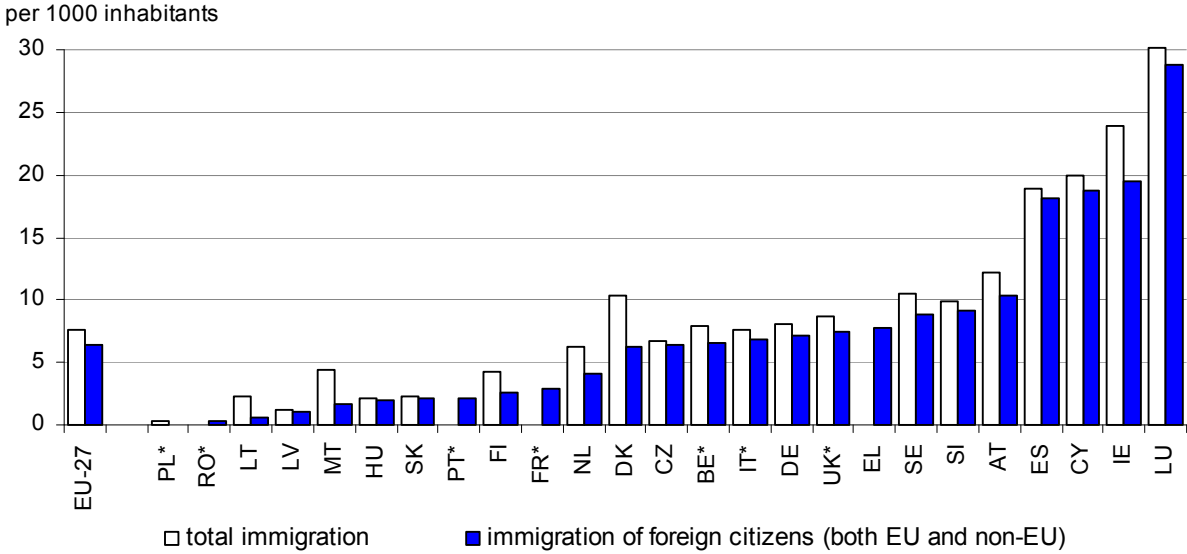
Three Member States received more than half of all immigrants

In 2006, the largest numbers of immigrants among EU Member States were recorded by Spain, Germany and United Kingdom (Table 1). These three countries together received more than 2 million immigrants (including returning nationals). More precisely, the total number of immigrants recorded in the national registers reached over 840 000 in Spain and over 660 000 in Germany². In the United Kingdom, the number of immigrants identified at the border as intending to stay at least one year was nearly 530 000 according to national statistics.

Even if vast majority of immigrants in the EU immigrated in a few big Member States, some smaller countries had larger immigration in relative terms while among above mentioned big countries only Spain had high immigration also in relative terms to its population size. The highest rate of immigration was recorded in Luxembourg followed by Ireland, Cyprus and Spain. These four countries had significantly higher rate compared with other Member States, while for Germany and United Kingdom, immigration per 1000 inhabitants was close to the EU 27 average (Figure 2).

² The total number of immigrants registered by population registration system of Germany includes immigrants for short-term stay while in Spain non-EU citizens can be registered without residence permit.

Figure 2. Immigration per 1000 inhabitants, EU-27 (1), 2006



(1) Per 1000 inhabitants of the country at the beginning of 2006. EU – 27 includes available data from Member States: RO, PT and EL – excluding nationals; PL – excluding nationals and temporary immigrations; FR - excluding nationals and EU15 foreigners; UK- excluding flows from Ireland; BE and IT – 2003 data; BG and EE - data missing.

European Union (EU) Member States: Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK).

Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

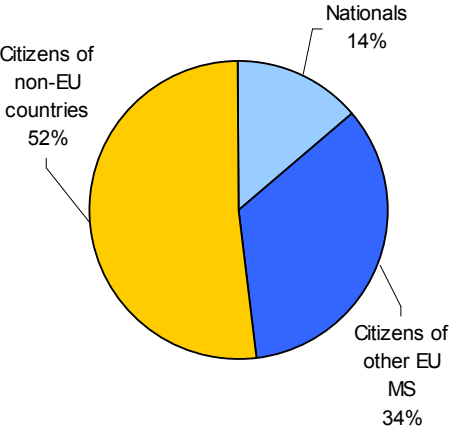
Majority of immigrants are non-EU citizens

In 2006, of a total 3.5 million immigrants to the EU 27 Member States, about 3 million, or in relative terms 86%, were foreigners – i.e. they were not citizens of the country to which they migrated. The rest (14%) were nationals returning to their home country. More than half, or in absolute numbers more than 1.8 millions of immigrants, were not citizens of any EU Member State. However, this does not mean that all non-EU immigrants were newcomers to the EU – this number includes immigrants both from outside the EU and from the other Member States. Thus, another part, slightly less than half, were EU citizens, in absolute numbers 1.7 millions, of whom nearly half a million³ were nationals returning to their home country (Figure 3).

Looking only at foreign citizens, 60% of immigrants were citizens of countries outside the European Union (Figure 4), while 40% were citizens of other EU Member States. Non-EU citizens were made up fairly equally of citizens of European non-EU countries, Asian, American and African countries, ranging from 13 to 16%, with a few per cent from Oceania or without known citizenship.

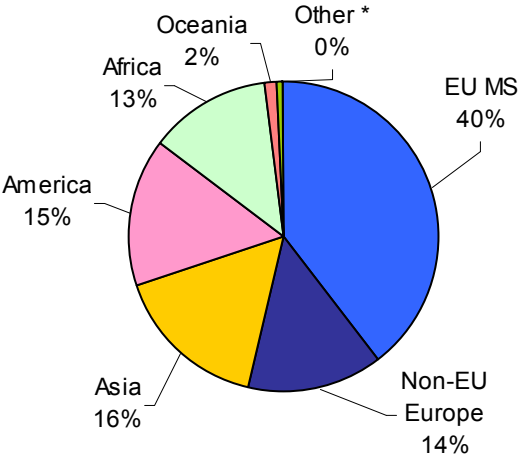
³ Number of immigrating nationals may be largely under recorded or not recorded at all as it is case in France.

Figure 3. Immigrants by groups of citizenship, EU-27, 2006



Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

Figure 4. Foreign immigrants by the location of the country of citizenship, EU-27, 2006



(1) Including stateless and unknown citizenship.

Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

Table 1: Immigrants by citizenship group, 2006 or latest available year

Country of immigration	Total number of immigrants	of which			
		Nationals	Non-nationals		
			Total	EU27 citizens	Non-EU citizens
Belgium (2003)	81 913	13 113	68 800	35 143	33 657
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	:
Czech Republic	68 183	2 058	66 125	10 912	55 213
Denmark	56 750	22 469	34 281	16 833	17 448
Germany	661 855	103 388	558 467	320 727	237 740
Estonia	:	:	:	:	:
Ireland	103 260	18 895	84 365	65 002	19 363
Greece (1)	:	:	86 693	18 588	68 105
Spain	840 844	37 873	802 971	304 349	498 622
France (1)	:	:	182 390	5 403	176 987
Italy (2003)	440 301	47 530	392 771	102 045	290 726
Cyprus	15 545	1 010	14 535	6 017	8 518
Latvia	2 801	496	2 305	1 066	1 239
Lithuania	7 745	5 508	2 237	396	1 841
Luxembourg	14 352	621	13 731	11 512	2 219
Hungary	21 520	2 153	19 367	10 516	8 851
Malta	1 829	1 171	658	:	:
Netherlands	101 150	33 493	67 657	31 921	35 736
Austria	100 972	15 588	85 384	45 170	40 214
Poland(1)	10 802	8 978	1 824	409	1 415
Portugal	:	:	27 703	4392	23 311
Romania	:	:	7 714	1 085	6 629
Slovenia	20 016	1 765	18 251	1 741	16 510
Slovak Republic	12 611	1 302	11 309	6 096	5 213
Finland	22 451	8 583	13 868	5 368	8 500
Sweden	95 750	15 352	80 398	25 482	54 916
United Kingdom(1)	529 008	77 306	451 702	141 407	310 295

(1) The recommended time criterion (a stay of least one year) for defining immigration is used by CY, SE, and the UK for all immigrants and by CZ, FR, LV, LT, PT and FI for foreign immigrants with a residence permit. Other countries use shorter time criteria or do not apply this. ES data may include non-EU citizens registered at the local municipality regardless having a residence permit. FR means the whole territory of France, including metropolitan and overseas departments and regions. The number of immigrants to EL excludes citizens from EU-25 and EFTA countries; the number of immigrants to FR excludes citizens from EU-15, Cyprus and Malta and EFTA countries; the number of immigrants to the UK excludes immigrants from Ireland, whatever their citizenship. Immigration to CY covers only government-controlled territory; immigration to Poland covers only immigrants taking up permanent residence.

: data not available

Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

Immigrants to the Member States were of varied origin

Citizens of all countries of the World were represented among immigrants to the EU Member States. However, the citizenship composition of immigrants to different Member State varied greatly. In 2006, most Member States counted more non-EU than EU among foreign immigrants. The exceptions were Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia and Belgium (in 2003), where more EU than non-EU immigrants were recorded. Returning nationals accounted for a minority of immigrants in most countries. However, Denmark, Lithuania and Finland recorded more nationals than non-national EU or non-EU citizens among immigrants (Table 1).

Available data from all countries indicate that, among non-national immigrants, Polish citizens formed the largest group in the EU in 2006 (Figure 5). The estimated number of Polish immigrants to other Member States was more than 290 000. The second largest group was Romanians, with more than 230 000. British and Germans were next by their numbers but somewhat less numerous — British nearly 100 thousands and Germans 90 thousands.

The substantial numbers of British, German, and also French and Italian citizens (around 50 000 each) migrating to other Member States is explained by the population size of these countries. In relative terms, per 1000 nationals living in their home the country of citizenship, these nationalities had significantly lower migration compared to migrating non-national EU citizens in the EU 27 on average (Figure 5). By contrast, Romanian and Polish citizens were numerous in both absolute numbers and relative terms, as were Bulgarians and Slovak citizens.

Among non-EU citizens, the figures for Moroccan immigrants were much higher than those for any other non-EU citizens in absolute terms (Figure 6), at some 140 000 in 2006, according to estimates. Thus, Moroccans were the third largest group of non-national immigrants in the EU 27 as a whole after Polish and Romanians. Ukrainians and Chinese were next numerous among non-EU citizens. Their numbers were close to the numbers of Britons and Germans migrating to other Member States.

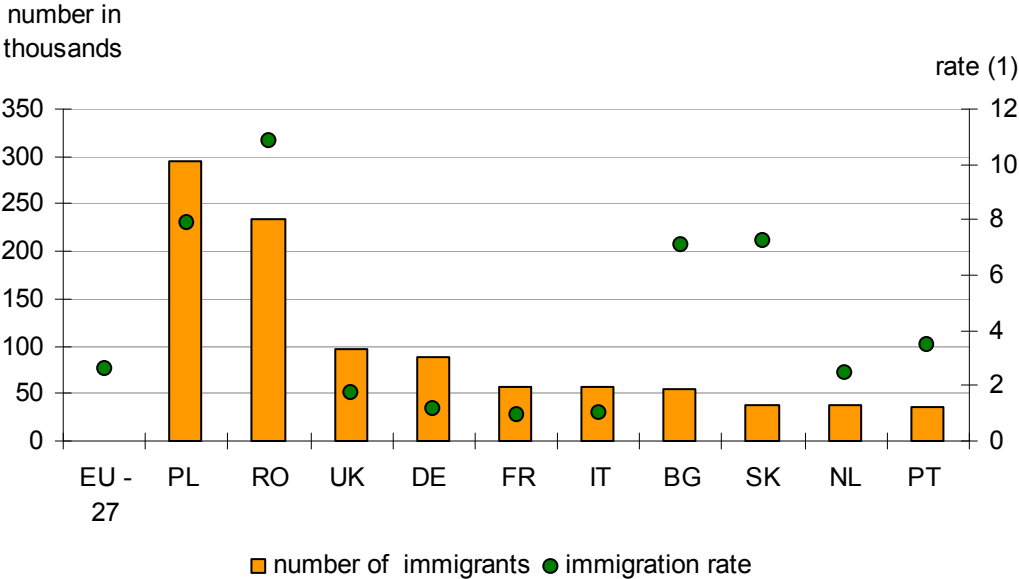
Every Member State had its own citizenship profile for immigrants. Citizens of some countries were affected by several Member States, while others had only one main country of destination (Table 2).

More than half of all migrating Polish citizens immigrated to Germany, while a large part of the rest went to the United Kingdom. For Romanians, the most attractive destination countries were Spain and Italy (the latter according to 2003 data). Nearly half of British migrants went to Spain while Germans, Italians and French citizens had less preference for one particular country of destination: most of them immigrated to their neighbour's territory or other big countries in the EU.

Among non-EU citizens, Moroccans ranked first in flows to Spain and Belgium (the latter according to 2003 data) but were also numerous in France and Italy. Of nearly 100 000 Ukrainians migrating to the EU, three quarters migrated to the Czech Republic and Italy; other attractive destinations for Ukrainians were Spain and Portugal. Chinese citizens most often migrated to Spain and to the United Kingdom but also to several other countries. Albanians migrated to neighbouring countries — Greece and Italy. US citizens had the United Kingdom and Germany as their favourite destinations but migrated to many other Member

States as well. Turkish and Russian citizens were frequent immigrants to several Member States, too. Many Turks migrated to Germany and Austria but France and the Netherlands were also popular. Russians were the largest group of immigrants to Finland and Latvia. However, more Russians migrated to Germany. By contrast, some citizens were significant among immigrants to one country, e.g. Indians to the United Kingdom, Bolivians and Brazilians to Spain.

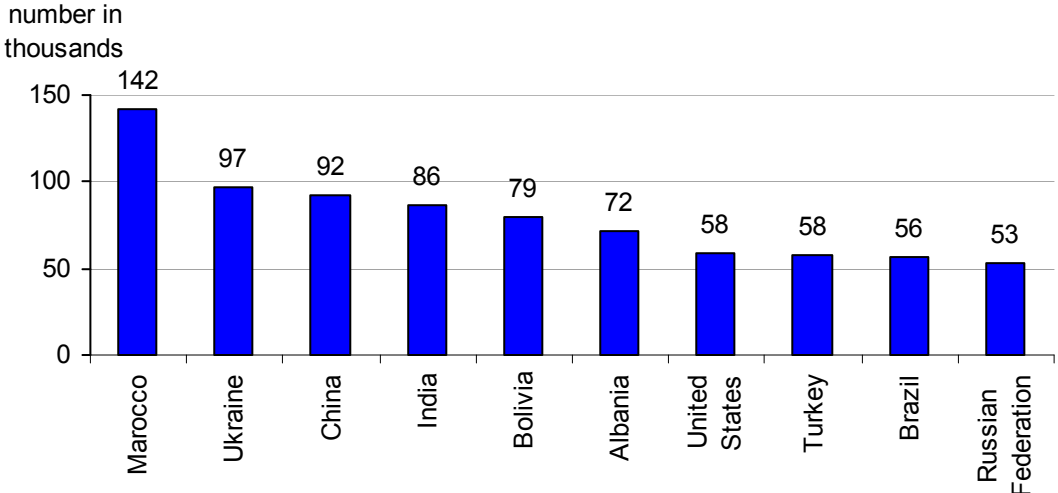
Figure 5. Ten most important non-national EU citizenships among immigrants in the EU and their immigration rates, EU-27, 2006



(1) Rate is counted per 1000 nationals living in the country of origin at the beginning of 2006.

Source: Eurostat estimates.

Figure 6. Ten most important non-EU citizenships among immigrants in the EU, EU-27, 2006



Source: Eurostat estimates.

Table 2. Countries whose citizens are the most numerous immigrants to EU Member States, 2006 (1)

	Range	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Belgium (2003)	Citizens of Number	Netherlands 8547	Morocco 8444	France 8191	Turkey 3831	Germany 2942
Czech Republic	Citizens of Number	Ukraine 30150	Slovakia 6781	Vietnam 6433	Russia 4675	Moldova 2377
Denmark	Citizens of Number	Poland 3616	Germany 2743	Norway 1880	USA 1840	Ukraine 1650
Germany	Citizens of Number	Poland 152733	Turkey 30720	Romania 23743	Hungary 18654	Italy 18293
Greece	Citizens of Number	Albania 36841	Bulgaria 13210	Romania 5034	Egypt 4843	Ukraine 3290
Spain	Citizens of Number	Romania 131457	Morocco 78512	Bolivia 77755	United Kingdom 42535	Columbia 35621
France	Citizens of Number	Algeria 28454	Morocco 24054	China 11232	Tunisia 10345	Turkey 8760
Italy (2003)	Citizens of Number	Romania 74463	Albania 46587	Ukraine 41263	Morocco 32369	Ecuador 16987
Cyprus	Citizens of Number	Sri Lanka 1838	United Kingdom 1575	Philippines 1443	Greece 1236	Poland 941
Latvia	Citizens of Number	Russia 803	Lithuania 269	Germany 223	Estonia 80	Ukraine 76
Lithuania	Citizens of Number	Belarus 647	Russia 396	Ukraine 294	USA 141	Germany 84
Luxembourg	Citizens of Number	Portugal 3796	France 2510	Germany 929	Belgium 911	Italy 619
Hungary	Citizens of Number	Romania 6813	Ukraine 2365	China 1466	Germany 1176	Serbia and Montenegro(2) 1120
Netherlands	Citizens of Number	Germany 7150	Poland 6772	United Kingdom 3583	USA 3121	China 2908
Austria	Citizens of Number	Germany 16223	Serbia and Montenegro(2) 7423	Poland 6035	Turkey 4897	Romania 4757
Portugal	Citizens of Number	Ukraine 7063	Brazil 6036	Moldova 2646	Cape Verde 1723	Romania 1610
Romania	Citizens of Number	Moldova 4349	China 364	Italy 313	USA 292	Turkey 273
Slovenia	Citizens of Number	Bosnia and Herzegovina 7871	Serbia and Montenegro(2) 4447	FYROM (2) 2097	Croatia 1146	Ukraine 357
Slovakia	Citizens of Number	Czech Republic 1294	Poland 1132	Ukraine 1007	Germany 913	Serbia and Montenegro(2) 640

(1) See comments under Table 1. BG, EE, IE, MT and PL data unavailable.

(2) Country of citizenship Serbia and Montenegro refer to the country Serbia and Montenegro, which existed between 2003 and 2006; FYROM – The Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia.

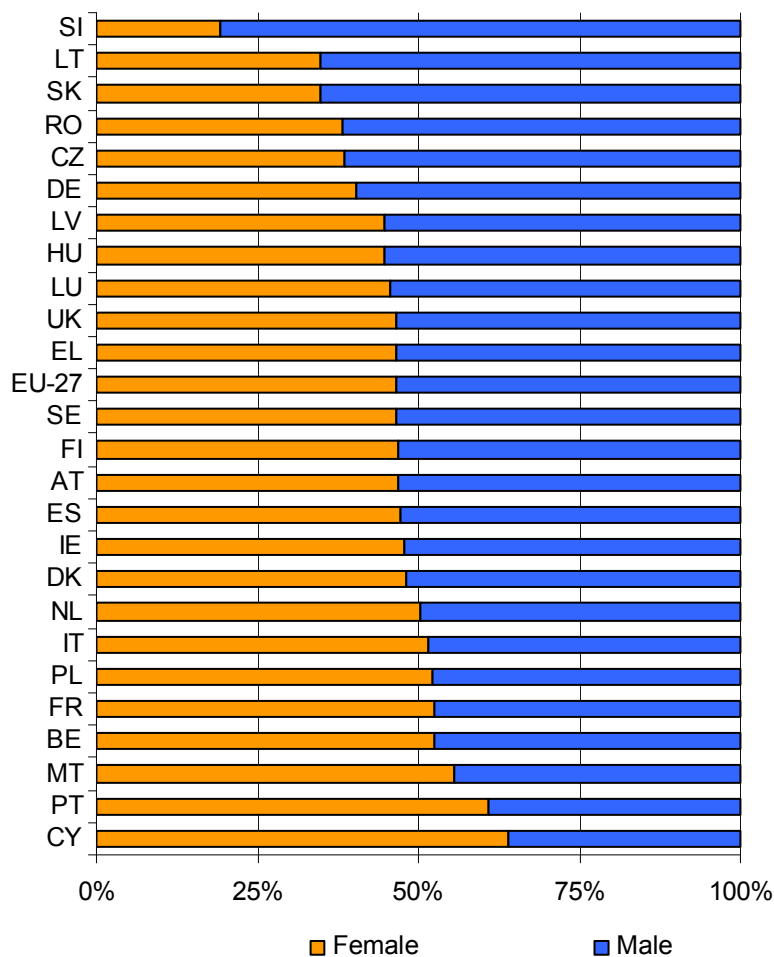
Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

More men than women among foreign immigrants

In 2006, the sex ratio of foreign immigrants to the European Union was 114 men to 100 women⁴. The male prevalence was general, with a few exceptions. In particular, there were more male than female immigrants to most countries in the eastern part of the EU, while women were more likely to predominate in the south (Figure 7).

The highest male prevalence was observed in Slovenia, where men represented more than 80% of the total number of registered foreign immigrants. This was due to the large number of male immigrants from the Western Balkan countries. In Lithuania and Slovakia, nearly two thirds of foreign immigrants were men, while in Romania, the Czech Republic and Germany, the prevalence of men was also significant.

Figure 7: Proportion of male and female foreign immigrants, 2006 (1)



(1) BE and IT (2003); BG and EE data unavailable

Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics

⁴ 2006 data on the sex distribution of all immigrants were available in 19 Member States and in addition 2003 data for BE and IT were used. No data were available for BG and EE, while for FR, EL, PT and RO data exist only on foreigners and for MT it was not possible to distinguish between EU and non-EU immigrants.

The few exceptions were Cyprus, Portugal and Malta, to which a large proportion of immigrants were women. In Cyprus, this was mainly due to female immigrants from Sri Lanka and Philippines, while in Portugal significantly more women than men came from Brazil and Eastern European countries. France and Poland also recorded more women than men in 2006, as did Belgium and Italy according to 2003 data. In 2006, only the Netherlands had equal numbers of men and women among foreign immigrants.

The difference between two citizenship groups of foreign immigrants — non-national EU immigrants and non-EU immigrants — was significant. The proportion of males among non-national EU citizens immigrating to other Member States was much higher than that of non-EU immigrants: 125 male for every 100 non-national female EU immigrants and 108 male for every 100 non-EU female immigrants.

Thus, non-EU immigration seem to be better balanced in terms of sex distribution. Still, looking at the gender composition of non-EU immigrants by destination country, very big differences can be observed: alongside huge male or female prevalence in some countries like Slovenia (up to four times as many men) and Cyprus (almost twice as many women), the gender composition of non-EU immigrants to many countries was quite balanced. Thus relatively low male prevalence among non-EU immigrants in the EU-27 as whole was actually the result of varying tendencies in individual Member States.

Concerning returning nationals, less extreme differences between the number of men and women were observed. Still, male prevalence was more or less noticeable in most countries. Only Austria had an exceptionally high male ratio: twice as many men as women. By contrast, a number of countries such as Cyprus, Ireland, Finland, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom reported practically equal numbers of male and female immigrants with national citizenship.

Among working age foreign immigrants (15 to 64 years old) the sex ratio was even more in favour of men compared with that of immigrants of all ages. In all 14 Member States that supplied immigration data separately on non-national EU citizens and non-EU citizens, significantly more male than female immigrants of working age were observed in both citizenship groups. Only in the Netherlands was the ratio almost the same for immigrants of all ages and of working age. By contrast, in Portugal, where more female than male immigrants were recorded in both citizenship groups, the predominance of women among immigrants of working age was even larger. Denmark, Luxembourg and the Netherlands had the same tendency among non-EU immigrants.

While there are likely to be more men than women among working age migrants, when one looks at total migration and at migration in old age, the age composition of the population of origin is reflected: there were fewer men than women among old people, which explains the prevalence of women among migrants in this age group.

Non-EU immigrants were the youngest

In 2006, the median age of immigrants into the selected Member States which had data on age distribution was 28.8 (Figure 8). Median age is the age at which exactly half of the immigrants are older and half are younger.

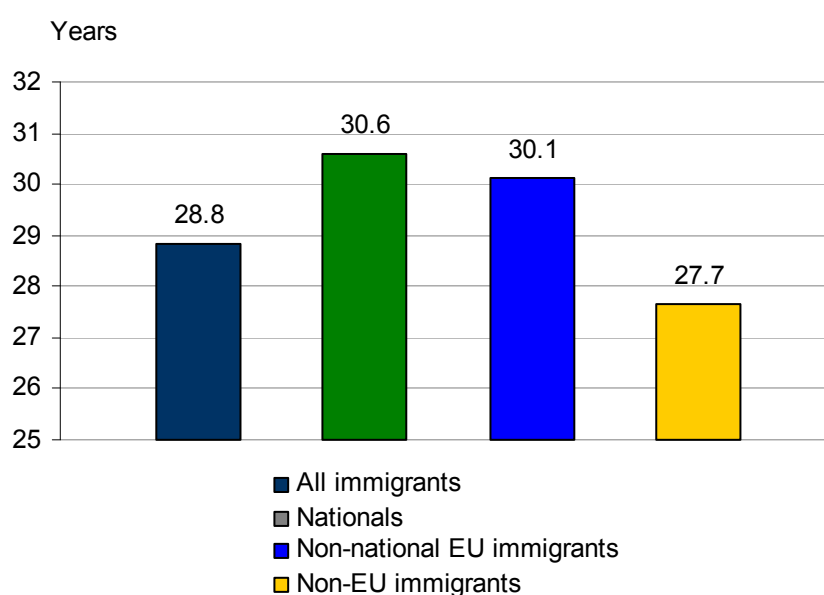
Returning nationals, with a median age of 30.6, were the oldest on average, compared with all other immigrants, while other EU citizens migrating to another country within the EU were just half a year younger. In contrast to the quite similar age composition of national and non-national EU immigrants, there was a remarkable difference between the ages of EU and non-EU immigrants. The median recorded age of non-EU immigrants was 27.7, almost three years younger than that of returning nationals and two and a half years younger than that of other EU citizens.

Indeed, non-EU immigrants tended strongly to be of younger working age: more than half were between 20 and 34 years of age. Among EU citizens migrating to Member States other than their own country slightly less than half were in this age range, while among nationals less than one third were.

Migration is more common in younger adult age, while in old age it is rather infrequent. Thus people of retirement age (older than 64) accounted for only a few per cent of the total number of immigrants to selected Member States. Comparing the proportion of children (under 15) to adult immigrants, children and those aged 50 or more accounted for nearly equal shares — 12% and 11% per cent of total immigration, respectively.

Different tendencies in age composition can be observed by citizenship group. Relatively many nationals settled in their home country in older working age: 12% of national immigrants were between 49 and 65 years of age. Early retirement may influence this tendency. The share of non-national EU citizens aged between 49 and 65 among immigrants was just slightly smaller than that of returning nationals, while among non-EU citizens there were significantly fewer people of this age. Children were rarest among non-national EU citizens, at just 8%, while among non-EU citizens 12% and returning nationals 18% were children.

Figure 8. Median age of immigrants in EU27, 2006



Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

Thus, compared with non-EU immigrants, who presented the typical age structure of migrants (mostly young adults), nationals returning to their country of citizenship had less extreme differences in age group in the EU on average. The age composition of non-national EU immigrants had some similarities with returning nationals, while some other tendencies in this citizenship group were more similar to non-EU immigrants. This is partly explained by rather different patterns of age composition of immigrants across the Member States in question.

Age of immigrants varied across Member States

Age composition, while corresponding to the typical age pattern of migration, varied between Member States. Denmark had the youngest total immigration, with half of the immigrants younger than 25 and 80% younger than 35. The Netherlands and Sweden also received relatively more young immigrants than others — 70% were younger than 35. However, the proportion of younger immigrants in these countries was not as high as in Denmark: the median age was nearly three years higher than in Denmark (27.8 years in both). In these three countries migrants of all citizenships were relatively young.

By contrast, in some countries like the Czech Republic and Slovenia more than half of the immigrants were older than 30. According to Slovakian data, half of the people immigrating to this country were even older than 32. In Slovenia, this was mainly because of relatively older non-national EU immigrants, while in the Czech Republic, returning nationals were older. In Slovakia, EU citizens (nationals and non-nationals) migrated at an older age compared with those from other countries.

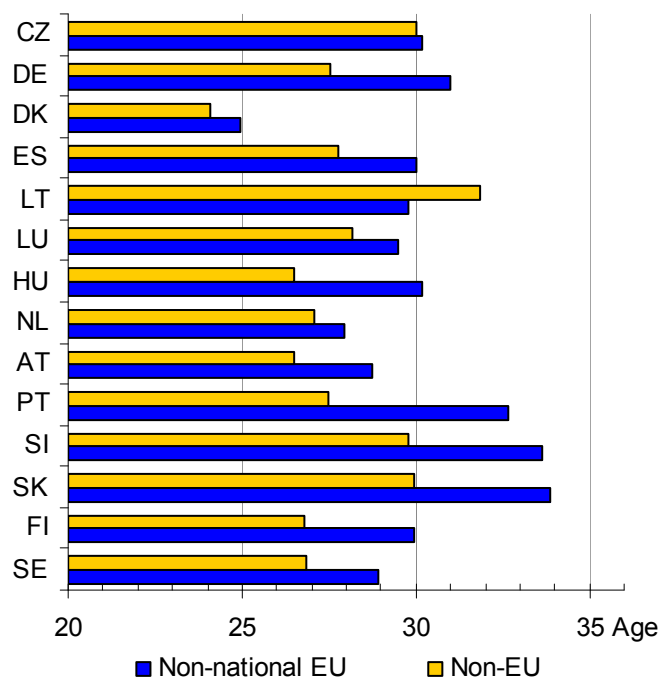
Thus, immigrants' age composition varied markedly across the Member States, particularly in relation to their citizenship (Figure 9). Therefore, it was rather difficult to find any common features among Member States. Bear in mind that different definitions of migrant used in different countries can also have an impact on the data on age composition: if only migrants taking up permanent residence are counted, the age figures may be considerably higher because this type of migration can be counted only after a certain period of temporary stay.

The median age of non-EU citizens immigrating to Member States was distributed over nearly eight years : from the lowest in Denmark (24.1 years) to the highest in Lithuania (31.9 years). The groups of countries with younger or older non-EU immigrants were rather selective: in "old" Member States (that is 15 Member States before EU enlargement in 2004) non-EU immigrants were generally younger than in Member States who joined the EU more recently.

Among non-national EU citizens, the difference between the lowest and highest median age was even greater: nearly nine years, with Denmark at 24.9 and Slovenia at 33.8. Non-national EU immigrants in northern parts of Europe were relatively younger, while those who immigrated to countries in the south and east of the EU were relatively older.

The median age of nationals returning to their home country was over 30 in several Member States. In Austria, returning nationals were, on average, oldest (with a median age of 35.4). The median age of Spanish, Slovakian and Czech nationals migrating to their home country was about 33, while half of German nationals migrating to Germany were also older than 31.

Figure 9. Median age of foreign immigrants by group of citizenship in selected Member States, 2006.



Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

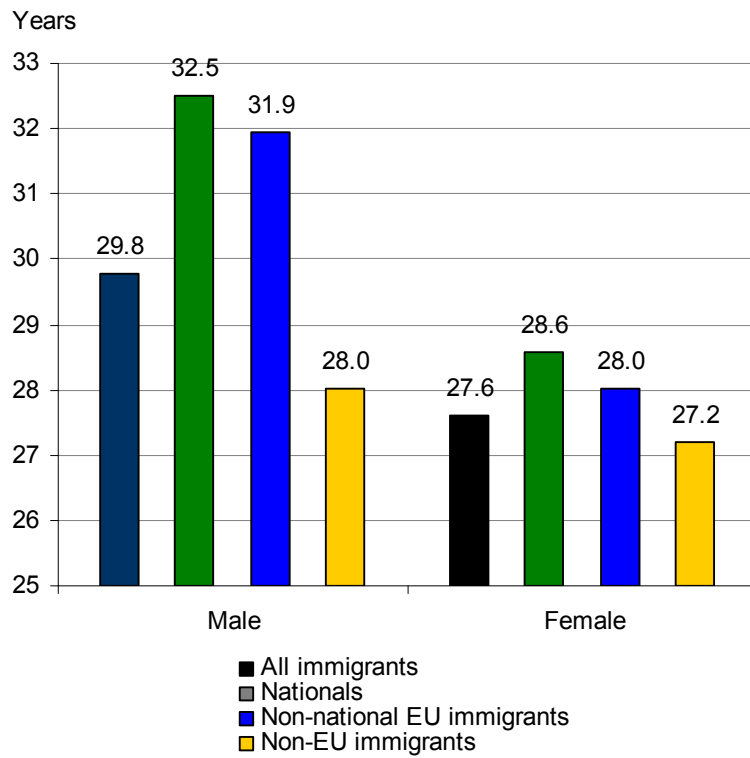
Women immigrate younger than men

In all citizenship groups, women were younger than men when they migrated. According to data from 12 EU Member States, the median age of all female immigrants was two years lower than that of males (Figure 10).

Again, the gender/age patterns of immigration differed between Member States. Among migrating EU citizens (national and other EU immigrants) the figure for men was everywhere at least two years higher than that for women. The biggest difference among nationals was observed in Austria where the median age of male immigrants with national citizenship was almost 5 years greater than that of women (36.6 for men and 31.7 years for women). Among EU citizens immigrating to other Member States, the difference was even more variable between countries: from less than two years up to almost eight (Figure 11).

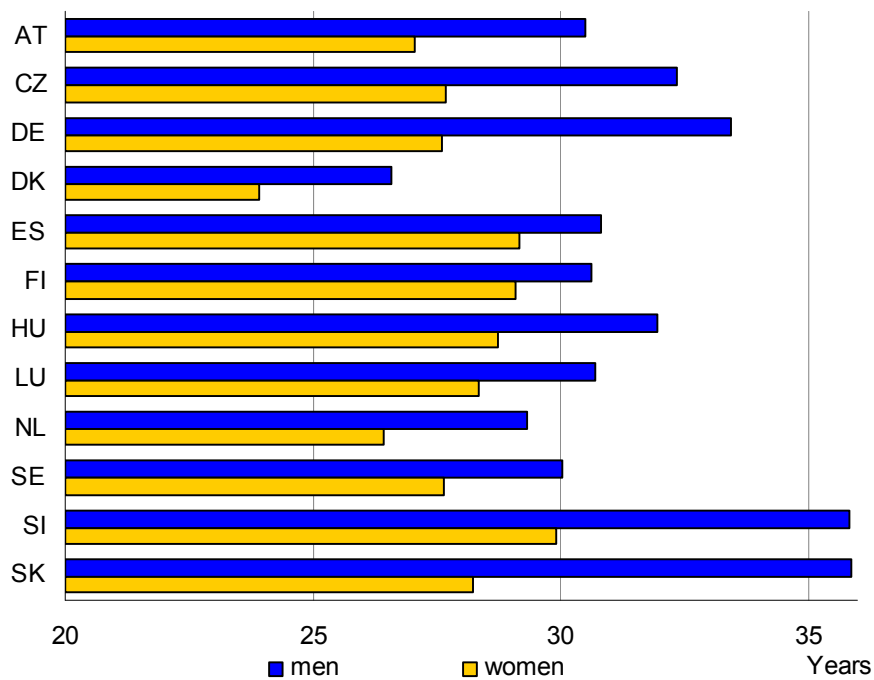
By contrast, among non-EU citizens the differences in median age between female and male immigrants were very small in many countries (Figure 12). In Spain and Sweden, the median age of male and female immigrants was the same, while in others — Denmark, Finland and Luxembourg, it was almost the same. In Luxembourg and Finland, the median age of male immigrants was a little lower than that of females.

Figure 10: Median age of immigrants by citizenship groups and sex, 2006



Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics

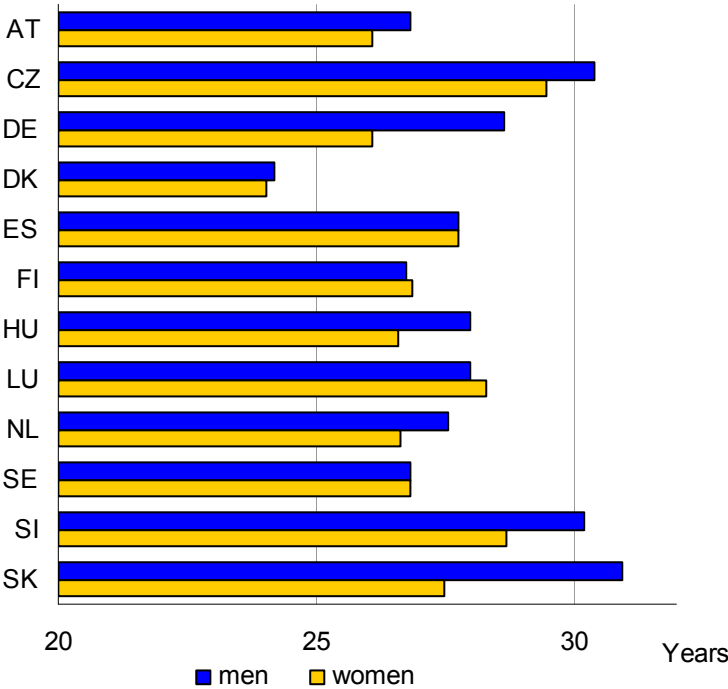
Figure 11. Median age of immigrating EU citizens by sex*, selected EU Member States, 2006



*EU citizens excluding returning nationals.

Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

Figure 12. Median age of immigrating non-EU citizens by sex, selected EU Member States, 2006



Source: Eurostat, Migration Statistics.

Conclusion

It is well known that the availability of international migration data is limited, and even if available, the quality is poor, and there is a lack of comparability between existing data by countries. Nevertheless, there are a lot of data collected that are enough reliable in order to understand the general patterns of migration in Europe. Eurostat's database on international migration includes useful information on immigration to EU Member States. These data are not yet complete in terms of the coverage and definitions and therefore a good knowledge of methodologies that are used for producing these data is needed. With the help of this knowledge, when using the set of data over several recent years and adjusting by estimations where necessary, it is possible to draw an overview on demographic pattern of the international immigration flow to Member States of the European Union.

Analysis of the available data adjusted by estimation revealed that from 27 Member States of the EU three countries (Spain, Germany and UK) received more than half of all immigrants in the EU in 2006. We identified that the overall demographic pattern of immigration consisted from rather different patterns of immigration flows to every individual Member State. Thus, as the share of immigration to only few Member States in the overall EU immigration is very large, their patterns can hide heterogeneity of the migration flows to all other Member States.

However, not only size of immigration flows to individual Member States differed significantly, but they also differed by the gender and age composition as well as by the citizenship composition of immigrants. While citizenship composition was available for most of 27 EU Member States; the data for analysis by gender and age were more limited: gender

data was possible to use from 19 and age from 12 countries. There were more men than women among non-national immigrants: for most countries the male ratio was between 50 to 60 per cents. However, some countries had significantly more women than men in their immigration flow. Median age varied largely when data were disaggregated by sex and by citizenship groups. As average for twelve observed countries median age of female immigrants was almost four years lower than that of male among EU citizens (both returning nationals and other EU citizens) The differences between male and female median age varied largely among individual Member States and the biggest differences – from two up to almost eight years - were observed again in case of EU citizens immigrating to another Member State. For non-EU citizens the difference in median age of male and female was less than one year as average in 12 countries. Again differences were observed between individual Member States. Compared with EU citizens, there were several countries with almost equal median ages of female and male non-EU citizens, and in some countries median age of men was even somewhat lower compared to women.

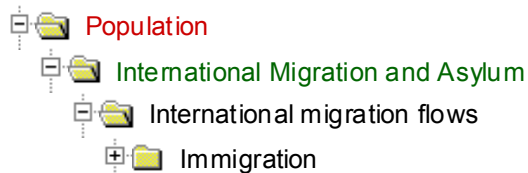
We also observed that citizens of some countries of origin were significantly more numerous among immigrants compared to others in absolute terms or compared to their home country populations. The finding that almost half of immigration was counted for EU citizens proves that there is a need on better knowledge about intra-EU migration. Moreover, citizens of EU Member States – Poland and Romania – represented two largest groups among all foreign citizens immigrating to other Member States, while the largest citizenship group of non-EU citizens – Moroccans – was two times less numerous.

Thus, analysing demographic pattern of immigration in the EU simply using total immigration flows to EU Member States without disaggregating by the citizenship would hide important information and limit the understanding the role of migration in the population change and composition of the European Union. Also, as the Member States vary by the level of attraction for migrants and by current and historical links to other countries, it is important to understand and consider the different migration patterns that shape the overall picture of the immigration into the European Union Member States.

Reference:

Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Population and social conditions



Poulain, Michel, Nicolas Perrin and Ann Singleton (2006), THESIM. Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration. UCL, Presses Universitaires de Louvain. 743 p.

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