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## **Trends in International Migration Reflect Increasing Labour-related Immigration and Persistent Integration Problems**

Record numbers of people are moving to many OECD countries in search of jobs and to join their families. The latest edition of OECD's annual **Trends in International Migration** notes that the economic down-turn in some OECD countries has not affected the upward trend in international migration which began in the mid-1990s.

The United States admitted more than a million permanent immigrants in 2001 and 2002, 25% more than in 2000. In the same time period, several European countries, including Austria, France and Switzerland, admitted about 15% more immigrants. Southern European countries, Canada and New Zealand also saw sharp increases in their immigration flows following recent regularisation programmes. Only Japan, Korea and Northern Europe saw smaller increases.

There was a significant increase in labour-related migration during 2001-2002, of both temporary and permanent workers and across all employment categories - skilled workers, seasonal employees, trainees, working holiday-makers, transfers of staff within multinational companies, and cross-border workers. Other categories of admissions such as family unification, refugees and students also continued to grow.

The report reveals changes in the geographic origin of migration flows, with the emergence of "new" trajectories. Increases were observed, for instance, in arrivals of Asian nationals, especially Chinese and Filipinos, and people from Russia and the Ukraine into all OECD Member countries. Migration flows from Latin America were also on the rise.

Despite improved conditions in the labour market for most foreigners during the past economic growth phase, some foreign workers - particularly women and younger and older workers - remained vulnerable.

Recent developments in international migration trends reflect changes in OECD member countries' migration policies which attempt to control the growth of asylum requests and to recruit skilled foreign workers as well as other types of foreign labour (e.g. for seasonal work and care for children and the elderly). In 2002 and 2003, several OECD countries - Denmark, France, Greece and Portugal - passed new laws regarding the entry, stay and employment of foreigners. Others, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Switzerland, amended their legislation on asylum. The report also reviews the main measures aimed at harmonizing migration policies across the European Union.

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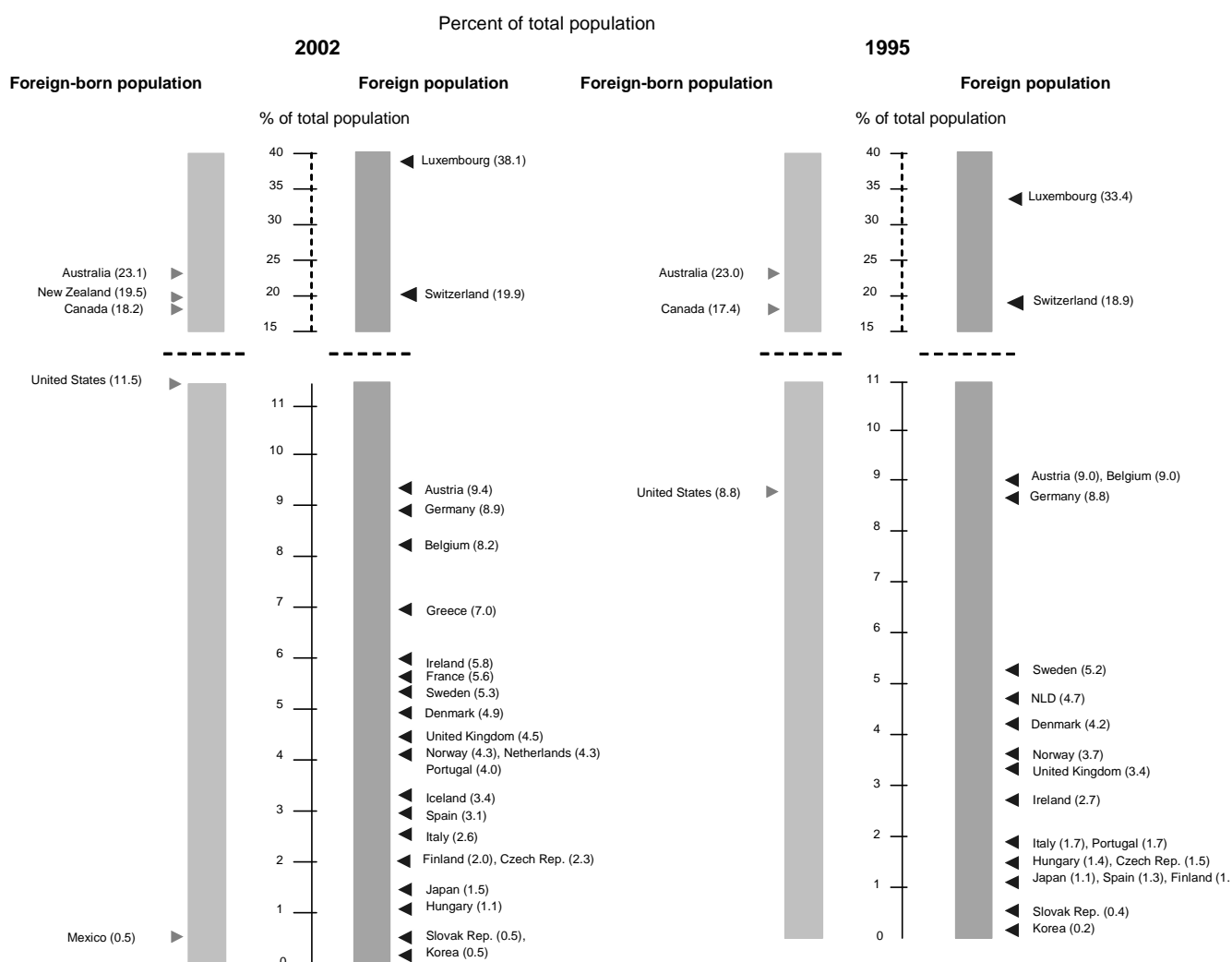
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The first special chapter of this edition of **Trends in International Migration** focuses on the regional aspects of international migration. Factors affecting where arriving immigrants decide to settle in the host country are primarily: i) the economic attractiveness of the destination region; ii) the presence of family members or people of the same ethnic origin; and iii) the point of entry into the country and the proximity of the country of destination to the country of origin. Regional programmes for migration, such as those introduced in Canada and Australia which encourage immigrants to settle in non-urban areas, are relatively limited in scope but illustrate the opportunities available to strengthen the links between policies related to regional development and those dealing with migration.

The 1990s saw a significant increase in the international mobility of highly skilled workers looking for jobs in the fields of new technologies, education and healthcare. The second special chapter addresses the “brain drain” issue, based on the example of internationally mobile health professionals from South Africa. The leading factors determining the mobility of health professionals broadly coincide with those that apply to all highly skilled workers and derive from a combination of push and pull factors. **Trends in International Migration** concludes that emigration is not necessarily the fundamental reason for the difficulties facing healthcare systems in developing countries, although it does aggravate the problem. The South African government recently introduced several measures designed to encourage the immigration of skilled foreign workers, in particular from other developing countries, and to retain South African personnel. The report presents, and attempts to assess, these programmes. Drawing on the South African example, the report shows the importance, both at the national level in countries of origin and at international level, of strong policy coherence in the spheres of migration and development aid, so that the benefits of the international mobility of health professionals are shared in a fair and sustainable fashion.

To obtain a copy of **Trends in International Migration**, journalists should contact the OECD's Media Relations Division (tel. 33 1 45 24 97 00 or [news.contact@oecd.org](mailto:news.contact@oecd.org)). Journalists wishing more information on this publication or other OECD work related to migration should contact Jean-Pierre Garson, OECD's Non-Member Economies and International Migration Division (tel. 33 1 45 24 91 74 or [jean-pierre.garson@ecd.org](mailto:jean-pierre.garson@ecd.org)).

**Stocks of foreign and foreign-born populations in selected OECD countries, 1995 and 2002,**



**Note:** An update has been prepared since the publication of the 2003 edition of *Trends in International Migration* with data available for 2002. The data are preliminary. 1996 for Canada.

**Sources:** National Statistical Offices. For more details on sources, please refer to notes for Tables A.1.4 and A.1.5 at the end of the Statistical Annex.