

# Sustainable Inclusion of Migrants

Sustainable Governance Indicators 2024



Indicator

## Integration Policy

Question

To what extent does the current policy approach hinder or facilitate the inclusion of migrants into society and the labor market?

30 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = Integration policies are fully aligned with achieving the sustainable inclusion of migrants in society.
- 8-6 = Integration policies are largely aligned with achieving the sustainable inclusion of migrants in society.
- 5-3 = Integration policies are only somewhat aligned with achieving the sustainable inclusion of migrants in society.
- 2-1 = Integration policies are not at all aligned with achieving the sustainable inclusion of migrants in society.

### Portugal

Score 9

Since 2015, Portugal has seen a significant and accelerating increase in its resident foreign population. According to PORDATA (2023), there was a 12% growth from 2021 to 2022, bringing the total number of foreigners living in Portugal to over 781,000 – nearly 400,000 more than in 2015. This increase is largely due to Portugal’s inclusive policy framework for employed migrants, a result of concerted efforts by the state and civil society to ensure immigrants’ human dignity and complete integration. This is achieved through principles of equity, respect for diversity, and equal opportunities. Crucial to this effort are the National Immigrant Support Centers, local centers, telephone support services offering simultaneous translation, and essential information resources.

In the 2023 Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), Portugal achieved an impressive third-place ranking with a score of 81 out of 100, distinguishing itself among nations with the most favorable policies for migrant integration. The country’s integration strategy is notably comprehensive, focusing on ensuring equal rights, opportunities, and security for immigrants. The MIPEX report specifically points out that “Portugal has consistently improved since the first MIPEX edition. (...) Portugal also started to address its slight areas of weakness on migrant health and education: the healthcare system is improving access to healthcare and health information, while the education system is better supporting cultural diversity at school” (MIPEX, 2023). Additionally, Portugal’s policies on citizenship are acclaimed as among the best globally. This acclaim is further supported by the most recent European Social Survey, which observes that “Portugal is one of the countries in which respondents report greater openness to immigrants, and which... has seen this trend increase since the year 2000” (European Commission, 2023).

In Portugal, legal immigrants enjoy the same rights, opportunities, and security as citizens. They have the right to work, and their children have access to the education system regardless of their legal status. Moreover, if immigrants believe they have faced discrimination, they can file complaints with the Commission for Equality Against Racial Discrimination (“Comissão para a Igualdade e Contra a Discriminação Racial”) – the institution responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination legislation. However, such complaints rarely lead to significant consequences. The most recent data indicates that in 2022, this Commission received 491 complaints, resulting in only five condemnations, with only four involving a fine. The largest of these fines, imposed on a bank, was a mere €57.80 (Expresso, 2023).

Coupled with the most recent amendments to the Nationality Law in 2018 and 2020 (Republic Diary, 2018 and 2020), which facilitated naturalization, there has been a notable increase in the number of naturalizations. Requests for Portuguese nationality surged by approximately 37% in 2022, reaching a new high of 74,506 requests (Immigration and Border Services, 2023).

Citation:

PORDATA. 2023. “População estrangeira com estatuto legal de residente: total e por algumas nacionalidades.” <https://www.pordata.pt/portugal/populacao+estrangeira+com+estatuto+legal+de+residente+total+e+por+algumas+nacionalidades-24>

Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). 2020. “Key Findings – Portugal, 2019.” <https://www.mipex.eu/portugal>

European Commission. 2023. “Portugal: Survey Finds Public Increasingly Tolerant of Migrants.” [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/portugal-survey-finds-public-increasingly-tolerant-migrants\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/portugal-survey-finds-public-increasingly-tolerant-migrants_en)

Republic Diary. 2018. Organic Law No. 2/2018 – Nona alteração à Lei n.º 37/81, de 3 de outubro, que aprova a Lei da Nacionalidade. <https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/lei-organica/2-2018-148086464>

Republic Diary. 2020. Organic Law No. 2/2020 – Alarga o acesso à nacionalidade originária e à naturalização às pessoas nascidas em território português, procedendo à oitava alteração à Lei n.º 37/81, de 3 de outubro, que aprova a Lei da Nacionalidade. <https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/lei-organica/2-2020-115643970>

Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras. 2023. “Relatório de Imigração, Fronteiras e Asilo 2022.” <https://www.sef.pt/pt/Documents/RIFA2022%20vF2a.pdf>

Expresso. 2023. “Queixas por discriminação racial aumentam em Portugal.” <https://expresso.pt/sociedade/2023-03-03-Queixas-por-discriminacao-racial-aumentam-em-Portugal-f4d5dc21>

## Australia

Score 8

Australia has a large migrant population, with nearly one in four residents born overseas and half having an overseas-born parent. The largest source of permanent migrants is the government’s skilled migration program, aiming to address workforce skills shortages and increase economically valuable skills. Approximately 60% of migrants to Australia since 2000 have arrived through the skilled migrants program, which tends to attract highly educated and economically valuable

individuals with favorable labor market outcomes (AI Group 2023). About 81% of permanent skilled migrants over 15 are employed, compared with 62% of the rest of the Australian population, with a slightly higher unemployment rate of 3.8% compared to 3.3%, possibly due to issues with recognition of overseas qualifications.

Although migrants are not able to vote in Australian elections, there is a pathway to full citizenship open to them which would guarantee the right to vote alongside other political rights and responsibilities. Citizenship can be achieved within four years, subject to character standards, passing a citizenship test – which includes questions about Australian history and values – and other requirements. The government provides free English language learning support through its Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP 2023) to improve integration.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX 2020) assesses countries on migrant integration policies across basic rights (e.g., migrants' rights to work, training, health and non-discrimination), equal opportunities (e.g., in education, health and political participation), and future prospects (i.e., can migrants secure their future in the country through family reunification, permanent residence and citizenship).

Assessed against these criteria, Australia ranks in the highest-scoring group of countries that adopt a “comprehensive integration” approach, aiming to secure equal rights, opportunities and security for immigrants. Australia scores below some other major destination countries, including Canada, New Zealand and the United States, but above the Western European countries. The index identifies Australia's weakest areas as migrant access to basic rights – where opportunities to participate politically are limited by the requirement that voters must be citizens – and labor market mobility, because migrants often face long delays before they can be employed under the same conditions as Australian citizens.

While there are good economic and integration opportunities for many groups of migrants, many migrants face significant hurdles to economic and political integration, particularly those arriving through refugee and humanitarian channels (Hirsch 2017).

Family reunion is an explicit component of the permanent migration program but is limited relative to demand, mostly restricted to partners of Australian permanent residents and citizens. Over 140,000 people seek parent visas, but only 8,500 places are available annually under the current migration program (Kaul 2023).

Citation:

AI Group. 2023. “Skilled Migrants’ Contribution to the Australian Workforce.” <https://www.aigroup.com.au/resourcecentre/research-economics/economics-intelligence/2023/skilled-migrants-contribution-to-workforce/>

MIPEX. 2020. “Migrant Integration Policy Index: Australia.” <https://www.mipex.eu/australia>

AMEP. 2023. “Adult Migrant English Program.” Australian Government Department of Home Affairs. <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/amep/about-the-program>

Hirsch, A. 2017. "Denying Refugees Citizenship: The Australian Way." <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/denying-refugees-citizenship/>

Kaul, N. 2023. "Over 140,000 Waiting for Parent Visas as Processing Time Balloons." SBS February 17. <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/hindi/en/podcast-episode/over-14-000-waiting-for-parent-visas-as-processing-period-balloons/8gkdg5lyp>

## Czechia

### Score 8

Czechia has a mixed record in integrating foreigners. Before the conflict in Ukraine, it was not known for welcoming refugees. In 2022, there were 1,694 asylum applications, of which 92 were granted, and 25 individuals were granted citizenship. However, increasing numbers of foreigners had come temporarily to work, including citizens from other EU member states, Ukraine, Vietnam, and the Russian Federation.

The situation transformed in 2022 when refugees from Ukraine were welcomed. The exact figure is unclear, but by October 2023, 453,725 had been granted temporary protection. An unknown number have since returned to Ukraine or moved elsewhere. Official data showed 635,857 Ukrainians in the country at the end of 2022.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the European Union activated the Temporary Protection Directive, which has also been applied in Czechia. This directive grants rights including residence permits, access to the labor market and housing, medical assistance, and access to education for children. According to a Voice of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic survey, one-fifth of Ukrainian refugees in Czechia did not see a doctor despite needing medical care. Many refugees face language barriers, lack of information, and long waiting times.

There were also early complaints from Ukrainian Roma of systematic and individual racism, which led to them being denied help for weeks.

By the end of 2022, foreigners made up about 10% of the population, with 57% from Ukraine and 10% from Slovakia. This is an increase from 6% in 2021. In 2022, foreign citizens accounted for 23% of the labor force registered by labor offices. Of these, 80% were working, including 47% of Ukrainians. However, foreign citizens often work in low-skilled jobs, frequently recruited in their home countries by employment agencies for work in manufacturing.

For people from non-EU countries, the only way to apply their qualifications in the Czech labor market is through the recognition of their diploma, known as nostrification. This process is often lengthy, leading to complaints from many employers seeking qualified labor. One significant example is the health sector, which suffers from a shortage of doctors and nurses and could benefit from newcomers with non-EU medical degrees who otherwise occupy unskilled positions.

Foreigners may encounter several barriers when seeking employment that matches their qualifications, one of which is a lack of knowledge of the Czech language. Language courses for adults with the legal right to stay in the country are provided by regional Centers for the Integration of Foreigners. The largest of these is the Integration Center Prague (Integrační centrum Praha ICP), a non-governmental organization receiving funding from the EU, the Czech government, and municipal authorities. However, it does not offer courses beyond a basic level.

Citation:

Hlas Ukrajinců: Zdraví a služby. Výzkum mezi uprchlíky. Listopad 2022./ The voice of Ukrainians: Health and Services. Research among refugees. November 2022. <https://www.paqresearch.cz/post/hlas-ukrajincu-zdravi-sluzby>  
[https://icpraha.com/kdo-jsme/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiArfauBhApEiwAeoB7qOD6ZEYA](https://icpraha.com/kdo-jsme/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiArfauBhApEiwAeoB7qOD6ZEYA)

## Denmark

Score 8

On 1 July 2020, approximately 814,000 immigrants and descendants of immigrants lived in Denmark, accounting for 13.8% of the population (9% immigrants, 5% descendants). Roughly two-thirds of these immigrants were from non-Western countries.

Immigration rules have tightened since 2002, including the family reunification rule introduced in 2004. Since peaking in 2015, immigration from countries outside the European Union has fallen, while immigration from within the European Union for work remains significant. The employment rate among immigrants and their descendants aged 16 to 64 is low compared to other groups, though it has been increasing in recent years. Consequently, there is a substantial employment gap when considering age distribution and qualifications.

Immigrants from non-Western countries had an employment rate 22% lower than that of ethnic Danes in 2020 (for descendants, the gap is 16%). The gap is higher for women (24%) than for men (19%). For immigrants from Western countries, the gap is about 11% (for descendants, about 6%). These gaps in employment rates should be viewed in light of Denmark's high employment rates for both men and women, the high qualification requirements for securing a job and the high minimum wage.

The inclusion of immigrants in the labor market has improved somewhat because the Danish labor market has proven very strong, attracting a large inflow of migrant workers. However, a concern remains that if the economy slows down, the first to lose their jobs would likely be non-Western immigrants (Statistics Denmark 2023).

An increasing share of immigrants report feeling more integrated and having more Danish friends, with fewer experiencing discrimination. Additionally, more immigrants than ever before now speak Danish. Within three years of arrival, half of all male refugees are employed, and the children of refugees are integrating into Danish schools faster than in the past.

Concerning educational achievements, immigrants and their descendants – especially girls – are making progress. Among those aged 25 to 34, 80% of women with Danish ethnicity and 67% of women with a foreign background have completed secondary education. For men, the figures are 73% with Danish ethnicity and 49% with a foreign background.

There is broad political support for tight immigration policies, and various measures have been introduced in recent years to reduce immigration, including family unification. The conditions of temporary residency permits are being reassessed, and discussions are ongoing about the scope allowed to temporary residents to return to their home countries. These measures should be viewed alongside changes to the social safety net and reduced transfers to immigrants.

Denmark has stopped receiving quota refugees through the United Nations, even though some municipalities had indicated they were ready to accept more. The Social Democratic Party has committed to a strict immigration policy, which allowed it to capture votes from the Danish People's Party. However, other parties in the “red” block, especially the Social Liberals, favor a more liberal immigration policy.

Citation:  
Statistics Denmark. 2023. “Stigende beskæftigelse for ikke-vestlige efterkommere.”  
<https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/nyheder-analyser-publ/nyt/NytHtml?cid=47918>

## New Zealand

Score 8

New Zealand has long been a prime destination for immigrants. The latest census (2018) shows that 27.4% of people counted were not born in New Zealand, up from 25.2% in 2013 (Stats NZ 2019).

New Zealand has implemented initiatives to facilitate the inclusion of migrants into society and the labor market. Immigration policies prioritize skilled migrants, offering pathways for those with skills needed in the labor market. Additionally, there are programs and services to assist migrants with settlement, language training and cultural integration. Policies that allow for family reunification further support migrants in establishing stable lives in New Zealand.

Empirical data suggest that these initiatives are effective: Immigrants are less likely to claim benefits, more likely to be employed, and their children have better educational outcomes than native-born New Zealanders. Moreover, there is relatively little ethnic or migrant clustering, and where concentrations do occur there is no indication of high rates of unemployment (Krupp and Hodder 2017). Surveys show that New Zealanders generally have a positive view of migrants and value the contribution they make to the economy and the cultural diversity they bring. For example, research commissioned by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and

Employment in 2021 showed that 64% of New Zealanders felt positively toward migrants, the highest point measured since the first survey was conducted in 2011 (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment 2021).

However, certain hindrances to inclusion remain. For example, challenges exist with regard to the recognition and validation of foreign qualifications and work experience – though some qualification requirements have been lifted recently, such as in the hospitality industry (Sadler and Ewing 2022). Moreover, despite the generally welcoming attitude toward immigration, racism and discrimination against migrants can still be found in New Zealand – including in the areas of health, housing and employment (RNZ 2021).

Citation:

Krupp, Jason and Rachel Hodder. 2017. “The New New Zealanders: Why Migrants Make Good Kiwis.” The New Zealand Initiative. <https://www.nzinitiative.org.nz/reports-and-media/reports/the-new-new-zealanders/>

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. 2021. “Community perceptions of migrants and immigration 2021.” <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/18768-community-perceptions-of-migrants-and-immigration-2021>

RNZ. 2021. “Racism against Migrants Prevalent in New Zealand, Report Finds.” 25 March. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/439123/racism-against-migrants-prevalent-in-new-zealand-report-finds>

Sadler, R. and Ewing, I. 2022. “Government Removes Qualification Requirement for Migrant Chefs as Part of New Immigration Support for Hospitality, Tourism Sectors.” Newshub, October 9. <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2022/10/government-removes-qualification-requirement-for-migrant-chefs-as-part-of-new-immigration-support-for-hospitality-tourism-sectors.html>

Stats NZ. 2019. “New Zealand’s Population Reflects Growing Diversity.” <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/newzealands-population-reflects-growing-diversity>

## Norway

Score 8

Integration policy in Norway is relatively well-organized and well-funded. The key policy objective, which is legislated, is to ensure access to training, education, and employment for immigrants to prevent dependence on social security benefits. Rules for applying for citizenship vary depending on the migrant’s country of origin. Despite comprehensive measures, non-Western immigrants experience higher unemployment rates, lower pay, and lower job security than native Norwegians and Western immigrants. There are complaints of discrimination in the labor and housing markets as well as in daily life. Nonetheless, Norway has been more successful than many other OECD countries in integrating immigrants into the labor market.

There is a tension between pursuing a policy of multiculturalism and respect for ethnic differences and the belief in strict principles of equal treatment, which, according to critics, can easily become a hidden pressure for assimilation. Opinions also differ on whether immigrants with a non-Western refugee background should be treated differently from European immigrants who legally seek employment within the common European labor market.

Integration policies include 300 hours of free language training for immigrants and additional resources for schools with a high share of immigrant children. The central



government compensates local authorities for their integration costs over five years if they agree to receive and integrate immigrants with a refugee background. Some of these resources are devoted to preserving cultural identity and providing classes for children in their mother tongue.

Applicants for citizenship must have lived in the country for at least eight out of the last 11 years (six years if their income is above a certain threshold, seven of the last ten years for asylum-seekers, but two years are sufficient for citizens of other Nordic countries). Immigrants with permanent residence status are entitled to vote in local, but not national, elections. Family reunification is a right for those able to verifiably demonstrate capacity for economic self-sufficiency. Political parties and other civil society organizations actively recruit individuals with immigrant backgrounds for key positions. There are no national target values for integration policies. Public attitudes toward immigration are monitored regularly. In the latest published study in March 2022, 53% of the population regarded immigration as positive for Norway, up 10 percentage points from 2021.

Citation:

Arbeids – og inkluderingsdepartementet. 2020. Integreringsloven. <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2020-11-06-127>

IMDi Integrerings og mangfoldsdirektoratet. 2022. “Integreringsbarometeret 2022.” <https://www.imdi.no/om-imdi/rapporter/2022/integreringsbarometeret-2022/>

IMDi Integrerings og mangfoldsdirektoratet. 2023. Hvordan går det med integreringen i Norge? Indikatorer, status og utviklingstrekk i 2023. <https://www.imdi.no/globalassets/dokumenter/indikatorer-status-og-utviklingstrekk/hvordan-gar-det-med-integreringen-i-norge-2023-.pdf>

OECD/European Commission. 2023. Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d5020a6-en>

## Spain

Score 8

According to a December 2023 survey by CIS, only 8.6% of Spaniards listed immigration as a main concern, down from 15.6% in September 2019 and 59.2% in September 2006. This indicates that Spanish society is quite open toward the inclusion of migrants.

In 2022, 118,842 applications for international protection were formalized, doubling the number from 2021. However, significant difficulties arose in obtaining appointments to declare willingness to apply for international protection. The Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants (2023) identified obstacles such as the accumulation of files in immigration offices, a shortage of appointments, and the heterogeneous interpretation of existing regulations. Digitalization in public administration has exacerbated existing inequalities among different social groups, particularly affecting immigrants and applicants for international and temporary protection.

EU immigrants have equal access to the Spanish labor market, while non-EU immigrants can access employment, self-employment, and unemployment support. However, available jobs are often unskilled, precarious, and insecure, primarily in domestic work and agriculture. Many non-EU immigrants are overqualified, but recognition procedures for their skills and qualifications are problematic.

Royal Decree 889/2022 establishes a six-month deadline for the homologation of foreign diplomas, aiming to improve migrant employability. Royal Decree Law 16/2022 of September 6 aims to enhance working conditions and social security for domestic workers. Royal Decree 629/2022 of July 26 updates labor-related migration regulations to address labor market needs and mismatches.

Spain ranks 23rd out of 38 Western democracies in the Migrant Integration Policy Index for migrants' education. Most immigrant pupils can access all schools legally, but the dropout rate is high. Most immigrants are first-generation and, in the case of Latin Americans, share language and cultural ties with the native population. However, there is limited support for learning the language and catching up academically. Language courses are mainly provided by the third sector, funded by the Ministry of Immigration or the autonomous communities. Organic Law 3/2022, effective March 31, aims to facilitate social and educational inclusion for vulnerable people, such as immigrants, in the vocational training system.

Spain ranks 11th out of 38 Western democracies in the Migrant Integration Policy Index for family reunions and permanent residence. The Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants (2023) recommends uniform criteria for assessing family extensions and accreditation of relationships, including criteria for DNA tests.

Voting rights for immigrants have been a significant debate. EU immigrants can vote and run in municipal and European Parliament elections. Foreign residents whose home countries permit Spaniards to participate in their elections have the right to vote and run in municipal elections.

The naturalization process is Spain's main area of weakness. Immigrants can become citizens after 10 years of residence, with dual citizenship granted only to those from certain countries. Immigrants cannot travel abroad for extended periods during this time, although short holidays and work trips are allowed. They must pass a basic language test and a cultural test, and the process takes about two to three years. Recent changes have eased economic and language requirements slightly. Royal Decree 629/2022, of July 26, establishes units for processing residence or work authorizations.

The Secretariat of State for Migration develops migration policy, while the Interministerial Commission for Foreigners' Affairs ensures coordination among relevant departments. Coordination with autonomous communities has been infrequent, with no meetings of the Sectoral Conference on immigration during the

observation period. Autonomous communities have competencies related to social policies and work with third-sector entities and civil society organizations on training and consulting for immigrants.

In 2022, the State Secretariat for Migration promoted a public consultation for developing the “Strategic Framework for Citizenship and Inclusion,” adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2023. The framework includes 23 action lines, with annual or biannual reports on the actions undertaken.

The Spanish government has been advocating for an EU-wide solution for illegal migration and asylum procedures. During the Spanish presidency of the Council of the European Union, the council reached a political agreement on migration and asylum.

Citation:

CONVIVE. 2023. “Informe Sobre el Estado de las Migraciones en España (EMCIE).” <https://www.cepaim.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Resumen-Ejecutivo-EMCIE-2023-1.pdf>

Foro para la Integración Social de los Inmigrantes. 2023. “Situación de las personas migrantes en España.” <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/documents/1652165/2966006/Situación+de+las+personas+migrantes+y+refugiadas+en+España+-+Informe+Anual+2022.pdf/e55230f9-2aa9-3f4e-d64e-002b746e4551?t=1688465906066>

Government of Spain. 2023. “Strategic Framework for Citizenship and Inclusion, (2023-2027).” <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/documentos/SummaryStrategic-Frameworkfor-Citizenship-and-Inclusionagainst-Racism-and-Xenophobia2023-2027.pdf>

## Canada

Score 7

Migration is currently very important to Canada, which has doubled its intake of immigrants from just a few years ago (Triadafilopoulos 2013). Canada also has an official policy of multiculturalism that celebrates and supports the cultural diversity of its population. This policy aims to promote inclusivity and encourages the preservation of cultural heritage while fostering a shared Canadian identity, including among new immigrants.

Several methods exist for entry to the country. The Express Entry system is designed to attract skilled immigrants to immediately contribute to the country’s economic development. It prioritizes factors such as education, work experience, and language proficiency, facilitating the integration of skilled migrants into the labor market. Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) allow provinces and territories to nominate individuals with specific skills and experiences for permanent residence, enabling regions to address their specific labor market needs. Canada also has programs for refugees and has implemented policies to support their integration.

Canadian governments invest heavily in settlement services to help newcomers adapt to life in Canada, including language training, employment support, and orientation programs to ease the transition into Canadian society. New policies have also been

implemented at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels to address the ongoing affordability crisis in housing, which is especially challenging in a country with a very limited social housing sector.

Many services are available, but they are being stretched by the influx of individuals and families under the new policy. Problems include a lack of credential recognition, whereby some newcomers, especially professionals, face challenges in having their foreign credentials recognized in the Canadian labor market. Efforts have been made to address this issue, but barriers still exist in many professions. Additionally, limited job opportunities in specific regions outside the hubs of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver cause settlement problems. Many regions face challenges in providing sufficient job opportunities for local populations, potentially affecting migrants' integration in those areas. Furthermore, other areas of the country, particularly Vancouver and Toronto, receive the largest share of immigrants. This aggravates situations where housing and other services are already expensive and difficult to access. High housing costs are a challenge for newcomers and raise concerns among local populations about the influx of non-residents.

Citation:

Triadafilopoulos, Triadafilos, ed. 2013. *Wanted and Welcome?: Policies for Highly Skilled Immigrants in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-0082-0>

## Estonia

### Score 7

Since the Soviet period, Estonia has had a large non-native population, with Russian speakers composing almost a third of the population. The national immigration policy has been regularly updated and monitored, with the government allocating substantial national and EU funds to various integration programs. In 2021, the Cohesive Estonia Strategy 2021 – 2030 was adopted (RE 2022), aiming to find common ground between previously separate programs and strategies. It also presents the objectives agreed upon for the next decade and the main policies to achieve them.

According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), from 2014 to 2019, Estonia's integration policies improved more than the MIPEX average. Estonia scored relatively high in many areas of integration, including labor market mobility and permanent residence, and recently made significant progress in family reunion (Solano, Huddleston 2020). The country also received a relatively high score in education, as its Soviet-inherited bilingual school system has enabled it to respond to diverse needs. However, this mainly indicates access to education, not performance. A notable ethnic educational gap exists in Estonia between Estonian-language and Russian-language schools (OECD 2023). While this gap has slightly diminished, it is due to the decline in Estonian-language school performance rather than improvements in Russian-language schools.

Furthermore, the existence of a parallel school system reinforces social and political fragmentation. For example, the share of people claiming obstacles related to language skills in getting a job is above the EU average (Eurostat). As a result, an increasing number of ethnic minority children study in language immersion groups and classes in preschools and Estonian-language elementary schools. Additionally, the long-postponed unified Estonian-language school reform was slated to be enacted in 2023, with a concrete long-term plan to integrate the existing parallel school system into one comprehensive system.

The biggest problems immigrants face are in the fields of political participation, access to nationality, and health (MIPEX). In national elections, only Estonian citizens can vote and register as candidates. Permanent residents without Estonian or other EU citizenship can vote in municipal elections but cannot stand as candidates. In recent years, an increasing number of Russian speakers who hold Estonian citizenship have been employed in the civil service, have entered the political elite and have stood as candidates in elections. However, the electoral turnout rate among Russian speakers remains lower than the national average. Several public and private initiatives have sought to facilitate civil society activism among ethnic minorities, yielding some visible progress.

Beyond policies from the Soviet period on integrating immigrants, Estonia has implemented programs to integrate refugees and new immigrants. Immigrants who have newly arrived can participate in an introductory welcoming program that helps them settle and acquire knowledge, skills and proficiency in the Estonian language.

Additionally, the Ministry of the Interior supports and empowers public, private and third-sector organizations working with newly arrived immigrants by building support networks and developing public services. In 2022 and 2023 the largest influx has been among Ukrainian refugees, and Estonia has accepted the highest per capita share of refugees from Ukraine. According to a recent study (RITA 2023), Ukrainian refugees from the war have integrated into the labor market and education system in Estonia more successfully than in other countries, although there is still room for improvement in matching the qualifications of those arriving from Ukraine with appropriate jobs.

The body responsible for equal treatment is the Department of Equality Policy, led by the gender equality and equal treatment commissioner (GEETC). The department is mandated to promote gender equality and address other equality matters.

Citation:

Republic of Estonia. 2022. Cohesive Estonia. Ministry of Culture. <https://www.kul.ee/siduseesti2030>

RITA 1. 2023. Ukraina sõjapõgenikud Eestis. Lõpparuanne. Parxis, TÜ, Centar. <https://centar.ee/tehtud-tood/rita-c-19-jatkuprojekt-ukraina-sojapogenikud-estis>

Solano, G., and T. Huddleston. 2020. "Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020." <https://www.mipex.eu/estonia>

## Germany

### Score 7

Regarding labor market mobility for migrants, the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) rated Germany with a value of 81 for 2019, ranking the country fifth out of 56. Thus, the MIPEX considers Germany's labor market policies favorable for promoting equal-quality employment over the long term. This means the index recognizes Germany for promoting equal rights, opportunities to access jobs, and the improvement of skills (MIPEX, 2020).

Germany's migration regulations must be divided into those for EU member states and those for non-EU countries. Since EU citizens enjoy freedom of movement, they are not subject to any restrictions when working in Germany (The Federal Government, 2019). Therefore, the following policies and regulations concern immigrants from non-EU member states only.

Germany is among the countries with the lowest restrictions on the immigration of skilled workers. The Immigration Act for Skilled Workers (Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz) provides the legal framework, defining skilled workers as individuals with a university degree or qualified vocational training of at least two years. Migrants with vocational training can obtain residence and work permits, allowing them to work in any profession they are qualified for, provided they have an employment contract and a salary equivalent to that of a German employee.

Skilled workers with a university degree can receive an EU Blue Card. Applicants must provide a university degree comparable to a German university degree and have a binding employment contract with a gross annual salary of at least €58,400 as of 2023. For occupations experiencing a shortage of employees, such as doctors, this minimum salary decreases to €45,552 per year (BMI, 2023).

The previously outlined favorable MIPEX score for Germany's labor market mobility policies is largely due to improved procedures for recognizing foreign qualifications and skills. This implies effective recognition procedures. Moreover, the MIPEX cites targeted support measures for immigrants as a strength in German labor market policy (MIPEX, 2020).

The German government offers different types of language courses. For professional purposes, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees provides free vocational language courses (Berufssprachkurse) that can be combined with vocational qualifications or work placements (internships). The courses start at a B1 language level; therefore, existing language skills are a prerequisite and can be acquired through an integration course (Integrationskurs). These integration courses consist of a language course and an orientation module (BMI, 2021).

Nevertheless, in 2021, a lack of language skills was an obstacle for obtaining a suitable job for 458,400 migrants, while for 369,200 immigrants, the obstacle lay in the lack of recognition of their qualifications (Eurostat, 2023a).

Regarding training programs, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) offers the Career Orientation for Refugees program (BOF). The BOF lasts up to 26 weeks and is designed to help young immigrants and refugees find training positions through workshops and practical experience. According to the BMBF, participants receive individual support throughout the program. However, the BOF is relatively small, with classes limited to a maximum of twelve participants (BMBF, 2023).

In 2022, the employment rate of migrants was 69.8% compared to the OECD average of 71%, with an unemployment rate of 5.6%, which was below the OECD average of 7.6%. Compared to 2021, the employment rate increased by 1.5% while the unemployment rate decreased by 0.9%. However, compared to native-born individuals, the employment rate for migrants was 9.1% lower while the unemployment rate was 3% higher. Additionally, in 2021, 58.7% of long-term or permanent immigrants migrated to Germany due to free mobility, 10.7% were labor migrants, 16.2% were family members, and 13.1% were humanitarian migrants (OECD, 2023).

Children of foreigners born in Germany acquire German citizenship if one of their parents has lived in Germany legally for eight years and possesses a permanent residence permit. Foreigners living in Germany can obtain citizenship by fulfilling specific requirements (see below). While Germany's naturalization rate increased by 28% from 2021 to 2022 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2024), the country's naturalization rate for 2021 was considerably below the EU average, with a percentage of 1.2% compared to 2.2% (Eurostat, 2023b).

With an allocated value of 42, the MIPEX index ranks access to citizenship in Germany as only halfway favorable and describes the naturalization process as clear but demanding. Additionally, Germany has a general ban on dual citizenship (except for EU members and Switzerland and for people born and raised in Germany who have two citizenships at birth), which contributes to low naturalization rates (MIPEX, 2020).

Under current law, immigrants must have lived in Germany for eight years before applying for citizenship. Naturalization after six years is possible through what is referred to as special integration achievements, such as particularly good language skills or civic engagement. A draft law from 2023 proposed shortening the minimum residence time from eight to five years and to up to three years in cases of special integration achievements. Further, the draft suggests enabling multiple citizenships in general (BMI, 2023b).

Political participation for immigrants regarding voting in Germany is related to the naturalization process since only German citizens (and EU citizens in municipal and European elections) have the right to vote in Germany. Given the low naturalization rate, 47% of people with a migration background – around 10.6 million – did not have German citizenship in 2021, rendering them unable to vote (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2022). Nevertheless, due to existing policies to consult and support immigrant civil society, political participation is still considered slightly favorable by the MIPEX, with a score of 60 (MIPEX, 2020).

Generally, family reunification is possible if skilled workers intend to stay in Germany for over one year. If the marriage occurs after the move to Germany, the spouse can only come to Germany two years later. The circumstances are more favorable for highly qualified migrants and immigrants with an EU Blue Card as exceptions exist in this case (BMI, 2023). Through the Opportunity Residence Act (Chancen-Aufenthaltsrecht), introduced in 2022, the requirement that spouses provide a language certificate no longer exists. According to MIPEX, Germany's family reunification policies are more restrictive than those of most Western OECD countries. Therefore, with a score of 42, the index rates Germany's family reunification policies as only halfway favorable (MIPEX, 2020). However, as the index was created for 2019, it does not take into account the changes brought about by the Opportunity Residence Act.

According to the MIPEX, Germany's education policies regarding migrants are moderately favorable, with a score of 55, ranking it as the 15th country. The index indicates that Germany has made partial progress in addressing specific needs and opportunities at all school levels (MIPEX, 2020). As education is regulated by the states, the support schools offer varies across different states. In Hesse, for instance, measures such as language assessments and an overall language promotion concept exist, including mandatory preparatory German courses (Staatliche Schulämter in Hessen, n.d.).

Both the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI) are responsible for migration policies. However, while cooperation is necessary in some aspects, the BMI mainly focuses on broader migration subjects such as citizenship and asylum and refugee protection. In contrast, the BMAS deals with issues related to migrants and their access to the labor market.

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), an authority of the BMI, is responsible for executing policies related to the integration of immigrants and processing asylum applications. The Federal Employment Agency, the respective authority for the BMAS, handles tasks such as recognizing qualifications and providing employment consultation.

Additionally, the federal government has a Commissioner for Refugees, Immigrant and Migration.



Finally, it is not clear whether the government has established target values for supporting immigrants. The BAMF, however, published a report on migration and integration in 2022, monitoring educational and labor migration.

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## Israel

### Score 7

In Israel, integration policy is targeted exclusively at Jewish immigrants who immigrate under the Law of Return. These immigrants receive Israeli citizenship upon arrival and are thus eligible for all social benefits provided to veteran citizens. Additionally, a comprehensive integration policy is coordinated by the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. Each immigrant is eligible for free Hebrew classes for the first six months. The classes are offered either by the Ministry of Education or through private organizations via vouchers. Furthermore, more advanced classes are available to specific sectors, aimed at improving the language skills needed for employment as physicians or other professionals.

Each immigrant is also eligible for a vocational training voucher, which they can use to enroll in one of the many available private training programs. Immigrants who wish to become self-employed are eligible for a business loan, and several hours of guidance and consultation at entrepreneurship centers located across the country. For scientists, there are programs in which the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption pays the scientist's salary for several years. Additionally, there are programs in which the

ministry pays the salary of immigrants for six months at governmental departments and institutions.

The accreditation of skills acquired abroad falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, which examines the academic degree. In addition, physicians must pass several exams to practice medicine. The ministry provides a preparation course for the exams and pays an allowance during the preparation time. Some parts of the exam can be taken in the immigrant's native language. Exams are also mandatory for other professions, such as psychologists and architects. Accreditation in these professions is managed by the respective professional organizations.

Under the Law of Return, immigrants eligible to enter Israel must provide evidence that they, one of their parents, or one of their grandparents were Jewish. The spouse of an eligible immigrant under the Law of Return is also eligible to enter Israel and receive citizenship. However, a parent of an eligible immigrant is not eligible and must apply for permanent resident status, which is difficult to obtain.

Immigrants are eligible to vote upon arrival. In addition, the government supports various grassroots immigrant organizations that help immigrants integrate into society.

The number of immigrants coming to Israel each year is relatively small. As a result, the ministry has adopted a "one-on-one" approach, providing each immigrant with a tailor-made integration program and a contact person to guide them during their first year following arrival.

A special Ministry of Immigrant Absorption department is responsible for university students, and provides tuition support, assists with bureaucracy and organizes various social activities.

The ministry's annual work plan outlines the strategic goals for the upcoming year and the measures to achieve these objectives. For example, in 2023, one of the ministry's goals was to improve the initial integration of immigrants by increasing the percentage of immigrants who meet a ministry representative three weeks after their arrival.

Integration policies are coordinated by the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and implemented by a range of ministries. Therefore, several interministerial committees handle various immigrant absorption issues.

While integration policies for immigrants with a Jewish background are well developed, the opposite is true for non-Jewish immigrants. Most non-Jewish immigrants to Israel enter illegally and the government largely refrains from processing asylum requests. Immigrants who enter the country illegally are eligible

only for very basic medical cover, have limited social rights and do not receive any public support to integrate into the labor markets. Nevertheless, their children can enroll in public schools.

## Latvia

### Score 7

In 2022, the number of immigrants entering Latvia tripled compared to the previous year, reaching 38,700, a significant increase from 12,700 in 2021 and marking a 43.5% rise from 2020. The number of emigrants from Latvia also rose, from nearly 12,000 in 2020 to around 13,000 in 2021 and further to 16,700 in 2022, a 28.6% increase from the previous year.

A notable proportion of these immigrants, about 64.2% or 24,900, came from European Union candidate countries, with 24,600 from Ukraine. The number of immigrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) also increased to 4,100, representing 10.7% of all immigrants, a 36.4% increase from 2021, including 2,200 from Russia. Additionally, 2,800, or 7.2%, of immigrants came from the United Kingdom in 2022.

Among those who entered Latvia in 2022, 9,300 or 24% were returning nationals – Latvian citizens, non-citizens, and individuals born in Latvia but holding different citizenship. This figure was higher compared to 7,000 or 54.8% in 2021. The remaining part of the immigrants had no previous legal ties to Latvia.

In the same year, 16,700 residents left Latvia, with 11,600 migrating to European Union countries, a 39.6% increase from the previous year. Migration to Germany rose by 16.3%, totaling 2,900, while 2,600 moved to the United Kingdom, almost the same number as in 2021. Emigration to CIS countries declined by 15.3% to just 300. A majority, 71.1%, of those who emigrated were Latvian nationals, slightly down from 71.3% in 2021 (Centrālā Statistika Pārvalde, 2023).

The number of third-country nationals (TCNs) and EU citizens living in Latvia as of January 1, 2021, is 245,962 TCNs and 6,343 EU citizens. However, data from the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, Central Statistics Bureau, and Ministry of Culture record only 98,366 TCNs, predominantly from Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Notably, Latvian national statistics include a “non-citizens” category, making up about 10% of the population, mostly from former Soviet states (Centrālā Statistika Pārvalde, 2023).

Latvia’s integration strategy for migrants is outlined in the 2021 – 2027 Guidelines for the Development of a Cohesive and Civically Active Society and the 2022 – 2023 Plan. These documents emphasize systemic integration through language learning, cultural orientation, and democratic values.

Latvia's Immigration Law, Asylum Law, and Citizenship Law govern foreigners' entry, stay, and citizenship. Recent amendments to these laws have focused on asylum procedures and dual citizenship. However, Latvia does not have a specific anti-discrimination law, instead addressing the issue through its constitution and other laws.

State-funded healthcare services in Latvia are available to Latvian citizens and non-citizens, citizens of EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland who work or are self-employed in Latvia (including their family members), foreigners with permanent residency in Latvia, refugees, and persons with alternative status. Children of these residents, up to the age of 18, are also eligible. Spouses of Latvian citizens and non-citizens with temporary residency permits in Latvia can receive state-funded maternity care and childbirth assistance. Other residents can access medical services at a cost according to the price list of the respective healthcare institution.

Citation:

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## Lithuania

### Score 7

Integration policies are largely aimed at achieving the sustainable inclusion of migrants in society, though immigrants from neighboring European countries find it easier to integrate than do those from other regions of the world. Lithuania remains a relatively homogeneous society.

In 2022 – 2023, immigration numbers increased significantly, mostly due to an influx of refugees from Ukraine. For example, in 2022, the number of foreign-born residents increased by 89% (Department of Migration, 2023). According to the Department of Migration, as of 1 Sept 2023, there were 203,157 foreign-born residents living in the country. This constituted about 7% of the country's population. Also, as of 1 September 2023, a total of 49,870 foreigners were benefiting from the EU's Temporary Protection Mechanism, which is granted to Ukrainian refugees fleeing their country due to Russian aggression.

Ukrainians continue to be the largest foreign community in Lithuania, with the population numbering 85,579 people (Department of Migration 2023). The majority of Ukrainian citizens came to Lithuania after Russia launched its large-scale invasion of their home country in February 2022. The second-largest foreign-born community

is made up of citizens of Belarus, totaling more than 60,000 people. Most of these individuals have fled to Lithuania since 2020, following the repression of opposition figures and the broader society in Belarus, which occurred after presidential elections deemed neither fair nor free by the West. This influx led to political debates regarding the simplification of employment procedures and education opportunities for migrants from Belarus. Since 2022, the focus has shifted to providing services to refugees from Ukraine and facilitating their integration into the labor market and society.

Lithuanian authorities have been actively providing information on social services and available job opportunities to immigrants from Ukraine. For example, the Ministry of Social Security and Labor created a dedicated site for this in both Lithuanian and Ukrainian. Information is also provided by the Department of Migration under the Ministry of Interior, which is the main institution working in this area. Lithuanian language courses are offered, as well as various education and training opportunities.

An analysis of the integration of residents from Ukraine into Lithuanian society, conducted by the Eastern Europe Studies Center (2023), showed that around 90% of them have been studying the Lithuanian language, 65% had stable incomes in Lithuania and 64% were considering applying for Lithuanian citizenship. The survey also revealed that insufficient availability of language courses, long waiting times at healthcare institutions and a feeling of social isolation were the main problems faced by immigrants from Ukraine.

The integration of legal migrants from neighboring countries and other EU member states into Lithuanian society has not been very difficult, with most taking up jobs in sectors experiencing labor shortages. Almost 50% of all foreign-born residents in Lithuania have found jobs in sectors such as long-distance freight and passenger transportation, construction, or other industrial services. According to the Department of Migration, as of 1 September 2023, a total of 97,925 foreigners held temporary residence permits in Lithuania for low-skill work, while 6,258 foreigners worked in high-skill jobs.

However, labor market services are not sufficiently developed in this regard, and foreign residents' access to relevant education and training programs remains limited. Moreover, new integration facilities and services are necessary to support the inflow of foreign-born nationals. The majority of recently arrived asylum-seekers, who have arrived either via the EU scheme of resettling migrants who originally arrived in Southern European countries or through Belarus, who have typically come from countries such as Iraq, the Republic of Congo, Syria, Cameroon or Afghanistan, have presented Lithuanian authorities with more complex integration challenges. The majority of them have sought to leave Lithuania for destinations such as Germany or Sweden.

There is also a lack of targeted policies extending beyond refugees from Ukraine that actively aim for the inclusion of migrants and monitor progress based on concrete indicators. Migrants' political participation and access to citizenship have been assessed as unfavorable by Migrant Integration Policy index authors (dating back to 2019).

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## Sweden

Score 7

The Swedish Migration Agency is the lead unit responsible for migration policy, but the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, municipalities, regions, county boards, the government, and the SKR (The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions) are also part of these operations.

In recent years, Sweden's immigrant policies have become far less permissive than they were in the past. After the 2022 election, the new center-right minority government, with decisive support from the radical right-wing party Sweden Democrats, has made migration and integration a prioritized policy area and agreed on a reform of the current immigration system.

The goals of current migration policy under the new coalition government (described as a paradigm shift) are to stem the influx of migration by restricting asylum, emphasizing that immigrant populations become part of the culturally and ethnically understood Swedish society, clearing the so-called shadow society – a term describing a hidden world of organized crime – and especially facilitating the migration of a highly educated and trained workforce.

To meet these targets, the government has agreed on controversial policies such as increased surveillance, checks for undocumented immigrants, and intensified efforts to deport people who do not qualify to stay in Sweden. Additionally, a lower rate of quota refugees (900 per year instead of 5,000 per year) was implemented, zones in which the police have the right to search and frisk were introduced, and participation in criminal gangs was further criminalized (Tidöavtalet, 2022; Regeringskansliet, 2023).

Currently, to obtain Swedish citizenship, adults must be over 18 years old, be able to prove their identity, have lived an “orderly” life in Sweden, and have a permanent residence permit, a right to residency, or a residence status. In 2020, Sweden ranked 83rd in access to nationality – this corresponds to the seventh best rank worldwide – and the process was evaluated as straightforward (Mipex, 2020). Taking into account all policy indicators used in a comparison of integration policies in 56 countries for 2020, Sweden ranks first.

The political bargaining driven by the radical right Sweden Democrats during the agreement that led to government formation following the 2022 election has resulted in the gradual tightening of rules for obtaining citizenship. Upcoming changes include a longer residence requirement of at least eight years, stricter requirements regarding knowledge of and integration into Swedish society and culture, a requirement to be self-supporting, stricter demands for a lack of criminal records, and even a loyalty declaration, citizenship conversation, or another mandatory ceremony to complete the process of becoming a citizen. Further provisions include revoking the citizenship of individuals with dual citizenship who have committed serious crimes or whose citizenship was granted on false grounds (Tidöavtalet, 2022).

Policies governing the migration of family members are considered strict due to economic resource requirements, which imply that the person residing in Sweden must be able to financially support themselves and their family members. This requirement, however, does not apply to refugees if the family applies for residence permits within three months (Mipex, 2020). The new government has agreed that the right to family reunification will not be more generous than the regulated minimum levels and is investigating the possibility of transforming existing permanent residence permits in the interest of a restrictive asylum policy (Tidöavtalet, 2022).

The official governmental goals for integration are “equal rights, obligations, and opportunities for all regardless of ethnic or cultural background” (Regeringskansliet, 2017). To measure these target values, Statistics Sweden uses the following indicators: occupation, health, housing, demography, municipal recipients, income, and education (SCB, 2023). Despite stricter policies on migration, Sweden was ranked second in labor market mobility and sixth in political participation in 2020 (Mipex, 2020). Sweden, along with other Nordic countries, has the most inclusive voting rights in the EU. In terms of labor market access, people born in foreign countries are more often unemployed and underemployed compared to Swedish-born individuals. Labor market accessibility varies between groups of immigrants – men generally secure a first stable job faster than women, and there is variation based on country of origin. Individuals born outside of Europe have lower salaries and receive more financial support, but these differences decrease after a period of time in Sweden (IFAU, 2022).

An obstacle to obtaining a job and accessing the labor market is the lack of language skills. In 2021, 8.17% of the foreign-born population experienced such difficulties,

compared to the OECD average of 8% (OECD Output Indicators). Language courses (SFI, Swedish for immigrants) are offered according to the regulation (SFS 1994:895) on Swedish education for immigrants for those in need of basic knowledge in Swedish. These courses are available to individuals over 16 years who reside in Sweden. Students have the right to at least 15 hours of SFI per week (Skolverket, 2023a). Since 2022, Sweden's municipalities are required to provide a cohesive program within adult education as part of establishment programs for participants in labor market programs or initiatives. This cohesive program should cover at least 23 hours per week and include SFI, courses at the elementary or high-school level, and follow a municipality-decided plan that outlines the training goals, organization, and main content (Skolverket, 2023b).

In summary, problems with the integration of foreign-born populations in Swedish society persist, and the response from the current right-wing alliance – under the direct influence of the radical right-wing Swedish Democrats – is to restrict immigration. Uneven integration of immigrant populations has led to sensational news stories about no-go zones in big cities and gang violence. At least in the labor market, even though income disparities exist between people born in Sweden and foreign-born people, such differentials tend to decrease over time.

Citation:

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## United Kingdom

### Score 7

Despite being relatively open to migrants for many decades, the scale of net inward migration has become a more salient policy issue since the run-up to the Brexit referendum. Mobile workers from Central and Eastern European countries after EU accession were not constrained, and the UK had also welcomed substantial numbers from other EU countries. However, tensions have arisen in areas where migrants are relatively concentrated, particularly around access to public services such as education, scarce social housing, and primary healthcare. A policy associated particularly with Theresa May, initially as Home Secretary and later as Prime Minister, aimed to create a more “hostile environment” for immigrants. This policy became toxic during the Windrush scandal, which concerned immigrants from the 1950s and 1960s who had never had their status regularized and were suddenly confronted with expulsion.

Nevertheless, a distinction must be drawn between authorized migrants and the more recent phenomenon of irregular migration, mainly involving individuals crossing the Channel in small boats. This issue has become politically sensitive. Irregular migrants are not entitled to work and face severe problems in finding sufficient accommodation, including the use of army camps and a notorious barge moored in a south coast harbor. Approximately 45% of these migrants are housed in temporary accommodation and receive subsistence support.

The Home Office has a poor record in processing asylum applications, despite claims of increasing its capability. In September 2023, the backlog amounted to 125,000, down by 7% from the previous quarter but still higher than the same time in 2022. In 2018, the figure was just 22,000. The proportion of applications decided within six months is well below pre-pandemic rates, though it is slowly improving as more staff are assigned to the task. A government policy to send irregular migrants to Rwanda has faced repeated legal challenges and was rejected by the Supreme Court. A fresh attempt by the government to legislate around the Supreme Court decision is making its way through Parliament, but expectations are low regarding its effectiveness in deterring irregular migration.

Regular migrants are another story entirely. Despite the above-mentioned local frictions, the UK has generally been able to absorb and integrate migrants into the labor force without undue stress. The recent rise in net immigration, partly due to migration from Ukraine and Hong Kong, has prompted a tightening of policy.

This policy revision has fairly wide support, but the Migration Advisory Council (MAC), an independent body advising the government on migration issues, has raised several concerns in its latest annual report. It highlighted “the exploitation of migrants and the abuse of the immigration system,” specifically citing care workers allowed into the UK under the Shortage Occupation List (SOL). This arrangement

allows the government to designate sectors in dire need of recruitment, and the MAC noted that many people receive care that would not be possible without this visa route.

In response, the government is ending an arrangement under which SOL workers could be paid below the going rate, though still subject to minimum wage standards. The MAC also pointed out that lower levels of exploitation in Scotland can be explained by better pay and professionalization of the workforce compared to England.

Student visas also pose challenges because they allow recipients to work, often in minimum-wage jobs, while studying. There is evidence that a sizable number of students remain in the UK after graduation but do not work in jobs commensurate with their qualifications. The number of student visas issued jumped by 54% between 2019 and 2022, with significant increases in people arriving from India, Nigeria, and Pakistan. A quarter of these visas are for dependent family members, a substantial increase that the new government policy proposes to curb. There are concerns that the sheer number of visas will further strain public services.

In relation to housing and public services, the difficulties that arise are as much due to poor provision as new demand from migrants. Migrants from the EU tend to have higher employment rates and, consequently, contribute to tax revenue. For the majority of economic migrants, language is not a significant barrier because English is often a reason for choosing the UK, though it can be a greater challenge for dependent family members.

Citation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migration-advisory-committee-annual-report-2023/migration-advisory-committee-mac-annual-report-2023-accessible#chapter-3-international-students>

## Finland

### Score 6

Immigrants face significant social exclusion, particularly due to poor integration in the labor market. The surge in immigration during 2016 and 2017 exacerbated these challenges. Since the early 1980s, Finland has experienced more immigration than emigration. From 1990 to 2018, the share of the population with a foreign background grew from 0.8% to 7.3%. Several factors have complicated the management of this influx. Second-generation immigrants have struggled to access education or secure employment (Teivainen, A. 2016). Additionally, there are disparities in labor market integration based on migrants' countries of origin. For instance, Ukrainians find employment more easily than migrants from sub-Saharan Africa countries such as Somalia.

Boosting the labor market participation rate was a key target of the previous government's actions. Although Finland has received a fair share of asylum-seekers on a per capita basis, the country is not considered to be among the top destinations

for immigrants (Tanner 2011). This is due to various factors. Applying for a Finnish residence permit is still a complicated process, as is applying for Finnish citizenship. Finnish is a difficult language, and proficient language skills are required. While sympathetic to work-related immigration, authorities' general attitude toward immigration is rather restrictive.

Moreover, until the summer of 2017, the True Finns party used its cabinet position as a platform to incite anti-immigrant sentiments. Several demonstrations by anti-immigrant protesters against refugee accommodations turned violent. In 2023, the True Finns party again joined the ruling coalition with the aim of curbing migration. For example, on the True Finns' initiative, the rules concerning family reunification are becoming stricter. Additionally, it will become more difficult to obtain Finnish citizenship. Furthermore, the income requirements for migrants to obtain legal resident status in Finland will be tightened. There are no specific policies to support migrants' political participation.

The officials struggle to develop effective recognition procedures for skills and qualifications, which are crucial for integrating migrants into the labor market. Although language courses are provided early on, the supply does not meet the demand. Similarly, there are professional training programs, mentoring opportunities and employer incentives available for migrants, but these too fail to meet the demand. Additionally, the programs are not always tailored to participants' needs.

The government has declined to establish specific target values with regard to addressing the needs of migrants and offering them tailored support. The lead unit for migration policy is Migri, which is known for slow processes and strict bureaucracy.

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## France

Score 6

France has traditionally maintained an open policy toward immigrants, relying on the *jus soli* tradition. Every person born in France is considered French or is eligible for French citizenship. Integration policies in terms of long-term residence permits, access to citizenship and family reunification are open and generous. Presently, most new legal immigrants come to the country through family reunification programs.

This migration is thus not based on language or professional skills, which possibly makes integration more difficult.

Integration of the so-called second – in fact, often the third – generation of immigrants, especially those whose families are from Maghreb countries, has also proved difficult for many reasons, including education system failures, community concentration in urban/suburban ghettos, high unemployment rates, cultural identity issues, labor market discrimination and so on. As a consequence, France ranks in the lower group of OECD countries with regard to secondary education attainment levels and integration into the labor market, performing below the OECD average. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (2020) offers a look at better results for France, with stronger outcomes in the areas of health, access to citizenship and anti-discrimination policy, but this assessment relates to 2019.

Since that time, immigration from Eastern Europe, the southern Balkans and more recently from the Middle East has become a very sensitive subject. It is exploited by the National Rally party (former the National Front) and more generally by the extreme right, which has been able to set the political agenda and force a focus on migration and identity issues. President Macron has declared his intention to review France's immigration policy, combining acceptance and integration policies for immigrants and refugees with accelerated asylum-application procedures and more rigorous efforts to repatriate people whose applications have been rejected. The process of screening requests has improved, but there has also been a deliberate policy to restrict residence permits. As it is very difficult to implement administrative or judicial decisions to expel illegal migrants, the number of migrants living in a kind of legal and social limbo without legal residential status – “sans-papier” – is growing.

A migration bill adopted in December 2023 introduced several important new measures. As it was unable to secure a majority in the lower chamber, the government had to accept several restrictive measures from the right (and, de facto, from the extreme right). In particular, the new version introduces the obligation to have a job or to have resided legally in France for five years in order to claim certain types of social benefits. The bill also creates yearly “quotas” of foreigners. Finally, bringing back an old debate introduced by President Hollande, criminals with dual citizenship who have been convicted of homicide may be stripped of their French citizenship.

As drafted, the would have introduced a sharp turn in French migration policy. Many of its measures were controversial from a constitutional point of view. Therefore, President Macron referred the law to the Constitutional Council, which rejected a considerable number of measures (40%) as unconstitutional in its ruling on 25 January 2024. The government then implemented the reform without the rejected articles.

## Slovenia

### Score 6

Over the past five years, integration policy in Slovenia has improved in several areas, including the labor market, education, political participation, and anti-discrimination. Non-EU immigrants with legal status in Slovenia experience a reasonably favorable integration policy. However, the Slovenian approach to integration can be characterized as “equality on paper” only. While immigrants enjoy basic rights and long-term security, they do not have equal opportunities.

The policy is unfavorable to migrant labor and their families, with non-EU workers facing barriers to equal access, particularly in non-regulated private jobs. After five years in Slovenia, most non-EU migrants can benefit from permanent residence security. However, the path to citizenship is long, and dual citizenship is not permitted. Some applicants have access to a sufficient number of free courses and study guides to achieve an A2 level in the Slovenian language. For example, international students can attend a Slovenian language course. Most regular basic-income immigrants can easily return to their families. Even with a slightly more favorable family reunification policy, transnational families in Slovenia still have a somewhat uncertain status, as the procedure is discretionary. All pupils with a migrant background have a basic right to access compulsory education and receive support. However, migrant families and schools continue to receive little support to promote the social integration of migrant pupils. Migrants also face challenges in gaining full access to the healthcare system. Long-term resident migrants have the right to vote in local elections. However, non-EU citizens cannot be members of a political party and cannot stand in elections.

Slovenia is expected to face a shortage of a quarter of a million workers in the coming years. One solution to this issue is the recruitment of foreign labor. In 2023, there were already 128,000 foreign workers in Slovenia, accounting for more than 14% of all employed individuals. The business community has long pointed out that the procedures for hiring foreigners are too lengthy and complicated.

In April 2023, the government simplified these procedures by amending the Aliens Act, removing administrative obstacles and speeding up the issuance and delivery of residence permits and registration certificates. Additionally, they extended free Slovene language courses to all categories of foreigners.

To secure a highly qualified labor force, the government plans to draft a law on development jobs and a law on Slovenia’s attractiveness to attract future global talent.

#### Citation:

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## Switzerland

### Score 6

Swiss industries depend heavily on the recruitment of foreign labor. In the first postwar decades, immigration mainly involved low-skilled workers from Mediterranean countries, though some sectors such as universities also relied on high-skilled labor. Since the 1990s, the pattern of immigration has changed, with an emphasis on high-skilled labor. Currently, Germans and Italians are the largest group of foreigners. Forty-one percent of the Swiss population had a migration background in 2022 (FSO 2023), and about 25% of the population has no Swiss passport. Immigration is one of the most salient political issues, with the largest political party – the Swiss People’s Party – taking a very critical stance on immigration.

Apart from the small share of asylum-seekers and refugees from Ukraine, access to the labor market is available, as foreigners fill the market needs. For high-skilled foreign labor, unemployment figures and rates of reliance on social assistance are as low or even lower than among Swiss citizens, while these figures are higher among low-skilled foreign workers. Most migrants come from the EU based on the bilateral treaty on the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU. This treaty creates conditions for EU immigrants that are similar to those that EU citizens enjoy within the EU. Citizens of non-EU/EFTA countries may immigrate only if they are highly skilled, and if similarly qualified workers cannot be recruited from the EU/EFTA. For the group of foreigners permanently residing in Switzerland, rules relating to family reunification and change of place of residence have been strongly liberalized (Lavenex and Manatschal 2022; Lavenex 2023; Manatschal 2023; Federal Act on Foreign Nationals and Integration, 15 Dec. 2005, article 37 and chapter 7).

Integration characteristics vary by cantons and municipalities, and the group of foreigners in the country is highly diverse, ranging from high-skill specialists to precarious workers in the informal economy.

While immigration policy is mainly based on economic needs, integration policy is politics-driven (Lutz 2019) and is implemented by cantons with considerable intercantonal differences (Manatschal/Stadelmann-Steffen 2013). For many years, Swiss integration policy was predicated on the perception that foreigners were “guest workers,” whose limited stay meant that broad efforts to encourage integration were unnecessary. As many foreign workers gained access to unlimited-time work permits between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s, the policy approach grew inappropriate over time. Accordingly, a number of efforts to improve integration policy have been made, starting as early as kindergarten. Nonetheless, integration policy cannot

broadly be called a success in Switzerland. For example, the Migrant Integration Policy Index score for Switzerland (MIPEX 2022, data for 2019) is “halfway favorable” (45), while being clearly below all neighboring countries except Austria. There is substantial variation in integration success across different groups of migrants. In 2017, 39% of migrants from Northern and Western Europe were members of voluntary associations and groups compared to about 50% of Swiss citizens without a migration background. In contrast, less than 20% of those from southern and eastern European countries hold such memberships.

Yet if the lack of a coherent federal integration policy is undisputable, this does not mean that integration policy as a whole is failing. Many local and cantonal authorities are doing a good and sometimes innovative job with regard to integration services, especially for second-generation migrants. In this respect, most policy development and implementation tasks are decentralized to the local and regional levels.

According to OECD statistics, second-generation migrants in Switzerland perform better in school and are better integrated into the labor market than in other European countries. This is not to say that immigrants have equal opportunities. Individuals with an immigration background score lower on PISA tests and are less likely to go to university than individuals with Swiss-born parents (Picot/Hou 2013). If immigrants’ rates of unemployment and dependence on social aid are above the national average, this is in part because the share of low-skilled workers, with a correspondingly higher risk of unemployment, is also above average among immigrants. But the lack of a coherent integration policy may add to the problems, and social discrimination is not limited to the labor market. Within the housing market, for instance, some groups of immigrants find it comparatively difficult to rent apartments, and rental agents openly discriminate against applicants based on racial stereotypes (Bonnet/Pollard 2021).

Thirty-seven percent of the resident foreign population comes from countries in which one of the official languages of Switzerland is spoken (Germany, Italy, France, Austria) (FSO 2023b). Among high-skilled workers, language is also a secondary problem, since English is the lingua franca in many industries. Language problems are considerable among less-skilled workers and refugees/asylum seekers. Depending on the canton, various opportunities exist to learn the language of the region.

Social integration is difficult for expats in Switzerland. According to a large survey among expats, the country ranks 47th among 53 nations with regard to ease of settling. Expats express concerns about local friendliness and welcome. The headline of the report reads: “Expatriate life in Switzerland is safe, but lonely and expensive” (InterNations 2024).

With regard to naturalization, about 41,500 foreigners were granted Swiss citizenship in 2022, with Germans and Italians comprising the largest groups (FSO 2023c). Calculating the number of naturalizations as a share of all migrants actually

living in the country, the Swiss rate of naturalization is very low in comparison with other consolidated democracies. In 2022, about 2.0% of resident foreigners acquired Swiss citizenship (FSO 2023c). Only some of the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and a few Western democracies – such as Austria and Germany – have similar or lower naturalization rates. The naturalization procedure is burdensome. As naturalization in Switzerland is a bottom-up process that starts at the level of the commune, considerable regional differences are evident, with some communes and cantons pursuing a liberal naturalization policy, and others acting more restrictively. The potentially arbitrary nature of naturalization procedures in municipalities is also regularly discussed.

These regional differences also show up with regard to the issue of political rights. A few cantons and communes – particularly in the French-speaking part of the country – grant political participation rights to foreigners, even though the federal government does not. Thus, with regard to integration, naturalization and legislation on political rights, we find a bottom-up approach rather than federal standards, which also raises the question of equal treatment and equal opportunities for foreigners.

In Switzerland, as in all contemporary societies, some segments of the population have suffered from globalization, and in particular from the free movement of labor. These “globalization losers” are particularly likely to hold xenophobic attitudes – to insist on “my country first” positions – and, consequently, to vote for right-wing populist parties. The Swiss People’s Party is the political party with the strongest electoral support. It has been particularly successful in mobilizing these segments of society. However, this is a far-from-perfect explanation. In a 2017 survey (MOSAiCH), 59% of all respondents with below-median years of education supported a xenophobic statement, compared to 43% of those with above-median years of education.

About 70% of all prison inmates are foreigners; most of them are nonresident foreigners. For the resident population, the share of foreign prison inmates is 40%, which in part reflects the fact that some groups of foreigners are on average low-skilled, a characteristic that itself correlates with a higher incarceration rate. Human rights NGOs have documented acts of racism and violence from the police against visible minorities, sometimes even resulting in deaths (Amnesty International 2007).

Therefore, on the one hand, there is limited prospect for a more generous and liberal integration policy in the near term given the strength of integration-averse political actors and citizens. On the other hand, as a comparative analysis of European Social Survey data shows, Switzerland numbers among the least xenophobic societies in Western Europe, together with the Nordic countries; for example, the country is much less xenophobic than Austria, the United Kingdom or France (Armingeon/Engler 2015).

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## United States

### Score 6

Several agencies manage immigration policy in the United States. The Department of Homeland Security has overarching responsibility for immigration administration, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). USCIS handles visa petitions and naturalization applications. CBP manages the Border Patrol force and seeks to enforce U.S. immigration law at borders and ports of entry. ICE investigates breaches of immigration law and initiates deportation proceedings. ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) carries out deportations.

Other federal agencies play an important role in the U.S. immigration legal infrastructure. The Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration certifies conditions for employment-based visas. The Department of State’s Executive Office for Immigration Review conducts immigration court proceedings and hears cases involving asylum claims and violations.

The United States admits more than a million legal immigrants each year. The Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey records that nearly 50 million U.S. residents were not born in the United States, making up 15% of the total U.S. population. The Census Bureau had previously estimated that this proportion of foreign-born residents would not be reached until 2033, ten years later than has actually happened.

There are various schemes to attract migrant laborers to the United States. These include employment-based visa categories, which often allow the inclusion of dependents and other family members (sometimes known as chain migration). IR visas are for “immediate relatives,” including spouses, children (including married children), adopted children, and parents.

Several types of employment visas exist. These include “priority workers” (which actually targets high-end business professionals), skilled workers, and special workers (for example, individuals who have worked for the U.S. government in conflict zones like Afghanistan and Iraq). The United States also issues visas for refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as visas for victims of human trafficking. High-level investors in the U.S. economy might be eligible for a special visa.

The Diversity Visa Lottery, established in 1990, allocates a modest 55,000 visas to the United States on a random basis.

The United States has a substantial undocumented migrant population participating in a large shadow economy. Certain sectors, such as agriculture, are highly dependent on illegal migrant labor. Some reports suggest that over half of U.S. farm workers are in the country illegally. The federal government typically does not deport individuals who have entered and settled in the country with a clean criminal record. Most deportations occur against undocumented arrivals apprehended at the border, with 2.5 million attempted border crossings in 2023 ([homeland.house.gov](https://www.homeland.house.gov)) and 2.2 million in 2022 ([nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)).

The federal government has created programs to provide illegal immigrants with routes to the U.S. education system and labor markets. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) scheme allows individuals who were brought into the U.S. illegally as minors to apply for a renewable 2-year deferral from deportation and access to a work permit.

To become a U.S. citizen, an immigrant typically must first qualify for Lawful Permanent Residency (a green card). This can be obtained through employment, family sponsorship, refugee status, or other qualifying categories. The green card holder must then live in the U.S. for three to five years, demonstrate good moral character (avoid committing crimes), undertake language and citizenship tests, submit a naturalization form, provide biometric data, pass an interview with a U.S. Customs and Immigration Service officer, and swear an oath of allegiance to the United States.

Citation:

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## Austria

### Score 5

Regarding the employment rate for the foreign-born compared to the native-born population (age group 15-64 years), Austria ranks in the middle among OECD countries. However, the share of migrants among the unemployed is significantly higher in Austria than in nearly any other OECD country except Sweden.

German language courses for migrants whose mother tongue is not German have been offered early on. There is also language training for older migrants. However, despite these efforts, the lack of proper language skills has remained a key obstacle to securing a suitable job among the foreign-born labor force in Austria, much more so than in most other OECD countries. Meanwhile, even recent conservative governments have come to consider the present measures insufficient to ensure a smooth integration of migrants into the Austrian labor market (Kurier 2023). In particular, the share of working migrant women has been considered deficient. Additionally, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic hit both male and female migrants in Austria harder than the country's non-migrant population.

Regarding the labor market, the Austrian government is half-heartedly welcoming employees arriving from foreign countries. Its policies, including the “red-white-red card,” are neither well-received by economic actors nor successful in attracting highly skilled professionals. The indirect, undeclared alliance between organized labor – which defends the short-term interests of union-protected workers and is usually linked politically to the left – and the far-right – which exploits xenophobic resentments, especially the FPÖ – creates a political climate that sometimes breaks into open hostility, particularly against migrants from Muslim countries.

Education in urban areas, and to a lesser extent rural areas, faces the challenge posed by children of first-generation migrants within school systems with constrained resources. As a result, children from migrant families find it more difficult to qualify

for higher education and are often placed in the lowest types of schools. This situation also significantly fuels the discontent of “native” Austrian parents with children in these schools, where achieving successful educational outcomes is becoming increasingly difficult. Special support policies for such children have recently been implemented, but it remains to be seen how successful these policies will be in the short to medium term.

Spouses, registered partners, and unmarried minor children are entitled to migrate to Austria for family reunification. The parents of minor children also fall within the scope of family reunification under the Asylum Act. Any marriage or registered partnership must, however, already have existed in the country of origin or prior to entry into Austria. The key requirements for family reunification include accommodation meeting local standards, adequate health insurance coverage, and a secure means of subsistence. Exemptions from these requirements exist for family members of persons granted asylum when family reunification is applied for within three months of recognition of refugee status (Lukits 2016).

Austrian laws concerning naturalization are extremely strict, leaving hundreds of thousands of individuals living legally in Austria excluded from political rights. Cases documented by NGOs have shown that members of the Austrian police have used cruelty and violence in interactions with non-citizens, especially migrants without residence permits.

Overall, regarding the situation of migrants, political asylum-seekers, and refugees, Austrian society and the political system face a specific cross-pressure: integrating newcomers while defending the prerogatives of Austrian citizens. While Austrians have repeatedly been found to be among the happiest nations in Europe, various surveys indicate that migrants living in Austria are strikingly unhappy. A survey among expats, published in 2021, found Vienna to be “the most unfriendly major city in the world.” A more recent study suggests significant differences among migrants. Generally, “refugees who scored higher on host-country-specific language proficiency, social contacts, and a feeling of relatedness have significantly higher levels of life satisfaction” (Haindorfer et al. 2022).

The current ÖVP-Green government is the first federal government to include a full minister for integration. In general, the integration of migrants in Austria faces the challenge of needing labor migration while being one of Europe’s primary havens for refugees, who often lack the necessary skills for jobs in the country.

Citation:

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## Belgium

### Score 5

Belgium has a contradictory attitude toward immigration. On the one hand, it has traditionally been quite welcoming to political refugees. This was evident in its initial reaction to the influx of Syrian and later Ukrainian refugees. The government responded by rapidly creating emergency accommodation centers and redistributing families to different cities and villages to promote integration and avoid the creation of ghettos. However, the situation has deteriorated over the last few decades, particularly in the wake of terrorist attacks on Brussels and throughout Europe. As in many, if not most, EU member states, popular support for a complete halt to immigration has risen significantly. A year after the Ukrainian wave of immigration, Belgium also showed its inconsistency: there were not enough beds available, and insufficient funding for other migrants, which drove the government to relinquish several of its obligations for “single men” searching asylum.

In general, again like in many other countries, the issue of migration is politically divisive. It precipitated the collapse of the previous government (see previous reports) and almost brought down the current government in the summer of 2021. This was following a hunger strike by over 470 undocumented migrants that narrowly avoided turning into a tragedy. An oral agreement was reached, without collective regularization, but considering all cases as admissible. However, after one year, only one in six people who had submitted a file had been regularized (see press article).

This trend toward less openness on migration issues can be partly explained by the strong presence of far-right and extreme-right parties in Flanders, pushing centrist parties to adopt less universalist postures. In fact, the current Flemish government announced shortly after its formation that it was withdrawing from UNIA (formerly the Center for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism), a proposition that was backed up by the parliament later on (see press article).

Though legally recognized as Belgian citizens, second and third-generation immigrants have also become victims of these tensions. The OECD and the European Semester have repeatedly highlighted the poor performance of Belgian schools, based on PISA scores, concerning the educational performance of students with a migrant background. Another weakness lies in the persistent inability to integrate non-EU immigrants into the labor market. In 2022, the employment rate of

Belgians and EU immigrants was above 70%, while for immigrants from North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, it was 51.3% and 54.3% respectively (see Statbel website). FPS Employment and Unia (2022) reports that “people of foreign origin are still less likely to be employed, and if they are, it’s often in less durable, lower-quality positions.” According to EU-SILC data, in 2020 the rate of severe material deprivation among foreign-born residents was three times higher than for native-born citizens (8.4 vs. 2.8), which increases to almost four times higher for non-EU-born residents (11.1).

Thus, while Belgium has been a country of immigration and is generally opposed to overt racism and discrimination, its performance in terms of eventual social inclusion and labor market participation is less than optimal.

Citation:

Press article on the hunger strike of undocumented immigrants: <https://www.rtb.be/article/deception-chez-les-sans-papiers-grevistes-de-la-faim-seule-1-personne-sur-6-obtient-la-regularisation-11006537>

Press article on the Flemish government withdrawing from UNIA: <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/fr/2022/10/27/le-parlement-flamand-approuve-la-creation-de-l-institut-flamand/>

Statbel data – Situation on the labor market according to the nationality of origin: <https://statbel.fgov.be/en/news/situation-labour-market-according-nationality-origin>

FPS Employment and Unia. 2022. Socioeconomic Monitoring 2022: Labour Market and Origin. Brussels: FPS Employment and Unia Publishing.

Eu-silc data – Severe material deprivation rate by group of country of birth (population aged 18 and over): [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC\\_MDDD16\\_\\_custom\\_9150158/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC_MDDD16__custom_9150158/default/table?lang=en)

## Greece

### Score 5

Greece has faced repeated inflows of migrants and refugees arriving on the Aegean islands and crossing the Greek-Turkish border along the Evros River in Northeastern Greece. These inflows have been unpredictable and disproportionate to the country’s administrative capacity, economic resources, and the size of receiving communities, such as islands and border villages.

In the past, particularly during the 2015–2016 crisis, Greece struggled to manage immigration challenges, with substandard conditions for receiving and hosting migrants and refugees. However, there has been progress in infrastructure, procedures, and administrative capacity at reception points over time, and the numbers of migrants and refugees have dramatically decreased.

New reception centers were built on Greek islands between 2020 and 2023. In terms of material and social deprivation among migrants and refugees, Greece ranks average among EU countries (Eurostat 2022a). Public services and NGOs cater to the welfare needs of these populations.

Despite these improvements, Greece has not effectively managed the demands of asylum-seekers or integrated them into local communities. Migrants and refugees face limited access to the labor market, often receiving temporary residence and

work permits that prevent them from pursuing long-term job opportunities. Consequently, many migrants and refugees work in the shadow economy as agricultural and construction workers, often in low-paid and uninsured temporary jobs. This is reflected in Greece's average ranking among EU countries for the unemployment rate of migrants and refugees (Eurostat 2022b).

To address labor shortages and streamline the situation, the government passed a law in December 2023. This law allows migrants and refugees who entered the country before 2021 and have lived and worked in Greece since then to obtain a three-year residency work permit, provided they present a job offer from a prospective employer (European Travel Information and Authorization System-ETIAS 2023).

However, there are no government-funded language courses, professional training, or mentoring programs for adult migrants and refugees. Children, on the other hand, can freely attend Greek primary and secondary public schools, where they learn the language and follow the same curriculum as Greek pupils. Despite the absence of language or administrative barriers in education, migrants and refugees struggle to progress in their studies. Greece ranks among the lowest-performing countries in upper secondary and tertiary attainment for migrants and refugees (Eurostat 2022c).

Greece follows EU policies on family reunification, although most migrants and refugees entering the country do not seek to reunite with family members in Greece. Instead, they aim to join family members already residing in Northern European countries.

Until recently, conditions for migrants and refugees to obtain nationality and participate in political life were unfavorable (Migration Integration Policy Index 2020). Today, the process of obtaining Greek citizenship has been streamlined and digitalized by the General Secretariat of Migration Policy, a unit of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, although it usually takes a long time. Migrants and refugees can now track the progress of their petitions, and political participation is available for second-generation migrants and refugees.

The Ministry of Migration and Asylum leads migration policy, with specific target values set to address migrants' needs and provide tailored support. These targets are outlined in the national strategy for integration (Ministry of Migration and Asylum 2019) and the annually updated plan for migration and asylum (Ministry of Migration and Asylum 2023).

Citation:

European Travel Information and Authorization System-ETIAS. 2023. "Greece adopts new residency permits to address labor shortages." <https://etias.com/articles/greece-residency-permit-labor-shortage>

Eurostat. 2022. "Severe material deprivation rate by group of country of birth (population aged 18 and over)." [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC\\_MDDD16\\_\\_custom\\_6268917/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC_MDDD16__custom_6268917/default/table?lang=en)

Eurostat. 2022b. "Unemployment rates by sex, age and country of birth (%)." [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSA\\_URGACOB/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSA_URGACOB/default/table?lang=en)

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Ministry of Migration and Asylum. 2019. “National Strategy for Integration.” <https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/%CE%926-%CE%95%CE%B8%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CE%A3%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE-2019.pdf>

Ministry of Migration and Asylum. 2023. “Annual Action Plan 2023.” <https://www.migration.gov.gr/annual-action-plan-2023>

The website of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum is <https://migration.gov.gr/en/>

The website of the General Secretariat of Migration Policy, in which third-country nationals can follow the progress of their petitions, is <https://pf.emigrants.ypes.gr/pf/>.

## Ireland

### Score 5

Ireland’s population increased to over five million, its highest since 1851, according to Census 2021. Seventeen percent of the population was born abroad, reflecting net inward migration flows over the last 20 years, primarily from EU citizens with the right to reside, work, and own property. The unemployment rate among migrants, especially those from post-2004 EU member states, is higher than among the Irish-born population, with many migrants not employed in occupations commensurate with their skills and education. McGinnity et al. (2023) highlight that foreign-born individuals have both higher employment and unemployment rates, with lower income and higher poverty levels. Immigrants to Ireland have various labor statuses, including international protection and student statuses, and many do not have equal and full access to the labor market. Some work visas still tie employees to a specific employer, and regulations deny access to the labor market completely for the first six months of asylum applications. Historically ethnically homogenous, with the Travelling Community as the only ethnic minority (formally recognized in 2017 and less than 1% of the population), Ireland is now considerably more diverse and facing contemporary challenges of integration and racism.

The country is shifting from an emigration to an immigration culture, experiencing both outflows and inflows. Over 120 nationalities are recorded, and social cohesion is relatively good. However, the recent arrival of up to 100,000 Ukrainians amidst a housing and homelessness crisis has shifted political dynamics. Migration, racism, and integration have become significant issues, with a far-right presence, race riots and arson attacks on accommodations for asylum-seekers marking late 2023 (HCC 2023).

Recognition procedures for skills and qualifications are slow and incomplete. Language courses are not systematically provided early and are often basic, offered by community groups and not facilitating professional development. Professional training programs, mentoring and employer incentives for migrants are limited.



Integration policies offer opportunities for family reunion, but applications are considered individually. Some integration policies provide opportunities for political participation, though these are sporadic. A full political integration program may evolve under the new Electoral Commission. The process for immigrants to obtain citizenship is relatively streamlined and welcoming, with collective national citizenship ceremonies publicly celebrated in national media.

There is a vacuum in government migration policy. The lead unit varies depending on whether the immigration is related to international protection (asylum/refugee status), economic migration, education, or other (family reunion). Multiple units are not effectively coordinated through interministerial policy coordination. Recent incidences of street homelessness among male international protection arrivals in early and late 2023 mark a complete abandonment of the policy to end Direct Provision for international protection applicants (Mahon 2020) and a tightening of conditions for Ukrainian refugees in 2024.

Citation:

Zellentin, A. 2021. "Education for Citizenship in a Changing Country." In *The Oxford Handbook of Irish Politics*, eds. D. M. Farrell and N. Hardiman, 71-88. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mahon. 2020.

DCEDIY. 2021. "A White Paper to End Direct Provision and to Establish a New International Protection Support Service." Government of Ireland, February 26.

CSO. 2021. "Population and Migration Estimates." <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2021/mainresults>

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## Italy

### Score 5

Large-scale immigration is a relatively new phenomenon in Italy compared to other European countries. In recent years, the number of legal immigrants – mainly from new EU member states – and illegal immigrants has increased significantly, making immigration one of the most contentious political issues. Some parties, notably the Northern League and the Brothers of Italy, have used negative or even xenophobic rhetoric during election campaigns, portraying immigrants as dangerous social elements.

There are around 5 million legal immigrants in Italy, of which 3.6 million are from non-EU countries. The number of illegal immigrants is estimated at around half a million. Historically, policies addressing immigration have focused on controlling illegal entry and temporarily hosting refugees rather than on integration. Provisions for large-scale regularization of immigrants, particularly those employed within

families, had not been repeated until recently. The 2023 “Decreto flussi” theoretically aims to facilitate legal immigration from abroad but can also be used to regularize undocumented immigrants already in the country. This measure introduced a new, small-scale program to address the issue under the Meloni government.

As a result of the current situation, many immigrants remain involved in the informal economy and are thus exposed to economic exploitation, dangerous working conditions, and a lack of respect for their rights. Certain sectors rely heavily on migrant labor, including agriculture, construction, private elderly care, childcare services, and private cleaning services.

Access to citizenship for immigrants remains problematic. Discussions on “*ius soli*” (granting Italian citizenship to migrant children born in Italy) have been tense, and legislative proposals on this issue have failed to gain parliamentary approval. The school system has proved to be a positive factor in the integration process for young immigrants; however, there is a serious lack of courses for adult immigrants, and schools have not received sufficient resources to achieve the best results. Public housing policy has been weakened by budgetary constraints, resulting in many cities having ghetto-like areas where immigrants live in extremely poor housing conditions.

The universal healthcare system has generally been effective in providing medical treatment for immigrants. Charitable organizations, particularly those linked to the Catholic Church (e.g., Caritas), have made significant contributions to the support and integration of migrants. The Draghi government adopted a more flexible attitude toward illegal immigrants entering Italy, significantly increasing the quota of legal immigrants allowed into the country to meet labor needs in key economic sectors.

The Meloni government has adopted a two-pronged approach to immigration. On one hand, it has planned the legal entry of around 450,000 immigrants for work purposes, despite the higher demand for economic workers from companies, which was about 850,000. On the other hand, it has introduced further restrictions on illegal immigrants.

Overall, there is still a lack of a coherent national policy on the integration of migrants. Most efforts are largely in the hands of local governments and charities. National rules for obtaining Italian citizenship are very demanding, and political participation remains low. Approximately 1.6 million resident foreigners, representing more than 614,000 households, live in absolute poverty.

Citation:

- Caritas. 2023. “XXXII rapporto annuale Immigrazione.” <https://www.caritas.it/presentazione-del-xxxii-rapporto-immigrazione>

Istat. 2023. “Report Immigrazione.” [https://www.istat.it/it/files//2023/02/REPORT\\_MIGRAZIONI\\_2021.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files//2023/02/REPORT_MIGRAZIONI_2021.pdf)

REV: on the “Decreto Flussi” see <https://www.fiscoetasse.com/files/17075/dpcm270923.pdf>

## Netherlands

### Score 5

Immigration to the Netherlands has seen significant increases, with 221,000 people settling in 2022 and an additional 140,000 in the preceding year. Politicians, particularly concerned about asylum-seekers, have amplified negative public perceptions of migration.

However, the actual growth has been driven largely by migrant workers and foreign students. Migrant workers play crucial roles in sectors where Dutch workers are reluctant to be employed, such as construction, agriculture, catering, cleaning, distribution and packaging. Such individuals fill hundreds of thousands of vacancies, and have become indispensable to employers.

The arrival of Ukrainian refugees marked a pivotal moment, causing a ripple effect in the migrant chain. They were granted immediate work rights, prompting a lawsuit that eventually allowed all refugees to work for more than 24 weeks per year. The housing shortage led to overcrowded, underfunded and understaffed migrant reception centers, notably in Ter Apel. This situation has contributed to the political framing of asylum-seekers as a threat to the country. During the fall and winter 2023, many municipalities called for a reduction in pressure on their formal reception centers. In response, the government drafted a bill for the forced distribution of asylum-seekers across municipalities nationwide.

Findings from the Court of Audit in 2023 underscored the persistent issue of insufficient budget allocations for asylum-seeker reception, highlighting the need for systemic adjustments. The new integration law introduced both opportunities and challenges, revealing disparities in implementation among municipalities.

As highlighted by the State Commission Against Discrimination and Racism, discrimination and racism persist in the Netherlands, affecting various sectors. Addressing institutional discrimination will require a systemic response. Concerns about discriminatory practices against students with a migration background have also been raised within the legal sector.

Workplace discrimination remains a challenge, with one in 10 workers reporting discrimination in the previous 12 months based on origin, skin color or nationality. Such discrimination impacts well-being and professional experiences.

Internal EU migration to the Netherlands has increased, with higher-educated knowledge migrants from outside the EU contributing significantly to the workforce. To combat abuse of labor migration, the government has implemented measures such as the WorkinNL website and laws regulating housing contracts for labor migrants. However, these regulations are often ignored and inadequately enforced in practice.

The education sector has witnessed a quadrupling of international students, sparking debates about reducing the frequency of English-language instruction at higher education levels.

Citation:

Cohortonderzoek asielzoekers en statushouders. 2023. Asiel en integratie. CBS.

Daan van Acht. 2023. "Asielzoeker mag per direct hele jaar werken, besluit kabinet na rechterlijke uitspraak." De Volkskrant, November 29.

Dossier opvangcapaciteit, <https://www.coa.nl/nl/dossier/opvangcapaciteit-dossier>

Tweede Kamer stemt voor wens om spreidingswet voorlopig uit te stellen. NOS Nieuws, donderdag 14 december, 18:04.

Seksueel geweld: blinde vlek in de asielprocedure? Een medische en juridische analyse van de rechtspositie van slachtoffers van seksueel geweld in de asieprocedure getoets aan internationale mensenrechten standaarden, Amnesty International, maart 2023

Discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkt neemt alleen maar toe, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 11 april 2023

## Poland

Score 4

Poland, one of the most homogeneous countries in the EU, has recently shifted from a net-emigration to a net-immigration status. Its legal framework for migration is generally satisfactory, but the issue has become highly politicized, leading to policies that often do not address real challenges. The primary legal documents governing migration and asylum are the acts on Foreigners and on Granting Protection to Aliens. EU citizens, as well as those from Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, have unrestricted access to the labor market. In contrast, citizens of Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine require an employer's declaration to work. Special permits are necessary for other nationalities. The government provides limited language assistance to migrants, allows family reunions after six months and permits naturalization after three years of legal residence.

Immigrants face challenges with regard to political participation, as they lack voting rights, except for EU citizens in local elections. Poland also lacks integration policies tailored to individual needs. The Ministry of the Interior and Administration is the main body responsible for migration policy, though the prime minister abolished the Department of Analysis and Migration Policy in August 2021.

Migration policy was a key issue for the conservative PiS government. In 2022, Poland faced an extended immigration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border, with thousands of people attempting to enter the EU through Belarus, often with Belarusian assistance. Despite confirmed deaths, Polish border guards maintained pushbacks until a 186-kilometer wall was completed in the summer of 2022. Conversely, Poland welcomed 2 million people fleeing the war in Ukraine, with nearly 10 million crossings recorded after the Russian invasion in February 2022. The response was notably effective, involving public authorities, NGOs and

individuals. Under the law of March 12, Ukrainians crossing the border after February 24, 2022, were granted residence and work permits, access to social benefits, and entry into educational institutions.

In 2023, immigration issues became an increasingly intense part of the public debate, with the government amplifying anti-immigrant rhetoric, and framing migration as an external threat to Polish identity and security. Two referendum questions related to border issues and the EU's relocation mechanism. The Polish government opposed the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum, arguing that it undermined Polish interests. Additionally, allegations of corruption in the issuance of visas by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Consular Service emerged in the summer of 2023. Relations with Ukraine also worsened, partly due to economic factors and internal political maneuvers. The new liberal coalition government that took office in mid-December 2023 is unlikely to make major regulatory changes but will need to address labor market needs and long-term pension system stability.

Citation:

Panara, M. 2023. "Poland's ruling party 'instrumentalizes' migrants for electoral gain." InfoMigrants <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/51180/polands-ruling-party-instrumentalizes-migrants-for-electoral-gain>

<https://interwencjaprawna.pl/en/seven-changes-to-the-migration-law-we-are-calling-on-the-new-government/>

## Slovakia

### Score 4

According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (2020), migrants in Slovakia face numerous obstacles to integration. While they enjoy basic rights and security, they do not have equal opportunities. Slovakia scores significantly low in labor market mobility, political participation, and education. Family reunification is rated as "halfway favorable." The process for immigrants to obtain citizenship is lengthy and complicated, requiring a minimum of eight years of continuous stay.

The Ministry of Interior is the main body responsible for migration. On September 8, 2021, the Slovak government approved the Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic Perspective 2025, which prioritizes "managed economic migration" and a strict fight against illegal migration. The policy includes general goals but lacks concrete targets and indicators. Slovakia has faced a lack of service infrastructure, negatively impacting the long-term integration of migrants. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, several new local and regional offices (e.g., Košice, Nitra, Trnava) were established through the initiative of regional self-governments and NGOs. The Migration Policy document suggests the need for a specialized nationwide coordination office, but no significant policy steps were taken until January 2024.

Anti-migrant attitudes are prevalent in Slovakia. According to a Eurobarometer survey, 83% of Slovak respondents have negative feelings toward people from outside the EU (EC 2018). These negative attitudes are reflected in the positions of political parties. A report by the Slovak Ombudsman on December 12, 2023,

criticized the living conditions of immigrants in the refugee camp Sečovce (Kancelária VOP 2023).

Attitudes towards immigration from Ukraine have been more open and friendly due to cultural proximity. The government adopted several measures to support their stay and possible integration. However, Amnesty International criticized the insufficient protection of the rights of immigrants from Ukraine, especially women with children and the LGBTQ community (Amnesty International, 2023).

Citation:

Migrant Integration Policy Index. 2020. "Slovakia." <https://www.mipex.eu/slovakia>

Government of the Slovak Republic. 2021. "Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic Perspective 2025." [https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/integracia-cudzincov/dokumenty/migracna\\_politika.pdf](https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/integracia-cudzincov/dokumenty/migracna_politika.pdf)

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European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, Directorate-General for Communication, and TNS Opinion and Social. 2018. "Special Eurobarometer 469: Integration of Immigrants in the European Union Report." <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a0fb4f0c-97c0-11e9-9369-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

## Japan

### Score 3

For many years, Japan has struggled to develop a coherent immigration policy. While the need for migration is widely recognized by politicians and society, not least due to worsening labor shortages, policymakers have long tried to assure the public that problems of integration as seen in Western Europe could be avoided by either inviting migrants of Japanese descent from South America or by making labor migration temporary. One of the largest programs in the latter sense has been the Technical Intern Training Program, which has allowed unskilled workers to stay in Japan for up to five years. Working conditions have often been harsh and there have been a number of scandals over the years where employers were found to exploit or mistreat migrant workers. In 2023, the Kishida government announced it would replace the program with a formalized scheme for low-wage workers.

Japanese governments have gradually opened some pathways to long-term settlement in Japan for highly skilled workers but also for medium-skilled workers who possess skills that are in short supply. However, the system for specified skilled worker visas – introduced in 2019 – is rather restrictive, with rigid quotas for workers in different categories. Most workers cannot bring their families to Japan or hope to stay in Japan more than five years. Language and cultural competency

requirements continue to constitute obstacles to foreign professionals, including graduates of Japanese universities.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index described Japan's approach in 2019 as "immigration without integration," pointing particularly to problems with education, political participation and non-discrimination. Support for intercultural education throughout the school curriculum is limited, foreign permanent residents lack the right to vote in local elections and there is no dedicated anti-discrimination law. However, there has been a slight improvement in the political participation of immigrants, as several municipalities have granted foreign residents the right to participate in local referenda. Moreover, legal migrants and asylum-seekers have access to the Japanese healthcare system. But the number of recognized refugees is very low and most asylum-seekers have lived in Japan in a precarious legal state.

The period of 10 years of continuous residence in Japan is a relatively high requirement for permanent residency, though highly skilled professionals and permanent residents' family members can apply earlier. The naturalization process is not particularly difficult, but dual citizenship is forbidden. Gaining Japanese citizenship has become easier for the Zainichi – Koreans living in Japan for several generations – whose rights had been limited in the past.

Immigration procedures are supervised by the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, which has been extremely reluctant to recognize the refugee status of immigrants. In November 2022, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed its concerns over poor health conditions in immigration detention facilities and the low rate of refugee recognition in Japan. It also appealed to Japan to improve the precarious situation of persons who lost their visas or resident status and are on "provisional release," without the possibility of engaging in income-generating activities.

Citation:

UN Human Rights Committee. 2022. "Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Japan." <https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPrICAqhKb7yhsuBJT%2Fi29ui%2Fb4Ih9%2FUJJO87S0HPMR1PnCPt3LQO6EolLe709268JsfEokJ6QyNqFgswSBYIrovzRJaQqYHclTtywUvvrUCI%2F6iBnTGHkY>

"Abolition of Technical Intern Training Program: Improve Treatment of Foreign Workers under New System." The Yomiuri Shimbun November 10. <https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/editorial/yomiuri-editorial/20231110-148773/>

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## Hungary

### Score 2

Migration is a highly controversial topic in Hungary. The government generally adopts an anti-migration stance, citing the need to protect the Hungarian nation and Christianity. This issue plays a central role in the illiberal narrative the government promotes. The migration of Hungarians from neighboring countries intensified after the democratic transition, and among non-European migrants, Asians are the dominant group. During the migration crisis in 2015, Hungary was a hard-liner against granting access to EU territory (Bocskor 2018). However, concerning Ukrainian refugees, Hungary's approach is much more liberal. Generally, Hungary does not fulfill its international obligations in asylum policies. Nevertheless, it recognizes the need to counter labor market shortages with targeted and medium-term recruitment to address the ongoing brain drain and population decline. Surprisingly, migration to Hungary consists largely of highly educated workers. The ratio of foreign-born to native-born individuals with at least upper secondary attainment (25 – 64 years old) ranks third among OECD countries, right behind Canada and Israel. Additionally, the unemployment rate among the foreign-born population is substantially lower than among the native-born population, making unemployment among migrants in Hungary almost negligible.

Integration policies in Hungary are considered restrictive and less developed than in many other European countries. Funding for supporting migrants in Hungary primarily comes from European programs such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund. However, due to a partial suspension of the AMIF national program, the funding has been partially interrupted since 2018.

Hungary's Migration Strategy for 2014 – 2020 focused on providing support services, legal assistance and representation in all phases of the asylum procedure, but failed to introduce a comprehensive integration program. A renewed strategy was not developed. A support system for beneficiaries of international protection and persons under subsidiary protection, established in 2014, was canceled during the migration crisis of 2016. Aid provided via civil society organizations is constrained by the Lex NGO, which criminalizes NGOs that help migrants. The Sovereignty Protection Act adopted in 2023 intensifies stigmatization. As a result, the implementation of migration policies is weak, as there is no real consultation mechanism. Overall, the Hungarian system distinguishes between asylum-seekers – for which the respective laws have been hardened several times, and recognition numbers are virtually zero (only 40 applications in 2022) (Eurostat 2024), ranking Hungary last among EU countries with regard to the number of first-time asylum applications – and migration into labor markets, for which the government is more proactive.



## Citation:

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