

The number of international migrants worldwide reaches 232 million¹

1. The number of international migrants worldwide reaches an all-time high

In 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 232 million, up from 175 million in 2000 and 154 million in 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, the international migrant stock grew by an average of 1.2 per cent per year. During the period from 2000 to 2010, the annual growth rate accelerated, reaching 2.3 per cent. Since then, however, it has slowed, falling to around 1.6 per cent per year during the period from 2010 to 2013.

In 2013, 136 million international migrants lived in the North, while 96 million resided in the South (figure 1). Since 1990, the share of international migrants living in the developed regions has increased. In 2013, the North² hosted 59 per cent of all international migrants; up from 53 per cent in 1990.

Between 1990 and 2013, the North gained a larger number of international migrants compared to the South. Some 2.3 million migrants were added annually in the developed regions, compared to 1 million in the developing regions.

Yet since 2000, the migrant stock in the South has been growing more rapidly than in the North. Between 2000 and 2010, the average annual growth rate for migrants in the South was 2.5 per cent per annum. In the North, the annual growth rate was around 2.3 per cent. Since 2010, the annual growth rate has slowed to 1.5 per cent in the developed regions and 1.8 per cent in the developing regions.

Worldwide, international migrants account for a small share of the total population. They comprised about 3.2 per cent of the world population in 2013, compared to 2.9 per cent in 1990.

In the North, the proportion of international migrants in total population exceeds that of the South. In 2013 migrants constituted 10.8 per cent of the total population in developed regions compared to 1.6 per cent in developing regions. Between 1990 and 2013, international migrants as a share of total population grew in the North but remained unchanged in the South.

Figure 1. International migrants, 1990-2013 (millions)

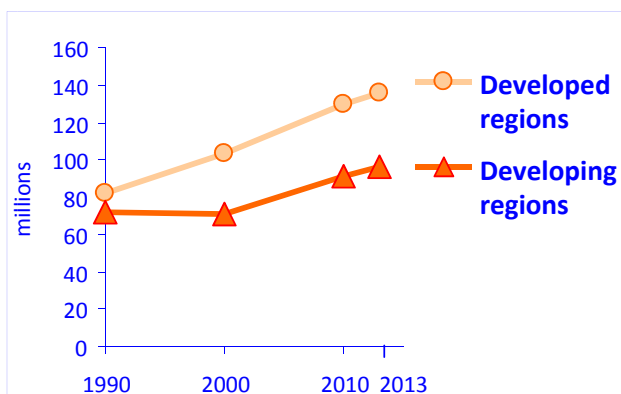
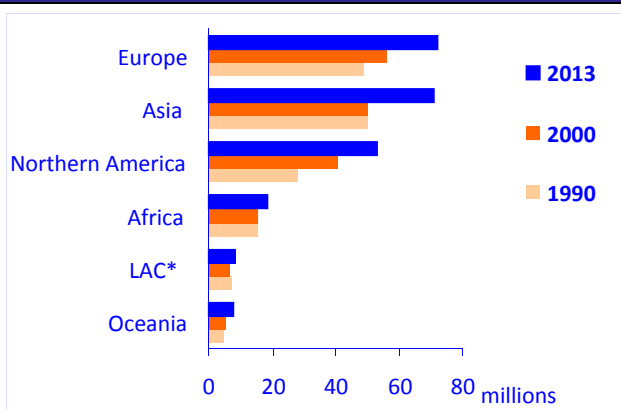


Figure 2. International migrants by major area, 1990, 2000 and 2013



2. Europe and Asia host the largest number of international migrants

Europe and Asia combined host nearly two-thirds of all international migrants worldwide. In 2013, 72 million international migrants were residing in Europe, compared to 71 million in Asia. Northern America hosted the third largest number of international migrants in 2013 (53 million), followed by Africa (19 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9 million), and Oceania (8 million) (figure 2).

Since 1990, Northern America recorded the largest gain in the absolute number of international migrants.

Between 1990 and 2013, Northern America added 25 million migrants, equal to 1.1 million additional migrants per year. Europe added the second largest number during this period (23 million or 1 million per year), followed by Asia (21 million or slightly less than 1 million per year).

Northern America also experienced the fastest growth in migrant stock.

Between 1990 and 2013, the number of international migrants in Northern America grew by an average of 2.8 per cent per year. Oceania recorded the second fastest annual average growth rate in international migrant stock during this period (2.3 per cent), followed by Europe (1.7 per cent).

Since 2000, however, Asia added more international migrants than any other major area.

Asia gained some 20 million international migrants between 2000 and 2013, or 1.6 million additional migrants per annum. Europe added the second largest number of international migrants between 2000 and 2013 (16 million or 1.2 million per year), followed by Northern America (13 million or 1 million per year).

In Europe, Northern America and Oceania, the share of migrants in total population has grown rapidly.

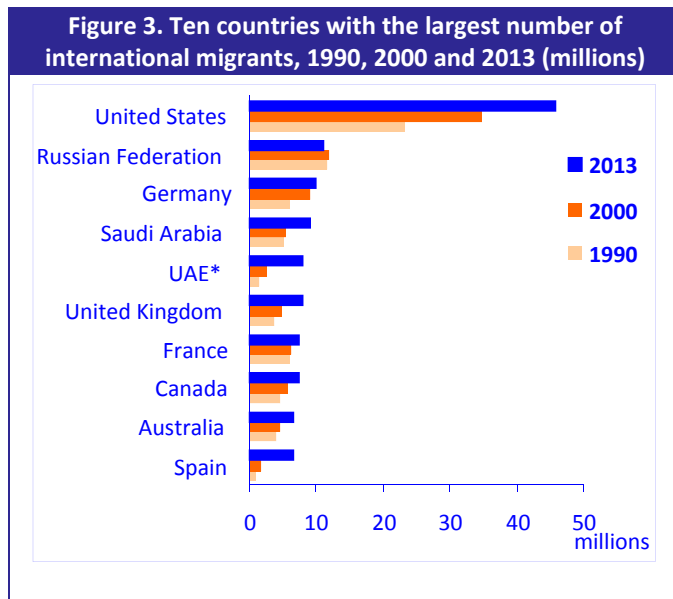
Oceania, the major area with the highest share of international migrant stock in total population, saw this figure climb from 17 per cent in 1990 to 21 per cent in 2013. In Northern America the proportion of international migrants in the total population reached 15 per cent in 2013 up from 10 per cent in 1990, while in Europe it rose from 7 per cent in 1990 to 10 per cent in 2013.

In Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, the share of migrants in total population remains small.

In 2013, Latin America and the Caribbean had the lowest proportion of international migrants in total population (1.4 per cent), followed by Asia and Africa (1.6 per cent and 1.7 per cent, respectively). Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean both experienced a decline in the share of international migrants among their total population between 1990 and 2013, in part owing to the fact that the overall population increased more rapidly than the total migrant stock.

3. Half of all international migrants worldwide reside in just ten countries

In 2013, over 51 per cent of all international migrants in the world were living in ten countries. The largest number of international migrants resided in the United States of America: 46 million in 2013, equal to 19.8 per cent of the world's total (figure 3). The Russian Federation hosted the second largest number of migrants worldwide (11 million), followed by Germany (10 million), Saudi Arabia (9 million), and the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom (8 million each).



* United Arab Emirates.

Since 1990, most countries in the world have witnessed an increase in the number of migrants.

Between 1990 and 2013, the size of the international migrant stock grew in 165 countries or areas, while it declined in 63 countries or areas (figure 4)³.

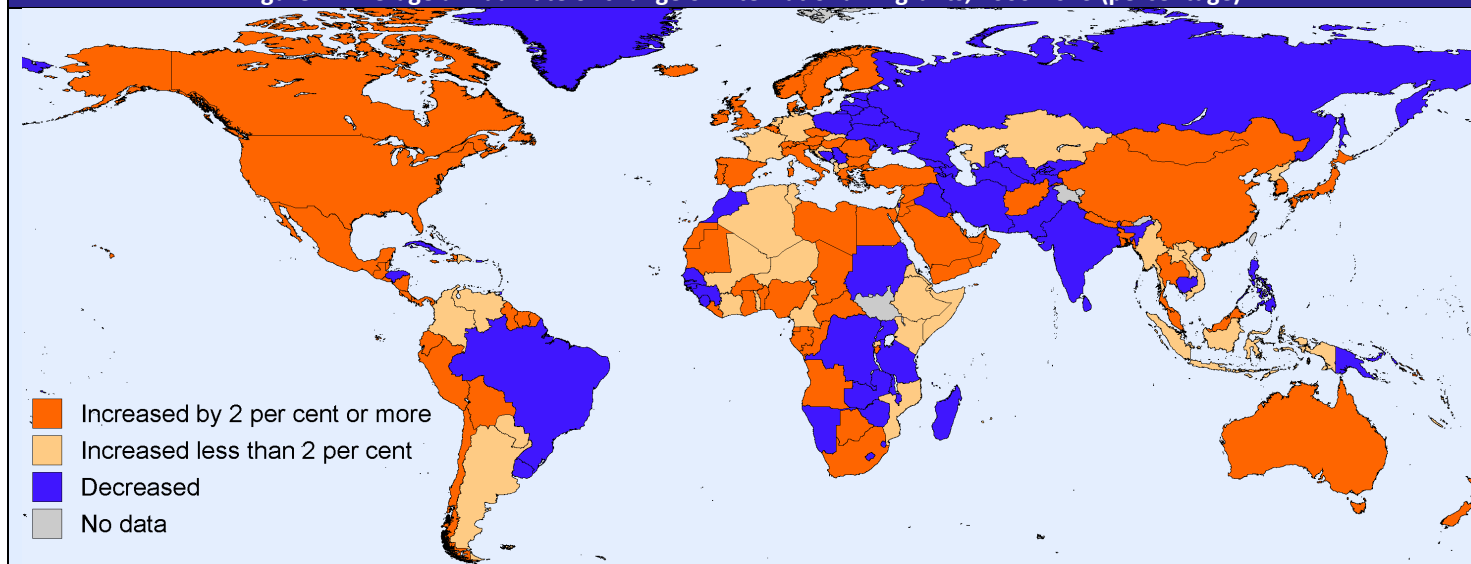
The United States of America gained the largest number of international migrants between 1990 and 2013:

nearly 23 million, equal to 1 million additional migrants per annum. The United Arab Emirates recorded the second largest gain during this period (7 million), followed by Spain (6 million). Yet all ten countries recording the largest gains in their migrant stock between 1990 and 2013, witnessed a deceleration in their annual growth rate between 2010 and 2013 compared to the period 2000 to 2010.

Ageing of international migrants and the voluntary repatriation of refugees has contributed to the decline in the migrant stock in some countries.

Countries that recorded large declines in the size of their migrant stock between 1990 and 2013 included India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan and the Ukraine.

Figure 4. Average annual rate of change of international migrants, 2000-2013 (percentage)



Note: The boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

In 2013, migrants accounted for at least one in every five people in 52 countries or areas. These include small island states in the Caribbean, Melanesia, Micronesia or Polynesia as well countries in Western Asia. In contrast, in many countries of Africa, Eastern Asia, South America and Southern Asia migrants account for less than 5 per cent of the total population.

4. Globally, women account for about half of all international migrants

Women comprise 48 per cent of the international migrant stock worldwide. Yet there are considerable differences across regions. In the North, women constituted 52 per cent of all migrants in 2013, while in the South they accounted for 43 per cent.

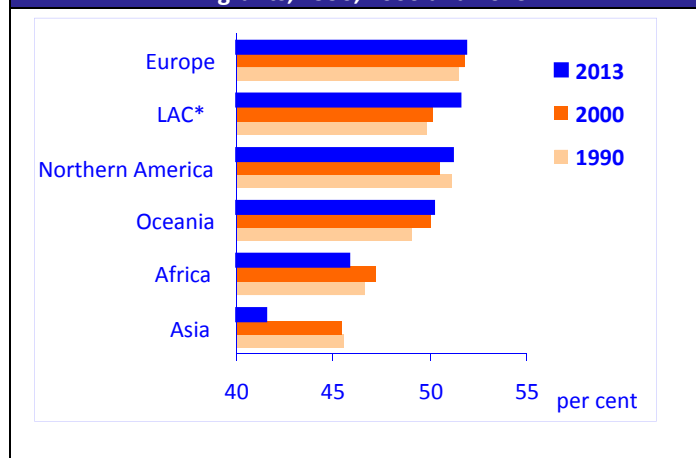
Since 1990, the South has witnessed a drop in the proportion of women among all migrants. Between 1990 and 2013, the percentage of women among all migrants declined from 46 to 43 per cent in the developing regions. In the North during the same period, however, the share of women increased slightly: from 51 to 52 per cent.

The decline in the percentage of women in the South is primarily the result of a rapid increase in the number of male migrants in Asia. Since 2000, the annual increase in the number of male migrants in Asia (3.1 per cent) far exceeded the increase the number of female migrants (1.9 per cent). The increase in male migrants in Asia has been fuelled by the strong demand for migrant workers in the oil-producing countries in Western Asia.

Historic destinations of international migrants tend to host higher proportions of women. In 2013, the percentage female among all international migrants was highest in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean (52 per cent each), followed by Northern America (51 per cent).

In contrast, male migrants significantly outnumbered female migrants in Asia (58 per cent) and Africa (54 per cent), where migration is more frequently of shorter duration (figure 5).

Figure 5. Percentage of women among all international migrants, 1990, 2000 and 2013

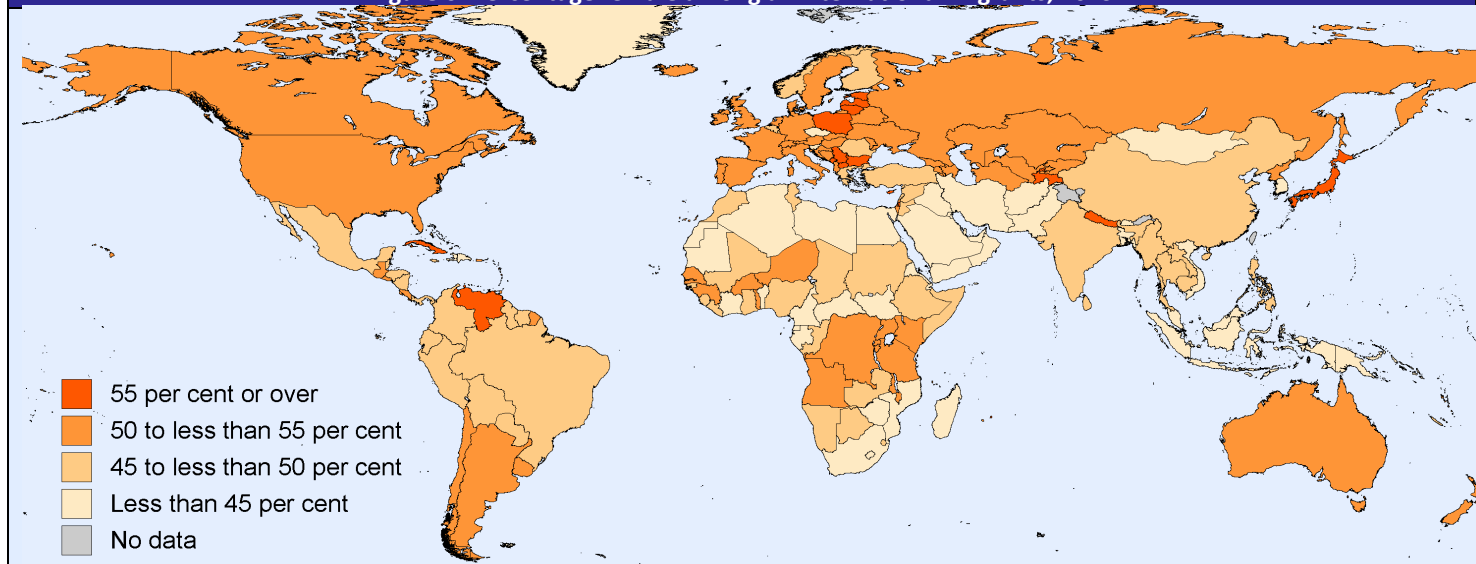


* Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since 1990, the proportion of women among all international migrants increased in all major areas with the exception of Africa and Asia. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the share of females among all migrants rose from 50 per cent in 1990 to 52 per cent in 2013. This increase is primarily due to the ageing of the migrant stock in that major area. In contrast, in Asia the percentage of women among all international migrant stock fell from 46 per cent in 1990 to 42 per cent in 2013.

In 2013, women constituted more than half of all migrants in 101 countries or areas (figure 6). Estonia, Latvia and Poland were among the countries with the highest shares. In 11 countries, all in Asia, women

Figure 6. Percentage female among all international migrants, 2013



Note: The boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

accounted for less than one in three international migrants. Bangladesh, Oman and Qatar were among the countries with the lowest proportions of women in their migrant stock in 2013.

5. Refugees account for a relatively small proportion of the global migrant stock

In 2013, the total number of refugees in the world was estimated at 15.7 million, representing about seven per cent of all international migrants. Between 1990 and 2010, the global number of refugees⁴ declined from 18.6 million to about 15.4 million. However since then, the number has increased.

million), followed by Africa (2.9 million), Europe (1.5 million) (figure 7).

A small number of developing countries host the majority of refugees worldwide. In 2013, Jordan hosted the largest number of refugees (2.6 million), followed by the State of Palestine (2.2 million), Pakistan (1.7 million), the Syrian Arab Republic (1.2 million), Iran (Islamic Republic of) (0.9 million) and Germany (0.5 million).

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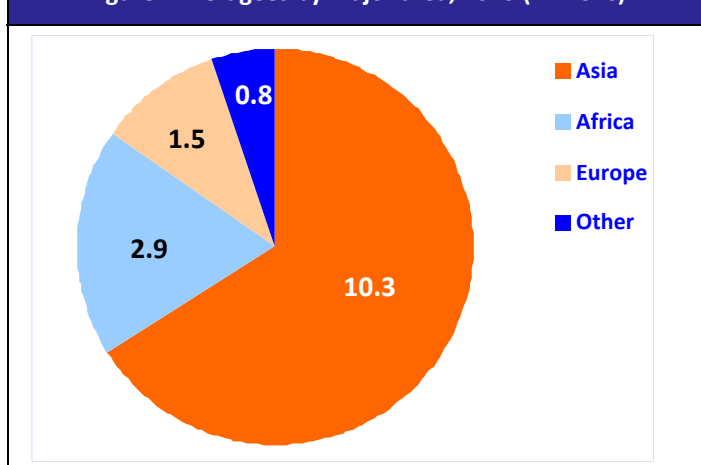
¹ The estimates of the migrant stock were prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The data presented here refer to the international migrant stock defined as a mid-year estimate of the number of people living in a country or area other than the one in which they were born or, in the absence of such data, the number of people of foreign citizenship. Most statistics used to estimate the international migrant stock were obtained from population censuses, population registers and nationally representative household surveys. The refugee data used to estimate the migrant stock were based on figures reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The following source should be cited when referring to the data in this fact sheet: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2013). See: www.unmigration.org.

² The term “North” refers to countries or regions traditionally classified for statistical purposes as “developed,” while the term “South” refers to those classified as “developing.” The developed regions include Europe and Northern America plus Australia, New Zealand and Japan. These terms are used for statistical convenience and do not express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process.

³ Countries that did not yet exist in 1990 are in 2013 are excluded from the analysis.

⁴ The data are based on estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2013). UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database. See: www.unhcr.org/statistics/population-database and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) (2013). UNWRA in figures. See: www.unwra.org.

Figure 7. Refugees by major area, 2013 (millions)



Nearly nine of every ten refugees in the world live in the developing regions. In 2013, some 13.7 million refugees, or 87.2 per cent of the 15.7 million refugees worldwide, resided in countries in the global South. Asia hosted the largest number of refugees in 2013 (10.4