



GERMANY

COUNTRY PROFILE

DRIM

Danube Region
Information
Platform for
Economic
Integration of
Migrants

Authors:

Antje Kohlrusch, Margret Steinle

SHORT INTRODUCTION

Germany is Europe's largest economy and has a population of over 82 million. Ever since the post-war guest programmes, which remained in effect until 1973, Germany has been an "undeclared" immigration country. Germany started to focus on migration in 2000. Two revised acts, the Nationality Law und the Immigration Act, set new directions. Since then, official debates on migration and integration have been underway. In light of the 2004 Immigration Act, Germany became an immigration country. A new political integration framework prepared the ground for new administrative structures to govern integration at various levels.

Germany is now the world's second most popular destination country among migrants, after the United States. Immigration is becoming increasingly important for Germany, particularly in light of demographic change and attracting specialist workers. Immigration became considerably more dynamic once more in 2015 due to the refugee crisis and the considerable increase in asylum-related immigration. The year 2015 was particularly characterized by a high immigration of persons seeking protection. In the 2015 reporting period, 476,649 asylum applications (first and follow-up applications) were registered (compared to 202,834 in 2014). This represents an increase of 135% compared to the previous year. The main country of origin is Syria ¹.

The strong rise in migration has led to many new initiatives and organizational structures to assist integration and to help new arrivals. Therefore, support networks are still expanding and new programmes are being initiated; even so, asylum-related migration has recently slowed down.

¹ Federal Ministry of the Interior: http://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/Topics/Migration-Integration/Immigration/immigration_node.html (1 June 2017)

TABLE WITH BASIC INFORMATION²

Capital: Berlin
Official language(s): German
Population (end of year 2015): 82,200,000
Foreigners as percentage of total population (end of year 2015): 8.7%
Percentage of foreigners in the labour force (end of year 2015): 2,811,645 from a total of 30,821,731
Unemployment rate (February 2017): 3.9% ³
Degree of urbanisation, number of cities over 100,000 inhabitants: 79 cities with over 100,000 inhabitants

² Federal Statistical Office, www.destatis.de (1 June 2017)

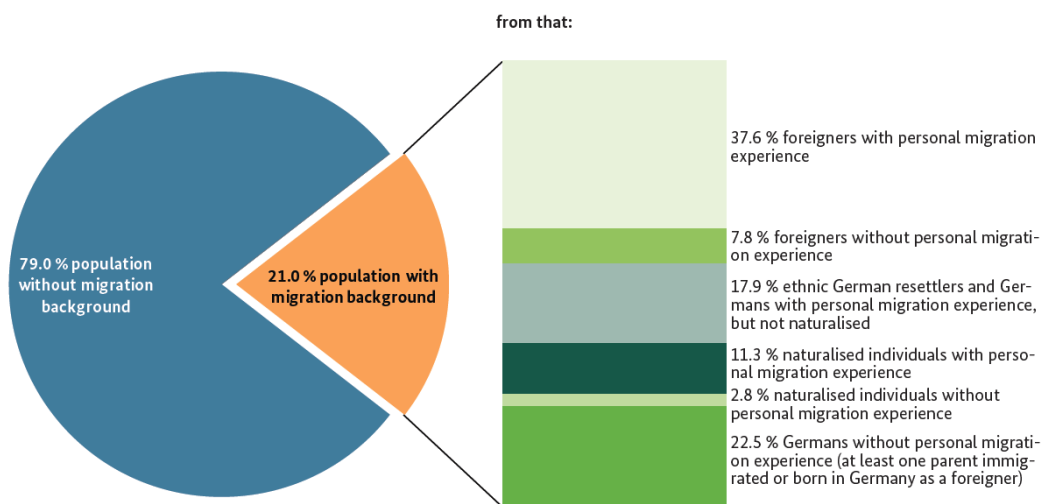
³ Federal Employment Agency, <https://www3.arbeitsagentur.de/web/content/EN/index.htm>, (1 June 2017)

THE MIGRANT POPULATION

In 2015, about 17.1 million people (21% of the total population) in Germany had a migrant background. Based on the results of the 2015 microcensus, the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) also reports that this was a 4.4% increase compared with the previous year. The unusually high increase was mainly due to the recent immigration. In 2015, 11.5 million immigrants were living in Germany, which was an increase of 5.5% over the preceding year.

The ten most important countries from which foreigners migrate to Germany are: Turkey, Poland, Italy, Serbia/Montenegro, Romania, Syria, Greece, Croatia, the Russian Federation, and Bulgaria. The migrant population is younger by comparison: every third person under the age of 18 has a migrant background.⁴

Composition of persons with a migration background in Germany in 2015



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Microcensus 2015

⁴ Federal Office of Statistics, https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2016/09/PD16_327_122.html (1 June 2017)

LABOUR MIGRANT POPULATION

In 2011, about 4 million foreigners were working or doing business in Germany. However, the share of employed persons in the 15-64 age group is smaller compared to people without a migrant background. Persons with a migration background show a higher proportion of unemployment and work more in less-skilled areas. However, persons with a migrant background are more likely to open their own business. In the past, comprehensive structures and institutions were created for supporting migrants to start living and working in Germany and its cities (which is still going on). Germany is also aware of the fact that migration can be part of lifelong global and career mobility. The aim of the support services developed in this regard is to create a welcoming culture for migrants and their families.

POLICIES AND APPROACHES TO (LABOUR) MIGRANTS

Germany is an immigration country and manages migration in order to be attractive for qualified migrants. Germany defines its migration policy with “Focus on People – Support and Integrate”.⁵ The state started recruiting foreign workers from southern Europe and the Mediterranean region in 1955 after concluding an agreement with Italy. Later, the government signed recruitment agreements with Spain, Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). As a result of the economic slowdown, caused among other things by the oil crisis, the Federal Cabinet ordered a stop to further recruitment of foreign labour in November 1973. Few exceptions were made to this ban on recruitment, and few foreign workers were admitted to Germany.

Later changes to the relevant laws gradually expanded the possibilities for foreign workers to move to Germany. The most recent change in this regard was the introduction of the EU Blue Card on 1 August 2012, which makes it easier for skilled workers from non-EU countries to work in the EU. Germany’s current system of labour migration is tailored to the needs and demands of the labour market and is part of the Federal Government’s demographic strategy.⁶

The Residence Act (AufenthG)⁷ governs the entry, residence, employment and termination of the residence of foreigners. In this way, it limits the inflow of foreigners into

⁵ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Startseite/startseite-node.html>, (1 June 2017)

⁶ Federal Ministry of the Interior, http://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/Topics/Migration-Integration/Immigration/labour-migration/labour-migration_node.html (1 June 2017)

⁷ Main documents: Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory: Residence Act:

http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/englisch_aufenthg.pdf (1 June 2017)

the Federal Republic of Germany. The Residence Act also governs measures to pursue the higher policy aim of promoting the integration of foreigners. The Residence Act does not apply to EU citizens who are entitled to freedom of movement and their family members, nor to diplomats.⁸

OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS

In Germany, the federal government decides on laws and regulation for staying in Germany. Therefore, the best starting point is information provided by the federal government through the [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees](#) and its [website](#). It provides information on and help with staying, working and living in Germany, and where to find further information. It also offers a hotline (+49 911 943-0).

Other useful information on the labour market is provided by the [Federal Employment Agency](#) (website in the German, English and French language) and the [Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy](#). Germany and its federal offices offer a comprehensive service to support migrants navigating through Germany from the very beginning, such as [make-it-in-Germany](#), which have also been made into apps: [Arrive-App](#), [Make it in Germany](#) (English, Spanish, French and 10 more languages) and [welcome in Germany](#) (German, Turkish, Russian) that help migrants to become familiar with the new circumstances. Federal ministries give detailed information in English.

These information services help to obtain information on Germany in general. Many support services and especially immigration offices are organized at the local level, in cities, in local communities or by the state government. After first contact, websites and apps guide migrants to establish contact with the local and responsible offices. These regional advice offices and immigration centres build the navigation structure in Germany.

If someone is still abroad, German embassies and cultural institutes provide information about learning the language and entry regulations: [Goethe-Institut](#) or [German Diplomatic Missions abroad](#).

⁸ Federal Ministry of the Interior, http://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/Topics/Migration-Integration/Law-Foreigners/law-foreigners_node.html (1 June 2017)

KEY STAKEHOLDERS (STATE/INTERNATIONAL/NGO SECTOR)

In Germany, many NGOs, foundations, networks, associations and other institutions from the civil society aim to provide information, support and/or databases for research.

- Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industries offers information on the labour market or entrepreneurship: www.dihk.de/en
- [European Migration Network](#)
- [The ZIRF-Database](#)
- [ProAsyl](#)
- [Refugees Welcome](#)
- [German Institute for Human Rights](#)
- <http://www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/Integrationsprojekte/integrationsprojekte-node.html>

Many activities happen at the local level, for example most German cities develop and expand their own services for migrants and refugees. Other important local players are regional employment agencies and numerous NGOs or education providers. We want to highlight the local services for the City of Munich – the capital of the federal state of Bavaria. It has a population of 1.5 million and about 40% of its inhabitants have a migrant background. In Munich (Bavaria), the City of Munich runs services and webpages such as:

- Munich Foreign Office
- [Basic Information for Refugees](#)
- [Munich Qualification Programme](#)
- [Asylum Seekers](#)
- [Education and Work Services](#)

In addition, universities, NGOs, foundations, networks, associations and other institutions from the civil society aim to provide information and support. Here are some of them:

- [The Council of Foreigners](#). The council consist of members who are non-German or naturalized citizens of Munich. They present the political interests of about 290,000 foreigners who are residents of Munich.
- The Network "[Integration through Qualification \(IQ\)](#)" is a programme funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the European Social Fund (ESF).
- NGO/Network of Bavarian Foreigners, Migrants and Integration Boards. The working group of all counsellors for foreigners, migrants and integration, called [AGABY](#).
- The [Chamber of Commerce and Industries Munich and Upper Bavaria](#) develops programmes and initiatives for integrating refugees.

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