

Mexico

Mexico saw a significant increase in the number of permanent immigrants in 2009, with the level rising by almost 60% to reach close to 24 000. It is unknown what proportion of this is work-related and what is family-related. The United States, China, Guatemala, Colombia and Cuba are the top origin countries, each accounting for about 2 000 to 3 000 immigrants. Following declines in 2007 and 2008, the number of seasonal workers entering Mexico rose by one-third, to 31 000. Most are from Guatemala and Belize.

These movements are relatively small compared to the population of Mexico and in any event, are dwarfed by the emigration of Mexican nationals, mostly to the United States. Here, however, the recession and enhanced border control measures have led to a decline, with movements estimated to have fallen from over 900 000 in 2006 to about 370 000 in 2009. Most of the fall was recorded in labour migration, which went from almost 700 000 to 255 000, but still accounted for almost 70% of all out-migration in 2009. Emigration for family reasons fell by almost a half.

Attempts to cross the border with the United States also declined, as evidenced by the drop in apprehensions of Mexicans, which stood at 528 000 in 2009, almost 40% below their 2007 level. Removals or deportations of Mexicans, on the other hand, increased to 283 000, up 15% the previous year. All signals point to substantial reductions in cross-border movement between Mexico and the United States, with the evidence suggesting that the decline in outflows from Mexico being the main driver of the fall in net migration of Mexicans into the United States.

The economic crisis has had a substantial impact on remittance flows to Mexico, with a drop in transfers of USD 26 billion in 2006 to USD 21 billion in 2009, a decline of almost 20%. However, the depreciation of the Mexican peso (MXN) compensated in part for this development. By October 2010, however, remittances had fallen in peso terms by about 6% below their pre-recession peak.

Mexico has been carrying out regularisations on a modest scale almost annually since the year 2004. The requirements for the most recent one are that the candidates must have entered prior to January 2007, must have a legal job, be the spouse or common-law partner or blood relative of a Mexican or of a foreigner legally established in the country. From November 2008 to September 2010, more than 6 000 persons, most from Central America, had been regularised on this basis.

In April 2010, the new Manual for Immigration Criteria and Procedures (*Manual de Criterios y Trámites Migratorios*) came into effect, with the intention of simplifying immigration procedures, applying information technologies to processing and improving the legal framework to reduce the discretionary behaviour of

immigration authorities. The changes include the requirement of a personal appearance for a visa extension to give testimony under oath regarding their activity in Mexico, the introduction of immigration fees and greater restrictions on family migration of direct dependents. With respect to the legal situation of immigrants in Mexico, however, the most important recent change has been the decriminalisation of irregular migration in Mexico in 2008; it is now considered an administrative misdemeanour.

One of the most significant developments related to migration in Mexico in recent years concerns the movement of the powerful drug cartels into human trafficking. 72 migrants from Central and South America were killed in August 2010 some 160 kilometres from the United States border, after ostensibly refusing to be recruited into drug-smuggling. The kidnapping of and violence against immigrants in transit to the United States border has become relatively common, as some are held for ransom from relatives in the United States. Legal and enforcement measures have been strengthened to deal with the issue, but the problem remains.

Among legislative proposals before the Congress currently is a Migration Law to replace the General Law on Population and a Law on Refugees and Complementary Protection. Together, these two are to lay the basis for immigration policy for the Mexican State. The migration law establishes the conditions for entry and stay of persons in the national territory of the main categories of migration, as well as addressing the social, economic and cultural integration of immigrants in Mexico. The legislative proposal includes procedures for the regularisation of immigrants and for the protection of migrants within the national territory, especially unaccompanied minors and migrants who are in a situation of vulnerability.

The Law cites the government's obligations with respect to emigration, which include that of promoting international agreements to redirect emigration into legal channels and to dissuade Mexicans from emigrating through informal channels. It also refers to obligations to address the social impact of emigration on the communities of origin and on facilitating conditions for return migration.

Finally, in May 2010, Mexico announced that it would be admitting to Mexico persons who have a current valid visa to the United States, regardless of their nationality and provided that the purpose of their visit to Mexico was for tourism, transit or a business visit.

For further information:

www.inm.gob.mx/index.php/page/Estadisticas_Migratorias
www.inegi.org.mx/Sistemas/temasV2/Default.aspx?s=est&c=17484

Recent trends in migrants' flows and stocks

MEXICO

Migration flows (foreigners) <i>National definition</i>	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Inflows	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	23.9			
Outflows	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type	Thousands		% distribution		Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners					
<i>Permit based statistics (standardised)</i>	2008	2009	2008	2009						
Work	..	..	..	..		
Family (incl. accompanying family)	..	..	..	..		
Humanitarian	..	..	..	..		
Free movements	..	..	..	..		
Others	..	..	..	..		
Total	15.1	23.9	..	..				
Temporary migration	2005	2008	2009	Average						
								2005-09		
<i>Thousands</i>										
International students	5.1	6.0					
Trainees					
Working holiday makers					
Seasonal workers	45.5	23.3	30.7	..	33.5					
Intra-company transfers					
Other temporary workers					
Inflows of asylum seekers	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average	Level				
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	680			
Components of population growth	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average	Level ('000)				
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Total	13.4	8.9	8.3	8.0	11.4	8.5	857			
Natural increase	19.8	14.5	13.5	13.2	17.1	13.8	1 413			
Net migration	-6.4	-5.6	-5.2	-5.2	-5.7	-5.3	-556			
Stocks of immigrants	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average	Level ('000)				
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Percentage of the total population</i>										
Foreign-born population	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	..	0.7	850			
Foreign population	..	..	..	0.2	..	..	260
Naturalisations	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average	Level				
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Percentage of the foreign population</i>										
	..	..	..	1.3	..	..	3 489
Labour market outcomes	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average	Level				
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
Employment/population ratio										
Native-born men	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born men	..	..	..	..	..	..
Native-born women	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born women	..	..	..	..	..	..
Unemployment rate										
Native-born men	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born men	..	..	..	..	..	..
Native-born women	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born women	..	..	..	..	..	..
Macroeconomic indicators	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average	Level				
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Annual growth in %</i>										
Real GDP	6.6	3.3	1.5	-6.0	2.6	1.4				
GDP/capita (level in USD)	4.7	2.3	0.7	-6.8	1.3	0.6	10 451			
Employment (level in thousands)	2.2	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.3	43 375			
<i>Percentage of the labour force</i>										
Unemployment	2.6	3.6	4.0	5.5	3.0	4.1				

Notes and sources are at the end of the chapter.

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