



## Immigration

Immigration plays an important role in the German society. Learn more about the immigration flow in Germany.

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# Germany's population is growing due to immigration

Germany is known for being a good place to live and work in and therefore is more attractive for immigrants than ever. Since 1950 there have only been a few years in which more people emigrated from than immigrated to Germany. German reunification in 1990 paved the way for high immigration figures, which peaked in 1992. The positive balance of the following years was due to a favourable economic situation and continuing stability on the labour market. The only downward trend was experienced during the global recession in 2008 and 2009. In both these years net migration was negative for the first time since 1984.

Despite a slight decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, Germany remains an attractive country for immigrants: Germany has consistent records of high positive net immigration of foreign nationals, peaking in 2022. So many people are still choosing Germany as their new professional and personal home.

Young immigrants in particular come to Germany, which could close the expected gap caused by the low birth rate. In 2023, more than 83.5 million people were living in Germany. Their average age was 44.6. Given the low birth rates, the younger people in Germany cannot, in purely mathematical terms, replace their parents' generation. But immigrants can close this gap, as they are frequently younger than the average age of the German population. Young immigrants could fill this demographic gap by remaining on the German labour market for a long time to come, palliating the shortage of qualified workers and contributing to prosperity and economic success. This is if they have the suitable qualifications.

## Immigrants are increasingly better qualified

More and more immigrants of working age have an academic degree. The qualification profile of immigrants has been changing significantly for some years now. The proportion of people aged 25 to 65 with migration experience of their own and an academic degree rose from 2005 to 2016 to such an extent that it was roughly the same as the share of the total population in Germany at the same age. Thus, the qualification structure of the immigrants does not differ notably from the total population in Germany anymore. The fact that more and more people with an academic qualification go to Germany can be explained by the simplified immigration for this group.

Due to the Recognition Act (*Anerkennungsgesetz*), which came into force in 2012, immigrants and anyone thinking of immigrating can have their foreign qualifications recognised in Germany. This is a necessary step for non-EU immigrants who do not have an academic degree and wish to take up employment in Germany.

For EU nationals who work in a regulated profession – doctors or lawyers, for example – [recognition](#) is also a prerequisite for exercising their profession in Germany. The chances of success are high: the total number of positive decisions regarding the recognition of foreign non-academic vocational qualifications rose from 7,980 in 2012 to 54,981 in 2023. 45% of them even achieved full equivalence. This provides a favourable basis for immigrants wishing to [find a job](#) and start their career in Germany.

In 2021, nearly 75,000 international scientists were working in German research institutions. The good news is that recently, there have been more researchers in [STEM](#) subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). In recent years, the number of scientists doing research in the fields of mathematics, science and engineering increased steadily (source: [DAAD](#), 2024). As a highly specialised centre of industry, Germany needs your know-how to develop innovative strength and international competitiveness.

## Plenty of room for growth – Granting of residence titles to qualified migrants

Many highly qualified people come to Germany to build their future professional career. Fundamental differences exist here: nationals from EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland have free access to the German labour market and do not need a [residence title](#).

However, nationals from non-EU countries require a [visa](#). The number of third-party nationals who received a residence title in their respective capacities of qualified professional or highly [skilled worker](#) was just over 71,120 in 2023. More and more residence titles are being granted to well-trained and educated workers. Therefore, the relevance of the [EU Blue Card](#) is increasing. The numbers for issuing this residence title rose from 2,190 in 2012 to 41,215 in 2023. Additionally, in 2023, nearly 2,245 new residence titles were granted for [self-employment](#) and 3,565 for [research](#).

## Bring your family to join you

Germany welcomes children of all ages. It is easy for workers with a residence or [settlement permit](#), especially with an [EU Blue Card](#) for Germany, to get their family to join them if their accommodation is large enough, the family has their livelihood secured and the spouse is of age. The number of visas issued for the

purpose of [family reunification](#) has risen steadily since 2010, with the exception of 2020 due to COVID-19. In 2024, 123,705 visas were granted for this purpose (source: [Federal Foreign Office](#), 2025).

## Migrants contribute to economic growth

Germany's economy is growing, which one can see by looking at the development of the production potential. The production potential corresponds to the amount of all the manufactured goods and services and basically depends on three factors: the number of people producing goods and services, the time required for production and how productive the workers and used machines are. Labour-related immigration has a positive effect on production potential in two ways: firstly, immigration raises the number of workers and more goods and services can be produced. Secondly, ongoing studies have shown that migrants who come to find work are better qualified than national workers and consequently raise work productivity. The [German Council of Economic Experts](#)  has estimated in a calculation model that migration in general will have significantly positive growth effects on medium-term production potential in the next few years. If only qualified immigrants were taken into account in this kind of estimate, the results would be even more positive.

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## Information on the web

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### Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community

[Labour migration in Germany](#)

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[Brochure Welcome to Germany - Information for Immigrants](#)

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