From Migrants to Workers:

International migration trends
in the Nordic countries

Timothy Heleniak

NORDREGIO WORKING PAPER 2018:1

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Stockholm, Sweden, 2018

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Key findings

Migration has been the major source of population increase in the Nordic countries: Since 1990, the population of the Nordic countries has grown by 16 per cent, with two-thirds of this growth coming from net immigration. This means that most of the population growth is not from the addition of native children but from the immigration of people from outside the Nordic countries.

Immigration to the Nordic countries has steadily increased, especially since the mid-2000s: With the EU expansion in the 2000s and the recent large flows of asylum seekers and refugees, immigration has increased considerably. In the past decade, over 3 million people have migrated to the Nordic countries. This represents a rather considerable addition of newcomers to a region with a population of fewer than 25 million 10 years ago.

Migration by citizenship: In recent years, there has been a small net emigration of citizens of the Nordic countries. At the same time, there has been a huge influx of people with foreign citizenship, and such people account for most of the immigrants to the Nordic countries. With the large inflows of non-citizens, the proportion of non-citizens has increased and is now between 4 and 10 per cent of the total population.

The countries of origin of migrants to Nordic region have become more diverse: Several decades ago, most migrants to the Nordic countries originated from other Nordic countries. With the expansions of the EU in the 2000s, new EU member states became primary source states, particularly Poland. For Finland, the former Soviet states of Russia and Estonia are among the top countries of origin. With the large refugee flows in recent years, Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, and Afghanistan have become the major source countries for some Nordic countries.

The proportions of the populations of the Nordic countries with foreign backgrounds have increased considerably: The number of international migrants has increased by 50 per cent globally since 1990, but it has more than doubled in the Nordic region. Since 1990, the number of foreign-born people in the Nordic countries has increased from 1.3 to 3.3 million.

The foreign-origin populations in the Nordic countries have a young age structure: Migrants between the ages of 25 and 35 make up significantly larger proportions of these age groups than their overall proportion of the population. For this reason, there is significant potential for their participation in the labour force and they reduce the overall age of the Nordic populations.

Reasons for migration: Based on data for first resident permits issued, the reasons for migration to the Nordic countries have changed significantly over the past decade. Of four broad categories of reasons for migration—family reasons, education, work, and refugee status—the latter has accounted for the greatest increases in both absolute and percentage terms. In Sweden, those arriving under refugee and other forms of protection increased from 13 per cent of all first permits in 2008 to 47 per cent, or nearly half, in 2016.

Asylum seekers: The number of people seeking asylum in the Nordic countries has increased substantially in recent years, with an especially large number during the 'refugee crisis' of 2015.

Integration: While the Nordic countries have well-established programmes for the integration of newcomers, international comparisons indicate that integration is slower because of the size and composition of recent migration.

Introduction

The populations of the Nordic countries are ageing, and to maintain economic growth there is a need to increase immigration and have these newcomers play a substantial role in the labour markets at the national and regional levels. For countries to make the best use of these newcomers, they need to be integrated into the Nordic societies and labour forces as quickly and completely as possible. All the Nordic countries have policies in place to support the integration of newcomers, as well as the necessary administrative structures at the national and regional levels. The refugee crisis of recent years has been a challenge to integration at the national and regional levels in the Nordic countries. There has been an increase not only in the number of people migrating to the region but also in the number arriving as refugees or asylum seekers. The process of integrating people who arrive on humanitarian grounds is much more costly and difficult than it is for people who migrate for work, family, or educational purposes. However, many of these people have skills and talents that may be of considerable use to the labour forces of the Nordic countries.

The Ministers for Nordic Co-operation have recently made the issue of integration of refugees and migrants a top priority, and have agreed to increase investment substantially to facilitate their integration in the coming years (Nordic Cooperation, 2016). While recognizing the challenges that the influx of refugees and

asylum seekers has had, especially in smaller communities in the Nordic countries, the ministries have reaffirmed their commitment to freedom of movement in the Nordic Region. While some steps have recently been taken to limit or control the influx of asylum seekers, they recognize that there is great human capital potential that can be utilized if these people can be fully integrated into Nordic societies.

This paper is one of several outputs of a project called *From Migrants to Workers: Immigrants' Role in Local Labour Markets in the Nordic Region* for the 2013–2016 Nordic Working Group on Demography and Welfare (Nordregio, 2016). This paper analyses data on recent migration flows into the Nordic countries. Another working paper analysed case studies of the process of integration in selected Nordic regions (Harbo, Heleniak, & Hildestrand, 2017). The paper also provides additional detail for the chapter on migration in the *State of the Nordic Region 2018* report.

The paper starts by examining migration trends into the Nordic countries over recent decades, examining migration as a component of population change, immigration and emigration, net migration by citizenship, net migration by sex, immigration by country of origin, total population of foreign origin, foreign-born people by age, reasons for migration, and flows of refugees and asylum seekers. The conclusions concern the implications of the integration of recent flows.

Immigration into the Nordic countries

This section provides a broad quantitative overview of recent immigration trends into the Nordic countries, drawing from various sources including data on immigration collected by national statistical offices and migration services. It starts by examining migration as a component of population change and trends in immigration and emigration before disaggregating by several key characteristics of the migrant populations including citizenship, country of origin, sex, and reasons for immigration.

Migration as a component of population change

Over the 27-year period from 1990 to 2017, the population of the Nordic countries has grown by 16 per cent from a combination of natural increase (more births than deaths) and positive net immigration (more immigrants than emigrants) (Table 1). Over this period, net immigration has

accounted for about two-thirds of the total population increase and natural increase for one-third. In Iceland, migration into and out of the country has fluctuated considerably, and because it has among the highest fertility rates in Europe, natural increase has contributed to most of the population growth in the country. Migration into Norway, Sweden, and Denmark has accounted for the bulk of population growth in those countries. In Finland, natural increase and net migration have contributed roughly equally to population increase. In both Greenland and the Faroe Islands, the excess of births over deaths has been almost exactly offset by net migration out of these regions, so the populations have stayed roughly the same. In Åland, a group of islands off the coast of Finland, net migration into the region has made up three-quarters of the total population increase.

Since 2007, net migration has increased

Table 1: Population change by component in the Nordic region, 1990–2017

	Total population		Population change, 1990–2017 (absolute)			Population change, 1990–2017 (per cent)		
	1990	2017	Total	Natural increase	Net migration	Total	Natural increase	Net migration
Total	23,226,651	26,949,609	3,722,958	1,363,127	2,356,135	16.0	5.9	10.1
Iceland	253,785	338,349	84,564	67,198	17,051	33.3	26.5	6.7
Norway	4,233,116	5,258,317	1,025,201	438,068	589,583	24.2	10.3	13.9
Sweden	8,527,036	9,995,153	1,468,117	383,346	1,083,986	17.2	4.5	12.7
Finland	4,974,383	5,503,297	528,914	262,219	256,040	10.6	5.3	5.1
Denmark	5,135,000	5,748,769	613,769	190,735	427,965	12.0	3.7	8.3
Greenland	55,558	55,860	302	13,447	–12,514	0.5	24.2	–22.5
Faroe Islands	47,773	49,864	2,091	8,114	–5,976	4.4	17.0	–12.5
Åland	24,231	29,214	4,983	904	3,856	20.6	3.7	15.9

Sources and notes: Iceland: Statistics Iceland (accessed 15 September 2017). Norway: Statistics Norway (accessed 31 August 2017). Sweden: Statistics Sweden (accessed 20 September 2017). Finland: Statistics Finland (accessed 20 September 2017). Denmark: Statistics Denmark (accessed 20 September 2017). Greenland: Statistics Greenland (accessed 20 September 2017). Faroe Islands: Statistics Faroe Islands (accessed 25 May 2016). Åland: Statistics Åland. Data for Åland are included in the total for Finland.

considerably in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark and has become the major source of population increase, far exceeding that of natural increase (Figure 1 a–e). As discussed below, much of this increase is due to EU enlargement but is also attributable to the influx of refugees and asylum seekers. Between 2007 and 2016, the excess of births over deaths added 186,000 people to the population of Norway while net immigration added 392,000 people. In Sweden over the same period, there were 223,000 more births than deaths and 656,000 more immigrants than

emigrants; in Finland, there were 71,000 more births than deaths and 155,000 more immigrants than emigrants. In Denmark, there were 71,000 more births than deaths and 240,000 more immigrants than emigrants. Thus, since 2007, in the four Nordic countries that account for the bulk of the region's population, adding new people through immigration has been the primary source of population increase, contributing to increasingly diverse populations (Andreassen, Dzamarija and Slaastad 2013).

Figure 1 a: Natural increase and net migration in Iceland, 1990 to 2017. Source: Statistics Iceland.

Figure 1 b: Natural increase and net migration in Norway, 1990 to 2017. Source: Statistics Norway.

Figure 1 c: Natural increase and net migration in Sweden, 1990 to 2017. Source: Statistics Sweden.

Figure 1 d: Natural increase and net migration in Finland, 1990 to 2017. Source: Statistics Finland.

Figure 1 e: Natural increase and net migration in Denmark, 1990 to 2017. Source: Statistics Denmark.

Iceland has a fertility rate that places it among the highest in Europe, although it has been just below replacement level in recent years (Statistics Iceland). Life expectancy has been steadily increasing in recent decades and is now among the highest in Europe (Statistics Iceland, 2016). These trends, combined with a somewhat younger population than the other Nordic countries, have led to natural increase being a greater contributor to overall population increase. Until the mid-2000s, net migration played a smaller role in overall population change, either positive or negative. During the boom years from 2005 to 2007, net

migration into the country exceeded natural increase when there was net immigration of 14,247 people into Iceland. Following the banking crisis in 2008, more people left Iceland than arrived—between 2009 and 2012, 8,692 more people left than arrived. In 2013, net migration turned positive again and has remained so but not at the same levels as in the mid-2000s.

The size of the population of Greenland has remained remarkably stable at 56,000 people over the past two decades, not fluctuating by more than 1,000 above or below that level (Statistics Greenland). Any excess of births over deaths

Figure 2 a: Natural increase and net migration in Greenland, 1990 to 2017. Source: Statistics Greenland.

Figure 2 b: Natural increase and net migration in Faroe Islands, 1990 to 2017. Source: Statistics Faroe Islands.

Figure 2 c: Natural increase and net migration in Åland, 1990 to 2017. Source: Statistics Åland.

has been offset by roughly the same amount of net emigration from Greenland (Figure 2 a). The Faroe Islands have had a somewhat similar trend to Greenland but with greater fluctuations in net migration (Figure 2 b). The period 1990 to 1995 was one of high out-migration from the Faroe Islands because of a downturn in the fisheries industry. This was followed by a period of moderate net immigration between 1996 and 2003 before migration again turned negative until 2014. Overall, these combined trends of natural increase and net migration in the Faroe Islands have contributed to a very moderate population

increase since 1990. In Åland, net immigration has been the major contributor to population increase with many more people migrating to Åland than leaving in most years (Figure 2 c).

Immigration and emigration

Net migration—the difference between immigration and emigration—is useful for measuring the relative impact on population change. However, it is composed of flows both into and out of a country, and thus of two groups of people with quite different characteristics and motivations. To determine the impact of recent immigration into

the Nordic countries, this section separates net migration into immigration and emigration and then disaggregates these two flows into important characteristics.

Iceland: Unlike the other Nordic countries, Iceland has vacillated between being a country of net emigration and net immigration since 1960. From 1960 to 1996, there was net emigration of 9,306 people (Figure 3). During the boom years of 1997–2008, there was a huge net inflow of 20,266, followed by a net outflow of 8,692 in 2009–2012 following the banking crisis. Net migration became positive again in 2013, and in 2016 the number of new arrivals was over 10,000, approaching the levels prior to the banking crisis. In the early 1990s, the volume of new migrants coming to the country only amounted to just over 1 per cent of the total population, roughly 3,000 new arrivals each year into a population that at that time was just over a quarter of a million. This small inflow had a minimal impact on the economy and society. This inflow was balanced by roughly equal-sized outflows, and both were largely made up of native Icelanders moving abroad for a period and then returning to Iceland. At the peak of immigration in 2007, this inflow represented over 4 per cent of the Icelandic population, 12,500 people into a population of then just over 300,000 people. The increased size of this group had the potential to impact the Icelandic economy but would present some challenges with integration.

Being a small, geographically isolated country, Iceland has a long history of both permanent and temporary emigration (Statistics Iceland, 2009). Until recently, these outflows mainly consisted of native-born citizens of Iceland, as the foreign-born population was quite low. As recently as 2005, the foreign-born proportion of Iceland's population was only about 3.5 per cent (Statistics Iceland). With the recent increase in migration, this percentage has risen to about 7.5 per cent of the population. Based on data for return migration for the years 1986 to 2008, 80 per cent of Icelandic citizens migrated back to Iceland after an average stay abroad of 2.4 years. Over this period, about half of the total immigration to Iceland consisted of returning Icelandic citizens. This is important for integration policy as most of these people presumably speak Icelandic and have family or other social ties. Many of these people gained education or experience while abroad that could be useful to Icelandic society and the economy. However, the percentage of total immigration to Iceland that consists of return migration has fallen from 72.6 per cent in 1986 to 28.7 per cent in 2008, meaning that over 70 per cent are newly registered immigrants who are unlikely to speak Icelandic, have few social ties, and would take longer to integrate into Iceland's society and economy.

Norway: From the time of its independence from Sweden in 1905 until after World War II, Norway was predominantly a country of emigration. The

Figure 3: Immigration, emigration and net-migration 1960–2016, Iceland.

Figure 4: Immigration, emigration and net-migration 1960–2016, Norway.

outflows over this period were second only to those of Ireland in percentage terms (Cooper 2003). In spite of Norway's early involvement in humanitarian assistance to refugees¹, the country remained a largely white Christian population until the 1970s, with most immigration coming from the other Nordic countries. The country adopted an 'immigration stop' in 1975. Since then, the government has practised a careful balancing act between portions of the population who favour more restrictive immigration policies and those who support increased immigration and refugee flows.

Norway has been a country of net immigration since 1970, with increasingly large inflows (Figure 4). There have been some recent changes in these migration trends, driven by the declines in oil prices. Immigration peaked in 2011 when nearly 80,000 people migrated to Norway. It declined somewhat after that until 2016, when 67,000 people entered the country. The number of people leaving the country has also been increasing, causing the net migration to decline from a peak of 47,000 in 2011 to 26,000 in 2016.

Until 2005, the inflows of people into Norway were not very significant as a percentage of the population. They amounted to less than 1 per cent of the total population and were balanced by roughly equal amounts of emigration. However,

since then, immigration has amounted to more than 1 per cent of the population each year. In the past decade, more than 700,000 people have migrated to Norway, which amounts to 15 per cent of the population.

Sweden: With the exception of two years in the 1970s, Sweden has predominantly been a country of immigration since 1960 (Figure 5). Levels of emigration have fluctuated and risen slightly but it is the levels of immigration that have driven overall net migration. There have been several periods of higher-than-usual immigration into Sweden, one in the early 1970s and another in the 1990s. However, since 2000, levels of immigration have increased considerably and even more sharply from 2006. Immigration has increased each year since 2011. The immigration in 2016 of 163,000 people was the highest in Swedish history. A proportion of these were people who had applied for asylum in 2015 and were granted resident permits in 2016. During the 'refugee crisis' of 2014 to 2016, Sweden received the most asylum applications per capita of any OECD country—1.6 per cent of the total population. Unlike some of the other Nordic countries, immigration has not peaked and continues to increase. From 2006, the annual inflow has averaged more than 1 per cent of the existing population or more than 100,000 newcomers into a population of just over 9 million. This represents more than 1 million newcomers in a decade.

¹ Arctic Explorer Fridtjof Nansen became the first U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921 (then the League of Nations).

Figure 5: Immigration, emigration and net-migration 1960–2016, Sweden.

Until the 1960s, most immigration into Sweden consisted of people from the neighbouring Nordic countries, but since the early 1970s, immigration has both increased and diversified and has consisted of increasingly large proportions of refugee migration and family reunification from non-European countries (Westin, 2003). Sweden has long had a policy of permanent immigration, rather than temporary labour migration, and it treats labour migrants as future citizens. This policy started in 1975, and it broke with the previous *laissez-faire* policy that assumed that most immigrants would easily assimilate, because the majority were from other culturally similar Nordic countries. The new policy rested on three principles: equality, freedom of choice, and partnership. Sweden's immigrant policy, with its strong humanitarian dimension, is reflected in the geographic sources of immigrants, their educational and skill levels, and eventual labour market and social integration. In 2008, Sweden reformed its labour migration policies, making it easier to bring in immigrants (OECD, 2011). The new policy shifted decision-making on labour migrants from the state and unions to employers (Emilsson, 2016). This solved the complicated problem of forecasting labour demand by giving full responsibility to employers for the selection process. The main outcome of that policy change was to increase the amount of

non-EU labour migration. This explains not only the increase in the number of migrants but also the change in their composition to include more immigrants from outside the EU.

Finland: Finland was predominantly a country of emigration in the 1960s and 1970s, with some periods of quite high emigration during economic downturns, much of this directed to the other Nordic countries. However, since 1981, Finland has been a country of immigration, although not at the same level as the other Nordic countries, and even more recently than the others it has begun to view itself as such (Tanner, 2003). Since 2000, both immigration and emigration have risen (Figure 6). Immigration has risen considerably faster than emigration, resulting in net immigration into the country. Since 2000, immigration has averaged about 25,000 people annually. Similar to Norway, there was a recent peak in immigration before a slight decline in recent years (Statistics Finland). Unlike Norway and Sweden, the size of the immigration flows has been much smaller, never amounting to more than 0.5 per cent of the population in any year. While there have been more people entering than leaving the country since 1990, the overall contribution to population increase has been much smaller than in these other two countries.

Figure 6: Immigration, emigration and net-migration 1960–2016, Finland.

Denmark: Like the other Nordic countries, until recently, Denmark was mostly a country of emigration with small inflows that were balanced by roughly equal outflows, resulting in a relatively homogeneous population (Hedetof, 2003). However, since about 1990, both immigration and emigration have been steadily increasing, although immigration has increased more rapidly, peaking in 2015 when nearly 100,000 people entered the

country (Figure 7). This was the highest level of immigration and net migration into Denmark in the past half century. In nearly every year since 1990, immigration has been more than 1 per cent of the existing Danish population. While the contribution of migration to overall population increase in Denmark was less than that in Norway and Sweden, it still resulted in a significant increase in the foreign-born population.

Figure 7: Immigration, emigration and net-migration 1960–2016, Denmark.

Greenland and the Faroe Islands: From 1960 to 1990, Greenland vacillated between being a country of net immigration and one of emigration, although on balance over these decades there was a net outflow of people (Figure 8). However, since 1990 there has been a clear trend of net emigration from Greenland, which as noted above, has been roughly equal to the amount of natural increase resulting in a rather stable population size. Since 1993, an average of 2,400 people per year have migrated to Greenland and 2,800 have left the country. Because of Greenland's small population size, these flows represent a larger proportion of the total population and signify considerable churning. Each year, nearly 5 per cent of the population leaves Greenland, mostly to Denmark, and a flow proportional to 4 per cent of the population moves to Greenland, a large portion of which is people born in Greenland.

The Faroe Islands have had a similar trend to that of Greenland, with significant inflows and outflows each year (Figure 9). Since 1990, there has been net immigration amounting to 3.2 per cent of the population and net emigration of 3.7 per cent. There was a period of high outmigration in the first half of the 1990s, but since then, migration has been relatively balanced between immigration and emigration. Since 2014, there has been positive migration into the Faroe Islands

owing to a combination of rising immigration and declining emigration.

In summary, both immigration and emigration have increased significantly in recent decades in the Nordic countries. Immigration has increased much more recently, resulting in a large net inflow into the region. This increase has been especially sharp since the mid-2000s.

While the general pattern is one of increased immigration, there are differences among the Nordic countries and regions in terms of the levels and patterns of these flows, and their demographic, social, and economic impact. In Iceland, migration has fluctuated between net immigration and emigration, but in general, there has been a sizeable increase in the proportion of the population with a foreign background. In Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, there has been a sharp increase in the flows to these countries and the proportion of the population with foreign backgrounds has increased substantially. Greenland and the Faroe Islands form a third group where natural increase has been balanced by the same level of emigration, resulting in stable population sizes. In both countries, a larger proportion of the population migrates both in and out each year.

A simulation of the importance of migration to population growth was recently carried out for

Figure 8: Immigration, emigration and net-migration 1960–2016, Greenland.

Figure 9: Immigration, emigration and net-migration 1960–2016, Faroe Islands.

Sweden (Lundkvist, 2016). The exercise simulated how the Swedish population would have developed between 1970 and today if there had been no immigration or emigration over this period. In 1969, the population of Sweden was roughly 8 million, of which 6 per cent had been born abroad. Because most migrants are in the young working ages of 20 to 35, they have a unique impact on the age structure of the population as well as on fertility and mortality trends. Without migration, Sweden would have had the same population size today as it had in 1970, instead of the 10 million it has today. Of this total, foreign-born people make up 17 per cent of the total. Because there would have been fewer migrants among those in the young working ages, which are also the high fertility ages, the number of deaths from 1995 would have begun to exceed the number of births, leading to population decline. Of the difference between the hypothetical and actual figure of nearly 2 million, 1 million would have been in the working ages of 20 to 64. Thus, migration is not only a partial solution for population decline and aging but also contributes to a much more diverse population.

Net migration by citizenship

An important aspect of social and labour market integration is whether the people migrating to a country are citizens of that country returning from stays abroad or citizens of other countries, i.e. non-citizens. Of course, some citizens are naturalized—

people who acquired citizenship after a period of residency in the host country and who have met other requirements. However, most citizens are native-born people who acquired citizenship upon birth. Non-citizens who migrate to the Nordic countries would obviously take longer to integrate into society and the labour market than would returning citizens. Many non-citizens migrating into the Nordic countries eventually become naturalized citizens, which is the ultimate indicator of desire to remain and integrate into the country. As shown above, citizens and non-citizens of the Nordic countries have quite different patterns of migration.

In Iceland, citizens and non-citizens responded differently to recent periods of economic expansion prior to and following the 2008 banking crisis (Figures 10 and 11, which are shown on the same scale to facilitate comparison). In the years 2004–2007, most of the net immigration into the country was driven by non-citizens as there was net immigration of 15,544 of non-citizens and a net emigration of 767 Icelandic citizens. This caused the number of non-citizens in the population to increase from 3.5 to 7.6 per cent of the population. Following the 2008 banking crisis, Icelandic citizens responded more strongly than non-citizens by leaving. In the period 2008–2012, there was a net outflow of 6,893 Icelandic citizens and of only 655 non-citizens. The trend of Icelandic citizens leaving and non-citizens coming to the country has increased. In the past

Figure 10: Net migration of citizens, 1960–2016.

Figure 11: Net migration of non-citizens, 1960–2016.

few years, two-thirds of those people migrating to Iceland have been non-citizens. Since 2013, there has been a net emigration of 2,207 Icelandic citizens and a net immigration of 10,438 non-citizens. This has resulted in the number and proportion of the population of non-citizens in Iceland to approach the historical highs of the late 2000s just before the banking crisis. In 2017, 30,275 non-citizens in Iceland made up 8.9 of the population (Statistics Iceland).

Norway has had a similar pattern of net emigration of Norwegian citizens and net immigration of foreign citizens. Since 2000, there has been an annual average net emigration of about 1,000 Norwegian citizens each year and a net immigration of more than 30,000 foreign citizens. This large influx over recent decades has caused the proportion of non-citizens in Norway to increase from 2 per cent of the population in 1986 to over 10 per cent in 2017 (Statistics Norway).

Sweden has had a similar pattern of net emigration of Swedish citizens and net immigration of foreign citizens. Between 2000 and 2016, there was net emigration of 93,000 Swedish citizens and a net immigration of 965,000 foreign citizens. The proportion of the population with foreign citizenship was around 5 to 6 per cent of the population until the mid-2000s, but with the recent increase in immigration into Sweden is now 8.6 per cent of the population (Statistics Sweden). The huge inflow of nearly 120,000 non-citizens in 2016 is largely composed of asylum seekers who arrived in 2016 and were granted residency.

In Finland, there has been a similar pattern of net immigration of foreign citizens and net emigration of Finnish citizens. Since 2000, there was a net emigration of 24,000 Finnish citizens and a net immigration of 224,000 foreign citizens. The proportion of non-citizens in Finland has increased from just 0.5 per cent in 1990 to 4.4 per cent in 2016 (Statistics Finland).

Denmark is like the other Nordic countries in that the overall patterns of migration have been driven by non-citizens in recent years. Since 2000, there has been net emigration of 30,000 Danish citizens and net immigration of 329,000 foreign citizens. The proportion of non-citizens has increased from 4.9 per cent in 2000 to 8.4 per cent in 2017 (Statistics Denmark).

In summary, over recent years there has been a small amount of net emigration of citizens of the Nordic countries. At the same time, there has been a huge influx of people with foreign citizenship, and such people account for most of the immigrants. With the large inflows of non-citizens, this proportion of the populations of the Nordic countries has increased, and now stands between 4 and 10 per cent. Citizenship is both a legal concept and a notional one, indicating the integration intentions of immigrant populations. The large increase in the proportions of people with foreign citizenship represents a challenge to integration.

Net migration by sex

An important aspect of labour market integration is the sex composition of migration flows. Economic sectors of the Nordic countries have differing demands for occupations that traditionally may be filled by either men or women. Since 2000, in Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Greenland, males have accounted for significantly higher proportions

of both immigrants to and emigrants from these countries, whereas in Finland, Denmark, and the Faroe Islands, immigration and emigration are more balanced between the sexes (Table 2). In Iceland, the overall sex balance of net migration is roughly equal, as males both immigrate and emigrate in proportional numbers. In Norway, Sweden, and Finland, there has been higher net migration of males into these countries than females, perhaps because more of the jobs that immigrants take or seek are those more often filled by men. In Greenland and the Faroe Islands, where emigration generally dominates, the sex patterns are different. From both, there has been higher net emigration of females than males, although the difference is not large. In both of these countries, there is also a sex-specific pattern of internal migration where women leave smaller settlements for larger settlements in much larger numbers than men, skewing the sex ratios in favour of women as they move up along the urban hierarchy.

In Iceland, the sex patterns of immigration and emigration were fairly balanced between men and women until 2003 (Figures 12 and 13). However, from the 2004 economic expansion prior to the banking crisis, both immigration and emigration began to be skewed in favour of men, a pattern that would reverse in the year following the 2008 banking crisis. In 2006 and 2007, two-thirds of both immigrants and emigrants were male. From 2003 to 2007, there was net immigration of 10,345 males, more than double the net immigration of 4,432 females. Following the banking collapse, from 2008 to 2012 there was net emigration of 6,680 males and only 868 females. As the Icelandic economy expands, it seems to increase the demand for males to fill jobs. In 2016, 60 per cent of immigrants were men.

Since 2005, the flows of both immigrants and emigrants in Norway and Sweden have been increasingly male. In Finland, the male share of both immigration and emigration has increased but the percentage share of male immigration has increased somewhat faster. Further analysis is needed to determine whether it is native-born males and females who are coming or going in the largest numbers. However, it seems that as immigration increases into the largest Nordic countries, the male share of these flows also increases, as many of the labour market niches that immigrants fill are filled predominantly by men.

Table 2. Immigration, emigration, and net migration by gender in the Nordic countries, 2000 to 2016

	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Finland	Denmark	Greenland	Faroe Islands
Males							
Net migration	10,101	264,872	453,859	109,422	145,938	-3,198	243
Immigration	67,094	523,004	849,734	223,877	589,943	22,748	12,853
Emigration	56,993	258,132	395,875	114,455	444,005	25,946	12,813
Females							
Net migration	7,633	229,065	418,536	90,857	152,658	-3,375	-111
Immigration	52,234	452,023	761,928	207,398	559,382	17,741	12,719
Emigration	44,601	222,958	343,392	116,542	406,724	21,116	12,830
Per cent male							
Immigration	56.2	53.6	52.7	51.9	51.3	56.2	50.3
Emigration	56.1	53.7	53.5	49.5	52.2	55.1	50.0

Sources and notes: National statistical offices.

Figure 12: Immigration per cent male, 1960–2016.

Figure 13: Emigration per cent male, 1960–2016.

Immigration by country of origin

One trend in international migration in the Nordic countries is that with increased overall levels of immigration, the diversity of countries of origin has also increased. No longer do immigrants mostly originate from other Nordic countries or even from other EU countries, including the new accession countries, but are increasingly coming from countries outside the EU. This has implications for integration, as many of these new migrants are more linguistically and culturally distant from the Nordic societies. This section examines trends in the countries of origin of immigrants into the Nordic

countries. The next section considers the numbers of foreign-born people. There are more data on the characteristics of these populations, allowing comparisons of their socio-economic characteristics with those of the native-born populations.

Iceland: Over the period 1986 to 2015, immigration into Iceland increased considerably from 2,703 in 1986 to a peak of 12,546 in 2007 just prior to the banking crisis. Immigration then declined by more than half to 5,625 in 2010 before increasing again to 10,958 in 2015. In 1986, 64 per cent of immigrants came from the other Nordic countries,

Table 3: Iceland, top ten countries of immigration, 1986 to 2016

	1986		1995		2005		2016
Absolute number							
Total	2,703	Total	2,867	Total	7,773	Total	10,958
Denmark	809	Denmark	716	Poland	1,541	Poland	2,839
Sweden	562	Sweden	562	Denmark	1,488	Denmark	1,006
Norway	382	Norway	380	Sweden	522	Norway	938
United States	293	United States	226	Norway	487	Lithuania	658
United Kingdom	132	Poland	122	China	432	Sweden	560
Faroe Islands	95	Germany	120	Germany	415	United States	443
Germany	55	United Kingdom	79	United States	365	United Kingdom	371
Sri Lanka	36	Faroe Islands	55	United Kingdom	234	Germany	361
Luxembourg	34	Finland	45	Portugal	222	Spain	293
Australia	26	France	41	Lithuania	207	Romania	228
Other	279	Other	521	Other	1,860	Other	3,261
Per cent of total immigration							
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100
Denmark	30	Denmark	25	Poland	20	Poland	26
Sweden	21	Sweden	20	Denmark	19	Denmark	9
Norway	14	Norway	13	Sweden	7	Norway	9
United States	11	United States	8	Norway	6	Lithuania	6
United Kingdom	5	Poland	4	China	6	Sweden	5
Faroe Islands	4	Germany	4	Germany	5	United States	4
Germany	2	United Kingdom	3	United States	5	United Kingdom	3
Sri Lanka	1	Faroe Islands	2	United Kingdom	3	Germany	3
Luxembourg	1	Finland	2	Portugal	3	Spain	3
Australia	1	France	1	Lithuania	3	Romania	2
Other	10	Other	18	Other	24	Other	30

Sources and notes: Statistics Iceland.

14 per cent from the EU15, and 10 per cent from North America.² Flows from other regions were quite small, including those from other European countries, a category that encompasses the new member states of the EU. In 1986, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the United States were the top sending countries, together accounting for more than three-quarters of all immigrants in that year (Table 3).

A decade later, in 1995, immigration had risen slightly to 2,867 and the proportions of immigrants coming from other European countries had risen to 10 per cent from almost none in 1986. The proportion from Asia had risen to 6 per cent. Although the top four sending countries remained the same, immigrants from Poland now made up 5 per cent of all immigrants. In 2005, the first full year after the EU accession of ten new countries, immigration had more than doubled to 7,773. At this time, the Icelandic economy was growing rapidly and there was considerable investment in projects such as the aluminium smelter in eastern Iceland, creating a demand for labour that was met by workers from the new EU states who then acquired the ability to work in the EU15 and other states. Poland was now the country sending the largest number of immigrants.

In 2007, the last year before the banking crisis, immigration peaked at 12,546, with the proportion from other Nordic countries falling to 22 per cent and the proportion from other European countries increasing to 55 per cent. In that year, Polish citizens were by far the largest group of immigrants. In 2011, following the banking crisis, immigration had fallen by more than half from the peak to 5,578. While the proportion of immigrants from other Nordic countries had fluctuated, the absolute numbers were rather stable with an average of 2,246 a year since 1986. In 2011, Denmark again became the largest sending country with Poland being the second largest. The numbers migrating to Iceland from Denmark have fluctuated somewhat over time but the numbers from Poland have changed considerably, accounting for a large proportion of overall migration. The number of Polish citizens migrating to Iceland went from just five in 1986 to a peak of 5,653 in 2007 before dropping considerably to 780 in 2011 then increasing again to 2,839 in 2015.

² The Nordic countries include Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and the EU15 includes Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Norway: In 1970, when immigration was quite low, the main sending countries were the United States (mainly returning Norwegians), the other Nordic countries, and some of the larger countries of Europe (Table 4). Immigration rose slowly but steadily to the year 2000 to 37,000 from 17,000 in 1970. Many of the main sending countries remained the same, but there was increased immigration from new countries such as Iraq and Somalia, which mainly consisted of refugees. In 2010, immigration had more than doubled to 74,000. Following the EU expansion, Poland became the largest sending country, with fellow accession countries of Lithuania and Latvia also becoming major source countries. In 2016, immigration was down slightly from a peak in 2011 but was still significant. Reflecting the refugee and asylum flows, Syria was the largest sending country. Also among the top ten countries were Lebanon and Eritrea.

Sweden: Sweden has had the largest increase in immigration of the Nordic countries since 2000 and a similar pattern of diversification. In 2000, 58,659 people immigrated to Sweden and the largest country of immigration—based on country of birth—was in fact Sweden, obviously consisting of returning Swedes (Table 5). The other Nordic countries, as well as other large countries in Europe, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, were also large senders. However, there was already evidence of significant refugee migration. Iran, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia were among the top ten sending countries, although the numbers were rather small.

In 2005, immigration had increased slightly to 65,229, and Poland became the second largest sending country (after Sweden) after people from Poland and the other new EU accession countries gained free access to the labour markets in the EU15 from 2004. In 2010, there was a sharp increase in immigration, to 98,801 people. This reflected the increased proportions entering Sweden as refugees, following returning Swedes were people born in Somalia, Iraq, and Iran, which were among the leading sending countries. By 2016, immigration had even increased further to 163,005 people. Again, this reflects the fact that of the many refugees and asylum seekers, people born in Syria were the largest group of immigrants as well as there being large numbers from Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia, and Afghanistan.

Table 4: Norway, top ten countries of immigration, 1970 to 2016

1970		1980		1990		2000		2010		2016	
Absolute number											
Total	17,383	Total	18,776	Total	25,494	Total	36,542	Total	73,852	Total	66,800
United States	3,085	Denmark	2,387	Sweden	5,053	Sweden	5,059	Poland	11,197	Syria	7,603
Sweden	2,933	United Kingdom	2,309	Denmark	2,356	Iraq	4,382	Sweden	9,397	Poland	5,976
Denmark	2,554	United States	2,288	United States	1,908	Denmark	2,959	Lithuania	6,482	Sweden	4,009
United Kingdom	1,747	Sweden	2,231	United Kingdom	1,250	United States	1,708	Denmark	3,467	Denmark	2,973
Germany	865	Germany	583	Serbia and Montenegro	841	United Kingdom	1,653	Germany	2,808	Lebanon	2,774
Canada	539	Finland	551	Vietnam	792	Somalia	1,424	Latvia	2,297	Lithuania	2,472
The rest of Africa	482	Pakistan	523	Pakistan	757	Germany	1,371	United Kingdom	2,178	Unknown	2,132
Finland	461	Vietnam	458	Germany	607	Finland	1,311	Eritrea	1,715	Philippines	1,731
Serbia and Montenegro	412	Iceland	420	Turkey	590	Serbia and Montenegro	1,032	Philippines	1,704	Eritrea	1,723
Netherlands	403	France	419	Sri Lanka	587	Russia	895	United States	1,684	Spain	1,693
Other	3,902	Other	6,607	Other	10,753	Other	14,748	Other	30,923	Other	33,714
Per cent of total immigration											
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100
United States	18	Denmark	13	Sweden	20	Sweden	14	Poland	15	Syria	11
Sweden	17	United Kingdom	12	Denmark	9	Iraq	12	Sweden	13	Poland	9
Denmark	15	United States	12	United States	7	Denmark	8	Lithuania	9	Sweden	6
United Kingdom	10	Sweden	12	United Kingdom	5	United States	5	Denmark	5	Denmark	4
Germany	5	Germany	3	Serbia and Montenegro	3	United Kingdom	5	Germany	4	Lebanon	4
Canada	3	Finland	3	Vietnam	3	Somalia	4	Latvia	3	Lithuania	4
Africa, unspecified	3	Pakistan	3	Pakistan	3	Germany	4	United Kingdom	3	Unknown	3
Finland	3	Vietnam	2	Germany	2	Finland	4	Eritrea	2	Philippines	3
Serbia and Montenegro	2	Iceland	2	Turkey	2	Serbia and Montenegro	3	Philippines	2	Eritrea	3
Netherlands	2	France	2	Sri Lanka	2	Russia	2	United States	2	Spain	3
Other	22	Other	35	Other	42	Other	40	Other	42	Other	50

Sources and notes: Statistics Norway.

Table 5: Sweden, top ten countries of immigration, 2000 to 2016

2000		2005		2010		2016	
Absolute number							
Total	58,659	Total	65,229	Total	98,801	Total	163,005
Sweden	13,482	Sweden	11,066	Sweden	14,870	Syrian Arab Republic	51,540
Iraq	6,681	Poland	3,525	Somalia	6,793	Sweden	15,318
Finland	3,433	Denmark	3,494	Iraq	5,321	Eritrea	6,580
Norway	2,893	Iraq	3,094	Poland	4,517	Poland	5,078
Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of	2,747	Finland	2,793	China (excluding Hong Kong)	3,484	Iraq	4,901
Denmark	1,918	Norway	2,425	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	3,249	India	4,247
Germany	1,834	Thailand	2,205	Thailand	2,958	Somalia	3,794
United Kingdom	1,343	Germany	2,147	Denmark	2,732	Afghanistan	3,607
United States of America	1,278	Serbia and Montenegro	1,756	Turkey	2,435	Finland	2,969
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1,250	China (excluding Hong Kong)	1,749	Germany	2,338	Germany	2,666
Other	21,800	Other	30,975	Other	50,104	Other	62,305
Per cent of total immigration							
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100
Sweden	23	Sweden	17	Sweden	15	Syrian Arab Republic	32
Iraq	11	Poland	5	Somalia	7	Sweden	9
Finland	6	Denmark	5	Iraq	5	Eritrea	4
Norway	5	Iraq	5	Poland	5	Poland	3
Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of	5	Finland	4	China (excluding Hong Kong)	4	Iraq	3
Denmark	3	Norway	4	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	3	India	3
Germany	3	Thailand	3	Thailand	3	Somalia	2
United Kingdom	2	Germany	3	Denmark	3	Afghanistan	2
United States of America	2	Serbia and Montenegro	3	Turkey	2	Finland	2
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2	China (excluding Hong Kong)	3	Germany	2	Germany	2
Other	37	Other	47	Other	51	Other	38

Sources and notes: Statistics Sweden. Data are based on country of birth.

Finland: Similar to the other Nordic countries, over the past several decades, immigration into Finland has both increased and diversified. The number of people migrating to Finland more than doubled from 13,558 in 1990 to 34,905 in 2016. In 1990, Sweden was the largest sending country, accounting for 44 per cent of all immigrants (Table 6). Because of Finland's proximity to Russia and cultural ties to Estonia, people from both of those countries constitute increasing proportions of total immigration into Finland. In 1990, immigration from the former Soviet Union made up 14 per cent of total immigration.

By 2000, the number of people migrating from Sweden had declined and as a proportion of total migration it had fallen to just 19 per cent. In 2010, Estonia would become the largest sending country to Finland, followed by Sweden and Russia. Again, reflecting the increased flows of asylum seekers and refugees, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, and Syria were among the top sending countries, along with traditional sources such as Russia, Estonia, and Sweden.

Denmark: Over the three and a half decades from 1980 to 2015, immigration into Denmark has increased substantially from 30,000 in 1980 to nearly 100,000 in 2015. At the same time, like the other Nordic countries, the sending countries have diversified and become more geographically

(and culturally) distant. In 1980, 70 per cent of immigrants came from Europe, broadly defined.³ In that year, the top sending country was Greenland, which is a protectorate of Denmark (Table 7). This was followed by immigrants from the United Kingdom and the USA and then fellow Nordic countries Sweden and Norway.

By 1990, the proportion of immigrants from Europe had declined to 62 per cent and the proportion from Asia had increased from 11 to 17 per cent. There was a slight change in the order of the top ten sending countries. In 2000, the distribution of sending countries by continent had changed little but there was some change among the top sending countries, with the United Kingdom, Germany, the USA, and Germany being the top four, Greenland falling to fifth, and Iraq being among the top ten sending countries.

In 2010, the proportion of immigrants from Europe had actually increased to 66 per cent of all immigrants into Denmark, as this definition includes the new EU accession countries. Some of the top sending countries remained the same, but new sending countries among the EU accession countries—Poland, Romania, and Lithuania—were now among the top ten. Reflecting the large refugee flows of recent years, the largest sending country in 2015 was Syria. Many of the other sending countries remained the same, a mix of other Nordic countries and EU accession countries.

³ Statistics Denmark has its own unique classification of countries (Statistics Denmark 2016).

Table 6: Finland, top ten countries of immigration, 1990 to 2016

1990		2000		2010		2016	
Absolute number							
COUNTRIES, TOTAL	13,558	COUNTRIES, TOTAL	16,895	COUNTRIES, TOTAL	25,636	COUNTRIES, TOTAL	34,905
Sweden	5,939	Sweden	3,232	Estonia	4,043	Iraq	3,142
Former Soviet Union	1,958	Russian Federation	2,592	Sweden	2,875	Estonia	2,933
United States	421	Norway	1,034	Russian Federation	2,353	Russian Federation	2,640
Turkey	417	UNKNOWN	1,032	United Kingdom	928	Sweden	2,610
Norway	394	Estonia	846	Somalia	899	Afghanistan	1111
Germany	338	Germany	685	United States	837	United Kingdom	1,085
United Kingdom	313	United Kindom	638	Iraq	824	Iran, Islamic Republic of	1,053
Denmark	209	United States	579	Thailand	786	Syrian Arab Republic	1,047
Poland	194	Denmark	407	Germany	755	Viet Nam	944
Spain	192	Former Serbia and Montenegro	372	China	677	China	880
Other	3,183	Other	5,478	Other	10,659	Other	17,460
Per cent of total immigration							
COUNTRIES, TOTAL	100	COUNTRIES, TOTAL	100	COUNTRIES, TOTAL	100	COUNTRIES, TOTAL	100
Sweden	44	Sweden	19	Estonia	16	Iraq	9
Former Soviet Union	14	Russian Federation	15	Sweden	11	Estonia	8
United States	3	Norway	6	Russian Federation	9	Russian Federation	8
Turkey	3	UNKNOWN	6	United Kindom	4	Sweden	7
Norway	3	Estonia	5	Somalia	4	Afghanistan	3
Germany	2	Germany	4	United States	3	United Kingdom	3
United Kingdom	2	United Kindom	4	Iraq	3	Iran, Islamic Republic of	3
Denmark	2	United States	3	Thailand	3	Syrian Arab Republic	3
Poland	1	Denmark	2	Germany	3	Viet Nam	3
Spain	1	Former Serbia and Montenegro	2	China	3	China	3
Other	23	Other	32	Other	42	Other	50

Sources and notes: Statistics Finland.

Table 7: Denmark, top ten countries of immigration, 1980 to 2016

1980		1990		2000		2010		2016	
Absolute number									
Total	30,311	Total	40,715	Total	52,915	Total	69,200	Total	94,365
Greenland	3,573	Greenland	3,433	United Kingdom	3,824	Sweden	5,384	Syria	9,020
United Kingdom	3,166	USA	3,327	Germany	3,499	Germany	4,493	USA	6,316
USA	2,406	Sweden	3,183	USA	3,428	USA	4,462	Romania	5,081
Sweden	2,248	United Kingdom	3,125	Norway	3,263	Poland	3,946	Germany	4,983
Norway	1,996	Norway	2,781	Greenland	2,688	United Kingdom	3,138	Poland	4,594
Germany	1,806	Germany	2,016	Not stated	2,305	Norway	3,130	United Kingdom	4,453
Turkey	1,608	Faroe Islands	1,675	Sweden	2,232	Romania	2,461	Sweden	4,173
Iceland	856	Lebanon	1,360	France	1,528	Greenland	2,419	Norway	3,629
Faroe Islands	765	Turkey	1,223	Iraq	1,377	Spain	2,119	India	2,726
France	753	France	954	Spain	1,307	Lithuania	2,016	Spain	2,606
Other	11,134	Other	17,638	Other	27,464	Other	35,632	Other	46,784
Per cent of total immigration									
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100
Greenland	12	Greenland	8	United Kingdom	7	Sweden	8	Syria	10
United Kingdom	10	USA	8	Germany	7	Germany	6	USA	7
USA	8	Sweden	8	USA	6	USA	6	Romania	5
Sweden	7	United Kingdom	8	Norway	6	Poland	6	Germany	5
Norway	7	Norway	7	Greenland	5	United Kingdom	5	Poland	5
Germany	6	Germany	5	Not stated	4	Norway	5	United Kingdom	5
Turkey	5	Faroe Islands	4	Sweden	4	Romania	4	Sweden	4
Iceland	3	Lebanon	3	France	3	Greenland	3	Norway	4
Faroe Islands	3	Turkey	3	Iraq	3	Spain	3	India	3
France	2	France	2	Spain	2	Lithuania	3	Spain	3
Other	37	Other	43	Other	52	Other	51	Other	50

Sources and notes: Statistics Denmark. Data are based on country of last residence.

Total population of foreign origin

Aggregate data on the 'non-native' population give an indication of the size of the migrant population that needs to be integrated but also the potential for contributing to the Nordic society and the country to which they have migrated. This section presents data on the population with foreign origin, first using international data and then using national data from the Nordic countries.

International data on the foreign-born population:

The United Nations defines a migrant as a person who resides outside his/her country of birth. Globally, there were 244 million migrants in 2015, amounting to 3.3 per cent of the world's population (United Nations Population Division, 2015). This is an increase from 1990 when there were 154 million migrants, but only a slight increase in percentage terms when this number represented 2.9 per cent of the world's population. While globally the number of international migrants has increased by 60 per cent since 1990, it has increased 250 per cent in the Nordic region (Figure 14).⁴ Since 1990, the number of foreign-born people in the Nordic countries has

increased from 1.3 to 3.3 million. This number means that one in eight Nordic residents were born abroad.

The 3.3 million foreign-born people in the Nordic region in 2015 represented 12 per cent of the population. As noted above, while the foreign-born percentage of the total global population has only increased moderately since 1990, it has risen sharply in the Nordic countries (Figure 15). International migrant numbers have increased from just 1.3 per cent of the population of Finland in 1990 to 5.7 per cent in 2015. Over the same period, the proportion increased from 4.6 to 10.1 per cent in Denmark, 3.8 to 11.4 per cent in Iceland, from 8.9 to 11.4 per cent in the Faroe Islands, from 4.5 to 14.2 per cent in Norway, and from 9.2 to 16.8 per cent in Sweden. The percentage of foreign-born people in Sweden now exceeds that of the United States, which has a much longer history as an immigration destination. Greenland is the only Nordic region where the percentage of foreign-born people has declined, from 16.9 per cent in 1990 to 10.7 per cent in 2015. The proportion of foreign-born people had been as high as 19 per cent in 1975 before home rule was instituted in Greenland and the flow of Danes to Greenland slowed.

Figure 14: Foreign-born population in the Nordic Countries, 1990 to 2015. Source: United Nations Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision.

⁴ These figures for the foreign-born population might differ somewhat from those from the national statistical offices of the Nordic countries. International organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations use national data as their primary source but then often adjust the definitions of migrants to adhere to a common definition. In the World Bank's migration matrix, migration data are estimated using a combination of place of birth, country of citizenship, and other migration statistics and then aggregated to match the UN's population data for all countries of the world.

Figure 15: Foreign-born population in the Nordic Countries, 1990 to 2015. Source: United Nations Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision. Data in order by per cent foreign born in 2015.

National data on population of foreign origin: The Nordic countries define and tabulate data on the immigrant or foreign populations differently. Thus, no attempt is made at comparability across the countries when foreign populations are analysed. Data are presented and described for each of the Nordic countries based on the definition and divisions used in the respective countries (see Table 8). There has been some progress in harmonizing indicators of integration across the Nordic countries, but these are still not fully comparable (Ämnesråd, 2015).

Using national data from the Nordic countries on the foreign-born population, or population

of foreign origin, provides much more detail and nuance. In the Nordic countries, people who are allowed permanent residence must usually obtain a personal identification number that places them on a statistical register. From these numbers, considerable detail can be obtained, and cross tabulations can be made about the native and foreign populations. These include aggregations by age, sex, level of education, duration of residence, country of origin or birth. From other specialized surveys, even more detail can be obtained about the role of the foreign or immigrant populations in the labour forces of the Nordic countries.

Table 8: Data on the population of foreign origin in the Nordic countries

Country	Main disaggregation	Other disaggregations
Iceland	Population with no foreign background, immigrants, second-generation immigrants—born in Iceland with one parent born abroad, born abroad with Icelandic background, born abroad with one parent born abroad.	By citizenship, age, sex, country of birth, and citizenship.
Norway	Place of birth of a person, his/her parents and grandparents.	By sex.
Sweden	Data are presented on foreign-born and native-born people. The native born are then further divided into those born in Sweden with two foreign-born parents, those born in Sweden with one parent born in Sweden and one foreign-born parent, and those born in Sweden with two parents born in Sweden.	By age and sex.
Finland	Data are collected on people with a Finnish background and people with foreign backgrounds. These are disaggregated into those born in Finland and those born abroad.	By age, sex, country of origin, and destination region.
Denmark	Population of Danish origin, immigrants, and descendants (these are termed according to ancestry).	By ancestry, age, sex, country of origin, citizenship, educational attainment. There is also disaggregation by place of birth.

Iceland: Iceland collects quite detailed data on the population of foreign origin including place of birth, place of birth of parents, and citizenship, as well as various disaggregations of these indicators by age, sex, and country of birth or citizenship. People are first divided into those with no foreign background, meaning that both they and their parents were born in Iceland, and immigrants. Another category is those born abroad with an Icelandic background. Immigrants are then categorized as first- and second-generation immigrants. There is a further disaggregation of those born in Iceland with one parent born abroad and those with both parents born abroad.

In 1996, 95 per cent of the population had either no foreign background or had been born abroad but had an Icelandic background (see Figure 16). Only 2 per cent of the population were immigrants and less than 1 per cent were both born abroad, and had at least one parent born abroad. Thus, two decades ago Iceland was still a relatively homogeneous society and those with foreign backgrounds formed quite a small segment of society. Ten years later, in 2006, the proportion of the population with no foreign background and those born abroad with an Icelandic background had declined to 90 per cent and that of immigrants had increased to 5.6 per cent.

Most recently, in 2017, the proportion of the

population with no foreign background and those born abroad with an Icelandic background had declined to 83 per cent of the total population. The proportion of immigrants had increased to 10.6 per cent, second-generation immigrants to 1.3 per cent from almost zero in 1996, those born in Iceland with one parent born abroad made up 3.7 per cent, and those born abroad with one parent born abroad accounted for 1.3 per cent. Thus, the total proportion of the population with some foreign background is now 17 per cent of the Icelandic population, a significant increase from 20 years previously when it was just 5 per cent.

Norway: Norway has the most detailed data on the immigrant population. It classifies people based on their place of birth (two possible classifications: native born or foreign born), their parents' place of birth (three possible classifications), and their grandparents' place of birth (five possible classifications). This produces 30 different categories of foreign-born people based on three generations. However, not all are significant or useful for policy. Of the 30 categories, only five have more than 100,000 people (Andreassen, Dzamarija, and Slaastad, 2013).

In 1990, Norway remained considerably homogeneous. In that year, 93 per cent of the population were native-born with two native parents and

Figure 16: Population of Iceland by foreign origin, 1996 to 2017.

Figure 17: Norway: Foreign-origin population, 1990 to 2017.

four native grandparents, and 7 per cent were immigrants (Figure 17). Of these, 3.6 per cent were first-generation immigrants without a Norwegian background and 2.4 per cent were people born in Norway to foreign-born parents. With the high level of immigration in recent decades, the percentage of the population that are native-born with two native parents and four native grandparents declined in 2017 to 77 per cent, and the immigrant population increased to 23 per cent. In 2017, 13.8 per cent were first-generation immigrants without a Norwegian background and 4.9 per cent were people born in Norway to foreign-born parents.

Sweden: For Sweden, data are presented on the foreign-born and native-born residents (see Figure 18). The native-born residents are then further divided into those born in Sweden with two foreign-born parents, those born in Sweden with one parent born in Sweden and one foreign-born parent, and those born in Sweden with two parents born in Sweden. Children born in Sweden with one or two foreign-born parents are considered second generation. People born in Sweden with two parents born in Sweden can be considered natives.

A somewhat shorter time series seems to be available for Sweden on the foreign-origin

population with the earliest data only available from 2002. However, even over this relatively short time, there has been a remarkable increase in the foreign-origin population. In 2002, 12 per cent of the population were foreign born, and 3.4 per cent were second generation (born in Sweden with two foreign-born parents). Six per cent were born in Sweden with one parent born in Sweden and one foreign-born parent, presumably the result of mixed marriages. Seventy-nine per cent of the population had no foreign background as they were born in Sweden with both parents born in Sweden.

By 2016, the percentage of foreign-born residents had increased to 17.9 per cent from 12 per cent in 2002. This proportion is higher than that of the United States, a country founded on immigration. The proportion of people born in Sweden with two parents born in Sweden declined to just 69 per cent of the population from 79 per cent in 2002. The proportion of second-generation immigrants increased to 5.4 per cent of the total population from 3.4 per cent in 2002. The increase in the second generation is most telling in relation to school-age children. Among children aged 0 to 14 years, the proportion of second-generation immigrants increased from 9 to 14 per cent of the population, making many adjustments necessary in the school system.

Figure 18: Sweden: Population by Swedish and foreign background in Sweden, 2002 to 2016.

Finland: In Finland, data are collected on people with Finnish background and people with foreign background. These are disaggregated into those born in Finland and those born abroad. This allows disaggregation into first-generation immigrants (people with foreign background, born abroad) and second-generation immigrants (people with foreign background, born in Finland). The need for integration of these groups differs. Most of the second-generation immigrations are the children of the first generation and many are presumably still in the school system in Finland.

Finland has had less immigration than the other Nordic countries, and thus has a smaller foreign-origin population. However, there has still been a considerable increase in the number of those of foreign origin in the country since 1990 (Figure 19). In 1990, only 1.3 per cent of the population had been born abroad and half of this group were of Finnish origin. In that year, Finland remained an extremely homogeneous country with 99.2 per cent of the population having a Finnish background, and only 0.8 per cent having a foreign background. By 2016, the proportion of foreign-born people had increased to 6.5 per cent of the population and the proportion with a foreign background had increased to 6.6 per cent. Of those with a foreign background, 5.6 per cent had been born abroad, meaning that they were

first-generation immigrants, and 1.1 per cent were second-generation immigrants born in Finland.

Denmark: Denmark provides data on the population by place of birth, which is consistent with UN data. Statistics Denmark then further disaggregates data for immigrants and their dependants (Statistics Denmark, 2016). According to its definition, an immigrant is defined as a person born abroad whose parents are both foreign citizens or who were both born abroad. A descendant is defined as a person born in Denmark whose parents are either immigrants or descendants with foreign citizenship. A person of Danish origin—regardless of their place of birth—has at least one parent who is a Danish citizen who was also born in Denmark.

The enormous increase in the population of foreign origin in Denmark since 1980 is evident (Figure 20). In 1980, only 3 per cent of the population was of foreign origin; 2.6 per cent were immigrants and 0.4 per cent were children of immigrants. Denmark was still an extremely homogeneous society with 97 per cent of the population being of Danish origin. The size of the population of foreign ancestry has steadily increased as a proportion of the Danish population. In 2017, more than one in eight Danes were of foreign ancestry; 9.9 per cent were immigrants born abroad and 3.0 per cent were descendants of immigrants.

Figure 19: Persons by foreign background and place of birth in Finland, 1990 to 2016.

Figure 20: Population by ancestry in Denmark 1980 to 2017.

Foreign-born people by age

There is a well-established age pattern to migration that holds across most migration streams. Mobility is highest among those in the young working ages, in their 20s and 30s. It then tapers off with increased age as people become more established in their jobs and communities. There is also a peak in migration for those below the age of five or so as these are the children of those in their 20s and 30s, which are also the years of peak childbearing. Thus, migrant populations tend to have quite a different and typically much younger age profile than the native or non-migrant population. These migrant populations tend to be predominantly of working age and concentrated in the young working ages.

Iceland: In 2015, 13.5 per cent of the population of Iceland were foreign born. The proportion of the population born abroad was less than this at every age under 20 (see Figure 21). However, between the ages of 20 and 48, the foreign-born proportion exceeded their overall proportion in Iceland.

Between the ages of 26 and 37, the foreign-born population made up more than a quarter of each age group. Thus, the migrant population in Iceland had the potential to make significant contributions to the labour force. If all or most of the people in this age range were in the labour force, they would be quite crucial to the overall functioning of the labour market.

Sweden: As noted above, in Sweden, the increase in the proportion of the population with a foreign background is particularly high, and the country shows the same age pattern of especially high numbers in the young working ages (Figure 22). In 2015, 17 per cent of the population was foreign born and 30 per cent had a foreign background, meaning that they had been born abroad or that one or both of their parents had been born abroad. The foreign-born proportion was smaller than the national average for each age group up to the age of 24. For ages 25 to 44, a quarter of the population was foreign born. Nearly 40 per cent of those aged 25 to 34 years of age had a foreign background.

Figure 21: Age structure of the native and foreign-born populations in Iceland, 2015.

Figure 22: Age structure of the native and foreign-origin populations in Sweden, 2015.

Finland: Data for Finland disaggregating foreign-born from native-born residents are only available for five-year age groups but show the same pattern of high proportions of foreign-born people among the young working ages. In 2015, 6.1 per cent of the entire population of Finland had been born abroad (Figure 23). In each age group below the age of 20,

the foreign-born population was smaller than this proportion. However, of those aged 20 to 49, the foreign-born proportion of each age group was larger than that of the total population. From the age of 25 to 39, the foreign-born population was more than double that in the overall population.

Figure 23: Age structure of the native and foreign-born populations in Finland, 2015.

Figure 24: Age structure of the population of Danish and foreign ancestry, 2016.

Denmark: Overall in 2016, immigrants and their descendants made up 12.3 per cent of the total population in Denmark. However, at some ages, the population of foreign origin makes up a significant proportion of the Danish population, and by implication, the labour force (see Figure 24). Below the age of 18, the population with foreign ancestry makes up only a slightly larger proportion than the overall proportion in the population. However, from ages of 19 to about 40, the foreign-ancestry population makes up quite a significant proportion of the total population of Denmark. Between the ages of 27 and 34, >30 per cent of the population is of foreign ancestry. It seems crucial to incorporate and integrate this sizable proportion of those in the young working ages into the labour force, as they can make a significant contribution. This youthful foreign population will also contribute to future population growth in Denmark.

Reasons for migration

The reasons for migration to the Nordic countries are an important indicator of migrants' ability to integrate. National data on reasons for migration are available for Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

Comparable data for all Nordic countries are available from Eurostat on first permits issued each year (Eurostat 2017).

In 2008, the largest category of migrants to Sweden were those migrating for family reasons, accounting for 44 per cent of all first permits (Figure 25). This was followed by employment (17 per cent), study (14 per cent), and those holding various refugee and international protection statuses (13 per cent). The total number of first permits nearly doubled over this period from 84,000 to 147,000. By 2016, those coming for work reasons had increased from 37,000 to 48,000 but had declined in percentage terms to 33 per cent of total first permits. Those coming for education declined to 6 per cent and those for employment reasons declined to 11 per cent. Those in various refugee and humanitarian categories (which cover international protection status, refugee status and subsidiary protection, and humanitarian reasons) have shown the greatest increase in absolute and percentage terms. This category increased from 11,000 in 2008 to 69,000 in 2016, from 13 to 47 per cent of all first permits.

Figure 25: Numbers of first residence permits for Sweden categorized by reason, 2008–2016.

Figure 26: Numbers of first residence permits for Norway categorized by reason, 2008–2016.

In Norway in 2009, the breakdown of first permits by reason for immigration was similar to that of Sweden, with 46 per cent coming for family reasons, 25 per cent for work, 12 per cent for school, and 12 per cent for refugee or humanitarian reasons (Figure 26). The number of first residence permits increased from 25,000 to 38,000 between 2008 and 2016. By 2016, the proportion coming for family reasons had declined to 39 per cent, for work to 18 per cent, and for education to 10 per cent. Similar to Sweden, the proportion coming for refugee and other humanitarian reasons increased the most, to 31 per cent of all first permits.

Denmark has a somewhat different breakdown of migration by cause, with those coming for work being the largest category in 2009, accounting for 42 per cent of all first permits, followed by education (24 per cent), and family reasons (18 per cent) (Figure 27). Those coming with various refugee and protection statuses only made up 5 per cent of all first permits in that year. The total number of first permits increased from 26,000 in 2009 to 41,000 in 2016. By 2016, the pattern had changed. Those coming for work reasons had declined to 25 per cent, although the absolute numbers remained the same. Those coming for education remained

Figure 27: Numbers of first residence permits for Denmark categorized by reason, 2008–2016.

roughly the same at about one-quarter, and the proportion coming for family reasons increased to 31 per cent. Like the other countries, the proportion of first permits with refugee status increased the most to 18 per cent in 2016 from 5 per cent in 2009, although this proportion was smaller than that of other countries.

In Finland in 2008, family reasons accounted for the largest category of first permits (33 per cent), then came work (26 per cent), followed by

education (20 per cent), and refugee status (7 per cent) (Figure 28). The number of first resident permits increased to 29,000 from 22,000 over the period. First resident permits for family reasons declined to 27 per cent although they increased slightly in absolute numbers. The number coming to study increased in absolute numbers but stayed roughly the same as a proportion of the total. The absolute number coming for work stayed the same but declined as a proportion of the total to

Figure 28: Numbers of first residence permits for Finland categorized by reason, 2008–2016.

Figure 29: Numbers of first residence permits for Iceland categorized by reason, 2008–2016.

19 per cent. Like the other Nordic countries, the largest absolute and percentage increase was for those coming with various refugee and protection statuses, a group that accounted for 23 per cent of all first permits in 2016.

For Iceland in 2008, family reasons were the largest category for first resident permits (43 per cent), followed by work (31 per cent), and education (17 per cent) (Figure 29). Between 2008 and 2016, the number of first resident permits increased from 973 to 1,469. Family reasons remained the largest category at 33 per cent but this was a decline in the proportion. The number of people coming for education increased to 29 per cent of all first permits and the number migrating for work declined to 21 per cent. Like the other Nordic countries, the largest increase was among those with various refugee and protection statuses, a proportion that increased from 0 to 11 per cent in 2016.

Flows of refugees and asylum seekers

As discussed in the previous section, increasingly large proportions of people migrating to the Nordic countries enter as refugees or with some other form of humanitarian protection. People officially become immigrants with refugee status through several channels, including entering the country and applying for asylum. Not all people who apply for asylum receive protected status (see box). This section looks at both long-term trends in asylum and refugee flows and trends over the past several years of the 'refugee crisis'.

BOX: ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

The process of applying for asylum is similar throughout the Nordic countries and the EU. A person applies for asylum with the police or office of the relevant migration agency. Their application is either accepted and refugee or subsidiary protection status is granted, or they are denied asylum. If their application is denied, they must either leave the country or appeal the decision. If they are granted asylum, they are given a residence permit and are counted as an immigrant in migration statistics. In addition, there are quota refugees who have been selected by the UNHCR for resettlement and who enter the country with refugee status. In recent years in the Nordic countries, far more people have been granted protection status as asylum seekers than as quota refugees.

The number of people seeking asylum in the Nordic countries has fluctuated, mainly because of exogenous events elsewhere in the world. The general trend in all the Nordic countries has been increased numbers of asylum seekers, as seen in Figure 30, which shows the number of asylum seekers over the period 1985 to 2016. The first large increase was in the early 1990s, when Yugoslavia was breaking up. The numbers declined into the late 1990s before increasing again in the early 2000s.

Figure 30: Asylum applications in the Nordic countries, 1985 to 2016. Source: Eurostat.

The movement of large numbers of migrants into the Nordic countries and elsewhere in Europe since 2015 is often referred to in the press as a 'refugee crisis' as it represents one of the largest influxes of displaced people since the end of World War II. Over the course of 2015, an estimated 1.3 million people applied for asylum in the European Union. Sweden had by far the largest per capita inflow of asylum seekers in Europe. From about 2012, the numbers of asylum seekers increased considerably as a result of ongoing civil wars or instability in Africa, the Middle East, and south Asia. Europe received a record number of asylum applications in 2015. The numbers for Iceland are almost too small to be seen in the figure because of the scale, but follow a similar pattern as the others. For many years, there were no asylum applications (or no data). There was a peak in 1991 when there were 20 applications. From 2012, the number began to rise, peaking at 1,125 in 2016.

With the increased number of asylum seekers, more people entered the Nordic countries with refugee or other forms of protection status (Figure 31 a, next page). In 2008, 12,000 applications for asylum were approved by the five Nordic countries. This figure rose sharply to 94,000 in 2016.

The trend of increased numbers of people entering as refugees was also driven by the increased proportion of approvals. This was attributable in part to the changing countries of origin. For some countries such as Syria and Afghanistan, nearly all asylum seekers are granted refugee status. In Sweden, the percentage of approvals rose from

27 per cent in 2008 to 77 per cent in 2014 before declining to 70 per cent in 2016 (Figure 31 b, next page). In Norway, the proportion of positive decisions increased from 34 per cent to 66 per cent over the same period, and in Denmark from 58 per cent in 2008 to 81 per cent in 2015 before a decline in 2016. In Finland, the proportion of approvals went from 39 per cent in 2008 to a peak of 57 per cent in 2015 before declining. In Iceland, the proportion of approvals went from 18 per cent in 2008 to a peak of 55 per cent in 2014 before declining.

Increased border controls and other enforcement efforts by the Nordic countries coupled with an agreement between the EU and Turkey in June 2016 contributed to stemming the flow of irregular migrants. Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark all had record numbers of asylum seekers in 2015. Iceland had smaller numbers and a later peak in 2016. The number of asylum seekers was especially large in the second half of 2015 (Figure 32). In Finland, the peak month was September, when 10,815 people submitted asylum applications. In October, Sweden (39,060) and Norway (8,665) received their highest numbers of applications, and in November, Denmark received its largest numbers with 5,030. Iceland received its highest numbers a year later in November 2016, with 255 applications. After an agreement was reached with Turkey, the number of asylum applications dropped significantly to about 2,000 a month in Sweden and between 200 and 400 a month in Norway, Denmark, and Finland.

Figure 31 a: Number of asylum applications in the Nordic countries, 2008 to 2016. Source: Eurostat.

Figure 31 b: Share of approvals of all initial instance asylum applications, 2008 to 2016. Source: Eurostat.

Figure 32: Number of asylum applications per month, January 2014 to June 2017. Source: Eurostat.

Conclusions

Based on the preceding analysis of the data, it is obvious that the Nordic countries have become a region of immigration. Given their strong economies and the links established from previous immigration, they are likely to continue to receive more people through immigration than they will lose from emigration. According to projections from the national statistical offices, net migration is expected to be positive in the future, and migration will be the major contributor to population growth. Because of the large volume of recent immigration, the Nordic countries have made considerable efforts to integrate these newcomers, as their successful integration is the key to sustaining the Nordic welfare model.

Integration of migrant populations into the Nordic countries is a multi-dimensional and vast issue that cannot be reduced to a single indicator. The most important area of integration is into the labour market, which is what most integration efforts in the Nordic countries aim to achieve. Immigrant populations of various categories can be compared to native-born populations in terms of labour force participation, unemployment, job quality, earnings, health, housing, civic engagement, social cohesion, and other indicators.

There have been a number of recent evaluations and comparisons of integration of migrant populations in the Nordic countries and between the Nordic countries and other OECD countries. A recent OECD study distinguished between recent migrants (who arrived within the past five years) and settled migrants (who arrived more than five years ago). It pointed out that among the issues that proved to be obstacles to full integration of recent arrivals were low proficiency in local languages, unrecognized formal qualifications, low applicability of skills acquired abroad, lack of access to jobs in the public sector, little knowledge of local standards and customs, and lack of networks (OECD, 2016a).

In this regard, integrating immigrants into the Nordic region has become a challenge because of the above-mentioned characteristics of the

composition of the flows. With the large increase in immigration to the Nordic countries in recent years, many people referred to in the study are recent migrants who have not had sufficient time to integrate fully. Unlike the languages of some other OECD countries, the Nordic languages are not widely spoken outside the region, so few newcomers arrive with proficiency and they need time to learn them. Large proportions of recent arrivals have come either from outside the EU or as asylum seekers or refugees, often both. In recent years, about half of the foreign-born people or their families originally came to Sweden as refugees (OECD, 2016b). This makes the recognition of formal qualifications and the applicability of skills acquired abroad rather difficult. In 2015, Sweden received the highest number of asylum applications in proportion to its population (1.6 per cent), with Norway and Finland also receiving high proportions of 0.6 per cent of their populations. As a result, in Sweden, Norway, and Finland, expenditure on education and language courses for refugees has increased. Language training in Norway, Sweden, and Finland has proven to be effective, as evidenced by improvements on Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies scores after five years, which ranked these three countries highest among selected OECD countries.

Another recent OECD study was the first to compare the integration of immigrants and their children across a broad range of indicators for the OECD and EU countries (OECD/European Union, 2015). There was a special focus in the study on third-country nationals. These are immigrants from outside the EU who are the targets of many of the integration efforts. As mentioned above, large proportions of the immigrants into the Nordic countries are third-country nationals. The study grouped countries based on their immigrant populations. The four Nordic countries included in the study were classified as destination countries with significant recent and humanitarian migration, with the following characteristics:

- Humanitarian immigrants and their families have accounted for much recent immigration.
- Immigrants are overrepresented at both ends of the education spectrum.
- With the recent surge in migration, half of the foreign-born population has arrived in the past decade. Many are classified as 'recent arrivals' who arrived within the past five years.
- High proportions of immigrants take up host-country citizenship.
- Integration policies are strong and long-standing.

The reason for a person migrating to another country plays an important role in determining their integration outcomes, particularly in the labour market. Labour migrants usually have a job waiting for them upon arrival but immigrants coming for humanitarian and family reasons face different circumstances. Across the EU, immigrants are less likely to be employed than the native-born population, 62 per cent versus 65 per cent. This is partly attributable to women's employment rate being an average of five percentage points less than for non-immigrant women. The employment gaps are among the highest in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway for both low- and highly educated people (Figure 33). They are close to the EU average in Iceland and Finland. The gaps in employment rate between native-born and foreign-born residents are among the highest in Europe. This is explained by the high proportion of immigrants who arrive for humanitarian reasons and also by the high employment rates among the native-born population, especially women.

Data on the gaps in unemployment rates between the foreign-born and native-born residents for the 34 OECD countries are also available. The percentage point difference in unemployment rates between the foreign-born and native-born populations in the Nordic countries are among the widest, meaning that the foreign-born populations have much higher unemployment rates. Another indicator is the immigrant unemployment rate, which is a comparison between countries and not with the native-born populations. Here, the Nordic countries fare somewhat better, but three

of the five countries still have unemployment rates for the foreign-born populations that are above the OECD average. The Nordic countries fare better on this indicator, especially Iceland and Norway, because of their overall strong economies.

In terms of long-term unemployment among immigrants aged 15 to 64, the Nordic countries fare particularly badly. For 28 OECD countries, the difference in long-term unemployment between native-born and foreign-born populations was 0.0 per cent, meaning that there was no difference. For 28 EU countries, the difference was -1.2 percentage points, meaning that foreign-born residents had lower levels of long-term unemployment than the native-born population. The greatest difference among OECD/EU countries was the Netherlands, where the native-born population had a 14.5 per cent point lower difference in long-term unemployment than the foreign-born residents. This was followed by Switzerland (13.1 percentage point difference), Sweden (11.9 percentage points), and Iceland (10.6 percentage points). The differences for Denmark and Finland was lower but still positive. Thus, in all of the Nordic countries, significant proportions of the foreign-born populations were at risk of permanently being unable to integrate.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a tool designed to measure integration policies in 38 migration-receiving countries including all EU Member States, Iceland, Norway, and other high-income countries. The MIPEX consists of 167 different indicators of integration in eight policy areas. An overall score based on a composite of all integration policies was compiled for 2014, with 100 being the highest, best policies for immigrant integration, to 0, the worst policies. The average score for all MIPEX countries was 53. Of the 38 countries, Sweden (along with Portugal) had the highest score, 80 of 100. Finland had the third highest with a score of 71. Norway was seventh with a score of 69. Denmark was further down with a score of 59, followed by Iceland with a score of 46. Thus, compared with other high-income countries, the Nordic countries have well-developed policies in place for successful integration.

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