

Foreigners in Germany

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In 2002, 7.5 million foreigners lived in Germany (8.9% of the total population). Approximately 1.8 million are citizens from EU countries. Many foreigners live with their families in Germany. 97% of foreigners live in western Germany and 3% in eastern Germany. The foreigners come mainly from the following countries:

Population and citizenship					
Specification	Unit	2000	2001	2002	2006
Inhabitants on 31 December	1,000	82,259,5	82,440,3	82,536,7	82,438.0
By citizenship					
Germans	1,000	74,992,0	75,122,1	75,188,7	75,148.8
Foreigners	1,000	7,267,6	7,318.2	7,348,0	7,289.1
incl.:					
– Turkey	1,000	1,998,5	1,947,9	1,912,2	1,738.83
– Yugoslavia ¹	1,000	662.5	627.5	591.5	316.82
– Italy	1,000	619.1	616.3	609.8	534.66
– Greece	1,000	365.4	362.7	359.4	303.76
– Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,000	156.3	159.0	163.8	157.10
– Poland	1,000	301.4	310.4	317.6	361.70
– Croatia	1,000	216.8	223.8	231.0	227.51
– Austria	1,000	187.7	189.0	189.3	175.65
– United States	1,000	113.6	113.5	112.9	99.27
– Macedonia	1,000	51.8	56.0	58.3	
– Slovenia	1,000	18.8	19.4	20.6	

Federal Statistical Office Germany 2006
Source: <http://www.destatis.de/>

From 1991 to 1995 the foreign population of Germany increased by 1,291,600 people. This is above all due to the arrival of refugees from former Yugoslavia, the influx of people seeking asylum and the fact that birth rates amongst foreigners are relatively high compared to the rates for Germans. Currently, about 7.2 million foreigners live in Germany.

Foreign employees subject to social insurance contributions at place of employment					
Regional breakdown	Total	Including			
		Greece	Italy	Serbia and Montenegro	Turkey
	1,000				
Year/month/reference day	30 June 2003 ¹⁾				
Baden-Württemberg	427,435	29,325	66,295	48,577	102,332
Bavaria	347,421	20,014	27,362	36,547	78,406
Berlin	67,743	1,642	2,304	4,949	22,342
Brandenburg	7,470	204	237	240	952
Bremen	17,344	404	387	938	6,541
Hamburg	58,537	1,921	2,033	4,163	15,582
Hesse	215,310	10,743	23,678	17,835	55,398
Mecklenburg-W.Pomerania	3,131	130	131	81	214
Lower Saxony	103,308	4,397	7,622	7,731	28,451
North Rhine-Westphalia	458,233	27,759	40,372	35,370	158,995
Rhineland-Palatinate	72,416	2,047	7,790	5,498	18,927
Saarland	30,478	223	4,918	747	3,026
Saxony	10,517	382	397	399	709
Saxony-Anhalt	4,976	307	186	202	407
Schleswig-Holstein	31,427	995	1,086	1,822	9,564
Thuringia	4,665	148	272	156	457
Germany	1,860,411	100,641	185,070	165,255	502,303

Source: <http://www.statistik-portal.de/>

Foreign employees enjoy the same social security as Germans (health insurance, protection against dismissal, pension entitlement, child allowance, unemployment benefits, etc.). To a great extent they have their own cultural institutions. The Maastricht Agreement, which has been in force since 1993, guarantees citizens from the EU countries communal voting rights in their place of residence in the EU.

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For a long time, German citizenship had been based primarily on the principle of "Jus Sanguinis", meaning one usually acquired German citizenship if a parent was a German citizen, irrespective of place of birth.

However, a significant reform to the nationality law was passed by the German Parliament (Bundestag) in 1999 and became law in 2000. This new law eases the process of becoming a German citizen for those foreigners resident in Germany on a long-term basis and for children born in Germany.

According to the 1949 Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, "persons persecuted on political grounds shall have the right of asylum."

In 1993, however, the Asylum Law was amended, due to an increasing number of refugees and fraudulent claims of political persecution. Provisions to the law were added to ensure that asylum can be claimed only by those actually suffering political persecution and require protection in Germany.