

These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest information, research and analysis in a fast-moving environment. Topics will be repeated from time to time as analysis develops. If you have an item to include, please email us at research@iom.int.

Updates to international migration data reflect COVID-19 impacts

The [UN estimates](#) that there are now 281 million international migrants worldwide, or about 4 out of every 100 people. This is according to newly released data from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), in its first major update to the dataset since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The [release](#) includes estimates of international migrant stocks in global and regional aggregates while also featuring datasets disaggregated by country of origin, country of destination, age and sex. Explanations of DESA’s methodology can be found [here](#).



Source: UNDESA, 2021. Available [here](#).

While the [total number of international migrants](#) has increased [since the last release in 2019](#), the number of international migrants grew 27 per cent slower by mid-2020 or an estimated two million fewer international migrants than would otherwise be expected. As highlighted most recently in snapshots [#26](#) and [#54](#), a combination of mobility restrictions and economic effects have left hundreds of thousands of migrants stranded while others have returned to their country of origin.

Nearly [two-thirds](#) of all international migrants live in high-income countries, while nearly 80 per cent of refugees and asylum-seekers live in low- or middle-income countries.

Other key

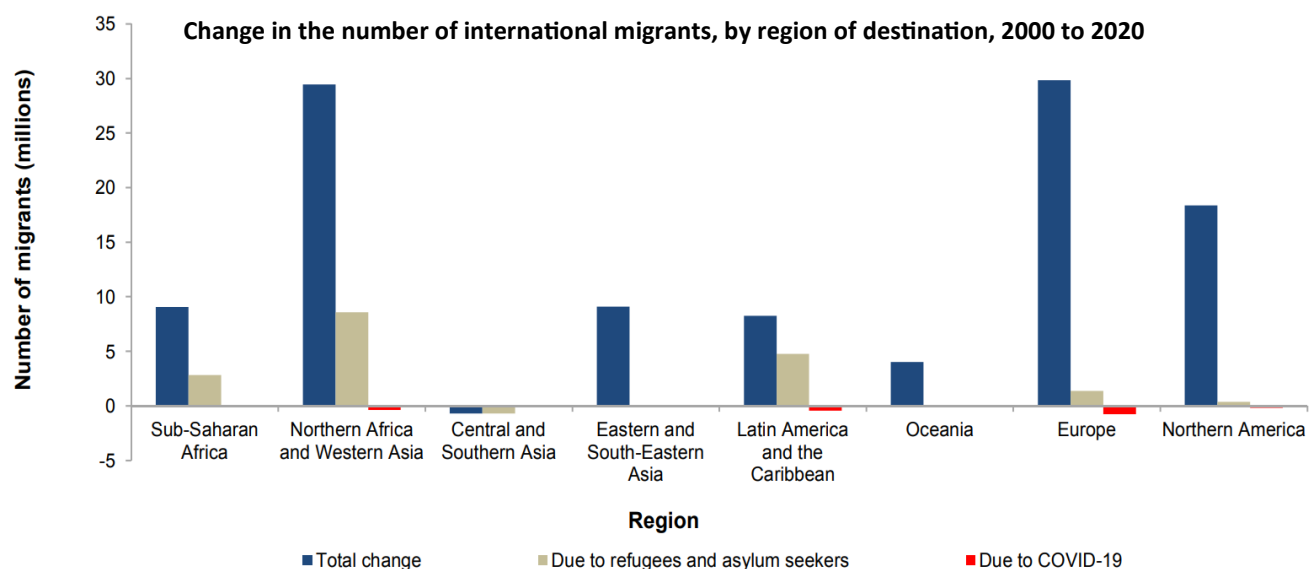


findings

As of 2020, about [48 per cent](#) of all international migrants were women or girls. Female migrants slightly exceeded the number of male migrants in Europe, Northern America and Oceania.

The pandemic effect on international migration

DESA estimates that the pandemic has reduced the international migrant stock by about two million people (or 27 % of expected growth). At the regional level, this reduction in migration seems most apparent in Europe. To learn more about how DESA made adjustments to account for the COVID-19 pandemic, click [here](#).



Source: UNDESA 2021. Available [here](#).

Top 10 origin countries (millions)

The countries with the [largest diasporas](#) in 2020 remain the same.

Country	Emigrants
India	17.9
Mexico	11.2
Russian Federation	10.8
China	10.5
Syrian Arab Republic	8.5
Bangladesh	7.4
Pakistan	6.3
Ukraine	6.1
Philippines	6.1
Afghanistan	5.9

Top 10 destination countries (millions)

The top 10 [destination countries](#) for international migrants stay relatively unchanged.

Country	Immigrants
United States	50.6
Germany	15.8
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	13.5
Russian Federation	11.6
United Kingdom	9.4
United Arab Emirates	8.7
France	8.5
Canada	8.0
Australia	7.7
Spain	6.8

This COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot has been produced by [IOM Research](#) (research@iom.int).

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