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ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

MIGRATION POLICY CENTRE



Co-financed by the EU

Migration Facts Lebanon

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April 2013

Introduction Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, the first emigration flows responded to internal conflicts and economic factors, and was concentrated in Latin America and to a lesser extent Europe and the US. Later waves during most of the 20th century headed to the US, Canada, Australia and France (permanently) as well as to Western Africa (temporarily) and, starting from the 1960s, to the Gulf States. The Civil War of 1975-1989 increased emigration to all the places mentioned and included emigrants with greatly varying socio-economic profiles. Today, outward flows are mainly directed to the Gulf countries and include a high proportion of highly-skilled individuals. Lebanon is currently a destination for temporary workers coming mainly from Syria and Asia. Meanwhile, it hosts large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, especially Palestinians and Syrians.

Demographic-Economic				
Outward Migration		Inward Migration		
STOCK				
Lebanese emigration stocks - year 2011 (a)		Immigration stocks in Lebanon - year 2004 (b)		
Total emigrants: 500,536		Total immigrants: 248,605 (6.6% of the total resident population)		
Five top countries of residence: Unites States: 122,594 Saudi Arabia: 44,671 Canada: 77,390 Germany: 38,655 Australia: 74,850		Top countries of nationality (year 1997) (c): Palestine: 198,258 Syria: 44,129		
Sex: Males: 53.8% Females: 46.2%		Age group: Less than 15: 4.6% 15-64: 83.8% 65+: 11.6%		
Level of education (year 2006): primary or below (27.1%); secondary (34.7%); tertiary (38.2%)		Notes: (b) Immigrants are defined according to the country of nationality criterion. Source: Estimation ACS <i>Conditions de vie des ménages</i> .		
Occupation (year 2006): professionals (18.0%); service workers and shop and market sales workers (17.0%); legislators, senior officials and managers (15.7%)		Refugees in Lebanon, years 2002-2011		
		2002	2003	2004
		2005	2006	2007
		2008	2009	2010
		2011		
		387,738	391,755	396,285
		400,230	424,334	
		458,775	464,381	472,601
		433,703	464,363	
		Top countries of nationality (year 2011)		
		Palestine: 455,373 (d) Iraq: 8,491		
		Notes: (d) Palestinian refugees include an unknown proportion of persons whose ancestors found refuge in Lebanon but are currently living outside Lebanon. Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).		
FLOWS				
Outflows of Lebanese nationals to selected countries of destination – year 2011		Inflows of foreign nationals in Lebanon – year 2011		
Total outflows: 12,220		Total inflows: 60,982		
Five top countries of destination: Australia: 5,068 United Kingdom: 814 United States: 1,920 Germany: 696 France: 1,413		Five top countries of nationality: Bangladesh: 16,910 Sri Lanka: 3,083 Egypt: 6,537 India: 1,533 Philippines: 5,171		
Source: flow data are provided by first residence permits (EU MS + Norway) and visas (US + Australia) issued annually to Lebanese nationals.		Source: flow data are provided by first residence permits issued annually by Lebanese authorities (Ministry of Labour).		

Legal and political framework governing migration and mobility

General legal references

- Constitution of Lebanon 1926;
- Law of 10 July 1962 regulating the entry of foreigners into Lebanon, their stay and their exit from Lebanon;
- Law n° 320 of 2 August 1962 on the control of entry and exit from Lebanese border posts;
- Law n° 129 of 24 August 2010 amending article 59 of the Labour Code of 23 September 1946;
- Decision No. 621/1 in 1995 on occupations reserved to Lebanese nationals;
- By-Law n° 17561 of 18 September 1964, regulating the work of foreigners in Lebanon and its amendment

Outward Migration and Mobility	Inward Migration and Mobility
Visa	Visa
No requirements for Jordanians to exit. Circulation between Lebanon and Syria is facilitated for nationals from both countries, as well as for Palestinian refugees. Exit of foreign nationals may be submitted to a visa.	No visa requirements for nationals of Jordan or the Gulf Cooperation Council states. Migrant workers entry submitted to authorization of the Ministry of Labour and General Security Direction. Syrian nationals can enter with their identity card, circulation facilitated.
Labour	Labour
1994 Labour Agreement with Syria and 2009 agreement with Egypt granting Lebanese workers in Syria/Egypt equal treatment. EU-Lebanon Association Agreement (2006) whereby parties agree to a dialogue that shall be used to find ways to achieve progress in the field of movement of workers and equal treatment and social integration of Lebanese and EU nationals legally residing in the territories of their host countries.	Lebanese nationals have priority regarding access to all jobs. Certain categories of workers and business owners are restricted to Lebanese citizens only. No access to the liberal professions for migrants, except through bilateral agreements. Work contract and sponsor required for access to employment in Lebanon (except for Syrians and Egyptians). Women from Indonesia, Guinea and Sierra Leone are not allowed to work as servants. 1994 Labour Agreement with Syria and 2009 agreement with Egypt granting equal treatment of Syrian/Egyptian workers in Lebanon.
Rights	Rights
Beginning in 2013, Lebanese expatriates will have the right to vote in parliamentary elections while abroad.	Family reunification with permit of residence. Access to employment subject to requirement of work contract and sponsor, under certain conditions. No equal access to public services.
Readmission Agreement	Rights
Readmission agreement with Bulgaria (2002) addressing readmission of irregular nationals and transit. Readmission agreements with Romania (2000), Cyprus (2003), and Switzerland (2006) addressing readmission of irregular nationals and irregular third-country nationals. EU-Lebanon Association Agreement (2006) whereby EU Member States and Lebanon agree to readmit any of their nationals illegally present on their respective territories.	Irregular Migration
Irregular Migration	Irregular Migration
Lebanon-Bulgaria agreement (2002) and Lebanon-Cyprus agreement (2004) against organized crime agreeing to address irregular migration. EU-Lebanon Association Agreement (2006) includes cooperation in order to prevent and control illegal immigration. Lebanon-Switzerland readmission agreement (2006) prescribes cooperation against irregular migration.	Government strategy is to reduce irregular migration through: strengthening legal penalties; cooperation with international organisations (e.g. UNIFL) and other countries to control borders; and develop action plans with international organisations to mitigate irregular migration. Attempts to reduce number of undocumented through apprehension, annual regularisation and deportation measures. The crime of trafficking is prohibited and punished under Lebanese law. The prescribed penalties for sex trafficking and forced labour range from five to 15 years' imprisonment.
International Protection	International Protection
UNHCR competence to organize the return of Lebanese refugees from Syria.	Lebanese strategy is to coordinate with UNRWA (in charge of Palestinian refugees) and UNHCR (all others refugees). No national procedure for refugees. Registration, refugee status determination, and resettlement are conducted by the UNHCR. 1951 Convention not ratified. Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States ratified with reservations. Any foreigner subject to pursuit, condemned for a political crime by a non-Lebanese authority or whose life or freedom is threatened for political reasons can request to be granted political asylum.
Diaspora	Citizenship
Lebanese government strategy (particularly Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Lebanese Expatriates) to sustain links with the Lebanese Diaspora and to encourage their development of the homeland through remittances, investments, and regular return visits; collaborating with international organizations (UNDP and IOM) on Diaspora's potential contribution to development of Lebanon; and encouraging conciliatory links among different Lebanese confessional groups residing abroad. Numerous civil society organisations active in consolidating links, providing services to Lebanese abroad, and mobilising Diaspora in times of conflict.	<i>Jus sanguinis</i> by descent from the father. Women do not transmit their nationality. No <i>jus soli</i> except for stateless children born in the country. Access to nationality for foreign women after 1 year marriage with male citizen. No access to citizenship through marriage with Lebanese woman citizen.
Multiple Citizenship	
Lebanon accepts the principle of dual citizenship.	