This Bulletin presents data on foreign workers affiliated to and registered as in employment in the Social Security on 31 December 2008. It analyses the evolution of foreign workers in the general context of increased affiliations to the Social Security in Spain in the last decade, as well as the comparison with Spanish workers.

Between 2000 and 2007, the number of foreigners registered as in employment in the Social Security saw a continuous increase which only came to a halt in 2008. That period coincided with a sharp increase in the number of workers registered as in employment in the Social Security system and much of that increase was due to the contribution of foreign workers.

Analysed here are the main national collectives of foreign workers, providing information on their employment — occupation, activity sector, working hours, province where they are currently registered as in employment, etc.— and on the workers themselves —age and sex—.

Similarly, the comparison of the main figures on Spanish and foreign workers highlights the differences in occupation sectors, affiliation regimes, type of working hours, age and sex of workers, etc.

Lastly, the report provides the geographic distribution of foreign workers and their numbers as a share of the total number of workers in each province.

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In the last decade, the increase in the number of workers affiliated to and registered as in employment in the Social Security has been influenced by the sharp increase in the number of foreign workers. Between December 1999 and December 2008, the number of workers rose by 3,727,287 affiliates, of whom 1,547,247 were foreign workers. That means that 41.51% of the total increase in new affiliations to the Social Security was due to foreign workers.

In 1999, foreign workers made up just 2.30%, which means that the share of foreign workers over the total number of workers multiplied by 4.5 in one decade.

The annual increases in the number of Spanish workers registered as in employment do not reach the 4% mark in any of the years under review. However, the number of foreign workers registers a year-on-year average increase of over 20%, reaching the highest peak in 2005 (56.82%) in contrast with that of Spanish workers in 2000 (3.78%). In 2008, both groups coincide in shrinking numbers of workers, with foreign workers falling by 4.99% and Spanish workers by 4.60%.

The data on foreign workers shows a much more irregular evolution than that of Spanish workers. After experiencing annual increases of more than 30% between 2000 and 2002, the number of foreign workers increased at a rate of 11% in 2003, 16% in 2004, and at the above-mentioned rate of 56.82% in 2005, as a result of the regularisation of foreign workers process. In the following years the increase rates levelled off to more moderate percentages, below 10% in 2006 and 2007, and witnessed a drop in the course of 2008.

In 2008, there were 1,882,223 foreign workers affiliated to and registered as in employment in the Social Security in Spain, representing 10.28% of the total number of workers registered as in employment on that date. In 1999, foreign workers made up just 2.30%, which means that the share of foreign workers over the total number of workers multiplied by 4.5 in one decade.
The largest collective of foreign workers is the Moroccan, with 238,048 workers, followed by the Romanian, with 227,690 workers. The third and fourth places are taken up by Ecuadorians and Colombians (218,718 and 132,643, respectively), followed by workers of Peruvian origin (80,281). In the context of the total number of foreign residents, not just workers affiliated to and registered as in employment in the Social Security, the fifth place is taken up by the British, although they rank tenth in number of foreign workers. These five nationalities make up nearly half of the foreign workers in Spain (47.77%).

Compared with the previous year, only three of the main fifteen nationalities experienced increases: Bolivia (22.20%), China (11.25%) and Peru (2.60%). All the other nationalities witnessed falls. The Portuguese (-16.68%) and the Ecuadorians (-14.80%) registered the sharpest falls in percentage terms.

Regime, activity sector and contribution group

In an initial overview of the situation of foreign workers in the labour market, we should note that 85.93% of them work on an employee-basis and the remaining 14.07% on a self-employed basis, thereby presenting a higher rate of salaried employment than Spanish workers, of whom 80.81% work on an employee-basis and 19.19% on a self-employed basis.

Workers are required to register in the Social Security as in employment in the regime associated with the type of activity performed. The regime that includes the highest number of workers registered as in employment is the General Regime, which concentrates 68.17% of the total number of foreign workers and 76.59% of the total number of Spanish workers. This regime is followed by the Special Self-employed Workers’ Regime (11.77% of foreign workers and 18.80% of Spanish workers), the Special Agricultural Workers’ Regime (10.77% of foreign workers and 3.49% of Spanish workers), and the Special Domestic Service Regime (9.05% of foreign workers and 0.70% of Spanish workers). The other two regimes are minority in both cases. Therefore, the biggest percentage differences in relation to Spanish workers are found in the Special Agricultural Workers’ Regime and the Special Domestic Service Regime.

By activity sector, we find that the construction sector (16.73%) and the agriculture sector (1.24%) hold more weight among foreign workers than Spanish workers (8.49% and 0.58% respectively). The opposite is true in the services sector (70.97% among foreign workers and 74.52% among Spanish workers) and the industrial sector (11.06% and 16.42% respectively).

Foreign workers registered as in employment by contribution group. Main nationalities. 31-12-2008
For contribution purposes, in the General Regime each worker is classed into the professional category of the job performed. In line with this classification, the largest contribution group among foreign workers is that of unskilled workers over 18 years of age, which represents 27.66% of the total. However, on analysing the results by the worker’s nationality, we find high variability between the main fifteen nationalities. Thus, we see that more than 50% of French and German workers are classed in the 1 to 5 groups (from Engineers and University Graduates to Administrative Officers), whilst 42.31% of Moroccan workers are included in the group of unskilled workers over 18 years of age.

Type of contract and working hours

On 31 December 2008, 71.96% of the Spanish workers registered as in employment in the General Regime of the Social Security held an indefinite contract and 28.04% a temporary contract. However, on that same date 52.40% of the foreign workers registered as in employment in the General Regime held an indefinite contract and the remaining 47.60% a temporary contract (excluded in both cases are workers holding learning, training, practice or other types of non-classified contracts). We therefore find a higher rate of temporality among foreign workers.

Looking at the main fifteen nationalities, the temporality rate exceeds 50% among workers from Bolivia (58.47%), Morocco (54.82%), Portugal (51.02%) and Romania (51.00%).

In terms of working hours, 75.45% of the foreign workers included in the General Regime work on a full-time basis, compared with 81.99% of the Spanish workers (excluded in both cases are workers holding learning, training, practice or other types of non-classified contracts).

According to the continent of nationality of the foreign workers included in the General Regime, the percentage of workers employed on a full-time basis exceeds 75.45% (a value obtained by taking into account the total number of foreign workers) among those of African origin (82.60%, which even exceeds the average among Spanish workers), European Community nationals (78.86%) and nationals of Oceania countries (77.40%). The lowest rate is found among Asians (60.03%), specifically among Chinese workers (43.75%).

Age and sex of workers

In the labour market, men make up a majority among both Spanish (making up 55.89%) and foreign workers (57.81%).

By continent, women only outnumber men in the case of workers from non-EC European countries (56.86%) and Latin America (54.21%). However, the proportion of women among African workers is just 21.68%.

By age, comparing the distribution of foreign and Spanish workers, we find that the share of foreign workers between 20 and 29 years of age (27.76%) and between 30 and 39 years of age (38.81%) is significantly higher than among Spanish workers (18.10% and 29.89% respectively). By contrast, the share of Spanish workers between 40 and 49 years of age (26.83%), between 50 and 59 years of age (18.15%) and 60 years and over (5.79%) is higher than among foreign workers (22.16%, 8.28% and 1.49% respectively). The share of Spanish and foreign workers below 20 years of age is very similar, slightly above 1%.

In the main fifteen nationalities, more than 50% of the workers are between 30 and 49 years of age, highlighting Ukraine with the highest percentage (65.69%). The Romanian is the nationality with the highest percentage of young workers, aged between 16 and 29 years (36.94%). Lastly, the highest share of workers aged 50 years or over is found among the British (26.55%).
Province

The provinces with higher numbers of foreign workers registered as in employment in the Social Security are Madrid (415,670), Barcelona (305,236), Valencia (99,616), Murcia (91,153) and Alicante (79,167). These five provinces concentrated 52.64% of the total number of foreign workers on 31 December 2008.

Looking at the main fifteen provinces, they all experienced falls in numbers of foreign workers from 31 December 2007. The province with the sharpest fall was Madrid (20,304 fewer foreign workers), although the steepest drop in percentage terms was Castellón (19.94% less foreign workers than at the end of 2007), followed by Alicante (falling by 14.07%).

Foreign workers made up 10.28% of the total number of workers on 31 December 2008. The biggest shares of foreign workers over the total number of workers were found in Melilla (18.79%), Almería (18.64%), Murcia (16.53%), Girona (16.28%), the Balearic Islands (16.08%) and Lleida (15.50%). In fourteen provinces the share of foreign workers was below 5%, and below 3% in Cádiz (2.89%) and Badajoz (2.85%).

Activity sector by autonomous community

Services is the major sector in all the autonomous communities for both foreign and Spanish workers. The percentage of foreign workers in the Services sector is 70.97%, reaching the highest peak in the Canary Islands (87.96%), and the lowest in La Rioja (52.32%). For foreign workers, the Construction sector takes up second place, representing 16.73%. The biggest share of foreign workers in this sector is found in Ceuta (37.36%) and the lowest in the Canary Islands (8.76%). In third place, Industry employs 11.06% of the foreign workers. The autonomous community with the highest share of foreign workers in Industry is La Rioja (22.85%), and the Canary Islands (2.98%) has the lowest. Lastly, Agriculture employs 1.24% of the foreign workers, reaching 4.13% in Castilla y León.