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# **Multiplying Migration to Europe Proving Major Challenge**

By JAMES KANTER International Herald Tribune

PARIS, June 8 — International migration is advancing so rapidly that the number of foreign-born workers in Spain increased six fold from 1994 to 2004, while in Italy the figure swelled fourfold in the same period, according to a report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development released today.

But with many migrants in Europe experiencing difficulties in finding jobs, integrating immigrants into host countries is proving a major political and economic challenge.

Employment "for both past and recent arrivals in many countries, and even for their offspring, is not as favorable as in the past," according to the O.E.C.D., an international organization in Paris composed of policy experts from 30 nations with market-oriented economies.

Barriers of language and skills contribute to some migrants' difficulties, but the fact that public sector jobs are closed to certain categories of foreigners in most European O.E.C.D. countries is a factor also, the report says.

Managing migration and employment has become an international priority and a major headache for politicians, particularly in Europe.

Many countries have rapidly aging populations at a time when younger members of society have diminishing interest in both manual work as well as some highly skilled jobs, obliging governments to open areas, from building trades to the sciences, to greater inflows of immigrant workers.

But governments also see newcomers as a political liability if the migrants are perceived by voters as a drain on national resources or as driving down wages.

Another reason why governments are touchy about immigration is that employment growth has been slow in O.E.C.D. countries, rising by only 1.1 percent overall in 2004, while joblessness remains stuck at higher-than-average levels in destinations like Germany.

In Denmark and Belgium, the rate of unemployment among immigrants is at least double that of the native population.

But in Spain and Italy, which saw the lion's share of recent unauthorized arrivals, immigrants had little access to social benefits — and many of them were able to find jobs quickly.

The O.E.C.D. also found that many immigrants in southern Europe are doing jobs for which they appear overqualified — for instance, taxi drivers with advanced university degrees.

Women and elderly immigrants have particular difficulty finding work, while problems among young immigrants and the offspring of immigrants are acute in France, where 35 percent are out of work, compared with 20 percent of the youths born in France.

"In view of the scale of the difficulties observed and possible risks of social unrest in these countries, there is an urgent need to gauge the problem and introduce policies that promote access to employment," the O.E.C.D. warned in its report.

Another trend is greater numbers from Ukraine and Russia migrating to European O.E.C.D. countries. Italy and Spain are significant destinations for Moroccans, Romanians and Ukrainians, while Turkey is the destination of choice for Bulgarians.

Spain also attracts immigrants from Germany and Britain, many of them retirees.