

Migrants' qualifications and their labour market integration

Key findings from the OECD country studies

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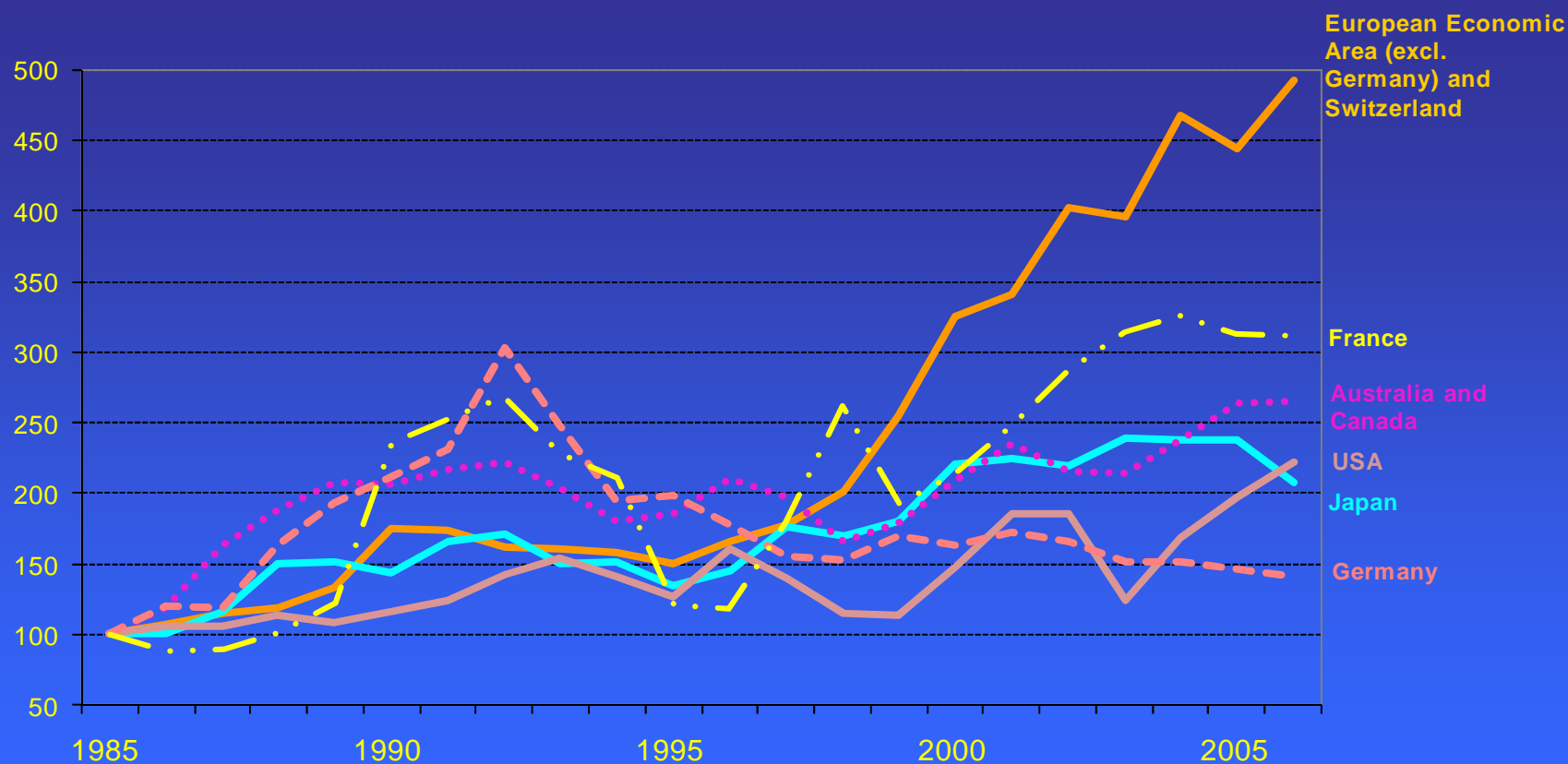
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Prior to the crisis, immigration had grown in the OECD area, and this was partly attributable to increased labour migration, particularly to Southern Europe, Ireland and the UK

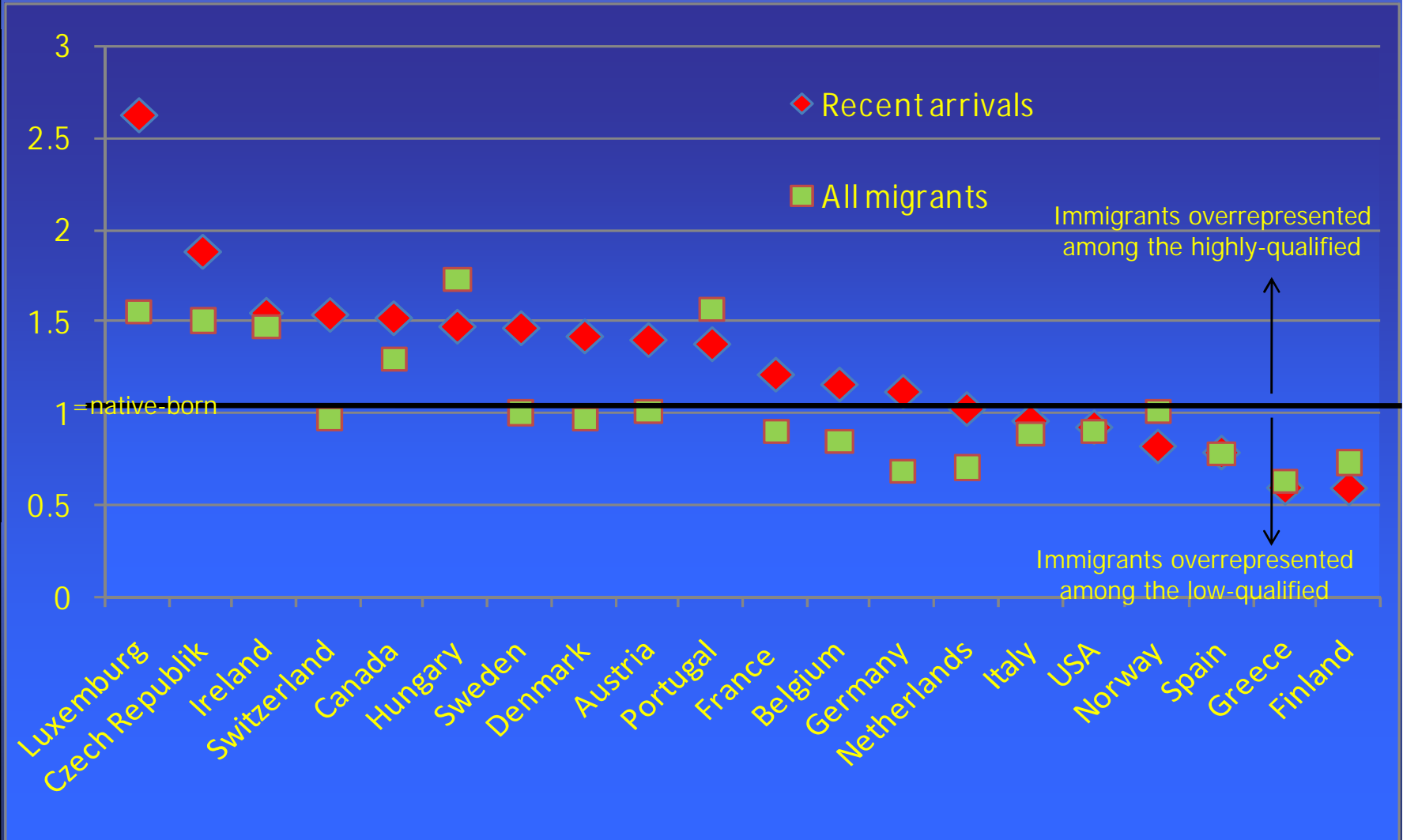
Immigration into OECD countries, 1985-2006 (1985=100)



Source: Trends in International Migration, OECD, forthcoming.

Past migrants have been less qualified than the native-born, but this is no longer the case for new arrivals

Highly-educated among all migrants and recent arrivals (up to 5 years of residence), relative to share of highly-educated among the native-born, 15-64 year old, 2007

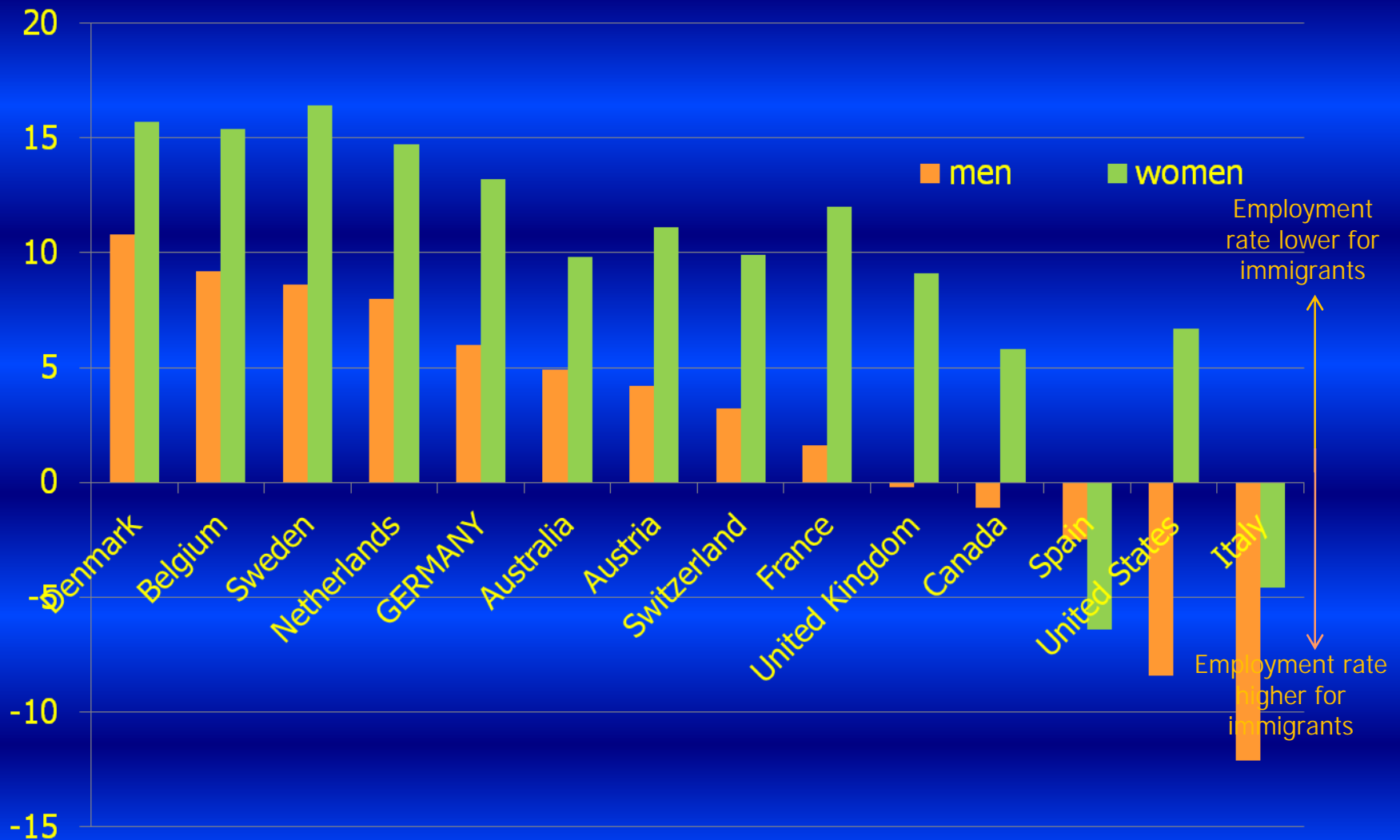


The labour market integration of immigrants

- r OECD Country reviews for some 10+ OECD countries
(« Jobs for immigrants »)
- r Employment rate as the key integration indicator – not only for labour market integration
- r Focus country of birth (« immigrants »), not on nationality (« foreigners »)
- r The « human capital approach » to labour market integration
 - | How do the skills and experience of immigrants compare with those of the native-born?
 - | Are the skills of immigrants « equivalent » to those of the native-born who have the same formal qualification levels – and does this matter?
 - | What means are available to immigrants to « transmit » / « communicate » their skills and experience to employers?
- r “Second generation”
 - | Growing presence in the labour market in many OECD countries
 - | Expectance of outcomes that are at least similar to those of the children of natives with the same socio-economic background
 - | “Benchmark” for labour market integration

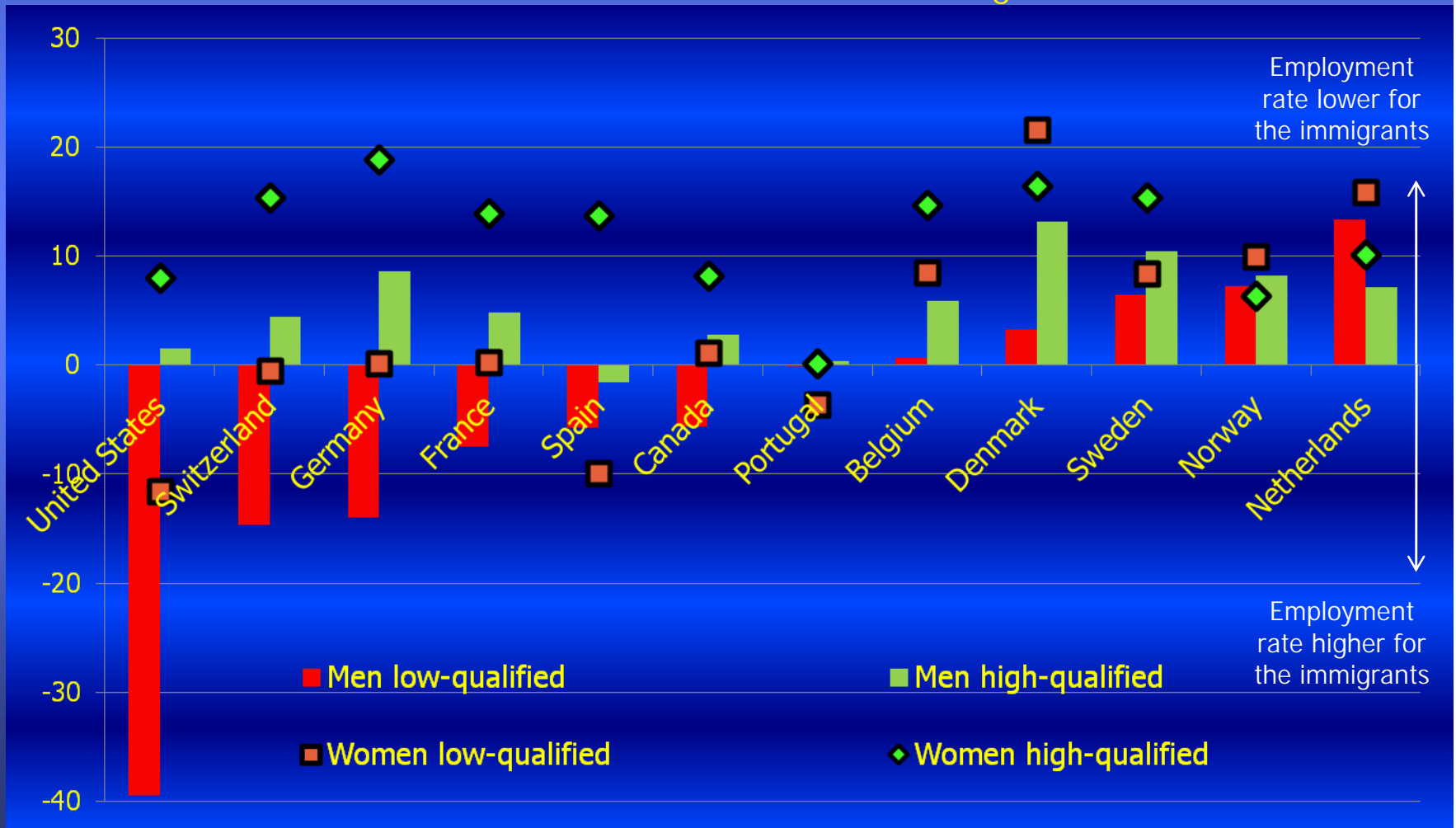
Lower employment of immigrants in most countries, but outcomes vary greatly

Percentage point differences in the employment/population ratios between native and foreign-born 15-64 years old, 2007/2008 average



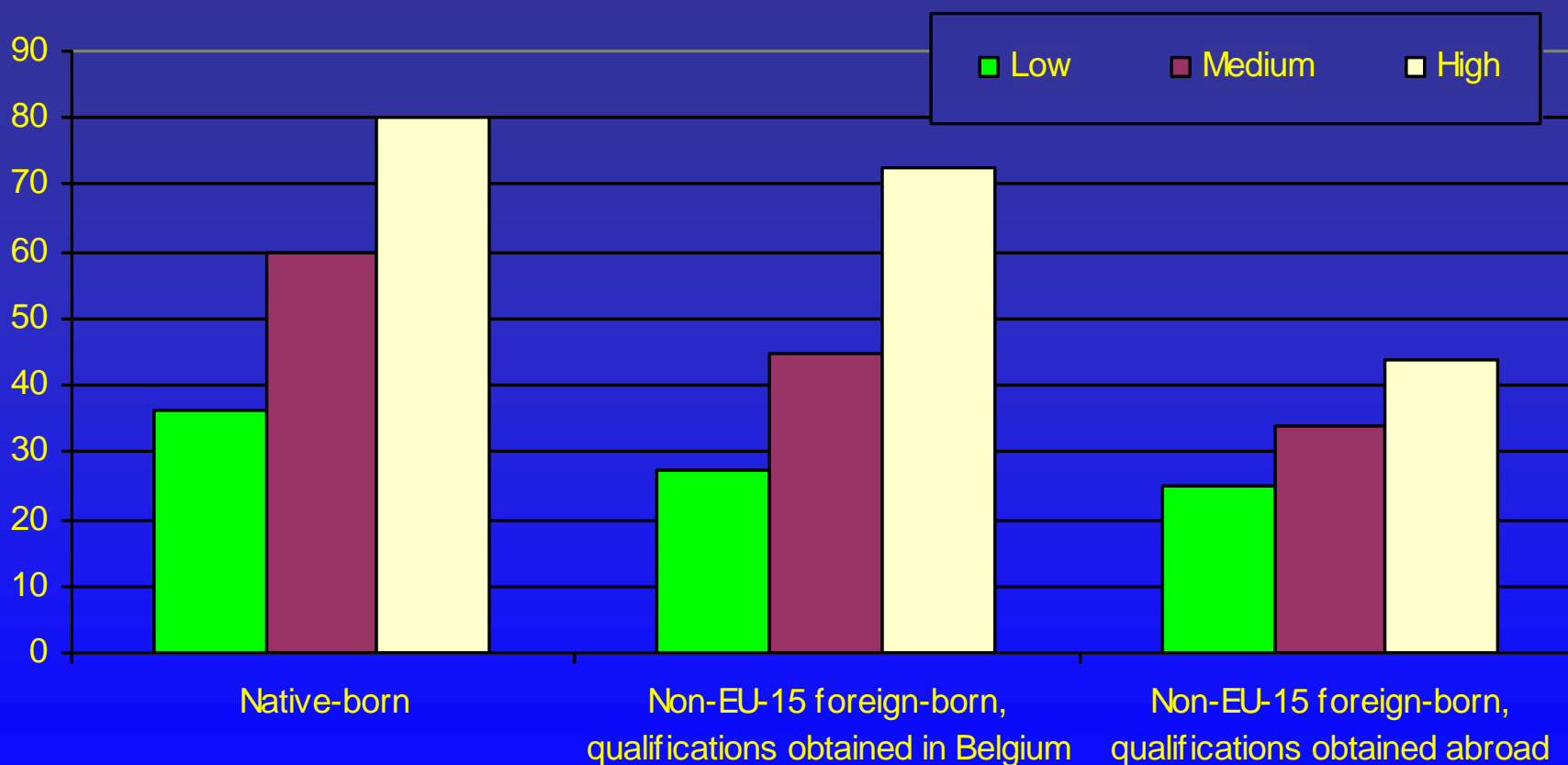
Employment rates by education level between immigrants and the native-born compare less favourably for *high-qualified* immigrants

Differences in the employment rates by education level between immigrants and the native-born, 15-64, 2005/2006 average



This is partly due to the fact that foreign qualifications acquired in non-OECD countries are largely discounted on the labour market

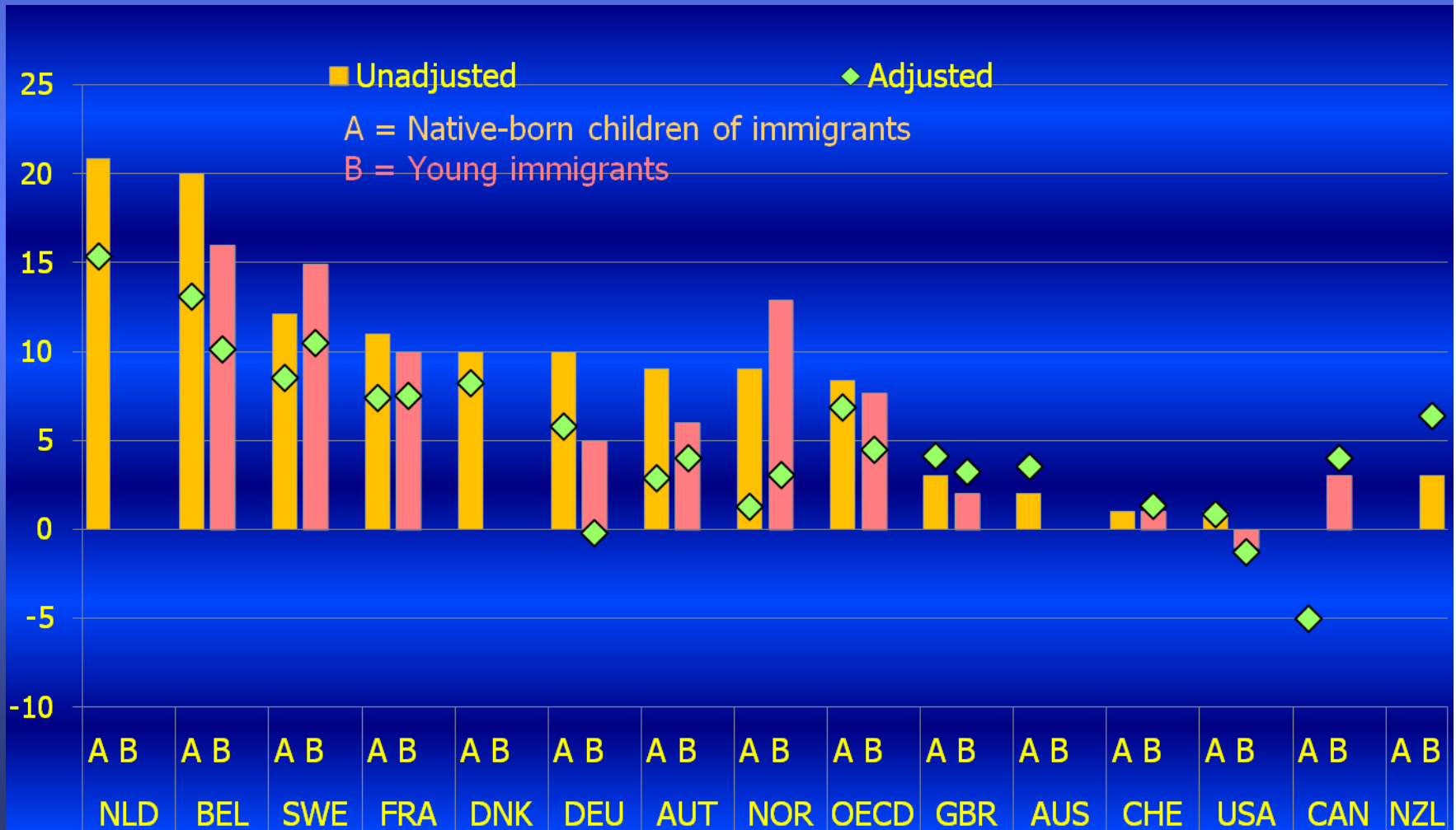
Employment/population ratios by qualification level in Belgium, 15-64, women, 2001



The unfavourable results are partly attributable to a lack of linguistic competence and to non-equivalence of degrees

Even for the children of immigrants, differences in educational attainment can only explain part of the lower employment rates

Percentage points differences in the employment/population ratios between children of natives and children of immigrants before and after controlling for differences in educational attainment, 20-29 years old and not in education, men



The reasons for the difficult labour market situation even for highly-educated immigrant offspring are difficult to ascertain

- r Is it essentially a class issue?
- r Lack of networks?
- r Lack of knowledge about labour market functioning?
- r (Other) information asymmetries?
- r (Statistical) discrimination? => testing studies reveal that the incidence of discrimination is higher than commonly thought
 - ∅ Employers seem to be looking for « signs » of integration
 - Naturalised migrants from less developed countries tend to have higher employment rates and to earn more
=> *Joint OECD/EC seminar on naturalisation and socio-economic integration under the Belgian EU presidency (14 & 15 October 2010, Brussels)*
 - Immigrants who changed their name also earn more
 - ∅ Amenable to policy intervention!

Making better use of the skills of immigrants

- q Facilitate the process for academic recognition & enhance its transparency
- q Mainstream and expand measures for the recognition of foreign qualifications and experience
- q Ensure that migrants benefit equally from measures for qualification of the workforce & the validation of informal learning
- q Promote accreditation of prior learning (APL) with a specific focus on immigrants
- q Provide means for immigrants to better “transmit” their skills to employers: mentorship programmes, internships, etc.

Concluding remarks

- r Even in countries with a selective migration policy, the labour market outcomes of highly-skilled immigrants from non-OECD countries tend to be significantly lower than those of highly-skilled non-migrants
- r This highlights the importance of an "expectation management" (NB: natives are also subject to "overqualification")
- r There is evidence that highly-skilled immigrants often suffer from so-called "statistical" discrimination
- r To combat discrimination, an informed and balanced public discourse is of central importance

Thank you for your attention!

For further information on the OECD's work on migration and the integration of immigrants:

www.oecd.org/els/migration/

