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(Geneva, 10-12 June 2003)

**REPORT OF THE APRIL 2003 JOINT ECE-EUROSTAT
WORK SESSION ON MIGRATION STATISTICS**

Introduction

1. The Joint ECE-EUROSTAT Work Session on Migration Statistics was held in Geneva from 28 to 30 April 2003. The meeting was organised in co-operation with the UN Statistics Division. It was attended by delegates of Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat and by the Directorate General Justice and Home Affairs. Representatives of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICPMD), International Labour Office (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Division, United Nations Statistics Division, World Tourism Organisation and World Trade Organisation (WTO) were also present.

2. The Provisional agenda was adopted.

3. Mr. David Pearce (United Kingdom) served as Chairman.

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Organisation of the meeting

4. The following substantive topics were considered in separate sessions at the meeting on the basis of 17 invited and supporting papers:

Session I: First results on international migration from the 2000 round of population censuses, comparison with other sources and any indications on coverage and reliability -- Organizer: David Pearce (ONS, United Kingdom)

Session II: Results of the pilot exercises on border card systems and work on residence permit systems carried out in 2002 in specific MED-MIGR and other countries, and the collection of international migration data from the MED-MIGR countries -- Organizer: Eurostat

Session III: Estimates of undocumented migration and of other major categories of migrants not included in standard immigration and emigration statistics -- Organizer: Eurostat

Session IV: Synergies between international migration statistics and statistics on other topics with particular relevance to policy needs, including the need for international flow statistics in providing services across borders -- Organizer: United Nations Statistics Division

Session V: Development of a regional strategy to promote progress by ECE and Eurostat countries towards complying more fully with the UN recommendations on international migration statistics -- Organizer: UNECE

5. The conclusions reached by the participants during the discussion of the substantive items of the agenda are presented in the annex to the report that was prepared after the meeting and distributed to participants in English only.
6. On the third day of the meeting, after the work session had ended, a separate meeting was organised by UNSD in collaboration with UNECE and Eurostat. The main purpose of the meeting was to elicit feedback from the participants on their experience in compiling international migration statistics within the overall framework of the UN Recommendations on International Migration Statistics.

Recommendations for future work

7. The participants were informed that the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians, at its October 2002 meeting, recommended that future meetings in the CES work programme have a specific purpose and/or product in mind, and that they should be prepared by a Steering Group composed of national experts.
8. A small group of participants composed of the representatives of Ireland, Norway, the United Kingdom, Eurostat, UNECE and UNSD, discussed the proposals on future work submitted by the delegates, taking into account the recommendations of the CES Bureau.
9. With regard to the type of work to be carried out in future, aimed at the production of more concrete outputs (as recommended by the CES Bureau), the group agreed to propose to focus on lessons learned from the past, with reference to the implementation of the

recommendations on international migration statistics and, in particular, to recent experiences with the 2000 round of population and housing censuses.

10. In particular, the group proposed that future joint work by ECE and Eurostat focus in two main directions:

- a) Carry out cross-country comparisons, at a rather general level (this would be an extension of the Norwegian paper presented at the work session, and it should be carried out by Eurostat)
- b) Identify a small number of countries (4-5) that would be available to carry out in-depth studies on their experience in the implementation of the current set of UN recommendations on international migration statistics in censuses and elsewhere, sum up the results and present them in a paper. Ireland and Italy volunteered to participate in this activity, and other candidate countries should be identified by the Steering Group.

11. The group agreed to propose that the Steering Group be composed of the following members: Bohdana Hola (Czech Republic), Lars Ostby (Norway), David Pearce (United Kingdom), and Kevin Deardorff (United States). The Steering Group should prepare a first draft proposal on future work for submission to the CES Bureau meeting that will be held in October 2003, based on the above proposals, as well as other suggestions made during the work session.

12. The group proposed that the next joint ECE-Eurostat work session take place in Spring 2005. With regard to the agenda of the next work session, in addition to the items associated to the activities mentioned above, other agenda items could be dedicated to the results of some of the various initiatives of work currently in progress that was referred to during the current meeting and that should become available over the next two years (e.g., US three-card method and outputs from MED-Migr, such as the border card projects).

13. The next work session could also provide useful feedback to UNSD on the implementation of the UN recommendations, as input to its work on the preparation of a manual on the implementation of the UN recommendations on international migration statistics.

14. In addition to the collaboration with UNSD, it was recommended that the activities of the work session be more closely coordinated with activities of other organisations and bodies active in this field, to be able to better reflect their needs for statistics and to avoid possible duplication. Moreover, representatives from relevant ministries and departments in the various countries, as well as users and policy-makers should be more and more involved in the work of the work session.

15. The meeting approved the proposal of the group on future work.

Adoption of the report

16. The participants adopted the report of the meeting at its closing session.

ANNEX

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY THE PARTICIPANTS DURING THE DISCUSSION

Topic (i): First results on international migration from the 2000 round of population censuses, comparison with other sources and any indications on coverage and reliability

Documentation: Papers by Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Norway, Malta, Luxembourg and France

1. The session was organised by David Pearce (United Kingdom). Aidan Punch (Ireland) was the reviewer and discussant
2. The session explored varying aspects on how the census is or could be used to measure or re-assess the estimated levels of international migration, both flows and stocks. While one major component highlighted was the use of 2000/01 Census results as a new benchmark for revising previous annual estimates of international migration (United Kingdom paper), it was clear that comparisons with other sources, whether statistical such as the Labour Force Survey or administrative such as population registers or registers of foreigners, are also important. Not only are these other sources important for producing annual population estimates at a national and sub-national level, but as Ann Singleton from the European Commission pointed out, they could be used to construct policy relevant indicators on, for example, the labour market or integration, which would be available annually. Thus reliable information is needed
3. The other main area discussed was the use of the census to distinguish varying waves of immigration through a year of (first) entry or arrival question and the power of a census to provide analyses and pictures of groups defined by length of settlement. This is an important area as attention is increasingly turning to integration and adaptation of immigrants or different ethnic groups. However, there are conceptual and reliability challenges given the prevailing levels of international mobility where a person may move residence many times. These issues need researching. It was also proposed that a further use of the census could be to estimate emigration given the paucity of sources, bearing in mind that Ireland uses the Labour Force Survey, albeit a relatively large sample size compared with other European countries. Malta intends to include an emigration module in their 2005 Census and it was agreed that it would be useful if Malta would share the results. It was pointed out that the census or household surveys could be used in four ways to measure emigration, namely from the censuses of receiving countries or from household surveys or censuses within the countries of origin- asking questions about emigrating household members or family members or members of vacant dwellings. All approaches had conceptual and coverage challenges.
4. Several invited speakers highlighted selected results from their censuses such as the levels of education among different cohorts of immigrants (France and Luxembourg) and non-immigrants (Czech Republic).

5. Other issues raised by the invited papers included:

- In the Czech Republic there is a preference for the more subjective citizenship over nationality (but according to the paper from Norway, less useful for making international comparisons), and to the use of the database of foreigners rather than the census. However for the indigenous population the census rather than the population register is used, illustrating the need to use a variety of sources to produce 'best estimates'
- The paper by Norway compared LFS and Census results for stocks for selected European countries while the United Kingdom paper compared figures from the LFS, Census and the International Passenger Survey, again for selected European countries. The need for comparisons and to investigate significant differences was stressed in the discussion, in order to understand and improve the sources, and hence the resulting statistics

6. In conclusion the main messages to take forward were the need to explore the LFS further as a source. To do this, differences with census figures need to be researched at a national level. Indeed comparisons between sources whether statistical or administrative are vital to the challenge of improved estimates of international migration for both stocks and flows; and to the combined use of information from these various sources. Definitional, conceptual and reliability issues need to be addressed. The census remains a key source, albeit once every 10, or at the best 5 years. The census is not only a vital source for rebasing population estimates -which for most countries in the region is revising past annual international migration flows-but can also be used in increasingly innovative ways to the traditional use of measuring change of usual address over the last year or five years. Examples include year of entry of immigrants and estimates of emigration. However both these examples are not straightforward and more empirical research is needed.

Topic (ii): Results of the pilot exercises on border card systems and work on residence permit systems carried out in 2002 in specific MED-MIGR and other countries, and the collection of international migration data from the MED-MIGR countries

Documentation: Invited paper by Eurostat

7. The session was organised by Eurostat.

8. Eurostat summarised the recent developments in the European Commission's MEDSTAT-Migration programme. The presentation noted that the main work topics included the promotion of the UN recommendations for census questions, consideration of a census emigration module and data collection. The paucity of annual migration data was emphasised.

9. Progress on the two other topics, pilot exercises on border card systems and proposals for deriving migration statistics through the adaptation of the residence permit systems in the Maghreb countries were described in greater detail. The largest of the three MED-Migr border card pilot samples covered 12,000 international travellers and the samples yielded few international migrants. Therefore, rather than describing the substantive findings of the pilot studies, the paper focussed on broader, more generally applicable, lessons learned, the

encouraging reactions of the countries involved and the positive developments in border card data collection which have occurred since the beginning of the MED-Migr work in this field. Similarly, the progress on residence permit systems in the Maghreb countries was summarised by outlining the stages in the work and by highlighting the achievements in the area of co-operation with the data collectors – the General Directorates of National Security.

10. Eurostat concluded by describing the MEDSTAT-Migration II programme. This phase extends from 2003 to 2006 and will include further work on border cards and residence and work permits and, at the request of some of the 12 Mediterranean partner countries, will also initiate activity in the new technical work areas of illegal migration, transit migration and asylum seekers.

11. Israel, Malta and Turkey, the three Mediterranean partner countries present at the session, reported that the MED-Migr programme had stimulated research on migration and/or developmental work in these countries. Supportive and encouraging comments were also made by several international organisations, most notably by UNECE who had followed the evolution of MED-Migr since its inception in 1996. UNHCR welcomed the fact that the work programme of MED-Migr II had been extended to include asylum seekers who constitute a significant proportion of migrants in some countries.

Topic (iii): Estimates of undocumented migration and of other major categories of migrants not included in standard immigration and emigration statistics

Documentation: Papers by the United States, Israel and the European Commission.

12. The session was organised by Eurostat.

13. At the previous meeting in May 2001, this agenda item had been proposed as an issue of increasing interest. The item was intended to cover illegal immigration and other forms of migration that were unlikely to be recorded in conventional migration statistics.

14. The fundamental difficulty of producing good statistics relating to undocumented and/or clandestine activities was mentioned. This impacted upon both administrative and surveys data sources. A person intending to remain illegally in their country of destination was unlikely to give a truthful answer in response to a passenger survey. Similarly, a person who did not have the legal right to remain in their country of residence would not be correctly recorded in a population register. A particular problem was undocumented departure. It was recognised that, in many cases, even people in a legal position saw little incentive in complying with a requirement to notify administrative authorities - such as tax or social security services - of their departure. This could lead to departures remaining unrecorded in migration statistics.

15. There were several reasons why estimates of illegal or undocumented migration should be made. These figures could be used to help correct existing migration statistics to better reflect the de facto situation. There was also a particular interest in several countries in researching the social and economic position of persons in an illegal or undocumented

situation. A further reason was that, given the sensitivity of this topic, speculation based on poor quality and possibly politically biased statistics produced from unofficial sources might tend to be widely circulated and accepted in the absence of unbiased official statistical information.

16. It was noted that illegal migration might cover a range of different situations. At one extreme would be the person who had entered and remained in a country illegally, and who had no right to be there. At the other extreme would be an EU citizen, living and working in another EU Member State, who had failed to comply with local regulations concerning registration as a resident. In both such cases, the person's presence was undocumented and would be unlikely to be reflected in the statistics - particularly if these were derived from administrative sources.

17. The paper presented by the United States General Accounting Office described the use of an innovative survey technique to ask migrant residents about their legal status. The 'three card method' offered a way of obtaining this information indirectly and in a non-threatening way. The advantage of the method was that persons were able to give information on their immigration status, without confirming that an illegal status applied to them. Potential drawbacks of the method included high variance values for the results produced and the fact that the technique appeared to be applicable in its current form only to face to face survey interviews. The method had been used with some success and its further development was planned.

18. The paper prepared by the Central Statistics Bureau of Israel examined a method for correcting the stock figures of foreign workers derived from the border control data. Models were prepared based on entry cohorts - groups of foreign workers who entered Israel in a particular year - and these models were used to predict the numbers remaining after a certain number of years. The results of these models were checked using administrative data from an alternative source - national insurance registrations. These checks indicated that the modelling approach was producing valid results.

19. The European Commission presented a paper which looked at potential future policy needs for statistics on illegal and undocumented migration, in particular on the return of migrants to third countries. The Treaty of Amsterdam had given the Commission policy competence in the fields of immigration and asylum. There was a clear need for statistics to guide the development and implementation of policy. This included statistics on persons with an immigration status that was illegal or undocumented. Although there was an existing data collection of enforcement actions against illegal migration (the CIREFI data collection), there were no official EU statistics on illegal migration flows or stocks. It was also important to ensure that definitions used in the development of a statistical database were compatible with definitions which were included in current and proposed legislation.

20. The meeting discussed the methodological approaches that had been presented. It was agreed that further work to develop these and other methods to estimate illegal and undocumented migration would be worthwhile.

Topic (iv): Synergies between international migration statistics and statistics on other topics with particular relevance to policy needs, including the need for international flow statistics in providing services across borders

Documentation: Invited papers by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Spain, and a joint paper by United States and Canada.

21. The session was organised by United Nations Statistics Division. Representatives of the World Tourism Organisation and the International Labour Office were discussants for the papers.

22. The session explored the emerging needs of trade negotiators and policy analysts for data to measure temporary movement of natural persons as service suppliers under mode 4 of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). It reviewed the relevance of some of the concepts related to international migration that are required for mode 4, such as residence, duration of stay, and temporary versus permanent movement, and the potential for using available data from the standard sources of migration statistics to measure mode 4. The session also considered as illustrative examples Spain's use of traffic control records together with administrative records to measure tourism, and the cooperation between the United States and Canada to mutually enhance the development of international migration statistics in the respective countries.

23. The meeting agreed that while there have been improvements in international migration statistics, and relatively more data were available in administrative records than had been published, significant gaps remained. Major problems related to the lack of standard terms and definitions, in particular between fields (i.e., international trade in services and international migration); the lack of comprehensive, regular, and coordinated data collection and dissemination by international agencies; and the lack of inter-country comparability of reported data. Data collection systems for the movement of people across borders did not as yet provide separate statistics, which exactly captured mode 4 activities. Few countries had comprehensive international migration statistics though some developed countries had sound statistical collection on the stock and inflow of foreign workers. Still, many developing countries struggled to provide even the most basic statistics.

24. GATS mode 4 service suppliers represented a small sub-set of a larger migratory trend and given the resource implications of collecting the more precise information required for GATS mode 4 other priorities, would need to be considered. Most data sources tended to have a wider focus, collecting information on a much broader set of workers and activities, while the quite detailed information required for GATS mode 4 covered a relatively narrow range of workers. A key question was therefore how to balance the need for better data on mode 4 with the other priorities and the limited resources of migration authorities. In order to focus on ways of making progress on mode 4 which would be feasible for the majority of countries, a process of dialogue and mutual education whereby trade negotiators would gain a concrete sense of the parameters of migration policies and data collection and trade policy-makers would also highlight new trends which might warrant the attention of migration authorities; industry would also have an important role to play as a source of information and data not presently captured by other methods.

25. With continued growth in the number of temporary migrants—and the correlated expansion of international trade in services—reliable and valid statistics on temporary migration are necessary also for demographers and economists. The system for migration statistics had been designed with other purposes in mind, with its own conceptual framework, and did not lend itself easily to providing these statistics at the detailed level required. Statistics on trade in services had been designed to suit the needs of trade analysts, trade policy makers and trade negotiators. In a quite different context, migration and labour statistics had been designed for, and to monitor migration and labour policies; and could supply useful information, especially if temporary employment were included, and give proxies for GATS' mode 4 trade. While tuning of migration statistics concepts, e.g., duration of stay, and categories of migrants and non-migrants, could be very helpful for trade policy needs, it was unlikely that trade policy needs would be duly taken into account in migration statistics in the short-term. By making continual incremental progress in producing reliable and valid statistics on temporary migration (and temporary migrants), the overall usefulness of statistics for many data users can be achieved.

26. Agreed international recommendations can be said to serve two functions: (i) as 'models' for corresponding standards to be used and adapted when developing national statistics in the relevant areas; and (ii) as basis for constructing statistics that can be reasonably comparable between countries. (International) statistical standards will not necessarily correspond to legal concepts and definitions, nor to those used in international agreements or commitments.

27. The present international recommendations give priority, both in emphasis and in the terminology, to descriptive and analytical concerns mainly important for demographic statistics and analysis. Working groups are needed to address the following areas of policy and analytical concern: population studies, migrant workers, GATS and tourism, as well as refugees and asylum seekers. The need to supplement and/or modify the present recommendations as well as investigations into the possibilities of (reasonable modifications to) existing data collection mechanisms should emerge from the work in the respective groups. The statistical units of relevant international agencies, such as the UN, ILO, UNCTAD & WTO/OMC, WTO/OMT & OECD, and UNHCR, could serve as secretariats for the respective working groups.

28. In conclusion, the discussions of the session underscored the need for national statistics offices to work with other institutions such as trade and tourism, and develop partnerships with counterparts in other countries, and thereby broaden the perspectives on the wide range of users, their statistical requirements and varying approaches to produce statistics to meet these emerging needs.

Topic (v): Development of a regional strategy to promote progress by ECE and Eurostat countries towards complying more fully with the UN recommendations on international migration statistics

Documentation: Notes by Eurostat and ECE

29. The session was organised by ECE.

30. Under this agenda item the meeting noted the relatively small amount of progress that has been made over the course of the last several decades towards improving the international comparability of international migration statistics. The participants also noted that this general lack of progress occurred, despite the fact that the United Nations Statistical Commission adopted three successive sets of international recommendations on international migration statistics in 1953, 1976 and 1997 that were all intended to improve the international comparability of these types of statistics.

31. During the discussion, the following were identified as factors that may well have contributed to the fact that such little progress has been made towards improved international comparability of the statistics during the past few decades: (i) statistical offices have often tended to work relatively independently on attempting to improve their international migration statistics, instead of working on this actively with other interested parties; (ii) officials responsible for producing the national immigration and emigration statistics have tended to accept too readily that the current practices in this field are satisfactory and are not in need of change; (iii) national and international statistical officials working in this field have been too far removed from policy makers, analysts, users and others in their on international migration statistics; and (iv) national and international statistical officials have tended to rely too heavily on individual data sources for the statistics on immigration and emigration for a given country.

32. There was general agreement that progress towards improved international comparability of statistics on immigration and emigration could be achieved in the future through the following: (i) national and international statistical offices should work more closely in the future with policy analysts, users and other government ministries in their work aimed at improving the coverage and quality of immigration and emigration statistics; (ii) whenever possible, the work in this field should be conducted jointly, so that these other parties with interests in the field of international migration statistics will be actively involved in the work; (iii) efforts to promote progress towards improved international comparability in this field of statistics should be pursued actively on a regional basis by organizations such as the UNECE and Eurostat in the ECE region, and similar types of regional organizations, but whenever practical, other world level bodies like the UN Statistics Division, the UN Population Division, the IOM and the ILO should also be closely associated with the work so as to help ensure that the circumstances and needs of countries in other parts of the world are also taken into account; and (iv) whenever possible, countries should move beyond relying on individual sources of data for their immigration and emigration statistics, and should instead move towards relying on a mosaic of several different data sources that collectively provide wider and more complete coverage of the immigration and emigration streams entering and leaving the country.
