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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

#### **Sixty first plenary session**

Geneva, 10-12 June 2012

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

#### **Progress reports and work of the Conference of European Statisticians Teams of Specialists**

### **Report of the Work Session on Migration Statistics**

#### **Note by the secretariat**

##### *Summary*

The Conference of European Statisticians, at its sixtieth plenary session in June 2012, approved the activities undertaken under the UNECE Statistical Programme 2012, and endorsed the list of meetings planned to be organized from June 2012 onwards, as provided in document ECE/CES/83 (Report of the sixtieth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, paragraph 34). This list included the Work Session on Migration Statistics, which was held in Geneva on 17-19 October 2012.

The present document is the report of that Work Session, and is provided to inform the Conference of European Statisticians of the organization and outcomes of that Work Session.

## I. Introduction

1. The joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics was held on 17-19 October 2012 in Geneva. It was attended by participants from Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and MEDSTAT III Programme. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States were also represented. Experts from University of Southampton (United Kingdom), Moscow State University (Russian Federation), the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium), Georgetown University (United States of America), University of North Carolina, University of Geneva and the Global Migration Policy Associates (GMPA) participated at the invitation of the UNECE secretariat.

2. A number of participants could attend the Work Session thanks to the financial support provided by United Nations country teams, the World Bank and the European Union MEDSTAT III Programme.

## II. Organization of the meeting

3. Mr. Marcel Heiniger from Switzerland was elected as Chair of the meeting.

4. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting:

- a) Experiences with using data from the 2010 round of censuses for measuring migration;
- b) Producing migration data using household surveys and other sources;
- c) Circular migration;
- d) Return migration;
- e) Aspects of migrant integration;
- f) Migration and development;
- g) Future work.

5. The following participants acted as Discussants: for sub-session (a) Ms. Maria Pia Sorvillo (Italy), for sub-session (b) Mr. Richard Bilsborrow (University of North Carolina) and Mr. Michel Poulain (Catholic University of Louvain), for sub-session (c) Mr. Eivind Hoffmann (Norway), for sub-session (d) Mr. David Thorogood (Eurostat), for sub-session (e) Mr. Jean-Christophe Dumont (OECD) and Mr. Han Nicolaas (Netherlands), and for sub-session (f) Ms. Lara Badre (Lebanon).

6. The discussion at the meeting was based on papers that are available on the UNECE website.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.10.migration.html>

### **III. Summary of discussion**

#### **A. Experiences with using data from the 2010 round of censuses for measuring migration**

7. The discussion was based on papers from the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Montenegro, Spain, and Eurostat.

8. The paper from the United Kingdom looked at migration questions in the population census from a historical perspective as well as from the perspective of their compliance with the CES Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing. It highlighted some new additions to the 2011 census, such as passports held (as a proxy for country of citizenship), date of entry to the UK and length of intended stay, national identity, and second address

9. The paper from Slovenia presented results from the first register-based population census in Slovenia in 2011. Data on every person's migration history were collected from annual migration surveys from 2002-2010, which were added to the information collected in the 2002 population census. When combined with the regular quarterly survey on the population, which is also register-based, it ensured there was no need for revisions of intercensal population or migration statistics.

10. The paper from Montenegro discussed migration characteristics of the Montenegrin population based on most recent results collected from the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in April 2011. A range of characteristics of immigrants is available, including country of previous citizenship, reason for immigration, and date of immigration, disaggregated by sex and age. In Montenegro, the most important migration topics for policy and planning include the use of migration in population projections, improving international migration data, and gaining statistical knowledge and skills from other statistical offices abroad.

11. The paper by Spain described the methodology used by the National Statistics Institute of Spain to implement the statistical reconstruction of the migratory phenomenon in the country in the period from 2001 to 2011, using data from the Municipal Population Register (Padrón). During this period, Spain had a substantial inflow of immigrants. The paper presented a general test of this methodology based on information available as of March 2012, as well as possible implications regarding the update of intercensal migration estimates.

12. The paper by Eurostat examined activities undertaken by national statistical offices and Eurostat to update and rebase population statistics based on results of the 2011 round of population and housing censuses. Special focus was given to population stock data, including migration-related tables on the resident population disaggregated by citizenship and country of birth.

13. Interest was expressed for the United Kingdom's new census question on second address, particularly since it acknowledged different forms of increased mobility. The question had resulted from the need to better understand where people are usually resident, following some local government authorities challenging the 2001 census population figures where there were different resident populations on weekends than during the week, due to people living at more than one address. Countries who were thinking of adding a similar question on second addresses were also considering its impact on respondent burden.

14. Questions were raised about the quality of Slovenia's administrative data, in particular with regard to procedures used to ensure the completion of emigration registers.

Since a significant number of those with permanent residence were leaving Slovenia, the emigration issue was examined in more depth. The presence of extremely old persons on registers is an indication of data quality problems. Due to the lack of register activity information, they were examining other administrative data sources, such as employment data.

15. The question of whether countries had greater confidence with their census or survey data or register data was raised. In the case of Spain, people have an incentive to register in order to receive services, so the Padrón registration data is considered quite reliable, even in case of illegal immigration (in the case of Spain, it is possible for illegal immigrants to be registered). While emigration data are more difficult, due to lack of incentive to de-register, procedures have been developed to take care of this, such as examining incorrect registrations between municipalities. In addition, some statistical treatments are carried out in order to provide accurate and consistent migration data from Padrón's registrations. It was commented that de-registrations may not always represent emigration, but could also represent persons remaining in countries. This effect was acknowledged, but the impact should be limited: people need to be registered in order to have access to basic services (health, education, etc.), so these cases should be detected and counted correctly in the end.

16. It was asked whether any emergency operations were planned for countries that cannot provide complete updated historical data to Eurostat, based on revisions from the latest census round. Though revisions by countries were voluntary, Eurostat did recommend them to ensure consistency of published data.

## **B. Producing migration data using household surveys and other sources**

17. The discussion was based on papers from Eurostat, the United States, UNECE, the Republic of Moldova, Albania, the Mediterranean Household International Migration Survey (MED-HIMS) Programme, the United Kingdom, Mexico, and the University of Southampton.

18. The first three papers dealt with results from the Suitland Working Group. Eurostat's paper provided an overview of the project "Website repository of household survey questionnaires for collecting data on migration and migrant populations" initiated by the Suitland Group, as well as the PROMINSTAT project (2007-2010). The Repository project aimed to increase the comparability of data produced by different countries and organizations, while PROMINSTAT is a complex project with similar goals. Although, the objective of the Repository project was achieved, further work in this direction continues.

19. The United States presented a short summary of the report on the project "A review of methods for estimating emigration". Various types of data and methodological approaches of emigration estimation were considered. The paper also described the advantages and shortcomings of each method.

20. The issues related to data collection on special migrant categories were the focus of UNECE's paper. Short-term and circular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, irregular and transit migrants, and trafficked persons are groups falling outside the regular typology of migrants. Existing definitions and methodologies for countries collecting information on these categories were presented, as well as possible applications for using household surveys to measure these groups.

21. The paper from the Republic of Moldova examined their experience in statistical measurement of labour migration using household surveys. Labour migration is an important phenomenon for the socio-economic situation in their country. The 2008 Labour

Migration Survey's achievements were described in detail, as well as plans for an upcoming LFS module to be conducted during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2012.

22. The paper from Albania looked at the use of household surveys to measure both internal and international migration in Albania. Particular attention was paid at the results from the Living Standards and Measurement Survey, the most recent population census, and remittance data from the Central Bank of Albania.

23. The paper from MED-HIMS described the programme currently coordinated at international level by the European Commission (EuropeAid, Eurostat and MEDSTAT III), the World Bank, UNFPA, UNHCR and the League of Arab States to use household surveys to measure migration in the Middle East and North Africa. The paper covered the programme background and scope, methodology used, content of the model questionnaires, and the status of activities in several countries. Specifically, current and future plans for surveys in the countries of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco were discussed.

24. The discussant provided an overview of problems related to international migration data and ways of collecting data on emigrants in countries of origin.

25. Participants expressed doubts about the use of residual methods to measure emigration. They emphasized the need to utilize household surveys to identify hard-to-count migrants, particularly transit migrants, even in light of the expense and difficulties associated with such measurement. Collaboration between the Republic of Moldova and the International Labour Organization was appreciated and they were encouraged to collect data that are more detailed on out-migration and return migration. The richness of Albania's Census data was praised, as was their collaboration with the World Bank. The MED-HIMS project was evaluated positively, and specialized sampling techniques were proposed to measure rare populations. Examples of how this could be done in Egypt and Jordan were presented.

26. The second paper by the United States and papers by the United Kingdom, Mexico, and the University of Southampton focused on sources other than household surveys to measure migration. The paper from the United Kingdom described improvement made to their migration data via the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme, particularly with regard to the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and the use of administrative data to improve sub-national international migration statistics. It described the new methodology developed to estimate long-term migration in England and Wales based on administrative data sources and the IPS.

27. The paper from the United States looked at how data from the 2010 Mexican census will be incorporated into the Census Bureau's 2010 demographic analysis estimates. Data from Mexico indicated a substantial level of return migration of the Mexico-born population from the United States to Mexico during the 2005 to 2010 period, which was used to update the foreign-born emigration component of their estimates. These estimates will serve as a base for demographic analysis in 2020.

28. The paper from Mexico focused on the use of different sources for the study of migration to and from Mexico, including their quarterly labour force survey and data from the United States. Specifically, they used American Department of Health Statistics information from birth certificates regarding the mother's place of birth combined with information from the American Community Survey, to estimate birth rates and age-sex structures for the Mexico-born population. This resulted in an estimate for the size of such population residing in the United States larger than those provided by other sources.

29. The paper from the University of Southampton presented the results of their Integrated Model of European Migration (IMEM) project, which modelled migration flows in 31 countries in the EU and EFTA. They advocate improved communication between

national statistical offices, including data exchange, as well as the need to use statistical models to reconcile reporting differences found between various countries.

30. Participants suggested that more work could be done to improve the relationship between national statistical offices and other national authorities to better utilize administrative data. Further, bi-lateral cooperation between countries was encouraged, with the United States and Mexico being cited as a good example.

31. The potential for cooperation on migration statistics in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia was discussed. Multi-country surveys and business surveys geared towards migrant labour are some potential new avenues to improve data in this region. Doubts about the comparability of data within the CIS region were expressed as well.

32. The University of Southampton clarified the way their model was adjusted for differing definitions of migration used by various countries, as well as the way in which uncertainty in original data was modelled.

### **C. Circular migration**

33. The discussion was based on papers from the Catholic University of Louvain, Sweden, and Norway.

34. The Catholic University of Louvain presented the final report of the UNECE Task Force on Analysis of International Migration Estimates Using Different Length of Stay Definitions. It reviewed the time criterion used in the definition of international migration, how the time criterion is applied using different types of data sources, analysed data provided by seven countries, and included recommendations for future work.

35. The paper from Sweden focused on the results from a mapping of circular migration initiated by the Swedish Government, involving moves made between 1969 and 2009. Circular migrants were defined as “persons that on last of December 2009 lived in Sweden and in migration purpose had crossed the border at least two times during the period 1969-2009”. Results of the study were presented, including information on places of origin, education, and age of circular migrants.

36. The paper and presentation from Norway looked at issues involved with the measurement of return and circular migration within the context of Norway’s statistical system. This included a discussion of some of the theoretical issues surrounding measurement of these concepts and data available to national statistical offices, in Norway in particular. It highlighted some of the data-related strengths and difficulties Norway faces to measure such phenomena.

37. In the discussion, participants raised the question whether the circular migration concept should fit within the concept of temporary migration or whether a separate concept should be used, as well as what the consequences on the United Nations recommendations on duration of stay would be. More investigation between the relationship between intended and actual stay were called for, as well as possible incentives for respondents to bias their responses on intended length of stay. Use of border control and household survey data to indicate length of stay were discussed as well. Examination of duration of a person’s right to stay, as opposed to intended length of stay, might be a better measure of a person’s actual length of stay. Despite these issues, the register data on migration between Nordic countries was deemed to be of high quality, and their use could provide insight into the measurement of circular migration, between these countries.

38. IOM reminded the discussion that the reason behind trying to measure circular migration should be kept in mind when establishing a definition, particularly within the context of the relationship between migration and development, since it counterbalanced

the effect of brain drain. Surveys were seen as the best method to obtain the detailed information needed to identify circular migration. Additional comments were made on the promotional definition used by the Global Migration Group, and that a simple definition of circular migration was required. Additional comments on the potential use of household surveys to measure circular migration were provided.

#### **D. Return migration**

39. The discussion was based on papers from the Netherlands and OECD.

40. The paper from the Netherlands compared return migration rates of recent groups of Polish immigrants to earlier groups of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. Based on analyses of Polish immigrants who came to the Netherlands between 2000 and 2009, about 60% returned to their country of origin within ten years. This proportion is substantially higher than among Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in the third quarter of the twentieth century, but comparable to that of Southern Europeans in that period. So far, recent labour migration is not expected to be followed by substantial family migration as was seen in the previous century.

41. The paper from OECD looked at the measurement of return migration and included some data on recent trends (before and after the economic crisis of 2008). It provided an overview of some of the issues related to defining and measuring return migration, including various forms of this phenomenon and methods used for its estimation. Finally, it examined different return migration patterns for various OECD countries.

42. Discussion focused on the time period used to indicate return migration as well as some of the links between return, circular, and repeat migration, as well as whether changes in modern transportation and communication technology reduced the need for family reunion visas. The need to look at data from multiple EU countries was expressed to better understand increasingly dynamic migration patterns and to see where immigrants are returning to, particularly with the opening up of labour markets to Eastern Europe.

43. The limited potential for disaggregating return migration flows by education was discussed, as well as different data sources used to provide these data. The difference between spontaneous and managed return migration was also pointed out.

#### **E. Aspects of migrant integration**

44. The discussion was based on papers from Canada, Italy, the University of Geneva, and the Canton of Zurich.

45. The note from Canada, representing the UNECE Task Force on the Measurement of the Socio-economic Conditions of Migrants, updated participants on the progress of this task force. It looked at the task force's objectives and work accomplished to date, including the six socio-economic dimensions that it will focus on: demography, education, labour market, economic well-being, social and civic engagement, and health. Key issues or research questions that warrant statistical information in each of the dimensions were identified. It also looked at the need for and advantages of taking a longitudinal analytical approach to the issue at hand.

46. The paper from Italy looked at secondary migration patterns within Italy of non-EU migrants, using administrative data sources. The data revealed that international migrants tend to be attracted to the Centre and North, as there has been intensive internal mobility of foreigners from the South to northern areas. It also looked at ways to improve the

collaborative relationship between the national statistical office and the producers of administrative data.

47. The paper from the University of Geneva looked at internal mobility patterns of foreigners in Switzerland and its relationship to international migration patterns. Interregional migration increased between 1981 and 2004, and became higher among the immigrant community than it had been among native Swiss citizens. The recent and more-selected immigrant cohorts are more highly skilled, and are therefore more spatially mobile than those who arrived in prior decades. Immigrants seem to adhere to internal migration patterns observed among native Swiss citizens, particularly in the most recent period.

48. The paper by the Canton of Zurich documented employment trends in foreign workers in the Greater Zurich Region showing a marked increase in recent years, particularly in the highly-qualified labour force. In 2011, the share of highly-qualified labour among foreigners slightly exceeded the share among the Swiss. The qualification level among foreigners varied strongly between regions of origin, as did educational background.

49. The discussion addressed the complexity of measuring integration of migrants. It was noted that not all countries may have data on primary indicators. Participants also touched on pre-existing indices on migrant integration policies. It was noted that there is a big gap between legal framework and reality when it comes to migrant integration.

50. Discussion emphasized the importance of longitudinal data to better understand migrant behaviour and acts, and the greater need for cooperation between national statistical offices and other government agencies. It was also suggested that internal mobility patterns of immigrants could have some bearing on segregation issues, as well as questions about the differences in mobility patterns between first and second generation migrants. There was a general agreement on the need for further work on data quality and the linkage of different data sources.

## **F. Migration and development**

51. The discussion was based on papers from the Georgetown University, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), IOM, and the Republic of Moldova.

52. Georgetown University made a presentation on the measurement of diaspora populations and the channels they use to foster development. These included brain strain, return migration, remittances, entrepreneurial investment, Home Town Associations, increased trade, and professional diaspora networks. It proceeded to look at current data availability and needs to measure these aspects of the diaspora and development.

53. UN DESA provided a briefing note with an overview of migration and development trends and implications for data collection. Governments were asked to prioritize data dissemination from the 2010 round of Censuses. In addition, countries were asked to provide tabulations by basic migration characteristics, provide public microdata files from censuses, better exploit administrative data, provide better metadata, invest in institutional capacity building, and finally to consider funding dedicated survey programmes.

54. IOM provided an overview of issues involved with measurement of the diaspora, drawing from their work in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In addition to covering various components needed to establish a definition for the diaspora, they presented an overview of the main findings from an IOM questionnaire on the legal, institutional and statistical frameworks for defining and counting diaspora and other population groups residing abroad.

55. The paper from the Republic of Moldova looked at ways of strengthening the link between migration and development in that country. It looked at current migration trends in the Republic of Moldova, ways to mainstream migration into development strategies, the impact of remittances and foreign direct investment, return migration, constraints on migrant business activities, communities living abroad, and ways to improve data collection.

56. Discussion acknowledged the challenges faced when trying to define the diaspora population. Available data tend to drive how the diaspora are counted. It was also noted that older migrant generations tend to have weaker links with and less interest in their country of origin and their systematic inclusion as part of a country's diaspora may be erroneous. It was agreed that taking into account gender in the analysis of migration on development could be of interest.

57. It was recognised that policy needs should be the driving force behind the definition, methods, and type of analysis needed to link migration with development. It was concluded that further work on the concept and definition of diaspora is required.

#### **IV. Recommendations for future work**

58. The meeting appreciated the progress of the Task Force on the Socioeconomic Conditions of Migrants and expressed support for its work. Several participants expressed interest in contributing to the work of the Task Force on Circular Migration, to be established in November 2012.

59. The meeting identified the following two areas where future methodological work could be undertaken by a UNECE task force:

- a) Use of administrative data sources to measure migration
- b) Measurement of short-term migration.

60. The meeting proposed that the next Work Session on Migration Statistics take place in two years, in October 2014. The following topics were suggested for discussion in the 2014 Work Session:

- a) Census 2010 results
- b) Use of administrative data sources to measure migration
- c) New methods to estimate migration
- d) Ways to improve communication between national statistical offices, producers of administrative data, and policymakers
- e) Short-term migration
- f) Circular migration
- g) Irregular migration
- h) Integration of migrants
- i) Migration and ageing population
- j) Reasons for migration
- k) Internal migration.

#### **V. Adoption of the report**

61. The meeting adopted parts I, II and IV of the report before it adjourned. Part III was finalised by the secretariat after the meeting.