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Integration of data from censuses, administrative sources and surveys for measuring migration

Statistics on international migration in Russia: the current situation*

Abstract

For many years, the Russian Federation has been attracting large numbers of long-term and temporary migrants, which reinforces the importance of correct measurement of these phenomena. During the post-Soviet period, the country has established and developed a system of data sources, (mainly administrative), reflecting the extent and impact of migration. Without these data it is difficult to analyze the full range of consequences of migration for Russia. The paper provides information on existing and potential sources of administrative data on international migration, in relation not only to the migrants flows and stocks, but also health of migrants, crime, economic activity and impact on demographic processes. The paper also deals with the situation in the field of the Federal statistical observation of long-term migration flows, dependence of statistics on institutional and organizational factors, and the prospects of solving existing problems.

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I. Introduction

1. During the whole period after the breakdown of the USSR, Russia has remained the center of a large migration system that evolved in the post-Soviet space. From 30 to 80 percent of migrants from other CIS countries of CIS come to Russia for permanent residence or temporary employment. Between 1992 and 2017 Russia hosted over 11 million immigrants with the vast majority arriving from the former Soviet republics. Net migration, as adjusted after the 2010 census, amounted at 6 million people or more. Russia is among top five countries in terms of the stock of international migrants born abroad; in 2017 their number exceeded 11.6 million people¹. “Statistical” migrants who arrived in Russia in the Soviet years from other republics of the former USSR are gradually being replaced by “true” international migrants from the newly independent states.

2. The extent of labour migration in Russia, even during the current economic crisis, remains one of the most significant in Europe. In 2016–2017, foreign citizens received about 1.7–1.8 million work permits and patents (per year), and several hundred thousand foreigners were entitled to work without a special permit². Russia is among top ten countries hosting international students. The stock of international students in 2017/2018 academic year exceeded 240 thousand. In 2014, the problem of reception of considerable flows of forced migrants again became topical for Russia: over two years (2014–2015), more than 300 thousand migrants from the south-eastern regions of Ukraine were granted temporary asylum. In 2016–2017, more than 250,000 immigrants received Russian citizenship per year, and in total almost nine million people have been granted Russian citizenship since 1992. Estimates of illegal migration, first of all labour migration, remain topical; its volumes are comparable to the number of legally working foreigners³. These facts explain why migration management issues remain on the agenda of the country’s both domestic and international policy. Measurement of migration in its diversity, development of statistics is in demand not only among the scholars in migration; they are, first of all, necessary for evidence-based decisions in the field of migration (and other) policies.

3. For many years, Russia has been establishing a system of migration statistics sources, which includes both “statistical” ones (referring to the responsibility of the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat)) and administrative data sources. This process was uneven; it was characterized by periods of both acceleration and stagnation. The key role in this system is played, of course, by Rosstat. The National Statistical Office collects migration data through censuses, sample surveys and current statistical observation of migration flows and (as will be shown below) vital events based on primary information from administrative sources. In addition, Rosstat regularly receives aggregated reports with migration-related variables from governmental agencies, such as the Ministry of Interior (MOI), the Ministry of Justice (civil registry offices), the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, etc. The governmental agencies themselves are also major producers of migration statistics or phenomena directly related thereto. The priority here, of course, belongs to the Ministry of

¹ International migrant stock: The 2017 revision

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml>

² This category includes citizens of the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and people who have a temporary residence permit or a residence permit. In 2017, out of 4.9 million foreigners who arrived in Russia and upon registration at the place of stay indicated “employment” as the purpose of their arrival, 822 thousand were citizens of the EEU countries. At the end of the year, the number of people holding a residence permit and a temporary residence permit reached 1.1 million, of which approximately 80% were at the working age of 18 to 59 years.

³ We will not cover this important issue in detail in this paper. However, it should be noted that the best approach to such assessments in Russia is the residual method, when, for example, the number of foreigners registered during the year at a place of temporary residence for the purpose of employment is compared with the number of persons who have received official permission to work in Russia. Since 2015, when the rules for access to the Russian labour market became more stringent for foreigners, and the financial costs of this access have increased, the ratio between people who arrived to find work and those who received permits was about 2: 1, while in the previous years it was almost 1:1. In 2017, about 4 million foreigners (without taking into account citizens of the countries of Eurasian Economic Union) were registered as migrants for the purpose of “employment”, and only 1.9 million patents and work permits were issued.

Interior, and namely, the Directorate General on Migration Issues. It was established in 2016 to replace the abolished Federal Migration Service of Russia (FMS).

4. In the absence of a population register (its establishment has begun quite recently ⁴), migration data in Russia resembles mosaic, where the number of elements depends not only on availability of certain information in the agencies, but also on the willingness of these agencies to develop statistics and disclose it to the public.

5. In this report we will discuss certain problems in the field of international migration statistics in Russia and, in particular, the inconsistency of the technological capabilities of the Ministry of Interior of Russia with the needs of the federal statistical observation of migration flows. In addition, we will provide information on some types of administrative statistics describing some specific aspects of migration, and dwell on the problem of insufficient use of various sources of statistical data, which have the potential to provide answers to important questions related to the consequences of international migration in Russia.

II. The main problems of the federal statistical observation of migration flows

6. Apart from conducting population censuses that mainly collect information on stocks of migrants born abroad and resident population with foreign citizenship⁵, Rosstat has been producing statistics on international and internal migration flows since the 1930s. This data is used for current population estimates (at regional and federal levels), in the national accounts system, etc. The primary information on long-term migrants both international and internal, comes from the internal affairs agencies on paper carriers, the so-called forms of statistical registration of a migrant. Until 2011, they were filled out upon registration of a person at a new place of permanent residence. In 2011, Rosstat switched to a new methodology of data collection, which was already discussed in detail at one of the UNECE workshops on migration statistics in the CIS countries⁶.

Table 1. Long-term international migration flows in Russia in 2008–2017, thousands

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Arrivals	281.6	279.9	191.7	356.5	417.7	482.2	578.5	598.6	575.2	589.0
Departures	39.5	32.5	33.6	36.8	122.8	186.4	308.5	353.2	313.2	377.2
Net migration	242.1	247.4	158.1	319.8	294.9	295.9	270.0	245.4	261.9	211.9

Source: Rosstat⁷

⁴ This decision was made in 2017. See: Order of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 1418-p dated July 4, 2017 approved the Concept of Creation and Maintenance of a Unified Federal Information Resource Containing Information about the Population of the Russian Federation, and appointed the Federal Tax Service of Russia as the registry operator. Currently, the draft law “On the Unified Federal Information Resource Containing Information About the Population of the Russian Federation” is being discussed. See <http://www.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc&base=PRJ&n=173241#048642385403417754>

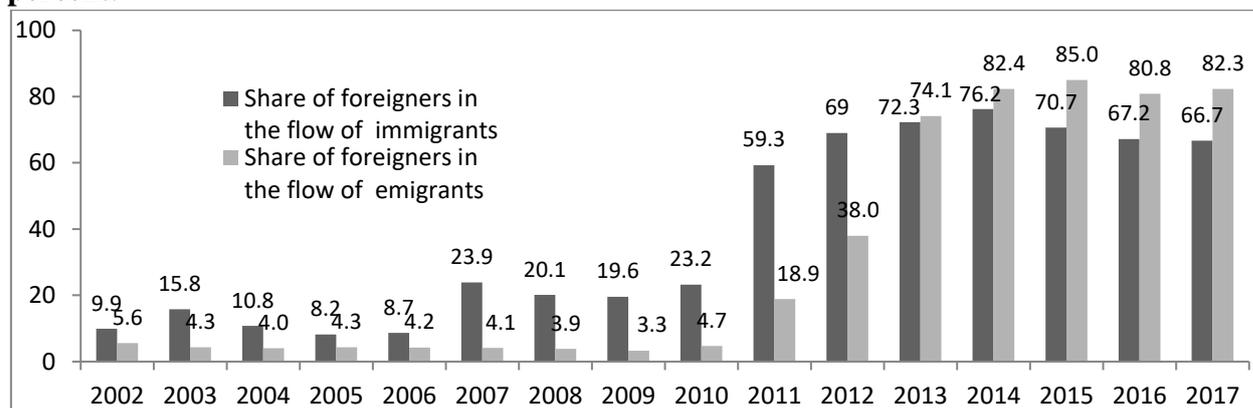
⁵ The situation regarding collection of materials on migration during population censuses can be considered relatively satisfactory, since their programs contain comprehensive blocks of questions on migration. The biggest problem in the 2010 census was the difficulty of obtaining data from respondents and its compensation with fractional information from administrative sources. This resulted in a huge number of people who did not indicate information about the country of birth (4.5 million), citizenship (4.1 million) and ethnicity (5.6 million). See the website for the 2010 All-Russian Population Census http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm

⁶ Use of administrative data sources to measure migration in Russia. Economic Commission for Europe Conference of European Statisticians Work Session on Migration Statistics Chisinau, Republic of Moldova 10–12 September 2014 <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=33645> It also explains why 9 months were chosen as the time criterion.

⁷ http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/#

7. Let us briefly recall the essence of the changes. Since 2011, in addition to migrants with “permanent” registration, numerous migrants with temporary registration at the place of stay for a period of 9 months or longer have been included in statistical observation. In particular, flows of temporary migrant workers and labour migrants with long-term work contracts began to be taken into account. The change in the methodology has resulted not only in a sharp increase in migration volumes (Table 1), but also in significant structural shifts of the flows, first of all, in a dramatic increase in the share of foreign citizens therein (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Share of foreign citizens in flows of international migration in Russia in 2002-2017, percent.



Based on Rosstat data⁸

8. Until 2011, only persons with a temporary or permanent residence permit could obtain “permanent” registration at a place of residence. Therefore, numerous long-term migrants who did not have such a document and status were not covered by statistics. In addition, until 2011, the liberal rules of Russian citizenship acquisition presumed a very short period (less than a year) between moving and getting the Russian passport. Many migrants preferred to naturalize first, and then obtain a permanent registration. Therefore, such immigrants were counted by statistics as Russian citizens.

9. In 2011, important changes occurred in methodology of counting the departures. After the expiration of temporary registration (9 months and longer), it is *automatically* considered that migrants have left the place of former residence or rather, moved to the country of their citizenship. It should be noted that the calculations are carried out in the Rosstat computer center and no information is received by Rosstat from the Ministry of Interior on the premature departure of such migrants. For “true” emigrants who get deregistered from the place of permanent residence when leaving for residence abroad, the forms of statistical registration of departures are filled out. The share of temporary migrants in the flow is very high. In 2012–2017, it amounted at almost 73% among immigrants, and over 90% of emigrants were counted because of expiration of the temporary registration (Table 2). The growth of “emigration” began in 2012 rather than in 2011, because the period of temporary registration of a significant number of immigrants who arrived in 2011 expired exactly in 2012.

⁸ See newsletters “Size and migration of the Russian population” for 2002–2007.

http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/publications/catalog/doc_1140096034906

Table 2 Distribution of international migrants in the Russian Federation by type of registration in 2012–2017, percent

	Immigration		Emigration	
	Registered in a new place of permanent residence	Registered at the place of stay for a period of 9 months and longer	Deregistered from the former place of permanent residence	Left due to expiration of registration at the place of stay
2012	30.7	69.3	21.2	78.8
2013	27.4	72.6	13.0	87.0
2014	24.3	75.7	7.5	92.5
2015	28.0	72.0	5.8	94.2
2016	27.5	72.5	5.6	94.4
2017	26.5	73.5	4.3	95.7

Based on Rosstat data⁹

10. Transition to a new methodology while maintaining the old technology of paper-based data collection (and the impossibility of current adjustments in case of premature departure and re-arrival of a migrant) aggravated the problem of data quality, including double count or underestimation of migrants. Rosstat specialists understand the existence of this problem very well and have long been planning to abandon the use of paper carriers. In the age of information technology, paper forms of statistical registration of migrants do not just look like an anachronism: their processing requires a huge amount of manual labour and time. The information is not machine readable, its input into a computer and preliminary preparation (coding of geographic and administrative units) is performed manually by the staff of regional offices of Rosstat. Moreover, a significant part of the forms come already as printouts, which means that the information has already been entered once by the MOI registration bodies, and statisticians do this work again.

11. The transfer of primary information on migrants in electronic format to Rosstat depends on the capabilities of its supplier, i.e. the Ministry of Interior. Several years ago, Rosstat commenced work related to coordination with the FMS of the technology of transmitting primary data on migrants in electronic form. The hope for a quick solution was given by the progressive development of information resources of the FMS, which for almost 12 years could already provide the Russian society with the main types of administrative statistics related to the foreign citizens' migration. Commissioning of the "Territory" application software and centralization of the regional information resources of the FMS bodies should have made it possible to transfer to Rosstat information files on both internal and international migration, of Russian citizens and foreigners. However, institutional circumstances intervened.

12. In April 2016, the Federal Migration Service was dissolved, and its functions were transferred to the Ministry of Interior, namely to the newly created Directorate General on Migration Issues of the Russian Ministry of Interior (DGMI). This step had great implications for the information systems of the former Federal Migration Service, and even more so for the nature of interaction between the newly established Directorate General with external users regarding statistics on migration.

13. All information resources of the FMS that had been created by that time were transferred to the Ministry of Interior : The central data bank for registration of foreign citizens, the "Territory" application program, the State Migration Registration Information System, etc., which helped to maintain all forms of registration of foreign citizens and the various statuses assigned to them, including those giving the right to work or live in Russia, up to the obtaining of citizenship. It should be noted that the information systems of the former Federal Migration Service were not transferred directly to the Main Directorate for Migration of the

⁹ In addition to the statistical bulletin "Size and migration of population of the Russian Federation", Rosstat develops more detailed regulatory tables for Russia available in electronic form upon request.

Ministry of Interior, but to the Department of Information Technologies, Communications and Information Protection of the MOI. The Main Directorate for Migration became the user and the end customer of the information. There was a change in the team involved in supporting and developing the system, which in its innovative approaches was ahead of many similar systems not only in Russia, but also globally. According to the specialists of the FMS of Russia, this was confirmed at many international meetings with their colleagues from other countries.

14. Development of the information system was replaced by its stagnation. Work on further integration of the regional segments of the “Territory” application software was stopped, and most of them remained unconnected to the central server. A discussion began on the prospects to establish a new information resource for migration units. After two years, it became clear that it was much more difficult to do this than to restore the functioning of already existing software products and databases, and that it was wiser not to start from scratch, but to develop the potential of already existing systems. Such an approach will ensure continuity in the field of information technologies of the Federal Migration Service and the Directorate General on Migration Issues of the Russian Ministry of Interior and will help to save huge amounts of money, and — which is equally important — to prevent a loss of vast arrays of invaluable information. However, as a result of the two-year period of uncertainty, Rosstat’s plans outpaced the technical capabilities of the Ministry of Interior regarding the transfer of arrays of primary statistical information on migration flows to statistical authorities.

15. Currently, Rosstat and the Directorate general on Migration Issues are in the process of agreeing on the format and procedure for transmitting primary data in electronic form. But even if this agreement is reached, data will be subject to certain limitations in the short term. First, so far there is the possibility of transferring information only on foreign citizens, and secondly, the range of variables is very limited, since the Ministry of Interior does not yet have the capacity to collect information about the level of education, marital status and the migrants’ occupations, etc. In addition, the list of reasons for move which are registered in the databases of DGMI differs from that used in the forms of statistical registration of migrants.

16. Rosstat has plans to obtain information on internal and international migration of Russian citizens from the Ministry of Interior in electronic form. However, this is a matter of uncertain (but hopefully not very distant) future.

III. System of available administrative sources of data on international migration

17. Based on the above, it is clear that among all agencies that produce administrative statistics on migration and related events, a very special place is allocated to the Directorate General on Migration Issues of the Russian Ministry of Interior. Despite the organizational difficulties associated with the information resources of the former Federal Migration Service of Russia, throughout the entire period (since April 2016), the development of regular statistical reports (forms 1-RD and 2-RD) has not ceased. Since the autumn of 2016, the main indicators of the migration situation have been regularly (once a month) published on the agency’s website.¹⁰ The 2-RD report was supplemented by a new section – with statistics on foreign labour migration. Until 2016, this report contained only information on visa and registration work, including data on residence permits and temporary residence permits, as well as data on acquisition of the Russian citizenship. It also had a section on administrative practices (actions in the field of immigration control), but since 2016 these functions and statistical reporting related thereto have been under the jurisdiction of the police.

18. Upon request, it was still possible to obtain from the DGMI (on the basis of the Central Data Bank for Foreign Citizens Registration) more detailed information on the age and sex of

¹⁰ <https://xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/Deljatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya>

foreign citizens who received work permits, patents, temporary residence permits, and residence permits. The above-mentioned decision of the Ministry of Interior to continue the development of information resources of the FMS gives hope that the opportunities lost during the last two years will be “caught up” and the operation of main automated accounting systems of Russian citizens and foreigners will be fully restored in the near future.

19. In addition to the data of the DGMI quite diverse administrative statistics are developed in Russia on a regular basis, characterizing not only migration itself, but also socially significant phenomena and processes in which migrants participate. Basically, this information is open to a wide range of users, but the way of obtaining it is not always convenient. In a number of cases, aggregated data is not posted on the websites of producing agencies, and it can only be obtained upon written request.

20. General information on the admission, graduation and stock of *foreign students* is published on the website of the Ministry of Education and Rosstat – in the Russian Statistical Yearbook¹¹. The Center for Sociological Research of the Ministry of Education and Science publishes collections where official statistical information is presented in more detail, for example, by areas of study (specialization) and by the cities of Russia¹².

21. Recently, when developing vital statistics (births and deaths) Rosstat began to separately indicate the *demographic events that happened to foreign citizens*. Unfortunately, information about the country of birth of migrants (which is also available in the civil registers) is not used so far, but we hope that it will happen in the future. Research of the contribution of migrants to fertility and mortality processes hugely enriches the analysis of the effects of migration, and the new data have already demonstrated their analytical potential. Regular publication of this information is not being done yet, and the authors emphasize that the studies were carried out on the basis of Rosstat unpublished data¹³. The algorithm for calculating indices and coefficients, i.e. birth and death rates, remains a problem, especially in the regions where there is a noticeable contribution of foreigners to the number of births and deaths. Not all foreigners who have given birth to children or died in Russia belong to the resident population, and the methodology for calculating the numerator and denominator can be of great importance.

22. The Ministry of Health develops and transfers to Rosstat data related to the *results of medical examinations of the population for infectious diseases*, such as HIV, active tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, and infectious skin diseases. These regular reporting forms have been introduced not so long ago, and their value cannot be overestimated. Foreign citizens in the aggregated reports are specified in a separate column. In order to avoid incorrect conclusions about the morbidity rate of foreigners and their impact on the epidemiological situation in Russia, it is necessary to have information about the number of persons screened and their composition (this information is also collected). A simple correlation of the number of detected cases with the population of Russia and the number of foreign citizens staying (including temporarily and short-term stay) on its territory can give controversial results¹⁴. Not all Russian citizens are screened for infections, and

¹¹ See, for example section *Higher professional education* http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_13/Main.htm

¹² A. L. Arefyev, F. E. Sheregi. *Foreign students in Russian universities*. Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. Center for Sociological Studies. Moscow 2014.

¹³ S.V. Zakharov *Is the potential of structural growth factors of fertility exhausted?* (Part One). Demoscope-Weekly, № 731–732, June 5–18, 2017 <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2017/0731/tema02.php>; S. Biryukova *Methodology for assessing the contribution of migrants to the reproduction of Russia's population using data based on civil status records*. Statistics. 2013. No. 4. P. 38–44.

¹⁴ In the study by O. Nechayeva, data on detected cases of diseases correlate with the mid-year population of Russia (for the citizens of the Russian Federation) and with the stock of foreigners staying on the territory of Russia as of a certain date, regardless of their status and length of stay. According to such calculations, the detectability of tuberculosis during the health examination is 2.65 times higher for foreign citizens as compared with the Russian citizens (2013: 163.2 against 61.6 per 100,000 of the population) and as for HIV, 2.93 times lower (107.5 against 315.1, respectively). (O.B. Nechayeva *Recommendations on control of tuberculosis among migrants*. Central Research Institute for Organization and Informatization of Health Care under the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, St.Petersburg, 2015. Adobe Acrobat presentation).

coverage rates vary significantly by regions¹⁵. At the same time, all foreigners who want to work or reside in Russia are required to obtain a medical certificate on the absence of such infections. It would be more correct to correlate the number of detected cases with the number of examined Russian citizens and foreigners. Unfortunately, these statistics are not published so far in a consolidated form, and it is necessary either to send a request to the Ministry of health, or to look for fragmentary data in official publications of various agencies, for example, the annual reports of the Federal Service for Supervision of Consumer Rights Protection and Human Welfare (Rosпотребнадзор)¹⁶.

23. *The Ministry of Interior keeps records of crimes committed by foreigners and against foreigners*; the information is published on the website of the Ministry of Interior (monthly reports are available since 2003)¹⁷, the General Prosecutor's Office¹⁸, and is also transferred to Rosstat. This information makes it possible to estimate relative indicators and compare the crime rates of Russian citizens and foreigners. Over the years, the proportion of crimes committed by foreigners has not exceeded 4 percent of the total number, and the "intensity" of crimes committed by foreigners is at least 2–3 times lower than that of Russian citizens.

IV. Potential sources of statistics on migration

24. Despite a certain diversity of administrative statistics, which provides an idea of the scale and main characteristics of migration in Russia, there are still some problems in this area that remain unresolved. In the context of increasing importance of administrative sources (due to their obvious advantages and development of technological capabilities to collect, process, and disseminate data), some agencies only collect information on migration, but do not develop it. In addition, such a tool as a Labour force survey, which in its current format is not suitable for measuring and studying migration processes, is used very inefficiently in Russia. Here are some examples.

25. *Participation of migrants in the economic life of the country* is one of the important indicators of migration attractiveness and economic benefits of migration for the host country and the migrants themselves. Often it is the economic behavior of migrants that plays the key role in assessment of the integration process. Administrative statistical resources are available to study this phenomenon in Russia, but they are not yet used. Due to the inability to see departmental databases, we can imagine their potential only on the basis of variables (questions) in the application forms filled out by the people who apply to these departments. For example, data on citizenship and place of birth of a person are indicated in the application for tax registration with the Federal Tax Service. These variables help to disaggregate the Federal Tax Service data by the taxpayer's migration status. Besides, the tax service must have information about taxes paid by foreigners: since 2015, obtaining an individual tax payer number has become mandatory for all foreign labour migrants. Also, the databases of the tax service can provide information about the internal migration of the population; for this one needs to compare information about the place of permanent residence (registration) of a person with the place of tax payments. In some countries, estimates of internal migration are also made on the basis of data from the tax service despite their objective limitations¹⁹.

¹⁵ See, for example, the results of serological HIV screening in the Siberian Federal District in 2012–2014. Omsk Research Institute of Natural Focal Infections, Siberian Federal District Center for Prevention and Control of AIDS. Omsk 2015.

¹⁶ See, for example, public report "On the status of sanitary and epidemiological welfare of the population in the Russian Federation in 2016" http://rospotrebnadzor.ru/documents/details.php?ELEMENT_ID=8345

¹⁷ <https://мвд.рф/Делятелност/statistics>

¹⁸ <http://crimestat.ru/> Monthly reports "Crime in Russia" provide data on crimes related to foreign citizens and stateless persons, including statistics by regions (<http://crimestat.ru/analytics>). Similar reports are published on the website of the Ministry of Interior, but only for Russia in total.

¹⁹ The US Internal Revenue Service publishes a guide for users of migration statistics based on processing of tax returns of the country's population (Form F1040. U.S. Individual Income Tax Return). This data measures migration between counties and states. It is noted that the data does not reflect the entire population of the country, because not

26. The *entrepreneurship* of migrants is also an indicator of their economic behavior and integration. Information on the place of birth and citizenship of an individual is contained in the application form for registration in the Register of Individual Entrepreneurs and establishment of a farm. In the future, it would be extremely important to use this data to study migration; such developments have long been made abroad. For example, a study of the migrants' *entrepreneurship* in the OECD countries was carried out, inter alia, based on data from business registers (although many aspects of this problem were identified through national sample surveys²⁰). A comparative analysis of the duration of the existence of enterprises established by migrants and non-migrants made it possible to measure the success of business activities of migrants in the country of residence.

27. It is known that the *migration of skilled specialists* with higher and secondary vocational education can be studied on the basis of information about the place where they were trained. Globally, one of the most important topics for study is migration of medical workers. While the emigration of Russian physicians (or individuals who have received professional training in Russia) can be traced in statistics of the host countries, in Russia we know nothing about the migration background of physicians and nurses working in the country. Many years ago, the Ministry of health had established the Federal Register of Health Workers in Russia, which includes information on the full name of the educational institution where the employee has completed basic and post-graduate training.²¹ We attempted to clarify with the Ministry of Health whether there was a possibility of developing such information, but did not receive a distinct answer. Therefore, for the time being, the potential of the Federal Register of Health Workers regarding the study of migration of this category of specialists can only be estimated theoretically.

28. Above, we focused our discussion on administrative data sources. But, speaking about the unrealized potential of statistical data sources, we should also mention *the situation with sample surveys* of the Russian population, which so far are very limitedly used to measure and study migration. In many countries, national sample surveys are used as one of the main sources of data on migration, which makes it possible to not only measure the number of people who were born abroad or have foreign citizenship, but also to explore the multiple characteristics of migrants. In Russia, the greatest potential in this regard has the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is conducted monthly, interviewing nearly 900 thousand people per year. The questionnaire contains more than 100 questions. However, the wording of the question on citizenship does not allow foreigners to specify the country of their citizenship (citizen of Russia / non-citizen of Russia). The questionnaire does not contain the question about the country of birth and the year of moving to Russia.

29. Currently, there are several million immigrants living in our country who have obtained Russian citizenship, but we know absolutely nothing about the employment biography of former foreigners. We cannot yet answer the question whether their distribution differs by type of economic activity, occupation, unemployment rate and education from the indigenous population of Russia (non-migrants). Under the conditions of accelerated process of granting Russian citizenship (after the rules became more stringent in 2011, this period on average does not exceed 2–3 years after move), migrants do not retain foreign citizenship for long. Therefore, in the future, it is important to collect information not only about the country of birth, but also about whether the LFS respondent is a Russian citizen by birth or by naturalization, as well as about the year of move to Russia for permanent residence. To reduce the burden on respondents, an extended set of questions on migration can be included

all residents must fill out form 1040 <https://www.irs.gov/statistics/soi-tax-stats-state-to-state-migration-database-files>

²⁰OECD (2010), *Open for Business: Migrant Entrepreneurship in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264095830-en>. Page 25. It should be noted that the cited edition describes the limitations of business registers when using them as a source of data on migrants' entrepreneurial activity, for example, form of ownership, etc. It is recommended to use special surveys of entrepreneurs more widely (ibid).

²¹ The names of educational institutions are listed in the Register of Educational Institutions of the Health System, which is one of the directories of the FRMW: <http://nsi.rosminzdrav.ru/#!/refbook/1.2.643.5.1.13.13.11.1462>

in specialized modular surveys conducted from time to time within the framework of the LFS²².

30. Comparison of the LFS materials with the administrative data of the Federal Migration Service on the number of long-term foreign migrants demonstrated that the LFS has a significant underestimation of the resident foreign population. The level of underestimation can reach 90 percent. For example, according to the results of the LFS, with the extrapolation to the universe, the population of foreigners aged 15–72 amounted at 375.000 and 355.000 people in 2014 and 2015, respectively. At the same time, data from the FMS of Russia showed that about 3.5 million foreign citizens in comparable age groups stayed in Russia for over one year. Another approach is to compare the number of foreigners counted by the LFS with the mid-year population (at comparable ages) of permanent and temporary residence permit holders; (this is a more “comprehensive” category of documented long-term migrants). The comparison showed that the latter group was approximately twice as large. Apparently, the problem lies in the sample design, which does not take into account the uneven distribution of foreigners across the country. Currently, Rosstat is conducting a study aimed at modernization of the LFS program in order to optimize the sample design, obtain more adequate information related to international and internal migration, and prepare a new survey on the use of migrants’ labour in 2019.

V. Concluding Remarks

31. It may seem that the balance in information provided above is misaligned towards criticism regarding the current situation in the field of statistics on international migration in Russia. However, this is not entirely true, and assessments should take into account the “fullness of glass” principle. Bearing in mind that quite recently Russian users experienced an acute shortage of data on migration, and access to administrative statistics was extremely difficult, we can definitely say that the glass is at least half full. The value of what has been done in recent years is colossal. Since the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, there has been obvious progress in census and survey programs²³ in our country, new forms of statistical observation with variables related to migration have emerged, various administrative systems for collecting information have been developed and civilized ways of access to statistics have been created. However, recognizing the positive dynamics in the field of migration statistics, we should not ignore the existence of problems and delay their resolution.

²² In 2014, a modular survey on the use of labour migrants was conducted as part of the LFS, a repeated survey is planned for 2019. For more information see http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/imigr/welcome.html

²³ The 2015 Microcensus Program, for example, for the first time contained questions about the absent population and the way to obtain Russian citizenship.