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COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

Joint ECE-EUROSTAT-ESCWA work session  
on Migration Statistics  
(Geneva, 8-10 May 2000)

**Results of a first survey concerning the implementation of the United Nations  
recommendations on statistics of international migration\*\***

1. Eight countries participated in a task force set up to evaluate the possibilities for implementation of the new set of United Nations recommendations on statistics of international migration. The countries concerned, in alphabetical order, were: Belgium, Canada, Israel, Italy, Norway, Romania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

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\* See also: CES/SEM.42/2/Add.2.

\*\* Prepared by Michel Poulain.

2. The basic table completed by each country and supplemented with numerous comments makes it possible to give a first indication of how the countries concerned are complying with the United Nations recommendations in the collection and elaboration of their international migration statistics. The summary table in the addendum to this brief analytical note (CES/SEM.42/2/Add.2) provides a first overview of the situation, although it cannot include information about the sources used, the exhaustiveness of coverage of the population concerned and the reliability of the data gathered.

3. In a first table, we will attempt to outline the various sources used for the collection of international migration statistics. The diversity of sources will be apparent and it should be pointed out in this regard that two a priori similar sources may produce widely differing data for the measurement of international migration flows and stocks of migrants.

	Population register, register of foreigners	Ad hoc surveys	Residence permits	Work permits	Border control	Other administrative sources	Population census
Belgium	+++			+			+
Canada		+	+	+	+	+	+
Israel	+++				++		+
Italy	++		++				+
Norway	+++					+	
Romania					++	+++	+
Slovenia	++		++				+
United Kingdom		+++				+	+

4. Detailed examination of the synoptic table in Addendum 2 reveals that only some cells include six or more of the eight countries concerned. There is no cell or corresponding statistical collection for which all eight countries can provide data. Only short-term entries of non-citizens linked to employment are counted in seven of the eight countries, while several cases are subject to data collection in six out of eight countries. These are:

- Entries of non-citizens linked to education and training;
- Entries of asylum-seekers (for which short-term and long-term entries cannot be distinguished);
- Total entries of non-citizens linked to education and training;
- Total entries of non-citizens linked to employment;
- Grand total of entries of non-citizens;
- Grand total of departures of citizens;
- Grand total of departures of non-citizens;
- A fortiori grand total of departures;

- Number of admitted refugees;
- Number of asylum-seekers;
- Total number of non-citizens living in the country.

5. While the countries' replies cannot be considered here in more detail, we may already note the following findings:

- The great difficulty of distinguishing between the short term and the long term;
- The lack of comparability between the duration of presence or absence calculated ex post and the intended duration given;
- The level of completeness and reliability varies greatly according to the sources used;
- The paramount need to know the population concerned when the total population is not considered in an exhaustive manner.

6. The first results suggest that the level of implementation of the recommendations varies greatly from one country to another. It is also interesting to note that some reports have raised the possibility of improving methods for the collection of statistics so as to align them more closely with the United Nations recommendations. In any event, a more in-depth analysis will need to be undertaken and the approach should thereafter be extended to all countries in order to determine how far the recommendations are actually being implemented. It will then be possible to evaluate in what respects and in what countries changes might enhance the reliability and international comparability of the data collected.

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