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STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE
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CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

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

Topic 1

International Migration: MED-Migr

Invited paper by Eurostat^{1/}

Introduction

1. The joint declaration of the Conference of Barcelona, comprising twelve countries in the Mediterranean basin, and the then twelve Member States of the European Union, held in November 1995, stressed the importance of sustained and balanced economic development in the Mediterranean basin as a whole. The agreed aim was to make the area one of shared prosperity. Reliable, harmonised and up-to-date statistics were seen as necessary to measure and monitor programmes directed towards achieving this aim. Hence, statistical co-operation (MEDSTAT) was born, covering a number of fields such as tourism, transport, external trade, environment and migration. The twelve countries included are Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

2. A seminar held in Naples in mid-1996 highlighted migration as a priority topic. The key areas identified were, firstly to produce an

1/ Prepared by David Pearce and Thana Chrissanthaki.

* The documentation for this work session will be processed as for seminars.

inventory of sources and data with the objective of carrying out a regular collection of statistics; second to encourage the use of United Nations recommendations on migration and third, to train personnel working on this topic.

Approach

3. The key areas were converted into a workplan for 1998 and 1999. This plan was approved by a meeting of national co-ordinators held in Cyprus in January 1998. The main activities agreed were:-

- a. To evaluate what data are already being collected, what data are needed and potential sources. This activity included a questionnaire being sent in February 1998 to each country, followed by Missions (held between September and November 1998) The results of these activities are published in Eurostat Working Papers (3/1998/E/9, 20 and 21).
- b. To run a basic training course on definitions, measurement, sources etc. Three courses had been held, in Malta (March 1999), Palestine (June/July 1999) and Tunisia (November 1999).

Missions

4. The Missions to each country identified the major population issue (emigrants abroad, emigration, immigration etc) and their relative importance, the major sources used, potential sources and the plans in each country to hold a Census of Population. The Mission also established whether the country would be willing to include the migration question included in the UN Recommendations for Censuses in the ECE Region. Interest in a follow-up survey on migration was also assessed. The overall Mission Report (including recommendations for pilot projects) is published as Eurostat Working Paper 3/1999/E/18.

Next steps

5. The next stage will be to launch pilot projects. The national co-ordinators agreed that each project country should be actively involved, the work must have a sustainable future within the project country and that it should have a regional or sub-regional character. Further, other Ministries, such as the Ministry of the Interior, will need to be involved, and co-ordination with other MEDSTAT projects should be looked at. On the latter, a Workshop on synergies between migration and tourism (the use of border collections - administrative and statistical) is to be held in Rome on 3-5 July 2000.

6. The projects have been allocated to one of four clusters of activities, and will finish by December 2001. The three main clusters are:-

- A Evaluation of coverage and reliability of current sources and statistics such as Censuses, Emigration Modules, receiving countries data, Labour Force Surveys. To consider how they might be integrated to give a fuller migration picture.
- B. Evaluation and enhancement of border card systems to identify and measure international migrants. Pilot exercises will take place.
- C. Evaluation and enhancement of work permit and residence permit systems.

7. In both B and C, improved co-operation between the different involved Ministries, such as the Ministry of the Interior, will be needed.

8. Workshops, evaluation reports and final reports will be part of each cluster. This will enable good practices, knowledge and experiences, included the outcome of pilot exercises, to be widely shared.

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