

UNECE

# Measuring migration and remittances in UNECE countries during the pandemic

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# **MEASURING MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES IN UNECE COUNTRIES DURING THE PANDEMIC**

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## **List of acronyms**

EECCA Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

HBS Household Budget Survey

LFS Labour Force Survey

LCS Living Conditions Survey

NSO National Statistical Office

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## Executive summary

1. This report is based on the results of an informal survey among national statistical offices of UNECE countries aimed at finding out how migration and remittances measurement was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was conducted during the first week of October 2020. Overall, 25 countries<sup>1</sup> participated in the survey, including 10 EECCA countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The survey was conducted using an online questionnaire. The aim of the survey was to find out which data sources were used to measure migration and remittances during the pandemic, which methods of data collection were adopted, whether there was demand from the national authorities for specific COVID-19-related migration data and how this demand was satisfied, and finally, what were the challenges faced by the national statistical offices and how they coped with them.
2. Overall, the findings indicate that during the pandemic, both surveys and administrative data sources were used to collect migration and remittances data. The data was collected mostly without significant delays, but the quality of data raises concerns.
3. In most cases, remote methods of survey taking were adopted, i.e. phone interviews. At the same time, collection of administrative data was constrained due to the restrictions of mobility and limited physical access to public offices. Collection of survey data was associated with higher non-response rates and limited skills of respondents to work with online questionnaire. Thus, adjustments in the data collection procedure – remote survey taking – appeared not always successful and require further improvement.
4. The impact of COVID-19 on migration/migrants was not yet fully addressed by most UNECE countries' statistical offices. Only a few UNECE countries did collect or compiled specific COVID-19 related data on migration upon the request of the national authorities, namely, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Luxembourg. COVID-19-related questions introduced into the surveys concerned changes in the income level, in the living conditions and in employment status. In the United States, a specialized Household Pulse Survey was launched in April 2020 to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of life.
5. Remote work appeared challenging for most national statistical offices in UNECE countries: a need for better connectivity appeared as urgent as expertise on new data collection methodology.

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<sup>1</sup> The list of participating countries is presented in Appendix B.

## I. Introduction

6. The COVID-19 pandemic created a peculiar context for the data collection practices around the globe. Traditionally, national statistical offices (NSOs) in UNECE countries relied both on administrative sources and surveys for collecting information about migration and remittances. A few countries used exclusively administrative sources. But all had to adjust their data collection and statistics compilation routine in 2020. Facing unexpected challenges of remote work and restrictions imposed on face-to-face communication, national statistical offices struggled to keep to the deadlines of publications and surveys, including those used to collect data on migration.

7. Starting March 2020, NSOs in most UNECE countries were fully or partially closed in accordance with the lockdown regime. Considering the unexpectedness of the shift to a new mode of work, a whole range of day-to-day operations of the NSOs were affected. Under the conditions of restricted physical contacts, face-to-face interviews had to be substituted with remote methods of survey taking. Many countries had to postpone conducting a population census planned for 2020. Challenges associated with collection of migration and remittances data included also reconsidering the usual data sources, and in some cases adjusting the methodology of migration statistics due to the disruption of the previous migration trends and closure of borders.

8. Using the results of an informal online survey conducted among NSOs in UNECE countries in October 2020, this report explores the administrative, logistical and methodological challenges faced by NSOs, and the strategies used to cope with them.

9. The report is organized as follows: it opens with an overview of the data sources on migration (and remittances) statistics used by UNECE countries in 2020, then proceeds to the description of the methods of data collection, production of COVID-19 related data and statistics on migration, and outlines the findings of the NSOs needs assessment. The report concludes with a recommendations section, which highlights some best practices across UNECE countries and outlines suggestions for improvement of work in the pandemic context based on the identified areas of concern. The appendices include the survey questionnaire and the list of the countries and respective NSOs covered by the survey.

10. This work was carried out in the project “Enhancing coherence and integration of economic and social statistics in support of the implementation of 2008 SNA” (grant TF0A4764) of the World Bank’s ECASTAT programme.

## II. Data sources of migration and remittances statistics in UNECE countries

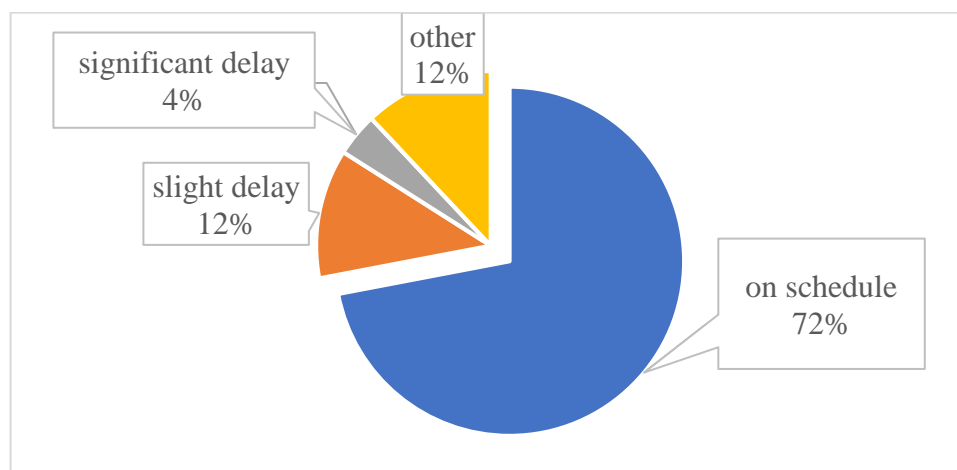
11. Most UNECE countries<sup>2</sup> rely on both administrative data and regular sample household surveys to collect migration (and remittances<sup>3</sup>) data. These surveys included Labour Force Survey, Household Budget Survey, Living Conditions Survey, and Demography and Health Survey. In the United States, the American Community Survey is conducted annually and the results are used for modelling net international migration estimates. Croatia and Ukraine conduct a specialized international migration survey. In some countries, e.g. Bulgaria, tourism surveys are also reported to be used for collection of data on emigrants and immigrants. At the same time, administrative sources remain the only migration data sources for several UNECE countries, namely Azerbaijan, Estonia, Denmark, Georgia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Uzbekistan.

12. During the pandemic, 17 sample household surveys were conducted by the UNECE countries surveyed, including 5 in EECCA countries. Tourism surveys and other border surveys were suspended due to the closure of borders. For the UK, where the International Passenger Survey was the key data source on international migration, data collection turned quite challenging. Population censuses were also rescheduled for 2021 in many countries, including EECCA countries (Armenia, Russia, Kazakhstan). Apart from that, the pandemic and associated restrictive measures did not have a significant adverse effect on the timeliness of the data collection: over 72% of the UNECE countries reported no delay in data collection (60% among EECCA), and 12% had a slight delay with getting the data (Figure 1).

### Has the procedure of receiving administrative data on migration changed during pandemic?

Figure 1

#### Timeliness of receiving the data in UNECE countries in 2020



13. Only one country – the Republic of Moldova – among the surveyed UNECE countries reported a significant delay with receiving administrative data. Russia commented that, due to lockdown measures, regional data reached federal level a bit behind the schedule. The U.S. Census Bureau reported a full stop in receiving administrative data on migration during the pandemic. In some cases, the reported delays in receiving the data from administrative sources were associated with the mobility restrictions and limited physical access of people to public offices which

<sup>2</sup> Here and further in the text, we refer to the 25 UNECE countries that participated in the online survey and listed in the Appendix B.

<sup>3</sup> The main source of remittance data is the statistics compiled by the national banks. However, some household surveys also include questions on remittances, e.g. Household Budget Survey.

## II. Data sources of migration and remittances statistics in UNECE countries

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complicated the timely registration of stay. Ultimately, existing registration systems in the countries could not quickly change the data collection practice at an extremely short notice. However, alternative online data portals were used: for example, in Kazakhstan, applications for registration of permanent residence were accepted electronically through the electronic government platform.



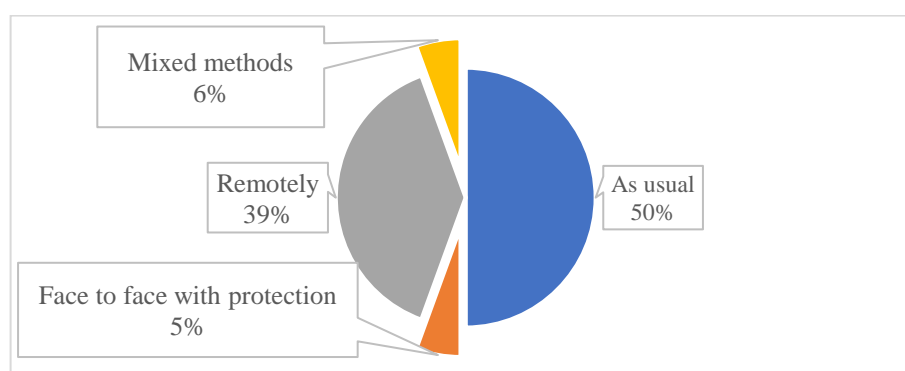
### III. Methods of data collection and data quality

14. Although the data was collected mostly in time, the methods of data collection and methodology of data compilation were quite often modified (Figure 2). Half of the surveyed countries cancelled face-to-face interviews and switched to remote methods: interviewing by phone, using self-administered online questionnaire, zoom or skype applications. Among EECCA countries only Armenia reported using online questionnaire filled with the assistance of the interviewer, other countries conducted interviews over phone. Some countries reported no changes in survey taking procedures, e.g. Croatia, North Macedonia, Switzerland; in selected countries, face-to-face interviews were kept but the protection gear was applied, e.g. in Montenegro. In the Republic of Moldova, in the first two months only phone interviews were allowed, and starting from June 2020, a mixed method was used which included interview over phone and face-to-face interviewing applying protective measures.

#### If you did take surveys, how did the survey-taking process change?

Figure 2

Methods of survey taking in the UNECE countries during the pandemic



15. No changes were reported by most of the UNECE countries with regard to the methodology of migration statistics based on the administrative sources. However, in a few cases, the NSOs had to adjust significantly their practice in using administrative sources for compilation of international migration statistics, e.g., in Canada, the UK, and the United States.

16. In Canada, emigration estimates had been normally based on demographic modelling using the assumption that the past trends would continue. In the context of COVID-19, when usual migration trends were disrupted due to the international travel restrictions, that assumption was no longer valid. Consequently, Statistics Canada adjusted its monthly estimates of permanent and temporary emigration in the context of the pandemic, using the United States visa data. These data were used because 1) they were very timely, 2) they showed a strong decrease consistent with travel restrictions and 3) the United States is the main destination country of Canadian emigrants. The adjustments resulted in a marked decrease in the number of both emigrants and temporary emigrants starting from March 2020.

17. Meanwhile, the U.S. Census Bureau also had to look for alternative data sources for producing July 1, 2020 net international migration estimates (NIM estimates), which would have been normally based on the American Community Survey for the previous year, i.e. 2019. As a result, a new methodology was developed to adjust NIM estimates by incorporating more up-to-date (March–June 2020) data sources, including monthly airline passenger data, visas issued abroad, I-94 visa arrivals, and Canadian and Mexican border flight and visa data.

18. In the UK, administrative sources became the primary data sources on migration after the International Passenger Survey was suspended in March 2020. The Office for National Statistics,

### III. Methods of data collection and data quality

in collaboration with the UK Government Statistical Service, accelerated the transformation plan aimed at putting administrative data at the core of both population and migration statistics. Thus, the new measures of international migration were developed based on the three main administrative sources: Registration and Population Interactions Dataset (RAPID), Home Office Exit Checks data, and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data. In 2020, producing migration estimates based on modelling was complicated for the UK, both due to COVID-19 and Brexit-related impact on migration trends.

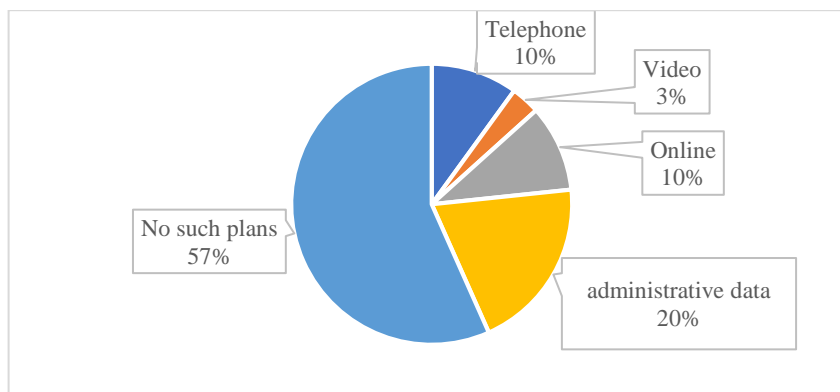
19. While the data was collected mostly without significant delays and the NSOs in most cases switched quickly to the alternative remote survey-taking methods and adjusted – where needed – the methodology of migration statistics based on the administrative sources, the quality of data appeared to be a widely articulated concern. Collection of survey data was affected by higher non-response rates and limited skills of respondents to work with online questionnaire. NSOs indicated increased numbers of refusals to participate in surveys, and as a result, narrowed frames of sampled households.

20. Thus, adjustments in the data collection procedure – remote survey taking – appeared not always successful and require further consideration. Armenia and Kazakhstan admitted that the current length of the HBS and ILCS questionnaires does not fit the method of a telephone interview, because the respondents appeared to be exhausted by the duration of the interview. As a result, for future studies of COVID-19 impact on migration and remittances UNECE countries opt for administrative sources of data (Figure 3).

#### **If you are now planning to take a survey on the COVID-19 impact on migrants, migration and remittances, which data collection method would you use?**

Figure 3

**Methods for future studies of COVID-19 impact on migration by UNECE countries**



## IV. Specialized surveys and compilation of statistics on COVID-19 impact on migration

21. The impact of COVID-19 on migration/migrants was not yet directly addressed by most UNECE countries' statistical offices by the time the survey was carried out. However, a few NSOs have pioneered in this domain, including Hungary, Luxembourg, and the Republic of Moldova. Apparently, the countries did not develop specific questionnaires, but rather added COVID-19-related questions to the existing surveys (HBS, LFS, LCS). A few questions related to the pandemic impact were incorporated to study changes in employment status, income level and living conditions. For example, people absent from work were asked if the reason for their absence was directly related to COVID-19. All three countries used remote methods of survey taking – phone interviewing and/or self-administered online questionnaire (Luxembourg).

22. A specialized COVID-19 survey targeting population in general, the Household Pulse Survey (HPS), was launched in the United States, to monitor the individuals' experiences of COVID-19 and provide timely information essential for governmental and non-governmental responses to business activity, stay-at-home orders, school closures, changes in consumer patterns and availability of consumer goods, and other abrupt and significant changes in the life of people. The HPS is the product of collaboration between several institutions: Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics, Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Social Security Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, and the U. S. Census Bureau. Phase I of the HPS, launched on 23 April 2020, consisted of 12 weekly surveys collecting data on individuals' employment status, food security, housing, physical and mental health, access to health care and educational disruption. Like the majority of the surveys during pandemic, the HPS was conducted remotely, using online questionnaire. The sampling frame was designed using Census Bureau's Master Address File (MAF) and email and mobile telephone numbers from the Census Bureau Contact Frame<sup>4</sup>. The data is publicly available and some variables can be used to analyse COVID-19 impact on different categories of population.

23. As of October 2020, NSOs in the UNECE countries have not yet implemented any studies targeting separately the most vulnerable categories of the population, such as labour migrants in destination countries, children of labour migrants in home countries, elderly parents of labour migrants, foreign students. Some countries, however, reported that, upon request of the authorities, they compiled COVID-19 impact statistics using existing data from administrative sources, e.g. Hungary, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Moldova.

24. In some cases, NSOs started running a special pandemic-related page on the website where they provide up-to-date statistical information on most relevant social and economic indicators for the analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. While migration statistics is not always included in the list of the indicators provided, all countries regularly publish data on how COVID-19 is affecting the labour market. This type of data is important for migration research and policy fields because migrants are part of the labour force.

25. The National Institute of Statistics in Spain uses the data from 2018–2019 household surveys<sup>5</sup> to publish bulletins informing about the composition of Spanish households, availability of ICT, and share of population working remotely before the pandemic<sup>6</sup>. The bulletins aim at showing that COVID-19 is not affecting the entire resident population of Spain in a similar way. The statistical information provided allows to study the population at highly detailed territorial

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<sup>4</sup> HPS website <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html>

<sup>5</sup> Continuous Household Survey 2019, Survey on Equipment and use of ICT in households 2019, Living Conditions Survey, module on welfare 2018, National Health Survey 2017.

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ine.es/en/covid/covid\\_inicio\\_en.htm](https://www.ine.es/en/covid/covid_inicio_en.htm)

#### IV. Specialized surveys and compilation of statistics on COVID-19 impact on migration

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levels, as well as to identify most vulnerable groups (Households at Home, 2020). However, migrant population is not covered in those information bulletins.

26. The Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland, on the contrary, publishes regularly comprehensive monthly bulletins on immigration and asylum statistics, together with other relevant socio-economic data on its special COVID-19 impact page<sup>7</sup>.

27. The National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria also has a specific pandemic-related page where it provides access to the results of the survey studying the impact of COVID-19 on business, as well as updated monthly statistics on trips of Bulgarian citizens abroad, and arrivals of foreign citizens to Bulgaria<sup>8</sup>.

28. During the crisis, for most NSOs business surveys remained a priority in terms of specialized data collection, because these were essential for the continuous measurement of the countries' economic activity and the collection of the main economic indicators.

29. UNECE created a wiki page<sup>9</sup> on the statistical response to COVID-19 in the National Statistical Offices of its member countries, with reference to the collection, processing and reporting of data on migration. The wiki page is maintained regularly with updates provided by countries.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/actualites/covid-19.html#-1570367150>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nsi.bg/en/content/18159/basic-page/covid-19>

<sup>9</sup> <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/migration/Statistical+response+to+Covid-19>

## V. Administrative challenges of the NSOs work during pandemic

30. Starting in March 2020, most national statistical offices in UNECE countries have switched to remote work due to the lockdown measures. The period of special working regime in the EECCA countries lasted until the end of August–September 2020, while for the rest of the UNECE countries strict quarantine was finished in May–June.

31. Remote work was reported as challenging for most of the NSOs. Among the key challenges, frequently mentioned were unavailability of the personnel and insufficient equipment of staff, with reference to electronic devices and internet connection for working from home. Where the data had to be transmitted in paper, logistical issues emerged due to the restrictions imposed on mobility during the quarantine period.

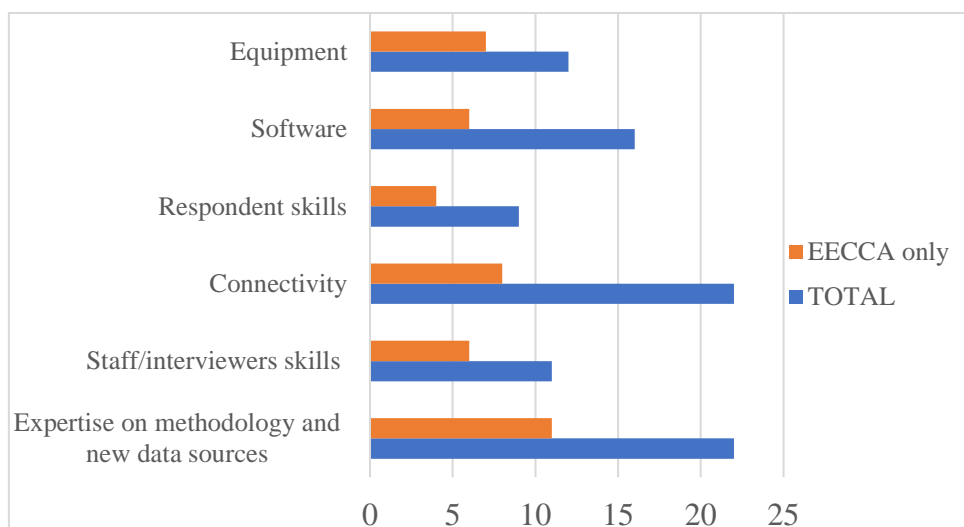
32. On top of that, the change in the usual procedures of survey-taking brought potential reputational risks: the INSEE of France reported that while conducting all surveys on telephone and the internet, numerous fake field enumerators claiming to work for INSEE have been taking advantage of the context to deceive individuals<sup>10</sup>.

33. When evaluating NSOs capabilities related to work in the pandemic context, it turned out that better connectivity appeared as urgent as expertise on new data collection methodology (Figure 4).

### What kind of support would your Agency need to tackle the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic? (number of countries)

Figure 4

#### Results of the needs assessment of the NSOs in UNECE countries



## **VI. Conclusion**

34. During the pandemic months of 2020, both administrative sources- and survey-based migration data were collected without significant delays in most UNECE countries. NSOs had to be inventive to adjust to the new context and associated difficulties. In many cases the challenges were met with fruitful collaborations established and effective solutions found.

35. The experience of the countries showed that diversification of the data sources and ability to use mixed methods of data collection are necessary in the given circumstances. At the same time, changes in data collection practices require additional training of staff and imply increased costs associated with proper ICT support and better connectivity. In countries where phone interviewing and online surveys had been in use before, the NSOs could rely on the previous experience with much less stress.

36. Quality is an emerging issue for survey-based data. Higher non-response rates reported by countries' NSOs have different reasons, including insufficient skills of respondents to work with online questionnaires, and pandemic-related circumstances. Therefore, different approaches are required to ensure the better quality of the survey data. Ultimately, the NSOs will continue to learn to balance health security and the quality of survey data collection.

37. Many NSOs focused their efforts on producing timely measures and socio-economic indicators to facilitate the analysis of the impact of COVID-19. Launching a specific monitoring instrument such as COVID-19 related web page seems a good practice in terms of assisting the data users in findings the relevant data quickly and providing regular updates on the key socio-economic indicators. Indicators relating to the migrant populations remain mostly uncovered by these monitoring tools.

## **VII. Recommendations**

38. Based on the findings of the survey of NSOs in UNECE countries, as well as on the information obtained from their websites, the following recommendations can be formulated:

### **A. Use of alternative data sources**

39. In the pandemic context, when migration trends were significantly disrupted due to the closure of international borders, and survey-taking on the border was suspended, it is worth considering alternative sources of migration data. For example, using mirror statistics could be quite instrumental, as well as helpful in terms of fostering international cooperation.

### **B. Adapting survey-taking procedure for remote interviewing**

40. While most NSOs cancelled fully or partially face-to-face interviews and replaced them with phone interviews, the result was not always satisfactory. One reason is that the questionnaires of multi-purpose household surveys are too lengthy for phone interviews. Having or developing a phone-interview guide may help to ensure that the questions are shorter and clearer than when interviewing face to face, e.g. avoid questions with long lists of answer choices. Keeping the phone calls short - 20–30 minutes – will ease the burden on the respondents.

### **C. Digitization of data collection through surveys**

41. Apparently, the countries with pre-existing fully CATI and CAWI based survey systems may have experienced relatively little impact on their operation or survey response rates. To ensure better data quality, respondent skills in working with online questionnaires should be considered and developing a supplementary user's guide could be of help.

### **D. Revising the time schedule of publications**

42. As long as the pandemic is not over and protective measures are still partially in place, more time than usual may be required for primary data collection. This should be built into the calendar of publications and surveys.

### **E. Adjusting existing surveys for collecting COVID-19 related data**

While undertaking a specialized COVID-19 survey may be a too ambitious effort at the current stage, adding specific questions to existing survey questionnaires seems a viable alternative. In most cases, it may only be necessary to add response categories to an existing question if the question is likely to lead to COVID-19 relevant information. For example, questions on reasons for temporary absence from employment are almost universal in the LFS and additional response categories may be useful.

### **F. Oversampling of respondents to reduce non-response rate**

43. With COVID-19 pandemic context, and in some cases with limited quality of phone connection and internet coverage, it might be challenging to preserve the required sample size. Oversampling could be a solution in this case, especially relevant when conducting remote surveys.

**G. Timely informing population and data users about the changes in the survey-taking procedure**

44. When field operations are changed, it is important to inform survey respondents accordingly, in order to ensure that they do not fall victim of a fraud. It is equally important to communicate to the data users the issues concerning data quality and any limitations on interpretation which may arise from the disruptions in data collection.



### Migration and remittances measurement in the pandemic

#### Questionnaire to focal points on migration and remittances statistics in national statistics offices of UNECE countries

##### Section I. General part

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution/Department/Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **If your Agency worked on special regime due to COVID-19 measures, please specify the period and the type of regime, in a few words.**
2. **Has the procedure of receiving administrative data on migration and remittances changed during pandemic?**
  - a. No changes, the data was received in due time
  - b. Yes, the data was received with a slight delay
  - c. Yes, the data was received with a significant delay
  - d. Other (please, specify)
3. **Has the methodology of collecting administrative data on migration changed during pandemic?**
  - a. No changes
  - b. Yes, it was changed (please, specify)
4. **What surveys does your agency conduct for measuring migration and remittances? Mention all that apply.**
  - a. Household Budget / Income and Expenditure Survey
  - b. Living Conditions / Multi-topic / LSMS Survey
  - c. Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)
  - d. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)
  - e. Labour Force Survey
  - f. Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### Section II. Adaptation of survey-taking to the physical contact restrictions

5. **Were you taking any of these surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No (select the reason):
    - i. Office work was completely stopped due to lockdown
    - ii. All surveys were postponed to a later date due to lockdown
    - iii. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- 6. If you did take surveys, then how did the survey-taking process change? (please select)**
- Was not changed at all
  - Face to face interview was kept, but protection gear was provided
  - Face-to-face interview was cancelled/ we switched to remote survey-taking methods
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. If you switched to other methods of remote survey-taking, then which of them? Mention all that apply.**
- Phone survey
  - Video survey (over Skype, Zoom or similar)
  - Self-administered web survey
  - Social media
  - Administrative data
  - Model-based estimate
  - Other (please specify)
- 8. What difficulties your office faces while taking surveys on COVID-19 impact on migrants and remittances? Mention all that apply (maximum 5).**
- Personnel is not available/ill
  - Personnel is not equipped with computer/tablet/smart phone to work from home
  - Personnel is not equipped with internet to work from home
  - Personnel does not have the sufficient skill to work remotely
  - The main office connectivity and IT is not suitable for remote work
  - Respondents do not have the skill to work online
  - We face funding limitations / constraints
  - We face procurement difficulties
  - Other (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section III. Special surveys designed for the pandemic crisis context and its impact**

- 9. Have there been requests from government agencies to produce statistical information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants, migration and remittances?**
- Yes, we took new ad-hoc specialized surveys
  - Yes, we prepared relevant statistical information based on existing statistics
  - There have not been any requests
- 10. How did you reflect the pandemic context and its impact in the questionnaires? Mention all that apply.**
- We have altered the standard questionnaires to add COVID-19 impact related questions
  - We have developed new COVID-19 impact questionnaires
  - We changed nothing

- 11. If you have altered questionnaires or developed new ones, which changes did you introduce? Mention all that apply.**
- a. Change sample design
  - b. Reduce sample size
  - c. Reduce questionnaire content
  - d. Add COVID-19 related questions
  - e. Change data collection mode
  - f. Use alternative data source or approach
  - g. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Section IV. Coverage by surveys of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups who may suffer disproportionately in the crisis**

- 12. Have you taken surveys covering the COVID-19 impact on the following groups? Mention all that apply.**
- a. Labour migrant households in the country of origin
  - b. Children of the labour migrants in the country of origin
  - c. Elderly parents and/or other family members in the country of origin
  - d. Labour migrants in a country of destination
  - e. Foreign students
  - f. Other groups (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. NO SURVEYS TAKEN COVERING THE ABOVE GROUPS

- 13. Which topics were included in these surveys? Mention all that apply.**
- a. changes in income level
  - b. changes in expenditure level
  - c. changes in employment status
  - d. access to healthcare services
  - e. changes in living conditions
  - f. changes in the amount of remittances received
  - g. changes in the amount of remittances sent
  - h. other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- 14. Do you publish the results of studies on COVID-19 on your agency's website?**
- a. Yes, (please provide a link)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No
  - c. No studies done

**Section V. Plans for using a harmonized module on migration and remittances for integration into a regular national household survey**

- 15. Does your Agency consider a possibility to use the harmonized module on migration and remittances in the near future?**
- a. Yes, but for remote survey
  - b. Yes, but after the questionnaire is adapted for studying COVID-19 impact
  - c. No such plans
  - d. Other (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Section VI. Statistical offices' needs for capacity development on the above-mentioned issues**

**16. If you plan to take a survey on the COVID-19 impact on migrants, migration and remittances, which data collection method would you use? Mention all that apply.**

- a. Phone survey
- b. Video survey (over Skype, Zoom or similar)
- c. Self-administered web survey
- d. Social media
- e. Administrative data
- f. Model-based estimate
- g. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**17. What kind of support would your agency need to tackle the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic? Rank all that apply.**

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Less urgent</b>	<b>No need</b>	<b>Already in place</b>
Expertise for new survey designs				
Expertise for using new data sources				
Staff training for remote work				
Interviewer training on physical distancing and use of protective gear				
Equipment (computers, tablets, servers etc.)				
Protective gear for staff				
Connectivity at HQ				
Connectivity in decentralized locations				
Connectivity at home for staff				
Software for remote work				
Software for remote data collection				
To teach respondents to work online				

**18. Please add any comments you may have or any additional information you would wish to share: \_\_\_\_\_**

## APPENDIX B

### NSOs of UNECE countries that participated in the online survey in October 2020

Albania	INSTAT, Social Statistics Directory, Population Statistics Sector
Armenia	Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia
Azerbaijan	State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Belarus	National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus
Bulgaria	National Statistical Institute, Population and Housing Fund Department
Croatia	Croatian Bureau of Statistics
Denmark	Statistics Denmark, Population and Education Division
Estonia	Statistics Estonia, Population and Social Statistics Department
France	INSEE-Cellule Immigration
Georgia	Geostat, Population Census and Demographic Statistics Department
Hungary	Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Population Census and Demographic Statistics Department, Migration Statistics Section
Kazakhstan	Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan	National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Demographic Statistics Department
Lithuania	Statistics Lithuania, Demographic and Migration Statistics Division
Luxembourg	STATEC
Montenegro	Statistical office of Montenegro, Department of Demography and Migration
North Macedonia	State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia
Republic of Moldova	National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova
Russian Federation	Federal State Statistic Service of Russia
Slovenia	Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
Spain	National Statistics Institute, Socio-Demographic Statistics Directorate
Switzerland	Federal Statistical Office
Ukraine	State Statistics Service of Ukraine
United States	U.S. Census Bureau
Uzbekistan	State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics

# Measuring migration and remittances in UNECE countries during the pandemic

## Working Paper Series on Statistics

The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on international migration and remittances in most countries, with a significant reduction of the flows starting in March 2020. At the same time, the pandemic created a peculiar context for the data collection practices in most National Statistical Offices (NSOs). Many NSOs use administrative sources and household surveys for collecting information about migration and remittances. As a consequence of the pandemic, they faced unexpected challenges of remote work and restrictions imposed on face-to-face communication, which required rapid shifts to new modes of work and different data collection methods.

This paper explores the administrative, logistical and methodological challenges faced by NSOs in the data collection and production of statistics on migration and remittances during the pandemic, and the strategies used to cope with them. The paper is based on the results of an ad hoc informal survey carried out among NSOs of UNECE countries. The paper was prepared by Anna Prokhorova, UNECE Consultant, and complements the paper “Analysis of Household Surveys on Migration and Remittances in the Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia” (UNECE Working Paper Series on Statistics, Issue 4, June 2018)

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