

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

Online meetings on migration statistics

- 26 October 2021, 10:00-13:30 CEST (Geneva time):
Workshop on measuring migration and remittances
- 27-28 October 2021, 15:00-18:30 CEST (Geneva time):
Group of experts on migration statistics

INVITATION TO REGISTER AND CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Submit abstract: by Friday 24 September
Register: by Friday 15 October
Consult the [meeting webpage](#)

I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1. As countries around the world continue to grapple with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on their populations, including the restrictions on travel, personal interaction and the impact on economic activity, the need for international exchange is greater than ever. This applies also to the collection, production and dissemination of statistics on international migration and remittances, also taking into account the fact that restrictions to travel between countries and health protection measures change rapidly, affecting the numbers of migrants but also the capacity to measure migration flows and stocks.

2. In light of the continuing restrictions on travel and health protection measures, UNECE physical meetings on migration statistics and in other areas continue to be postponed until further notice. In the intervening period until such a meeting can take place, UNECE is convening online meetings to provide migration statistics experts the opportunity to exchange experience on the impact of the pandemic on migration, and on the collection, production and dissemination of international migration statistics.

3. Two online meetings will take place over three days:

a. **Workshop on measuring migration and remittances**
Tuesday 26 October, 10:00-13:30 CEST (Geneva time)

b. **Group of experts on migration statistics**
Wednesday 27 & Thursday 28 October, 15:00-18:30 CEST (Geneva time).

II. PARTICIPATION

4. The main target audience of the meetings includes statisticians and analysts from national statistical offices and international organizations who are responsible for migration statistics. Representatives of academia, civil society and other individuals may also register and will be able to participate subject to available capacity.

5. Only registered participants will be able to connect to the meetings. To register please complete [the online registration form](#) by Friday 15 October 2021. Connection links and instructions for joining the events will be sent out by email approximately one week before the meetings.

6. The working languages of the meetings are English and Russian. The organizers expect to provide simultaneous interpretation in these languages. Abstracts should be submitted and presentations delivered in English or Russian only.

III. CONTRIBUTIONS

7. *No written papers are requested.* The events will consist of short presentations (7-10 minutes, maximum 5 slides) followed by facilitated discussions. You may signal your wish to give a presentation during the events by submitting an abstract of approximately 300 words outlining your proposed contribution. Abstracts should be submitted in English or Russian via [the online form](#) by Friday 24 September 2021.

8. Abstracts for all sessions should aim to be forward-looking with the goal of providing information that may be useful for others: e.g. highlighting findings or experiences that could offer valuable lessons learned; and/or showing how these experiences will inform future approaches.

9. The limited time available for the meetings may mean that not all abstracts received can be accepted for presentation at the meeting. In this case the CES Steering Group on Migration Statistics will select the abstracts to be presented. Selected presenters will be given full instructions and deadlines for preparing their presentations and for the conduct of the online event. All abstracts received will be made available on the meeting website and may be used to inform future online discussions (see section IV).

IV. THEMES

A. Exchange of experience on measuring migration and remittances, with focus on countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (workshop on 26 October)

10. The global Covid crisis has heavily affected and still affects almost all countries across the world, from the point of view of the public health, and the social and economic life. In terms of view of migration, many international migration flows were suddenly stopped or significantly reduced. Different kinds of restrictions to travel were adopted by many countries, often with frequent changes over time depending on the evolution of the virus spread in the different countries. As a result, migration flows in many countries were irregular, unpredictable, and even more difficult to measure than in “normal” times.

11. In this context, countries will be invited to share information on how the Covid crisis has affected the collection, production and dissemination of statistics on international migration and on remittances. Particular attention will be dedicated to changes that may have possibly taken place in data sources and collection method used. These include for instance the use of administrative data to replace household surveys, and the transition to electronic data transmission instead of using paper that in many countries was accelerated by the Covid pandemic.

12. The workshop on 26 October will focus on the situation in countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Representatives from all countries and international organizations are welcome to participate. It is envisaged that information on the impact of the Covid crisis on the production of statistics on migration and remittances and the response of NSOs could be collected from countries in advance of the meeting, in order to be presented and discussed.

B. Measurement challenges in the Covid crisis

13. The Covid crisis continues to have significant consequences on methodology used for migration statistics, for various reasons. For instance, governments may need to adjust methods, or have more frequent estimates, which could be produced adopting nowcasting or similar methodologies. The additional uncertainty and changes in migration patterns caused by the pandemic also create additional challenges when trying to project migration or population change. Countries will be invited to discuss the management of the crisis, and the impact on the statistical production.

C. Covid impact on immigrants and related population groups

14. Immigrants are more harshly affected than others by the pandemic for various reasons. Compared to the overall population, they may have limited access to information, prevention measures, and healthcare. This session will focus on vulnerable and temporary populations, including immigrants, foreigners, and refugees. Presentation and discussion will focus on the various aspects of inequality experienced by the targeted populations and areas of interest to ensure the recovery would not create further inequalities.

D. Measuring the consequences of decline in migration

15. In many countries, the Covid crisis resulted in lower level of immigrants, and this may have significant implications on the economy, including the food, health and housing sectors. Labour migration patterns have been suddenly interrupted or significantly affected. The session will address the impact of decline in migration and its implications on unemployment, remittances and production.

E. Improvements in use of administrative data for migration statistics

16. In some countries, administrative data have been at the core of the production of migration statistics for many years. In other countries, administrative data have not traditionally been used to produce migration statistics for various reasons, including for instance the absence of a population register or the limited availability or accessibility of administrative data. However, in recent years in most countries administrative data have been increasingly used to produce migration statistics, overcome limitations and difficulties, increase efficiency and respond to emerging issues with other sources (e.g. increasing costs and decreasing participation in household surveys). At this session, countries will be invited to share their experiences and innovative practices in the use of administrative data for migration statistics.

F. First results from the 2020 census round on migration data

17. In several countries the Covid pandemic disrupted the plans for the census of the 2020 round, leading to postponements or changes to data collection strategies. On the other hand, in the countries where the census was carried out, the first results may be available. At this session, countries may present the first results of their census on migration data, including potentially the impact of the Covid pandemic on their census operations and results.

G. Timeliness of migration data for policy-making, and use of estimates

18. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, in many countries the governments expressed the need to have more frequent estimates of migration flows and stocks, particularly in regions characterized by significant and/or irregular migration flows. This demand has further increased in many countries as a consequence of the Covid pandemic and of the need to monitor the impact of restrictions to travel. Official statisticians have to meet this demand taking into account the availability of alternative data sources which can be published faster than official statistics, though sometimes at the expense of quality.

19. In many countries, nowcasting or similar methodologies have been tested or adopted to meet this increasing demand. Nowcasting can use known historical information on migration events (immigration / emigration) and apply modelling techniques to forecast an estimate of migration flows or stocks in the current time period. The session will review recent developments in nowcasting techniques, whether they have been implemented in countries throughout the region, and what techniques can be utilised in the future for official statistics.

H. Use of geo-referenced data

20. Thanks to the increasing availability and accessibility of modern technologies and methodologies, geo-referenced data are increasingly used in the production of official statistics in many fields, including population statistics. In the field of migration statistics, the importance of geo-referenced data is reflected in the inclusion in the CES Recommendations for the 2020 round of censuses of a new topic on population grid based on 1km² grid cells. At this session, countries will be invited to share their experiences on the use of geo-referenced data for migration statistics.

I. Use of new sources for statistics on migration and mobility

21. The *UNECE Task force on the use of new data sources for measuring international migration and cross-border mobility* is expected to present its draft report. The feedback of the participants will be appreciated in view of the finalization of the document. At the same time, countries will be invited to present their experiences on the use of new sources (including social media and big data) to produce statistics on migration and mobility.

J. Definitions of population and migration

22. The progress of work on the revision of the United Nations recommendations for statistics on international migration will be presented and discussed, including the definitions of population, migration, and place of residence.

V. CONTACT INFORMATION

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