

Distr.: General
19 October 2022

English

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Migration Statistics

Geneva, Switzerland, 26–28 October 2022

Item G of the provisional agenda

Measuring emigration

Statistics register for Migration and integration statistics: Present and future

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Abstract

During the 2000s, the proportion of foreign-born in Sweden increased from just over 11 percent of the population to 20 percent. At the same time, people born in Sweden with two foreign-born parents have increased. In 2021, they were 6,3 percent of the population. The increased proportion of people with foreign background means an increased need for information about migration and integration.

Statistics Sweden annually publishes official statistics on migration and integration. The Swedish population and integration statistics are based on the information on registered persons that the Swedish Tax Agency provides to Statistics Sweden, but also on information from the Swedish Migration Agency and other authorities.

Two statistical registers are mainly used for the statistics, the Register of the Total Population (RTB) and the Longitudinal Register for Integration Studies (STATIV). It is also possible to produce statistics from the register on circular migration. To ensure good quality in the statistical registers, an extensive review of data from the data suppliers takes place. Statistics Sweden also has continuous cooperation with the relevant authorities.

To further broaden the statistics on Sweden's population, work has been going on for several years to produce a register that contains both registered and non-registered residents. Due to changes in laws and regulations, this work has been intensified.

This presentation will focus on describing the statistical registers used to produce statistics on migration and integration, the quality of the registers and the new register.

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NOTE: The designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

I. Summary

1. Statistics Sweden publishes preliminary and final statistics on migration. Statistics Sweden also annually publishes statistics on integration. The statistics are mainly taken from two statistical registers.
2. The biggest source of uncertainty in the populations statistics is considered to be that people who emigrate do not notify the Swedish Tax Agency.
3. In recent years, we have an increased delay in the reporting of immigrants in particular
4. Increased opportunities for the Swedish Tax Agency's ability to make control visits and strengthen identity control will lead to greater reliability in the Register of the Total Population (RTB).
5. An investigation into a new register, which should also contain people not registered in the national register, is ongoing.

II. Introduction

6. In 1858, Statistics Sweden was established. When Statistics Sweden started its operations, it was the population statistics that accounted for almost all the attention. Official statistics on emigration were already available from Statistics Sweden's first year and immigration since 1875. Today we publish statistics on emigration from 1851 and immigration from 1875.
7. Within population statistics, we publish statistics on migration. We publish preliminary statistics per month, quarter and six months as well as final statistics as of 31 December of each year.
8. Statistics Sweden also annually publishes statistics and analyses on integration, as well as official statistics commissioned by the government. The statistics on integration are published as final statis statistics.
9. Statistics are published as tables and in the statistics database. We also publish reports and short analyses.
10. When final statistics are published, it is common for a statistical news or press release to be produced. They contain a description of events during the year, and they are sent out to journalists and municipalities, among others.
11. Two statistical registers are mainly used for the statistics, the Register of the Total Population (RTB) and the Longitudinal Register for Integration Studies (STATIV). It is also possible to produce statistics from the register on circular migration. We also have a register on circular migration. All three registers contain data on registered persons.

III. Civil registration

12. Persons who are resident in Sweden for at least 12 months must enter the national register, the population registration database. And a person who moves to another country and is not considered to be resident in Sweden for at least 12 months must deregister.

13. All persons registered as living in Sweden is assigned a number as identifier, personal identification number (PIN). An important exception are asylum-seekers. It is only after they have been granted asylum as they get a PIN.
14. The PIN-system in Sweden was introduced in 1947 as a system of birth numbers consisting of date of birth plus a three-digit birth number. In 1967 there was a fourth digit introduced as a check digit
15. The PIN number is unique. Anyone who has ever received a PIN will keep the same number for life, unless it needs to be corrected. A person does not change their PIN number upon immigration or emigration.
16. The PIN as the identifier has been widespread. It is not only used in population registers, but is also used for, for example, passport records, driving licences, insurances, bank records, memberships in associations. There are thus strong incentives for a person to register. Anyone who is not registered in the national register lacks many rights, for example you cannot receive child support or open a bank account.
17. Even a person not registered as living in Sweden can in some cases get an individual coordination number (samordningsnummer). It's mostly used for foreigners that have to pay taxes in Sweden. There is a change in progress regarding when coordination numbers must be obtained.

III. Registers

A. The Register of the Total Population (TPR)

18. TPR is a longitudinal register of the population and the main source of population statistics.
19. It contains information about registered persons that Statistics Sweden receives from the Swedish Tax Agency. As an identity, TPR uses the PIN.
20. A person enters the database at birth or immigration and leaves the database at death or emigration.
21. The broad use of PIN means for the population statistics that we have opportunities to link data from other administrative registers on, for example, education, employment, income, health, housing. It also means that we can follow individuals over time and create parent-child links.
22. Statistics Sweden receives daily notifications about births, deaths, migration, immigration, civil status changes and dates of events from the Swedish Tax Agency. On a typical day, we receive between 10,000 and 15,000 notifications.
23. Based on notifications, TPR is created every month. The break point is one month after the reference point. This means that publication of the monthly, quarterly and half-year statistics takes place 2 months after the reference point. For the final annual statistics, publication takes place approximately 1,5 months after the reference point.
24. In TPR, we have both flows and stocks for migrants.
25. We judge that the reliability of RTB is very good, but of course there are some quality defects.

B. Longitudinal Register for Integration Studies (STATIV)

26. Database STATIV was taken over by Statistics Sweden when the integration agency was shut down.
27. STATIV is the main source for official statistics on integration. And is the source for many assignments, including for the government, researchers and the media.
28. The database contains various registers at Statistics Sweden, the Swedish Migration Agency and the Swedish public employment service.
29. STATIV contains, among other things, information about time in Sweden, ground for settlement, type of residence permit, information about income, education and employment.

C. The circular Migration Register

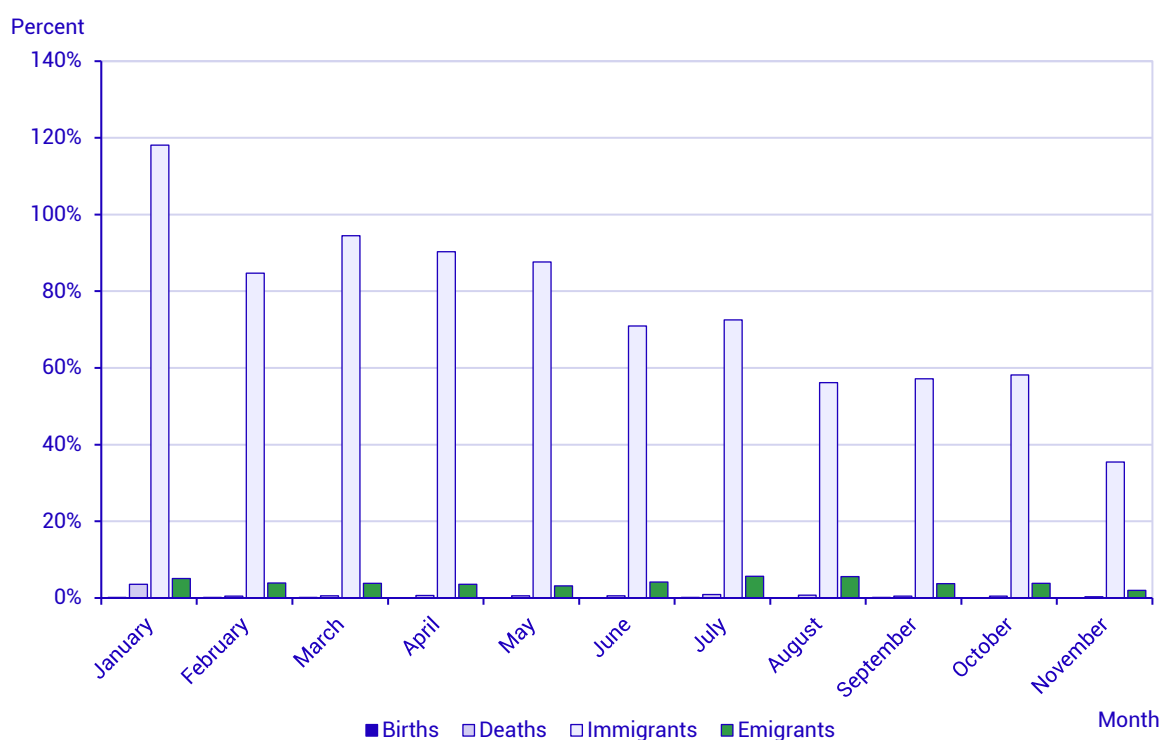
30. In the budget bill for 2016, the Swedish Government allocated funds to Statistics Sweden to produce yearly statistics on circular migration. There was a great interest, nationally and internationally, in obtaining information about people who have repeated moves between countries of birth and other countries.
31. The definition of circular migrant is in line with that proposed by a working group under the United Nations Economic Committee for Europe (UNECE)
32. The register contains people who crossed Sweden's border on at least three occasions in the last 10 years (circular migrant) and people who crossed twice (return migrants).
33. Between 2016 and 2021, Statistics Sweden published statistics on circular migration
34. As Statistics Sweden needed to release resources in 2021, a decision was made to temporarily end publication. However, the circular migration register is produced annually. This is to be able to produce the statistics on assignment if necessary. And to publish statistics again if it becomes relevant.

IV. Reliability in the Register of the Total Population (RTB)

35. The main source of uncertainty is that deficiencies in reporting lead to population registration data not perfectly reflecting how the population should be registered according to current regulations. Population registers are self-reported information. There are people due to lack of knowledge, omission, forgetfulness and other reasons refrain from reporting changes or provide incorrect information.
36. Deficiencies in reporting births contribute to undercoverage. At the regional level, internal migration contributes to undercoverage.
37. Deficiencies in reporting deaths and emigration (domestic and foreign) result in overcoverage.
38. However, deaths and births give rise to very small problems depending on the fast reporting routines.
39. The biggest source of uncertainty in the populations statistics is considered to be that people who emigrate do not notify the Swedish Tax Agency. We annually estimate the overcoverage in the TPR based on a model study that Statistic Sweden conducted in 2015. The model is reviewed annually, and adjustments are made if necessary.

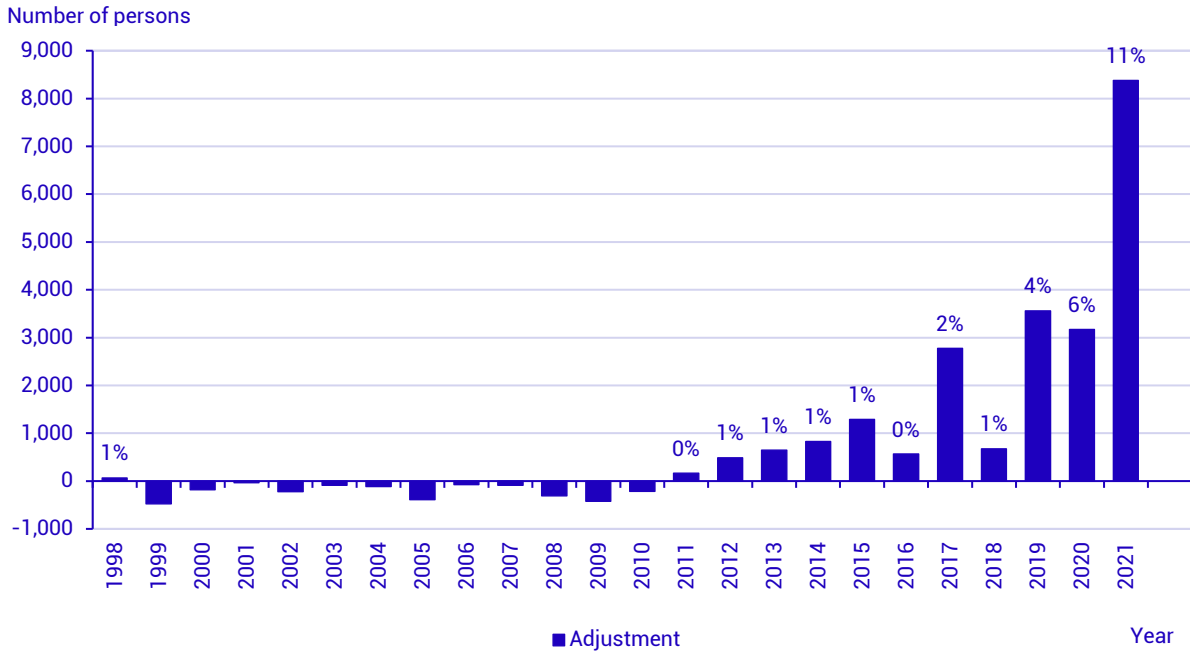
40. The idea behind the overcoverage variable is that persons who are living in Sweden leave their imprints in different administrative registers. For example, they can have income, study, or find a new place to live. Persons who do not have imprints in the registers even though they are registered in Sweden can be assumed to have left the country without reporting this to the Swedish Tax Agency. These persons are marked in the variable for overcoverage.
41. When deciding whether a person belongs in the overcoverage group or in the Total Population Register, a number of different indicators are used that can point out if it is likely that a person belongs in the overcoverage or not. The indicators are created by a set of rules that can be based on register data from a single year or from several following years. Because certain rules indicate overcoverage better than others, or the converse that the persons belong to the Total Population Register, a weighted count is used.
42. On 31 December 2021 the overcoverage was estimated to 73 000 persons, which corresponds to 0,7 percent of the population. Overcoverage per year has so far been stable and corresponded to approximately 0,65-0,7 percent of the population per year.
43. Our biggest concern in recent years is the delay in reporting information on immigration. An increasing proportion of immigrants are not included in the official statistics.
44. As some events are reported to SCB with a delay, the population register contains only notifications received up to a selected break day, approximately 30 days after the end of the reference period. Events occurring during a reference year that are reported to SCB after January of the following year are thus not included in the RTB or official statistics for the reference year.

Graph 1. Difference between first publication and final publication per month in 2021, percent

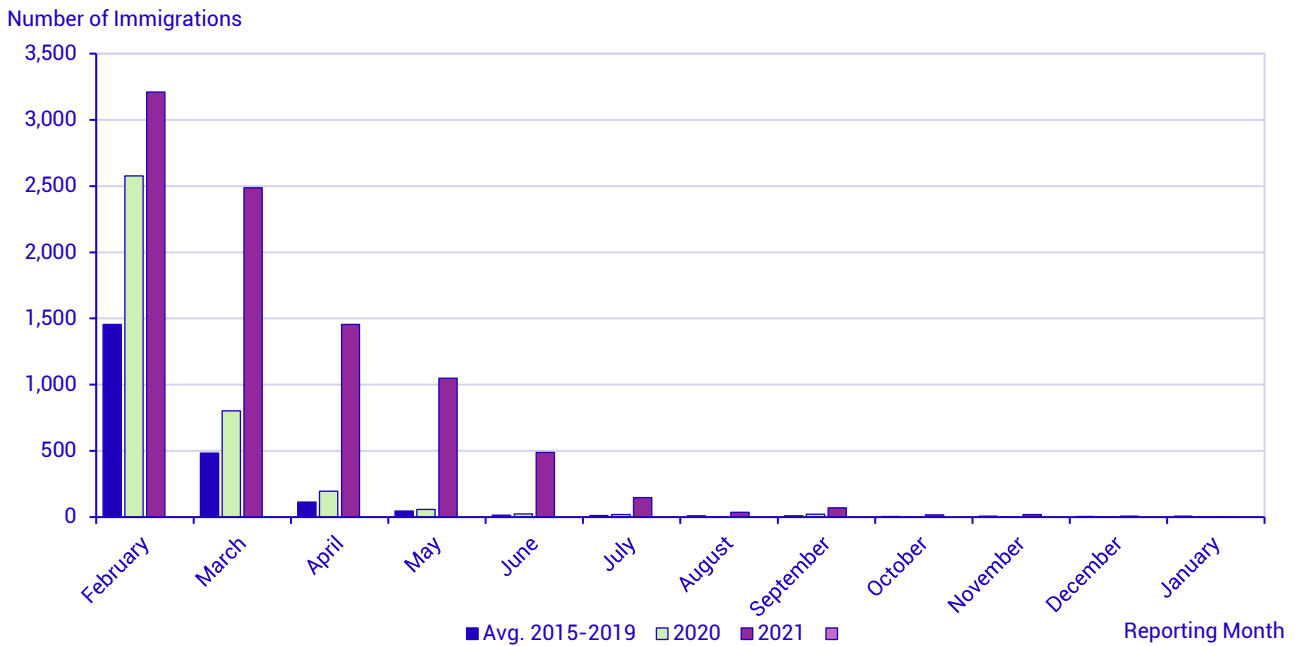


45. The mean time between immigration to Sweden and reporting to SCB has increased from an average of 20 days in 2017 to an average of nearly 50 days in 2021. Of those who immigrated to Sweden in 2020, about 10 percent were reported after the selected break day at the end of January 2021

Graph 2. Adjustment item and its share of population increase 1998 – 2022



Graph 3. Number of immigrations to Sweden not included in official statistics by reporting month, 2015-2021



46. The lag leads to a problem for those who want to analyse the population increase as a larger share of the population increase cannot be explained by birth surplus and net migration during the period. At the regional level, there are examples of regions that have a population increase at the same time as the sum of birth surplus and net migration indicates a decreased population.
47. According to the Swedish Tax Agency, work at home during covid is an explanation for the for the increase in the lag. The Swedish Tax Agency has also made some changes to make the reporting more effective.

V. Future – new opportunities

48. In June 2021, an investigation was published (Om folkbokföring, samordningsnummer och identitetsnummer SOU 2021:57) on proposing measures that improve the conditions for a person's residence to be determined correctly and that the correct personal data is registered in the population registration database (The Swedish Tax Agency).
49. The proposed measures primarily affect the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish migration Agency, but the changes have positive consequences for population statistics. Some proposals have led to changes in regulations and laws and more changes will occur in the future.
50. We can see that the quality of TPR will increase. Proposals that will mean an increase in quality are:
 - The Swedish Tax Agency has been given increased opportunities to make control visits
 - No longer possible to be registered without a known home
 - Strengthen identity control
 - The Swedish Migration Agency must notify, both registered and non-registered, the Swedish Tax Agency decisions on rejection of if a residence permit is revoke
51. The proposals also mean that Statistics Sweden has resumed the investigation into a new base register, Population base register. The idea is that the new register should also contain people who are not registered in the RTB.
52. The new register would give Sweden greater opportunities to meet requirements in the new framework European Statistics On Population and Housing (ESOPH) which is proposed, i.e. the definition of the population is expanded and the member states must establish a register that handles people according to the new definition.
53. In line with increased immigration, the demand for information about people not registered has also increased, both from the government, journalists, researchers and the public.

VII. References

SOU 2021:57: Om folkbokföring, samordningsnummer och identitetsnummer

SCB 2021: KVALITETSDEKLARATION Befolkningsstatistik

SCB 2016: Beskrivning av befolkningsregistret (RTB2016)

SCB 2007: Personnummer – dess konstruktion och hantering inom Statistiska centralbyrån