

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General  
30 September 2010

English only

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**Economic Commission for Europe**

## Conference of European Statisticians

**Fifty-eighth plenary session**

Paris, 8-10 June 2010

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Progress reports and work of the CES Teams of Specialists****Report of the work session on migration statistics (Geneva,  
14-16 April 2010)****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The Conference of European Statisticians' work programme for 2010 includes the organisation - jointly with Eurostat - of the Work Session on Migration Statistics, in Geneva on 14-16 April 2010 (see ECE/CES/2009/2/Add.1). The CES work on migration statistics is aimed at improving the quality and availability of statistics on international migration by developing common definitions, methods and practices, and promoting them across the UNECE region. The Work Session allowed countries to exchange experiences on the methods and techniques used for the collection, processing and dissemination of data related to international migration.

The outcomes of the Work Session include a proposal to undertake methodological work related to the measurement of the socio-economic conditions of migrants.

## I. Attendance

1. The joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics was held on 14-16 April 2010 in Geneva. It was attended by participants from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat and the DG Education and Culture (EAC). The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) were also represented. Experts from University of Southampton (United Kingdom), Moscow State University (Russian Federation), and the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) participated at the invitation of the UNECE secretariat.
2. A number of participants could attend the Work Session thanks to the financial support provided by UNFPA.

## II. Organization of the meeting

3. Mr. Marcel Heiniger from Switzerland was elected as Chair of the meeting.
4. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting:
  - (a) Migration statistics mainstreaming;
  - (b) Producing migration data using household surveys and other sources;
  - (c) Collecting data on migration in the 2010 round of population censuses;
  - (d) Measurement of migration by duration and by reason: definitional and methodological issues;
  - (e) Exchange of migration data among countries, regional and international organizations: experiences, issues and challenges;
  - (f) Information session on activities and programmes on international migration statistics.
5. The discussion at the meeting was based on invited and supporting papers. The papers are available on the UNECE website<sup>1</sup>.
6. The recommendations for future work in the field of migration statistics are given below. A summary of the discussion on the above topics will be presented in an annex to this report in English only and will be distributed to the participants after the meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.04.migration.htm>

### III. Recommendations for future work

7. The meeting proposed to undertake methodological work on the **measurement of the socio-economic conditions of migrants**, including:

(a) Identifying the socio-economic dimensions that are most relevant for the better understanding of the situation of migrants (e.g. employment, education, residence, participation in civil society, language...);

(b) Reviewing the definitions and practices adopted by countries for the measurement of the relevant migrant groups (follow-up to the work conducted by UNECE on the 2008 Questionnaire on migration statistics);

(c) Identifying and developing indicators for the different dimensions and population groups, and discussing measurement issues;

(d) Reviewing existing sources and their suitability to provide relevant data;

(e) Providing guidelines to countries intending to produce statistics on socio-economic conditions of migrants using existing sources or *ad hoc* surveys.

8. This new project should make use of the results of the work already conducted or ongoing in this field, and should take into account the existing demand for statistical information at national and international level.

9. The work should be conducted in the framework of the activities promoted by the Conference of European Statisticians in the field of social statistics. The meeting invited the UNECE Secretariat to prepare Terms of Reference for this activity, to be submitted to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians for review.

10. Representatives of Italy, Spain and Switzerland expressed interest in being involved in the work on this topic (to be confirmed after the meeting). Other countries were invited to consider contributing to this new initiative. Expressions of interest should be communicated to the UNECE Secretariat.

11. The meeting invited the UNECE Secretariat and the Steering Group on Migration Statistics to discuss follow-up activities to the work conducted on the exchange of data to improve emigration statistics, in coordination with Eurostat and other relevant international organizations.

12. The meeting also proposed that the next Work Session on Migration Statistics take place in two years (in Spring 2012), and that the following topics be discussed:

(a) Measurement of short-term international migration and analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions (discussion of the final results of the Task Force currently working on this topic);

(b) Improving migration and migrant data using household surveys and other sources (discussion of the final results of the Suitland Working Group);

(c) Measurement of the socio-economic situation of migrants (discussion of the results of the work proposed in this field);

(d) Migration and gender;

(e) Experiences with migration data from the 2010 round of population censuses, including reconciliation with flow data from other sources;

(f) Return migration.

13. The UNECE Secretariat invited interested countries to join the Steering Group on Migration Statistics

#### **IV. Adoption of the report of the meeting**

14. The present report of the meeting was adopted during the closing session.

15. A summary of the discussion in the substantive sessions of the meeting is presented in an annex to this report, prepared by the Secretariat after the meeting.

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## ANNEX

### Summary of the discussion in the substantive sessions

#### Topic I. Migration statistics mainstreaming

Documentation: Papers by Eurostat, European Commission DG Education and Culture (EAC), and Portugal

1. In its presentation, Eurostat proposed diverse actions to be taken in order to develop migration statistics to better meet the policy needs for information on migration. These includes adjusting existing data sources and further develop new ones; harmonizing definitions, concepts and methods; improving communication and cooperation with policy makers; and finally enhancing data sharing between national statistical systems.
2. Some participants commented on the importance to have clear definitions for measuring the different categories of migrants. Italy observed that some data on migrants are not available from administrative sources and must be collected through household surveys. However, during recent studies (in deep interviews with multicultural mediators and cognitive test on migrants) conducted in view of household surveys, migrants often showed some difficulties to be interviewed because of cultural and/or language barriers. Italy concluded that different tools (eg questionnaire translated in different languages, etc.) may be necessary to collect information on migrants through household surveys if compared with other household surveys.
3. The Economic Commission DG on Education and Culture reported about education and training issues concerning migrants in the EU. The DG EAC advocated for a better monitoring of migrants' education, which would allow identifying best practices and implement adequate and effective policies for migrants' integration.
4. During the discussion on migrants' education, Norway observed that tertiary education is particular since some students move in order to study abroad. Hence targeted measures are needed in data collection in order to distinguish them from other migrants. It was observed that particular attention should be given to adult learning, as this important sector was the only one where migrants were not disadvantaged.
5. The UNECE observed that in some countries (Austria and Germany) the results seem to show that the second generation performed worse than the first one. The DG EAC confirmed that these results were unexpected, and they were still investigating the reasons. They brought forward some possible explanations; the second generation may no longer be as highly motivated as the first one, or this trend could be due to new migration flows, from different countries of origin, having different background, perspectives and expectations.
6. Concerning the education of immigrants, it was observed that often migrants came from a lower social and economic background. Studies confirmed that the combination of lower economic welfare added to migrant status represented a double burden for migrant children to succeed at school.
7. Portugal presented the national experience on statistical needs on immigration and discussed the relation between Statistics Portugal and the Portuguese Immigration Service.
8. In the discussion that followed, Italy observed that residence permit statistics were difficult to collect. Portugal agreed and further explained that EU citizens had to register in their country of destination if staying over 90 days. However since this is not fully mandatory, many persons do not register and are therefore not counted.

## **Topic II. Producing migration data using household surveys and other sources**

Documentation: Papers by UNECE and Spain. Presentation by the United States.

9. The UNECE presented the results of the questionnaire on data sources and definitions for migration statistics, that was completed by member countries in 2008 as part of the CES work programme on migration statistics. The results of the questionnaire show that the 2010 round of censuses should represent an important source of information particularly on migrant stocks, but also on flows. Household surveys are potentially an important source of data, including data on length of stay. However, there are some issues to be solved, for instance concerning the comparability of data across countries or the availability of data for different migrant groups in different countries.

10. Norway observed that a more detailed analysis would be useful looking in particular at issues such as the quality of the registers. Norway also noted that qualitative methods are just as informative and recommended the work undertaken in the course of the THESIM project in particular.

11. The OECD thanked the secretariat for the report and outlined the importance of quality aspects in this exercise, raising the questions of confidentiality of personal data and the difficulties of using flow data.

12. Spain presented the methodology developed for monthly now-casting, which proved to be very successful in terms of accuracy. The participants commended this initiative on two scores, one being the importance of producing timely data and the second being the use of expiry data to check when individuals have moved on. This practice also fits well with the UN recommendation on length of stay of 12 months.

13. Some participants asked whether the ex-post establishment of dates of events requires an on-going revision of the time series, and whether the now-casts are checked later on against observed statistics, and possibly adjusted. Spain explained that estimating the results is still an issue. It is not possible to revise constantly, so other tools are used. Data from a small household survey and from the population registers ("Padron") are used as auxiliary sources. The coverage of immigrants in the Padron is considered relatively good also for illegal immigrants, as they can be registered and registration entitles them to basic services.

## **Topic III. Collecting data on migration in the 2010 round of population censuses**

Documentation: Paper by the United Kingdom. Presentations by UNSD and the United States.

14. The presentation by UNSD focused on the importance of population censuses in collecting data on migration statistics. It covered some of recommendations presented in the "Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev.2", concerning core questions asked in the censuses.

15. It was noted that the UNSD Recommendations do not cover the use of censuses for collecting data on emigration. The participants also noted the limited use of the population census to collect data on flows.

16. The United States presented the US reengineered Decennial Census, which include a decennial count based on a "short form" only, and the collection of "long form" data using the monthly American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS includes some CES

Recommended core topics. It was noted that the question on the country of citizenship is asked partially. No data are available on the country of citizenship, on stateless persons, or on dual/multiple-citizenship.

17. The United Kingdom presented information on measuring migration in the 2011 UK and Albanian Censuses. The recommended questions on citizenship and intentions to stay, to be used for the first time in the UK, are yet unproven in full census environment. The new questions arouse concern and suspicion from the migrant populations, however less so for Albanian migrants. Both the UK and Albania are aiming to adopt the CES Recommendations for including questions in the 2011 Census to collect information on migrant stocks and flows.

#### **Topic IV. Measurement of migration by duration and by reason: definitional and methodological issues**

Documentation: Paper by the Task Force on the analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions.

18. The UNECE presented a progress report on the work conducted so far by the Task Force and on the next steps. These include the further collection and analysis of relevant data from countries, and the investigation of the implications of adopting alternative migration definitions for emigration, including the impact on net migration estimation.

19. The subject of short-term and long-term migration was discussed as countries adopt different durations to measuring it. Moreover, there are differences between countries in the characteristics of migration by duration. For example in Slovenia the majority of immigrants intend to stay between 6 and 12 months, but then many of them eventually stay for more than 12 months, although the extension of stay is not fully reflected in the statistics.

20. The role of the reason for migrating was also discussed. The information about the reason is important since it allows distinguishing short-term migrants from tourists and other visitors.

#### **Topic V. Exchange of migration data among countries, regional and international organizations: experiences, issues and challenges**

Documentation: Papers by UNECE and Sweden/Netherlands (joint paper). Presentations by UNECE, UN ESCWA and Norway.

21. The comparison of international migration data between Sweden and the Netherlands demonstrated important differences between the two countries. These incongruities are due at least in part to differences in registration systems and in the definitions used for international migration. Another commonly recognized problem is the underreporting of emigration caused by unclear rules or the absence of incentives to individuals to deregister when they leave the country. Unreported migration is more frequent in the Netherlands than in Sweden. The next steps include the use of microdata: from both countries to improve the data of each country.

22. Norway presented the Nordic agreement on population registration, according to which the Nordic countries represent one population area. The purpose is to avoid double registration or no registration of individuals. The consistency of inter-Nordic migration statistics was also discussed.

23. During the discussion it was noted that administrative systems may have an impact on the data. In general, NSOs cannot change administrative rules. As a result, in some cases data are consistent, but not in agreement with EU regulations. In some cases there are different practices among different NSOs, for instance with regard to using different dates (registration vs. actual) or to the inclusion of the “lag” (delayed notifications).

24. The UNECE presented the final version of the Guidelines for Exchanging Data to Improve Emigration Statistics, which were endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2009.

25. The participants stressed the usefulness of using data from other countries to improve the data of its own country. It was noted that there should be a follow up regarding the Guidelines and welcomed the idea of data exchange, whether it is a clearing house or building up on already existing data exchange systems. The UNECE presented different options to promote data exchange at the international level. These options, with the respective advantages and disadvantages, will be investigated by the UNECE, Eurostat and the other relevant international organizations.

26. The participants noted that follow-up work to the Guidelines is very important. However, data collection activities already conducted by other organizations should be taken into account and not duplicated. The focus should be on data exchange, with the objective to help countries using the data from other countries. Dissemination and analysis of existing data is also essential.

27. ESCWA presented the main characteristics of international migration flows in the Arab countries (in particular the flows directed to European countries) and discussed briefly the economic and social implications for origin and destination countries. The main challenges in producing good quality migration data for countries in the region were also discussed, including the lack of coordination between countries, and the fact that there are no proper data collection systems.

28. The participants discussed about the inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees from Arab countries in the migration statistics in Eurostat database. It was observed that possibly only refugees are actually included, but not asylum seekers.

## **Topic VI. Reports on various activities and programmes**

Documentation: Papers by Eurostat, University of Southampton, OECD, Eurostat/World Bank/UNHCR. Presentations by UNECE, Tajikistan and IOM.

29. Eurostat presented a report on the implementation of the regulation on statistics on international migration, usually resident population and acquisition of citizenship. Challenges include: measuring emigration, stock/flow consistency, validity of residence permit vs. intended length of stay, unknown country of next/previous residence.

30. The University of Southampton presented the IMEM model for estimating international migration flows in the European Union. The objective is to provide a general framework for modelling migration flows between countries. The model allows harmonizing and correcting inadequacies in available data and estimating completely missing flows. The model uses Bayesian approach, based on probabilistic mechanism, and allows combining multiple data sources. The prototype was tested on a small set of countries, producing promising results.

31. The participants welcome the adoption of stochastic forecasting to measure migration, and noted that new models are user-friendly. It was also observed that expert

opinion could be used as an input for the model. However, the results of the modelling should be determined more by the data than by expert opinion.

32. UNECE presented the activities conducted in the framework of the Development Account Project on migration, aimed at strengthening the national capacity of CIS countries to produce migration data. A first workshop was held in Bishkek in February 2010 with positive results. A draft toolkit was prepared to help improving the production of statistics on international migration in the region. Other activities include plans to facilitate data-sharing in the region, and an inventory of information sources on migration in UNECE region.

33. OECD presented an update on the development of a database on immigrants in OECD countries. The objective is to help dispel some myths and shed new light on the “brain-drain” process. The extended database, based on data from the 2010 round of population censuses, should include data for specific countries and at regional level; new brain drain figures; specific analysis of international migration within specific areas.

34. Eurostat, the World Bank and UNHCR jointly submitted a paper on the follow-up of the work on Model Questionnaires for Mediterranean Household International Migration Survey (MED-HIMS) already developed in the framework of the MEDSTAT II Programme in order to investigate on emigration, return migration and intention to migrate in the Mediterranean countries. Next steps, which foresee the adaptation of Model Questionnaires to consider the topics of forced migration and population born abroad proposed by UNHCR and the preparation of technical manuals, should be implemented through funding made available from the World Bank, UNHCR and the upcoming MEDSTAT III Programme. The MED-HIMS surveys can be implemented in selected countries autonomously or eventually under a coordinated regional or sub-regional programme, depending on further availability of funding from international community.

35. Tajikistan presented a review of statistical data on international migration in the country, with a discussion of different sources and recent migration trends. The data show important flows of temporary labour out-migration. The participants expressed their interest in the presentations. Other countries were encouraged to share their experiences in future meetings.

36. IOM presented the Migration Profiles, which are migration reports on a specific country based on a standardized template, to be used as information tools for policy development. The objectives of the MP include: enhance governmental knowledge about migration; improve the use of migration information for policy development; foster greater inter-ministerial coordination. MP reports are more than statistical reports and can be used as a capacity-building tool, as the government is involved in the production. The experience showed that Migration Profiles can support policy development through improving accessibility and availability of migration data; identifying data gaps and promote data-sharing; promoting discussion on migration policy.

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