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MIGRATION STATISTICS MAINSTREAMING

Migration Statistics Mainstreaming

Note by the European Commission[*]

I.   INTRODUCTION

Migration is a major and growing issue that continues to impact on all areas of social and economic life. This paper highlights the expanding and changing needs for statistical information on migration and migrants. The importance for meeting these needs is discussed, together with potential approaches for undertaking the necessary developments.

II.   POLICY NEEDS FOR STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The 'Stockholm Programme', adopted by the European Union Member State governments at the December 2009 European Council, sets a framework and series of principles for the ongoing development of European policies on justice and home affairs for the period 2010-2014 Migration-related issues are a central part of this Programme. One of the initiatives in the new Programme is *'to consider how existing information sources and networks can be used more effectively to ensure the availability of the comparable data on migration issues'*.

The Stockholm Programme can be seen as a continuation of the efforts that have been made since the Amsterdam Treaty came into force in 1999. European policies on migration and asylum have evolved through the implementation of the Tampere Programme (1999-2004) and the Hague Programme (2004-2009).

A Commission Communication issued in October 2008, *'Strengthening the Global Approach to Migration'*, emphasises the importance of migration as an aspect of external and development policy. The Pact on Immigration and Asylum, formally adopted by the Council of the EU, in October 2008 focuses on legal immigration; the control of illegal immigration; border controls; migration and development; and the finalization of a common European asylum system and migrant integration. A key element of these policy agreements is the importance of reliable statistical information to inform and monitor the effectiveness of policy actions.

It is clearly not possible to define what future migration-related policies will look like at European Union or national level. It is though possible to predict that migration will, over the long-term, remain an issue of great importance in the face of population ageing in Europe and population growth in developing countries. The policy mainstreaming of migration issues is likely to be seen increasingly as a requirement for good governance. Although the patterns and drivers of migration will change over time, the complexity of migration-related issues will remain. This presents a challenge to policy-makers and to the official statisticians that seek to ensure that policy decisions can be based on good statistical information.

III.   STATISTICAL MAINSTREAMING OF MIGRATION

The statistical mainstreaming of migration can be defined as ensuring that the needs for information on migrants are taken into account across a wide range of social and economic statistics. This is a realistic and necessary response to the policy mainstreaming of migration and to the evolving demands for social and economic data on migrants.

Statistical mainstreaming is a direct parallel to policy mainstreaming. The policy mainstreaming addresses migration not just as a narrow home affairs issue but one that must to be taken into account across a range of public policy areas. As such, although this is a measure concerning migration, its practical implementation takes place in many areas not previously associated with migration. Similarly, although the statistical mainstreaming of migration is intended to provide policy makers with migrant-related statistics, many of the developments will take place in areas of statistics not previously linked to migration.

At a practical level, statistical mainstreaming would generally be implemented in terms of the inclusion of migration-related variables into a wide range of statistics rather than the addition of social and economic variables to migration statistics. For example, adding migrant status information (possibly *citizenship* and/or *country of birth*) to education statistics, rather than adding education variables to statistics on the foreign population stock. In terms of data sources, this would mean that migrant questions would be included as background variables in all social surveys and that similar migrant status information would be captured in administrative data sources. The initial focus would be on the adaptation and more effective use of existing data sources. This would though, not preclude the development of new thematic migration-specific data sources if it became clear that information needs could not be met with existing sources.

The idea of statistical mainstreaming was presented and discussed on several occasions – for example, in June 2008 at the Conference of European Statisticians at which it was agreed that the work on improving migration statistics should be addressed as a priority.

IV.   DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAMME FOR THE STATISTICAL MAINSTREAMING OF MIGRATION

In 2008, Eurostat developed an outline plan that included initial proposals for the statistical mainstreaming of migration and the development of social and economic data on migrants. The outline plan included actions related to administrative and survey data sources, to the exchange of data and methodological information, and to the improvement of communication between statistical services and administrative bodies.

In October 2009, the Directors General of the European Union National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) agreed the Malta Declaration on the Mainstreaming of Migration in official statistics. This Declaration noted that, in addition to reliable statistics on the scale and patterns of migration flows and migrant stocks, further information was needed on the social and economic situation of migrants with a focus on issues such as the drivers of migration and on the integration of migrant populations. An integrated approach was proposed, maximizing the use of available administrative and survey data sources. It was important to further develop the statistical use of administrative data, and to investigate approaches to the international exchange of migration data. Additionally, the Malta Declaration called upon the Directors of Social Statistics **to develop a conceptual framework and a draft work programme** (developed on the basis of above mentioned outline plan) **for the development of statistics on migration**.

- *Establishing a Strategic Task Force on Migration Statistic Mainstreaming*

A Strategic Task Force has been established, composed of the Directors of Social Statistics from five NSIs that had indicated their wish to participate following an invitation to all EU NSIs. The Strategic Task Force will work with Eurostat to prepare the conceptual framework and work programme. The first drafts of these documents were discussed during the first meeting of the Strategic Task Force on Migration Statistics Mainstreaming which took place in Brussels on 1 February 2010 and during the meeting of European Directors of Social Statistics which took place in Luxembourg on 11-12 March 2010.

- *A conceptual framework and a work programme*

A **conceptual framework** tries to explain what the future statistical information system on migrants and migration should look like. It consists of a set of organizing principles relating to users' needs, priorities, statistical concepts and definitions, statistical data treatment.
The Eurostat's draft conceptual framework (Annex 1), prepared in diagrammatic form, illustrates *migration flows* together with related monetary flows, *migration stocks* with more detailed information on different target groups and an appropriate set of variables essential to identify different definitions of 'migrants', and the *statistical process* focused on the meaningful integration of data from different sources, as well as the exchange of data and information on best practices. The principles established should support the implementation of the actions proposed in work programme for the development of European statistics on migration.

A **work programme** should focus on developing and integrating the use of different survey and administrative data sources. The first proposals for different actions which should be included in the final work programme were presented and discussed during the first meeting of the Strategic Task

Force on Migration Statistics Mainstreaming. A more detailed programme of actions to be undertaken in the short, medium and longer term is currently being prepared.

The actions listed below (here under a series of broad headings) were proposed for the first discussion of the Strategic Task Force. Certain actions are closely inter-linked and may need to be considered together.

1. <u>Adapting existing data sources</u>

1.1. Adapting methodology of existing surveys:
- *review the methodology and properties of the sample used for the EU LFS[1] and EU-SILC[2];*
- *propose appropriate methodological changes for the EU-SILC and EU LFS. These should be taken into account in the preparation of the new legislation for EU-SILC, as well as the development of the 2014 EU LFS module on migrants.*

The actions should result in changes to the size and to the structure of the survey sample or, if needed, changes in the sampling frame. It is essential that a sufficient and representative sample of migrants should be taken to allow for reliable statistics to be produced with an appropriate level of disaggregation.

1.2. Developing special migrant questions/modules that are attached to existing surveys:
- *identify needs and constraints relating to the addition of extra migration-related questions to existing surveys;*
- *make proposals for migration questions modules.*

Adapting existing survey data sources to better cover migrant populations offers a number of apparent attractions to both official data providers and data users. It will often be quicker and cheaper to amend or expand the procedures for an existing survey rather than create a completely new survey.

These actions should result in: (i) additional information particularly related to migration (for example, the reasons for migration, language ability, experience of discrimination);
(ii) a better understanding of migration-related processes such as integration;
(iii) identification of particular migration-related population sub-groups (such as recent migrants, second generation – native born of foreign born parents).

1.3. Further development of residence permit statistics:
- *identify other statistical information (not covered by Regulation 862/2007[3]) that is potentially available from the administrative systems used for residence permits; make proposals for the collection of this additional information;*

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[1] The European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS) is a quarterly sample survey covering the population in private households in the EU, EFTA (except Liechtenstein) and Candidate Countries. It provides annual and quarterly results on labour participation of people aged 15 and over as well as persons outside the labour force.
[2] The European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) is an instrument aiming at collecting timely and comparable cross-sectional and longitudinal multidimensional microdata on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions. From 2005 onwards EUSILC covered the then EU 25 Member States plus Norway and Iceland. Bulgaria, Romania, Switzerland and Turkey have launched EU-SILC in 2007.

- *encourage the owners of administrative systems to take statistical needs into account when redesigning and redeveloping administrative systems.*

Residence permit data can be particularly useful to provide information on the socio-economic characteristics of recent migrants – those who make up the migrant flows. These are persons who are often less well covered in survey data sources. Many categories of residence permit are now harmonised across the EU, with common definitions and rules applying to persons admitted for certain reasons – such as family reunion, family formation, or as students or researchers. This policy harmonisation is continuing. Importantly, these data can be collected rapidly with a limited additional burden on data suppliers.

2. <u>Develop new data sources</u>

2.1. Developing the statistical use of administrative data:
- *investigate options for developing the statistical use of a broader range of administrative systems (in particular, those concerned with education or social protection);*
- *undertake concrete pilot data collection exercises, working with NSIs and administrative departments in a small number of the European Union Member States;*
- *make proposals for implementation of these data collections in all European Union Member States where appropriate administrative data exist.*

Administrative data sources are already widely used for migration statistics. However, currently, the administrative sources used are generally limited to those associated with the registration of the population or the management of immigration; such as registers of the total population or of foreign citizens, or data on residence permits issued. This action should aim to ensure that the maximum possible use is made of administrative data.

2.2. Establishing a new targeted migrant survey/surveys:
- *review national level experiences of the use of targeted migrant surveys;*
- *develop proposals, if necessary, for a common European migrant survey that can provide data on migrants which cannot be provided neither by existing surveys nor administrative data sources (e.g. perceived integration and well-being, processes of integration, migration drivers and pathways);*
- *make recommendations for specific survey activities linked to the decennial census.*

In many cases, only surveys are able to provide the complex and multidimensional data that are needed for a fuller understanding of migration-related processes. Although a targeted survey may not be appropriate in all Member States, it would be valuable to have an agreed set of common questions and procedures to ensure comparability of the data between those Member States that did wish to participate.

3. <u>Definitions, concepts and methods</u>

3.1. Priority target groups:

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[3] Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 July 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 311/76 on the compilation of statistics on foreign workers

- *define the migration-related population groups that should be the focus of migration statistics (target groups);*
- *review the list of Eurostat Social Core Variables[4], if necessary propose additional or alternative items and definitions.*

The key target groups were already defined in the draft conceptual framework (Figure 2). In the course of the process of defining them the needs of data users as well as the feasibility of covering these groups in the statistics were taken into account. Next very important step is to reflect these key groups in revisions to the list of Eurostat Social Core Variables.

3.2. Mechanisms for integrating data from different sources:
- *investigate approaches to integrating data from different surveys and administrative sources;*
- *undertake, wherever possible, pilot exercises to integrate data from different sources – the results of these exercises will inform possible wider application of these approaches.*

The Commission vision for reforming the production of European statistics envisages taking and combining data from different existing sources. Data integration is potentially an efficient way to maximise the use of data. However, there are significant technical issues to be overcome.

4.   Improve communication and cooperation with policy makers

- *develop and undertake measures aimed at improving communication. A variety of approaches can be undertaken.*

Such actions should result in better cooperation and in statistical needs being taken into account by administrative services. There is potentially a beneficial circle whereby the better statistical use of administrative data results in better statistical information being made available to the administrative services to support their work.

5.   Develop data sharing between national systems

- *facilitate pilot projects for the exchange of individual data.*

This would result in developing ad hoc or more permanent programmes for the exchange of migration data with origin and destination countries. This can be particularly useful for measuring emigration which is often better recorded by the destination country than by the country of origin.

This action could usefully be based on the information gained from the UNECE 'Data Exchange Exercise'[5] and the 'Guidelines on the Use and Dissemination of Data on

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[4] A set of "Core variables" to be collected in every social survey. The final report of the Task Force on core social variables, created by the European Directors of Social Statistics in September 2005 recommends two migration related variables: country of birth and country of citizenship at time of data collection.

[5] Pilot Project collecting and analyzing migration data from different countries. The data exchange exercise involved 19 countries. The countries were divided into 4 clusters representing sub-regions with the following group leaders: Canada, Estonia, Portugal and Switzerland.

International Immigration to Facilitate Their Use to Improve Emigration Data of Sending Countries'[6].

V.   SYNERGIES WITH OTHER PROJECTS

Eurostat is actively participating in the work of the 'Suitland Working Group on the use of household surveys to measure migration and the size, distribution, and characteristics of migrant populations' coordinated by the US Census Bureau. The Suitland Group has developed under the framework of the Conference of European Statisticians Work Plan on Improving International Migration Statistics, promoted by the CES Steering Group on Migration, which is chaired by the United States. The Suitland Group is undertaking seven projects that are intended to collect and disseminate information on best practices and tools (questionnaire modules, handbooks) that may be used by official data providers intending to make use of household surveys to provide information on migrants. Each of the projects addresses a specific methodological topic such as the linkage of administrative and survey data, or - as a tool for greater harmonisation - providing an inventory of successfully implemented migration-related questions or modules that may be adopted by other official data providers.

The outputs of the Suitland Group projects will be directly relevant to this work on migration statistics mainstreaming. Efforts will be taken to avoid duplication of work between the Suitland Group and the European Social Statistics work programme on migration statistics.

VI.   CONCLUSIONS

There is an urgent need to take internationally coordinated measures to ensure the ongoing policy-relevance of official statistics on migration-related issues. It will take time for official statistical systems to be developed to meet as far as possible these emerging statistical needs. However, some shorter-term measures can be identified that would go some way towards meeting these statistical needs. Longer-term actions can also be planned that will, over time, ensure a more comprehensive response to these statistical requirements.

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[6] Provide guidance to those countries considering improvement of their emigration data by using immigration data of receiving countries. The Guidelines were approved by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2009.

Annex 1. A draft conceptual framework
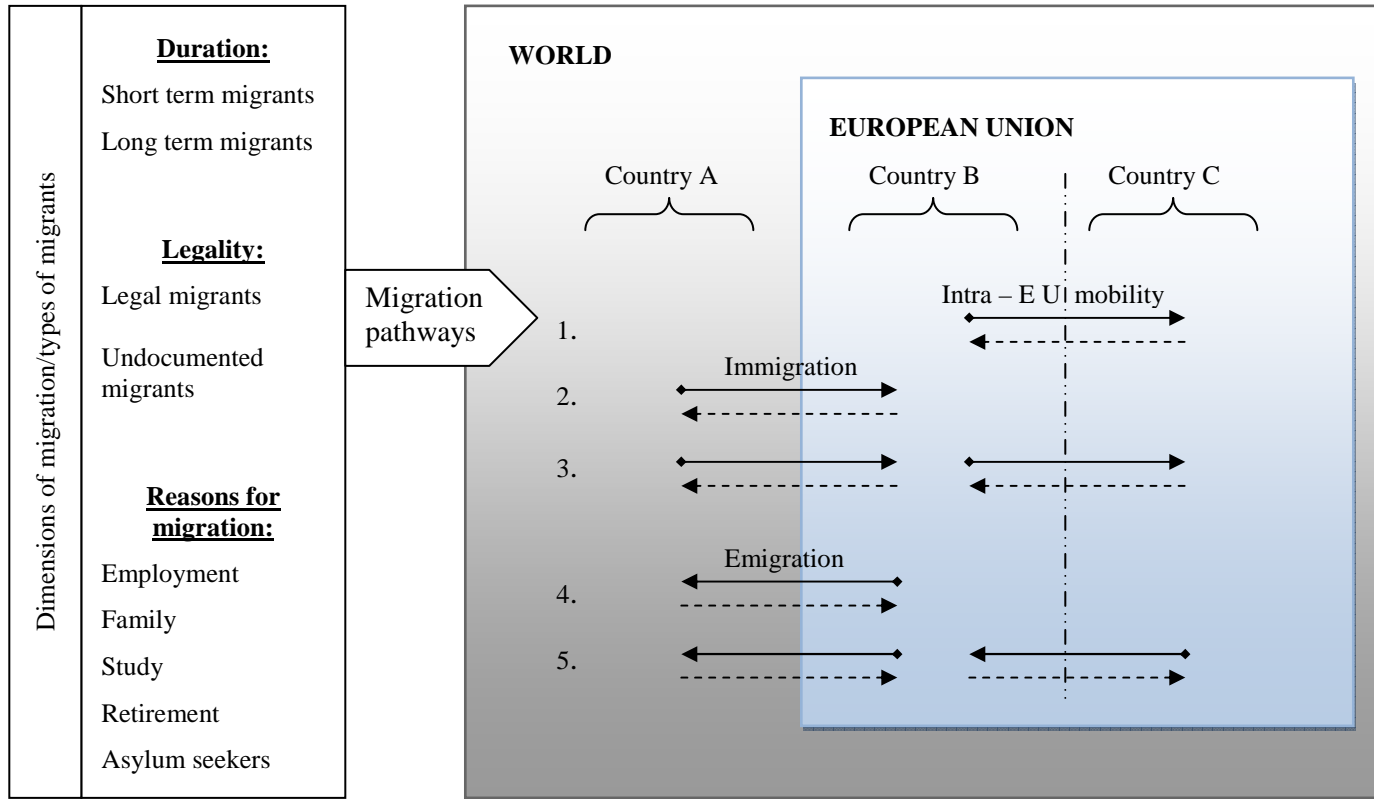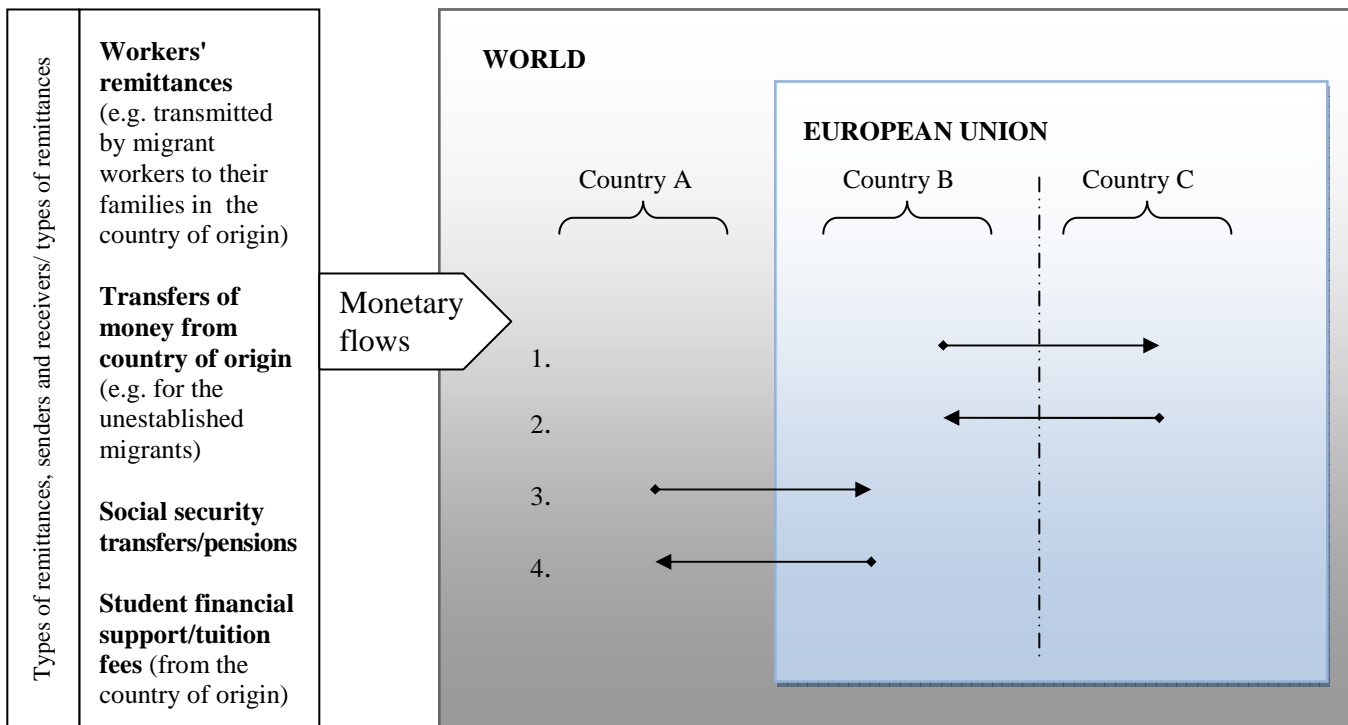
Migration flows

Figure 1. Migration pathways

Figure 1a. Related monetary flows

Statistical process

Figure 3. Data/Treatment

DATA SOURCES

Existing harmonized data sources

- Census
- LFS
- EU-SILC
- Ad-hoc modules
- Resident permits statistics
- Balance of payments

Potential national data sources

- Education registers
- Health care administration data
- Social protection data
- Benefits
- Specific migrant surveys
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STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

- Integration of data sources
  - linking
  - matching
- Estimation
- Exchange of data between countries

DATA OUTPUT

- Demographic characteristics
- Education
- Employment
- Income
- Living conditions
- Health
- Remittances
- Social inclusion
- Integration
- . . .