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# Harmonization of Migration Statistics in the CIS region

Olga Chudinovskikh  
Lomonosov MSU/ Higher school of economics

# Migration statistics as a subject of harmonization

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- ▶ Years of discussion
- ▶ Plenty of arguments
- ▶ Regular meetings and laborious work on data comparison
- ▶ International recommendations (standards) and conclusions coming from different agencies (“competition” of mandates – UN, EU, OECD etc.)
- ▶ Very slow improvement of situation (if any)
- ▶ Even in the countries with relatively close ties and strong international regulations the situation is not good
- ▶ Remaining lack of harmony “results from the complexity of the migration process and the different national practices for measuring it” (Nowok, Willikens, 2010)

# Several questions about the idea of harmonizing statistics on migration

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- ▶ Who is interested in harmonization most of all? (national or international statistical agencies?)
- ▶ Who establishes standards ?
- ▶ What is the subject of harmonization? (Definitions, sources and methods of data collection?)
- ▶ What are the criteria of “harmony” ? (Coincidence of “mirror” figures? Similar definitions, sources and methods of data collection?)
- ▶ What level of harmonization can be considered satisfactory?

## Who is interested in statistics harmonization most of all?

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- ▶ The idea belongs to international organizations that need statistics, valid for unification (homogeneous in terms of its nature) For instance – it will be good if all the countries of the region will collect data from population registers, or simultaneously conduct censuses and surveys using harmonized questionnaires .....
- ▶ The basic goals of harmonization are not that obvious for a specific country. For each country national data are the priority.

# Who establishes standards in statistics and whom are they addressed to?

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- ▶ International experts. Their views and opinions, after a long discussion, are formulated in Recommendations of different types.
- ▶ *Addressees – as a rule national statistical agencies*
- ▶ Limitations in implementation of recommendations: other ministries and agencies in the same country, that might be responsible for data collection, are not familiar with Recommendations or not interested in following them. Sometimes there are no technical or legal grounds for this, and national statistical offices do not have enough “power” or mandate to change the situation
- ▶ Up to the moment statisticians have (or try) to follow the UN Recommendations 1998 on statistics on migration, Recommendations on population and housing censuses (UNStats and CES/UNECE) + UNHCR

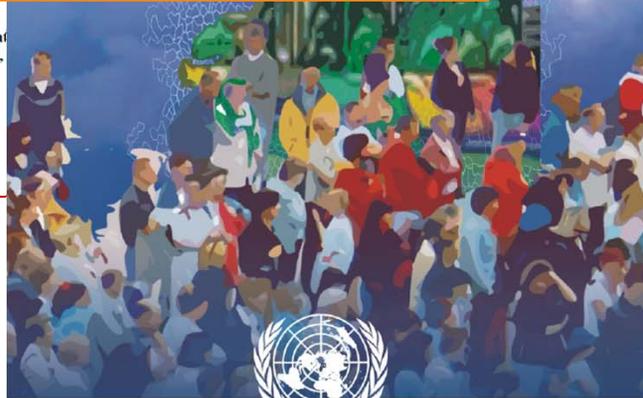
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Statistics Division

Statistical Papers Series M, No. 58, Rev. 1

**Recommendations**  
**on Statistics**  
**of International Migration**  
Revision 1

Standards and recommendations deal with definitions of long- and short-term migrants, census and survey questionnaires, data tabulations ....

United Nations  
New York



# One more question -What is the subject of harmonization?

- ▶ **International definitions of “migrants” include just “migrants”, core consideration**
  - duration of stay in a place of usual residence



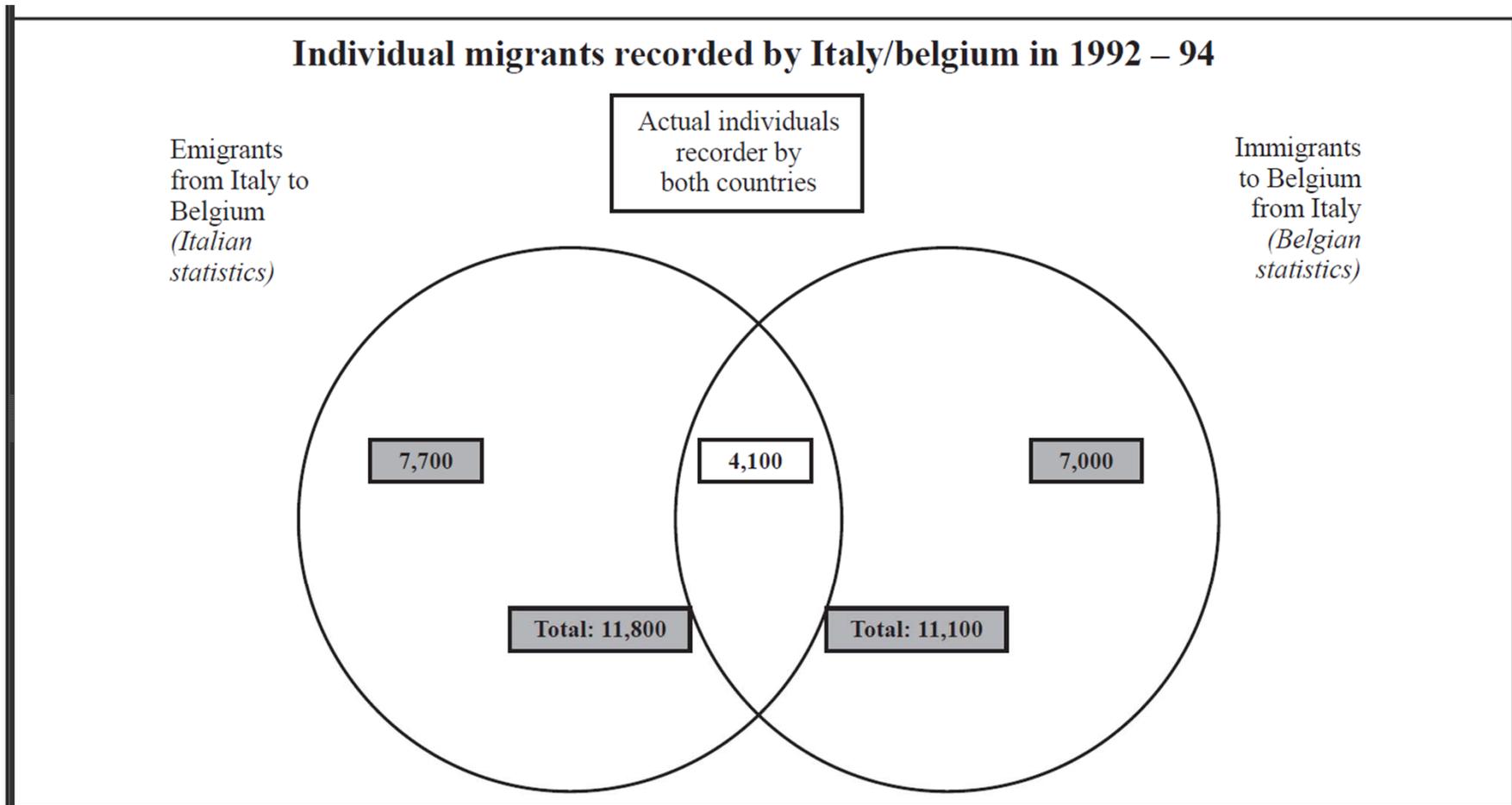
- and **“specific”** – more *policy-relevant* :
  - migrant workers,
  - migrants moving for family reunification,
  - international students,
  - forced migrants (refugees and IDPs)



**More categories – more definitions to be harmonized ....**

**Very often statistics is collected in accordance with definitions coming from national legislation , and they are not always in “harmony” with international recommendations**

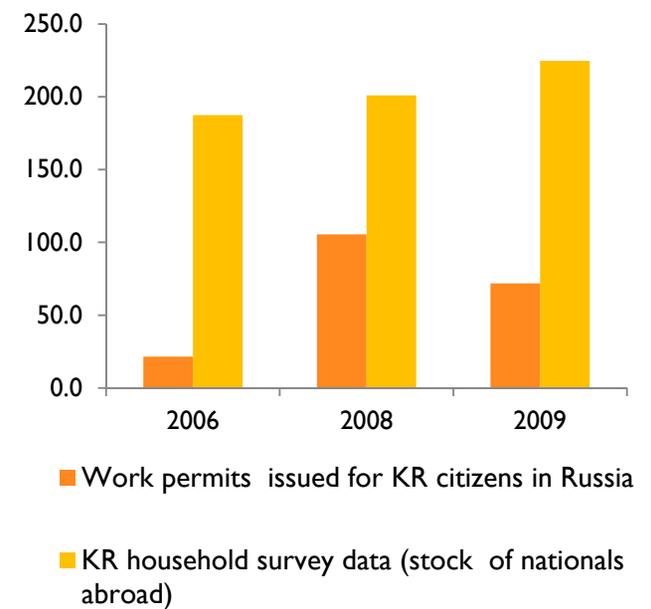
**Sometimes it is not enough to have similar figures in “mirror” statistics . Eurostat experience in bilateral comparisons of flows : case of Belgium and Italy 1992-1994. Totals (flows) were very close, but only about 35% of individual records coincided**



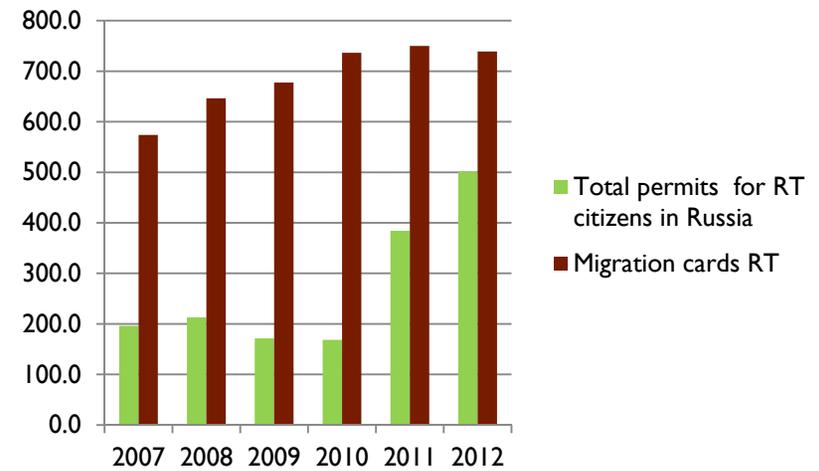
Source: Reno Camilleri

**...and sometimes it is not that bad to have different figures. Numbers of de-facto and de-jure migrants may show the scale of undocumented migration**

Household survey in Kyrgyz rep.  
And administrative data in Russia



Migration cards (>95% move to Russia) and permits for work issued to RT citizens (since 2010 including “patents”- work in private households) Thousands



Differences in data collected in sending countries and Russia, are absolutely clear, and they can not be “harmonized”, since they come from absolutely different sources.

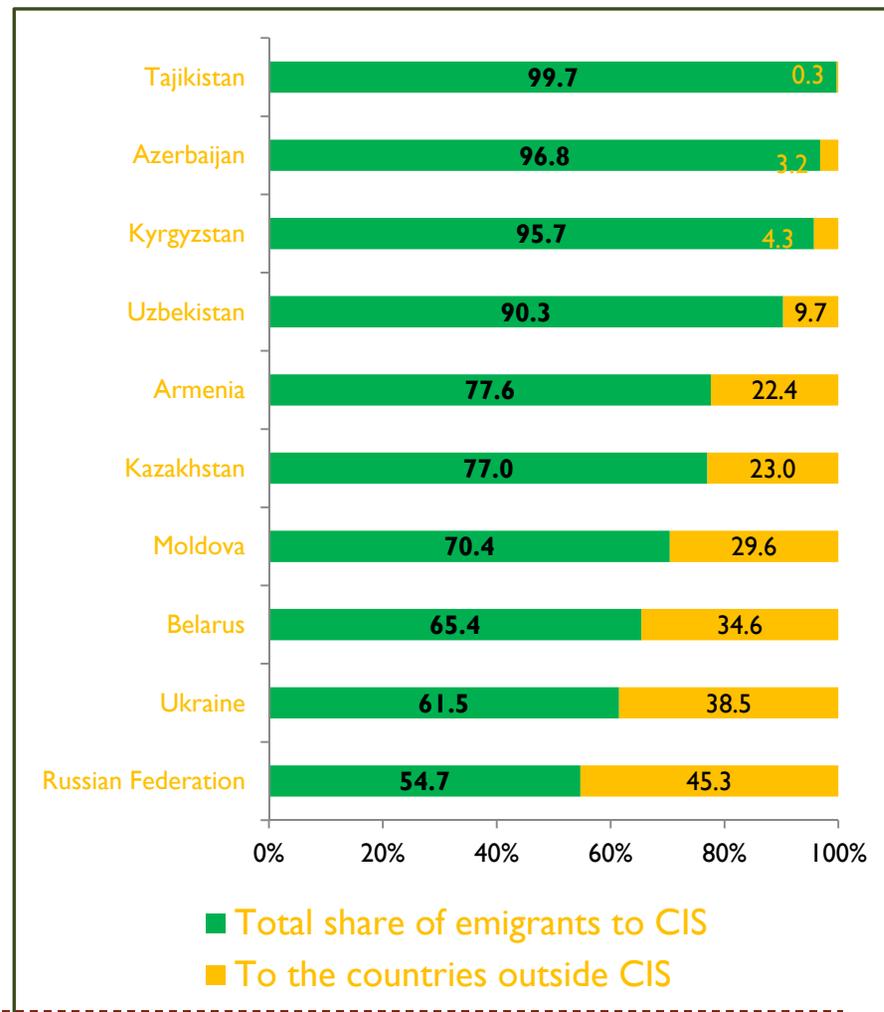
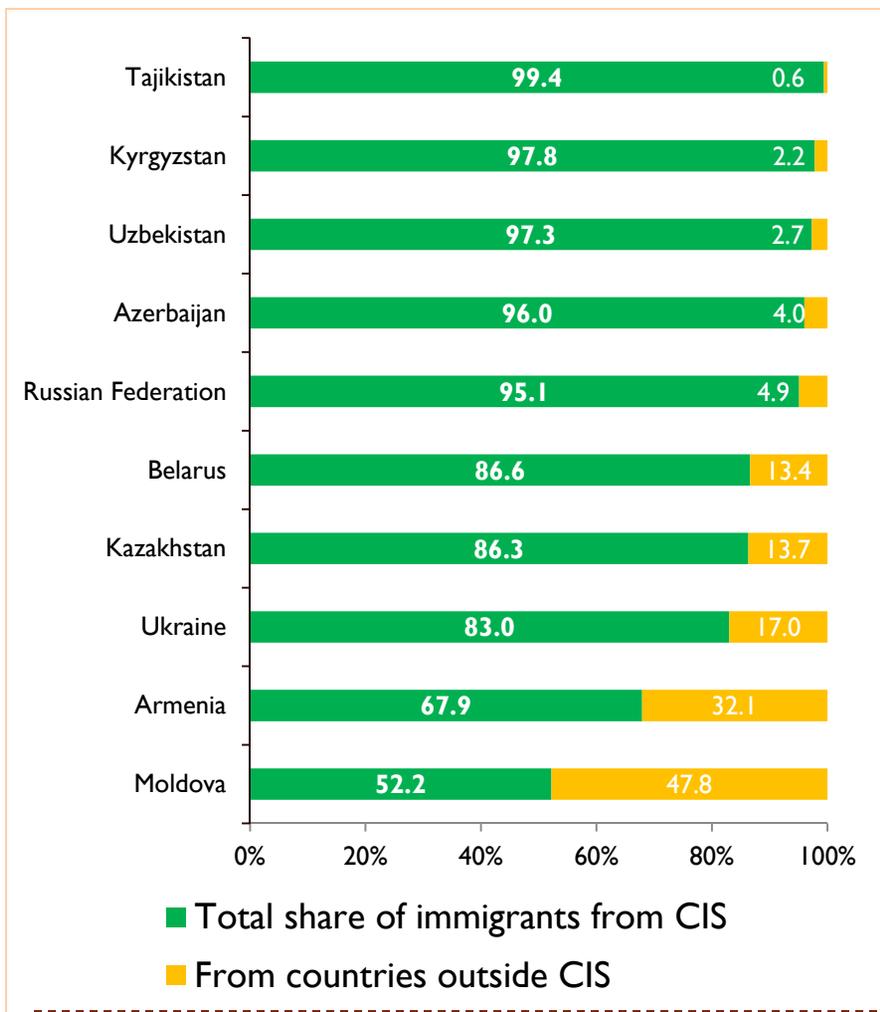
# Trends in migration in the CIS region: main challenges of measurement

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- ▶ Millions of people residing in CIS are involved into migrations and the biggest part of movements takes place within the region: about 92% of immigrants come from / and 75% of emigrants go to another CIS country, 50-99% of labour migrants also move to another CIS country
- ▶ Temporary forms of migration are prevailing
- ▶ Most part of labour migrants are undocumented
- ▶ Russia is the main destination country both for long-term and temporary migrants from the other CIS states. In 2000-2011 it has positive net-migration with all CIS countries (except Belarus). 70-90% of temporary migrant-workers move to Russia;
- ▶ After the breakdown of the USSR migration ties between some of the former soviet republics (excluding Russia) weakened dramatically ( for example, Ukraine – Central Asia, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan-Tajikistan, Turkmenistan - all the other countries);
- ▶ Mobility of the indigenous population of the Central Asia considerably increased during the last decade.

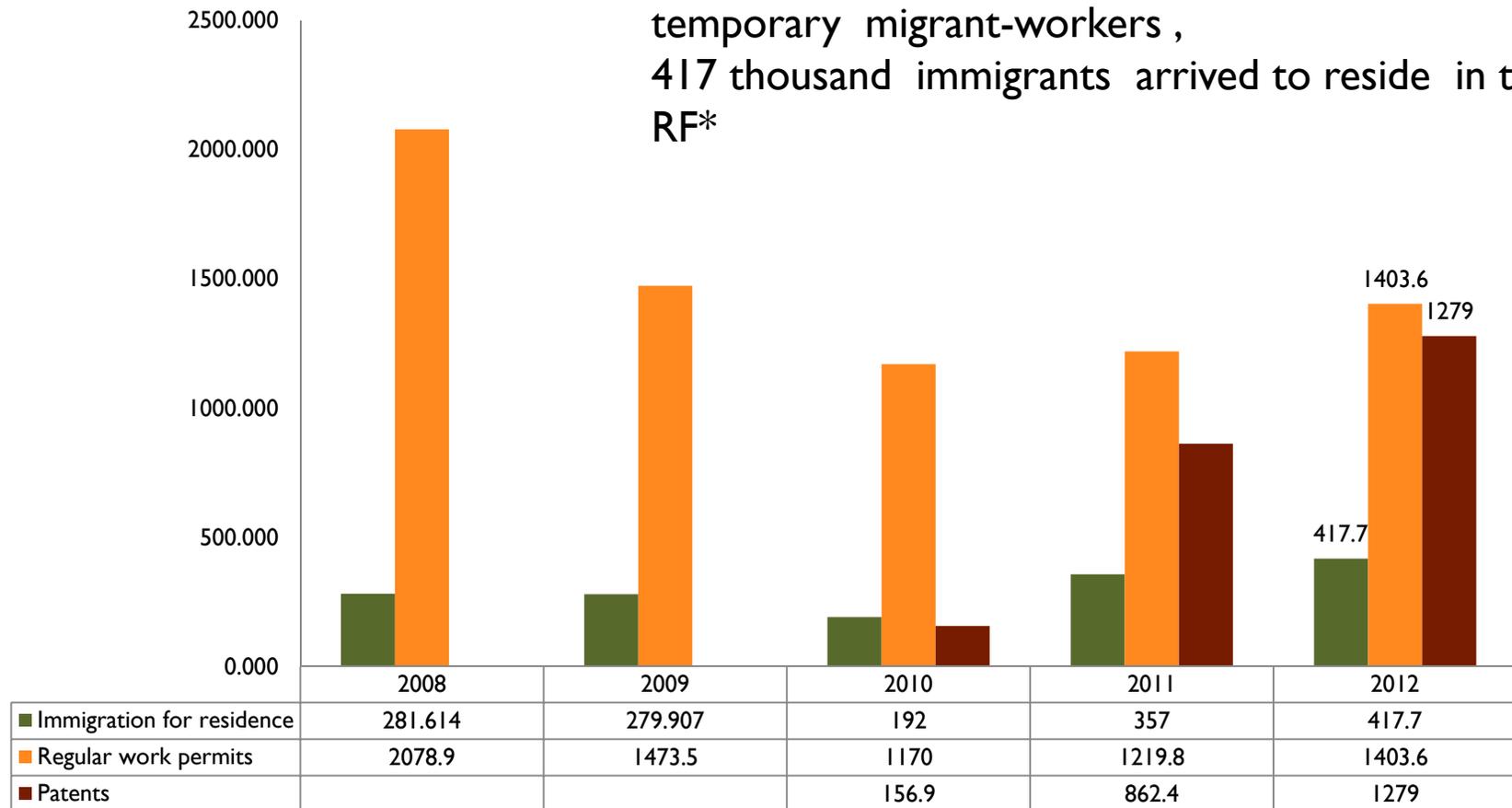
# Prevalence of movement within the area (permanent type migration) 2000-2010

% of immigrants from / emigrants to the other CIS state



# Flows of temporary labour migration and immigration for residence in Russia, thousand

Despite continuing economic crisis , in 2012 Russian authorities issued 1.4 million regular work permits, sold 1.3 million patents for temporary migrant-workers , 417 thousand immigrants arrived to reside in the RF\*



# Positive trends of the last decade in the CIS region

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1. Development of migration modules in the questionnaires used at the recent censuses
2. Every country has agencies that collect almost all types of data related to migration (level of development and interactions may differ)
3. More sources are involved into data processing and exchange at the national level (depending on financial support and political will of data producers).
4. More data are published, access to statistics becomes easier (including microdata). Diversification of published statistics.
5. Development of mutual understanding between national statistical agencies and administrative bodies collecting data on migration and related events

## Main problems about data on migration in the CIS region (all have objective reasons)

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- ▶ Development of data collecting systems is in progress almost everywhere, however its stages differ greatly due to economic and organizational reasons. Administrative data bases are used as real source of migration statistics quite in a few countries, and household surveys are also not a common practice of data collection.
- ▶ Although the situation about censuses is relatively satisfactory in terms of questionnaires, they are not conducted simultaneously. This has an impact on data comparability

# Definitions used to measure long-term migration flows

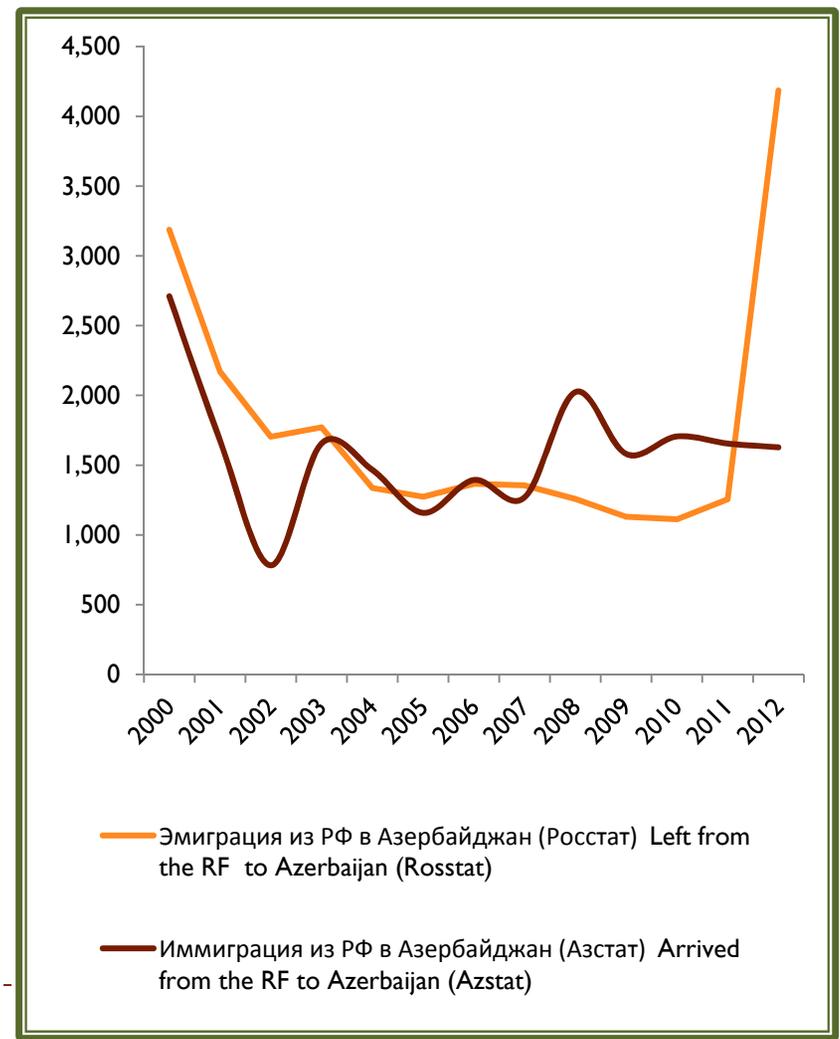
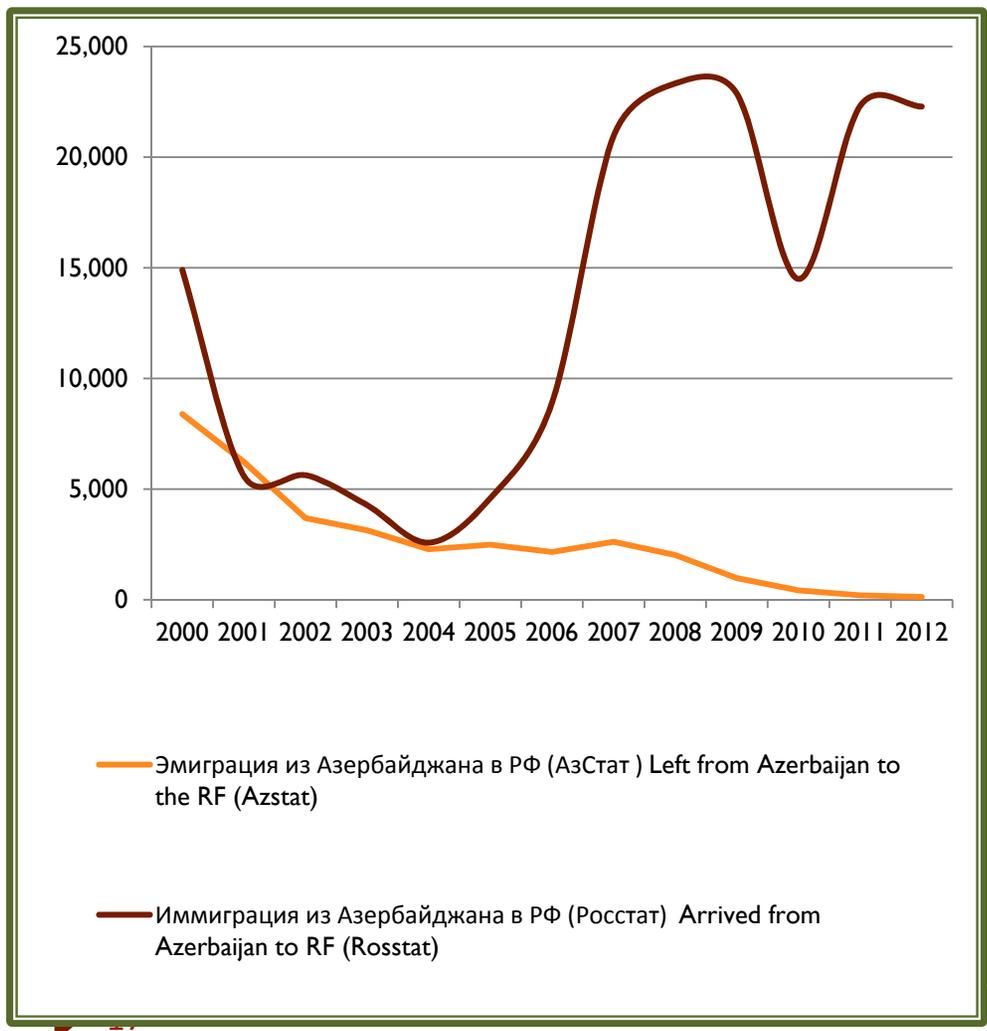
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- Most often de-jure registration (de-registration) in a place of permanent residence is taken into consideration. Place of permanent residence as a rule means a dwelling, where a person has a right to reside in. Duration of stay does not matter.
- In some countries registration depends on migrant's (foreigner's) status – and the latest – on duration of stay in the country (3-6 months etc. ).
- It is hard to implement definition of “usual” place of residence, in most cases national legislation reads that a place of permanent residence is a flat, house or another type of dwelling, where a person has a right to reside (as a proprietor, on terms of a contract etc.) Duration is not mentioned.

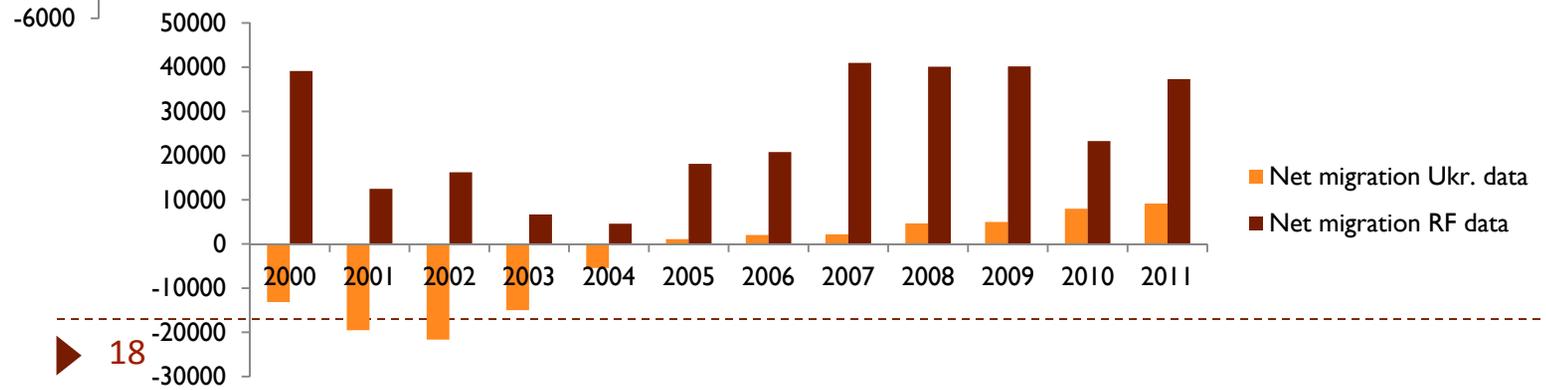
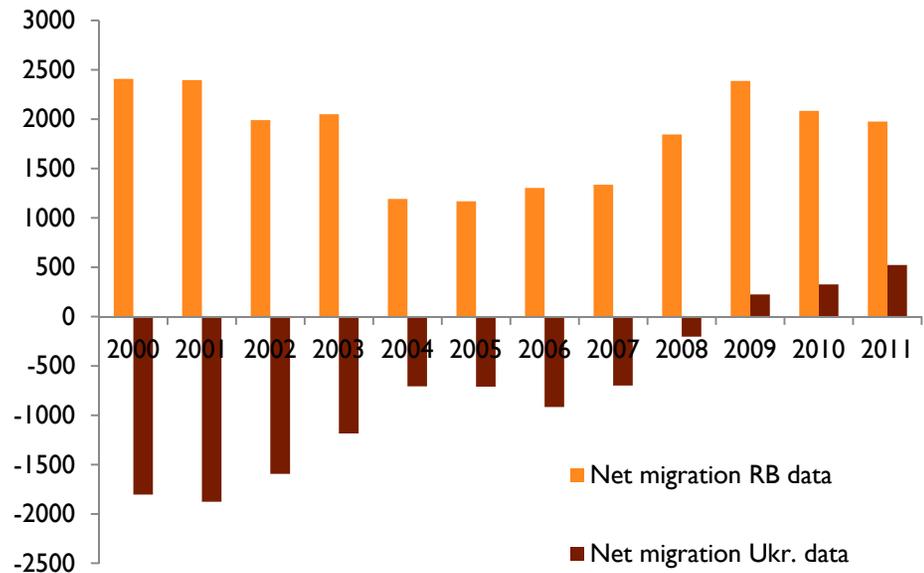
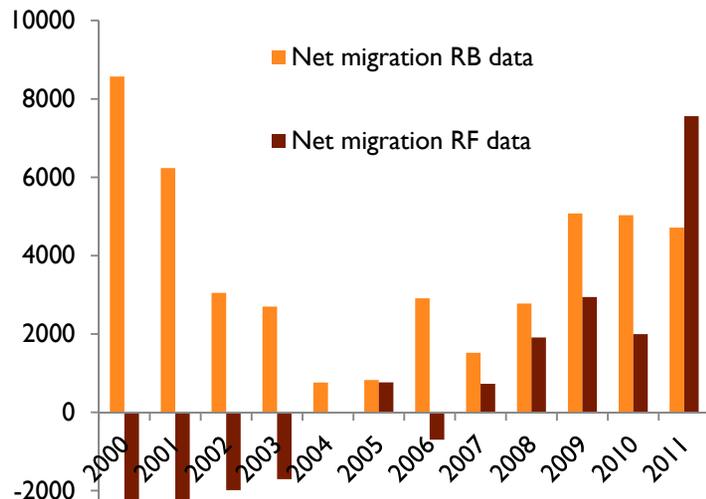
Some results of 'mirror' comparisons Permanent Net Migration in CIS countries, 2000-2010 (in 1000's)

	Data of the national statistical office of :										
	ARM	AZ	BEL	KAZ	KYRG	MOLD	RUS	TAJ	TURK	UKR	UZB
ARM	0	0	2	1	0	0	168	0	0	11	0
AZER	-4	0	3	2	0	0	111	0	-1	9	0
BEL	-1	-1	0	-11	-1	-1	-4	-1	0	-9	-2
GEOR	1	2	2	1	0	0	83	0	0	9	0
KAZ	-1	-1	15	0	-34	0	423	-4	-28	16	-217
KYRGYS	0	0	1	19	0	0	171	-7	0	3	-1
MOLD	0	0	3	0	0	0	100	0	0	30	0
RUS	-56	-18	39	-395	-290	-26	0	-73	-56	-52	-290
TAJ	0	0	1	3	4	0	119	0	0	2	4
TURK	0	1	2	32	0	0	46	0	0	3	0
UKR	-3	-1	20	-4	-2	-20	263	-2	-1	0	-17
UZB	0	1	4	274	-1	0	343	-8	-1	30	0
CIS	-64	-16	92	-77	-324	-46	1821	-94	-88	51	-523
TOTAL	-76	-16	77	-173	-340	-55	1566	-94	-90	-75	-584

# Similar procedures of data collection but different definitions lead to dramatic discrepancies



# A statistical phenomenon – partner-countries have positive net migration in mutual migration exchange (Ukraine, Belarus and Russia)



## CIS region – Labour migration is in focus of migration policy, but hard to count and compare data collected in sending and receiving countries

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- ▶ National definitions :
- ▶ Russia (Law on the legal status of foreigners in the RF) : «a foreign worker - is a foreign citizen , staying in Russia on a temporary basis and working in accordance with an established order». However statistics counts only those who get permits to work . The citizens of the countries with “free movement” (Common economic space) do not need permits as well as residence permit holders.
- ▶ Censuses in some CIS states that measured absent population established different time threshold of absence : Tajikistan (census 2010) < 12 months; Kyrgyz Republic (census 2009) – up to 3 years ; Moldova (census 2004) – no time limits
- ▶ Ukraine (survey 2008): “International labour migrants - are the Ukraine citizens of working age which were occupied with paid work on the territory of another countries - on a permanent, seasonal or temporary basis (including those who worked without documents) ”.

## Is harmonization achievable?

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- ▶ The idea belongs to international organizations that need statistics, valid for unification (homogeneous in terms of its nature) For instance – it will be good if all the countries of the region will collect data from population registers, or simultaneously conduct censuses and surveys using harmonized questionnaires .....
- ▶ The main task of harmonization is not that obvious for a specific country. That is why for each country the national data are the priority.

# The future of harmonization of statistics on international migration in the CIS area

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## A pessimistic point of view

- ▶ Harmonization depends on strength of regional regulations - like EU or Nordic countries that are closely connected with regional political and economic agreements
- ▶ CIS is not such a type of a union, trends of disintegration may be aggravating, member-states might not be that interested in harmonization of statistics. Customs union of common economic space probably will be better managed in terms of unification of data sources and definitions



An optimistic point of view:  
harmonization process will possibly go on without special efforts from the side of statisticians

- ▶ Automated systems of population and registration, including info on migrants, are in progress almost everywhere, it is an objective and inevitable reality
- ▶ Implementation of standardized definitions might be secondary: filtering necessary information will allow to get standardized and harmonized data, independently of political or economic unions in the region



# Concluding remarks

Possibly it worth speaking not about harmonization but “triangulation” of collected data through different types of activities:

- ▶ Thorough analysis of definitions and practices
- ▶ Selection of limited number of countries of destination origin/destination for data comparison and further work
- ▶ Good contacts with colleagues “on the other shore”
- ▶ Better implementation of more sophisticated (indirect) methods of migration measurement and estimates

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▶ Thank you for your attention!