

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Workshop on Migration Statistics
Minsk (Belarus), 28-29 May 2015

11 June 2015

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

I. Organization and attendance

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) organized this workshop on migration statistics in cooperation with the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (Rosstat), the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CISStat), and the National Statistical Committee (NSC) of the Republic of Belarus, with financial support from the Russian Federation. The working languages of the workshop were English and Russian.

2. Participants represented statistical offices from the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Experts from CISStat, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, Moscow State University, the Slovenian State Statistical Service, and UNECE participated as well.

3. The workshop consisted of two parts over two days. The first day discussed the use of administrative data to measure migration in the CIS region, while the second day examined the use of sample surveys to measure migration. The workshop included presentations by experts, country presentations, group exercises and discussion. Presentations made at the workshop are available at the UNECE website: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37886#/>

II. Objective

4. The objective of the workshop was to exchange experience in using administrative data and sample surveys to measure international migration, and to obtain feedback from CIS countries on a handbook being developed on this topic for the CIS region. The workshop included region-specific examples and a group exercise to help solidify concepts for participants.

III. Use of administrative data to measure migration in the CIS region

5. The workshop was structured around chapters being produced for the handbook by two consultants, Ms Olga Chudinovskikh and Mr Giambattista Cantisani. The first day was devoted to the use of administrative data to measure migration.

6. Ms Olga Chudinovskikh, from Moscow State University, provided an overview of sources of administrative data in the CIS region. The main advantage of administrative sources is that they provide a cost-effective means of measuring migration, which is often underutilized in countries. The presentation discussed various types of administrative data, such as population or foreigner registers, border control data, visa types, and consular information, discussing the strengths

and weaknesses of each type, as well as the ability to link information across administrative sources to get other characteristics of migrants. Among the limitations of these sources are issues of counting administrative procedures as opposed to actual migration events, unregistered migration, multiple nationalities, and general data quality concerns.

7. Country presentations on the use of administrative data to measure migration were given by Armenia, Kazakhstan, and the Republic of Moldova. Each described administrative data sources available in their countries for the measurement of international migration, including border crossings, migration cards, visas, residence permits, and population registers. Some of these data sources were produced by national statistical offices, but most were produced by other ministries. Migration statistics and results generated from these sources were also discussed.

8. Ms Chudinovskikh provided a second presentation on how to use sources of administrative data to measure migration in the CIS region. This outlined CIS countries' current use of administrative sources to produce migration statistics, particularly long-term migration flows. The region has shown progress in the use and dissemination of migration statistics based on these sources, as well as the development of population registers, but there is still room for improvement. The presentation also included many examples of migration statistics generated from these administrative sources.

9. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia described their efforts to improve missing information from unregistered migrants in their Central Population Register, through integration of information from other administrative data sources. Efforts have shown that under- and over-coverage of migrants (unregistered immigrants and emigrants) in Slovenia's register based census can be improved by incorporating other administrative sources, but additional methodological work is still needed for fine-tuning the measurement of these populations.

10. The International Organization for Migration presented on the administrative sources they use to collect and monitor international migration. These included ways to collect information for those using IOM services related to migration, border management, trafficking, voluntary repatriation, and tracking of displaced persons, including systems like MiMOSA (Migrant Management & Operational System Application), DTM (Displacement Tracking Matrix), and MIDAS. They also illustrated the data's application to help develop migration policies in several countries.

11. The Bureau of Migration and Asylum of the Republic of Moldova presented the results from Moldova's Extended Migration Profile, including their methods to calculate international migration. Seven different administrative sources as used to estimate migration, including data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, the Ministry of Education, consular records, border patrol data, contracts of Moldovans working abroad, and international sources. A plan is also being developed to support the reintegration of return migrants, as well as protecting families left behind due to emigration.

12. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan presented their experiences with migration statistics. Tajikistan discussed their ongoing program and methods to measure labour migration, including data collected through migration cards at borders, the 2010 Census, household surveys, and an ad hoc specialized migration survey. The complication of double-counting labour migrants was addressed. Future plans include a labour force survey module, focusing on labour migration and reintegration of return migrant workers.

13. Kyrgyzstan's presentation described the sources and methods they use to estimate migration, including administrative sources, the 2009 Census of Population and Housing, household surveys, other sources (e.g. household register of the rural

population). They also discussed the recent development of a population register and how this could be used to measure migration in the future.

14. A group exercise was held on how closer collaborative working relationships can be developed between statistical offices and the different producers of administrative migration data. Participants were split into four groups and asked to discuss several questions. The responses to these questions included discussion of existing data sharing arrangements, other administrative data sources, the possibility of intragovernmental working groups, existing legal frameworks for data sharing, how to apply international standards on migration statistics, data confidentiality, data evaluation and dissemination, and the potential of integrating different data sources. Each group made a brief presentation on the results of their discussion.

15. The final session of the day discussed ongoing regional initiatives to improve migration statistics. CIS-Stat made a proposal to use immigration statistics from countries of destination for the calculation of population estimates in countries of origin. This use of mirror statistics was advocated for the CIS-region to improve estimates of emigration.

16. CIS-Stat also made a presentation on improving labour statistics in the CIS-region. It included an overview of the labour situation in the region, and detailed a number of steps required to bring national labour statistical systems in line with the 19th session of the ICLS, in terms of measurement of work, employment, and labour utilization. Additional steps advocated included the utilization of sample surveys to measure labour migration, improved measurement of the informal economy and developing decent work indicators.

17. UNECE gave an overview of the Migration Clearing House database, including its origin and current update. Changes in coverage from data collection to data collection were shown, as well as some examples of data analysis that can be done measuring the stock of migrants abroad using data from other countries.

18. Discussion centred on the experiences of countries with their use of administrative data to measure migration and the interactions between national statistical agencies and the producers of administrative data. It was stated that there is a need to abide by standardized definitions for migrants, both between countries and between different agencies in the same country. Population registers have been developed or are under development in several countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Republic of Moldova, which will bring both new challenges and opportunities for countries in their measurement of migration. Such challenges include assessments of absent populations (who have no incentive to de-register), those temporarily absent, and those holding citizenship with more than one country. To improve the quality of migration statistics via administrative sources, it was recommended to increase public access to these data, which would allow for better validation of results.

IV. Use of sample surveys to measure migration in the CIS region

19. The second day was devoted to discussion of the use of sample surveys to measure migration. Mr. Cantisani presented an overview of surveys methods to measure migration. This overview included the different topics that are best suited for using sample surveys, different types of sample surveys available to researchers, and what needs to be taken into consideration when choosing which survey to use. Sample surveys were deemed more appropriate for measuring the determinants and consequences of migration, particularly though the use of specialized migration surveys.

20. CIS-Stat discussed their plans to develop a Handbook on labour migration for CIS countries, which would include conditions needed to measure labour migration

via sample surveys. The guide will be developed by consultants taking into account the 2013 resolution of the ICLS and include measurement of indicators of decent work.

21. Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees presented information about their recent on-line survey of highly skilled blue card holders in Germany, including the methodology used and challenges faced while conducting this survey. While not yet able to share the results of the survey, in addition to the methodology, participants learned about the current state of migration to Germany and migration policies in place to recruit high-skilled labour.

22. Mr. Cantisani presented the second part of the chapter under development, related to survey design and implementation. This methodological information included guidance on how to define the target population, how to design questionnaires and samples specific to migrants, and described the entire survey process from start to finish.

23. A number of national examples of the use of sample surveys to measure migration followed, including Armenia, Belarus, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Moldova. Armenia presented the results of their most recent 2013 ILCS household survey, which included information on recent migration, duration and reason for migration, employment status and economic activity abroad, and remittances sent to Armenia. Belarus detailed an ad hoc module added to their most recent labour force survey to measure foreign labour, which includes questions on their characteristics, their activities and duration of residence abroad, reasons for working abroad, as well as income earned and remittances sent or brought back to Belarus.

24. The Russian Federation discussed plans to conduct a microcensus in 2015, which will include a number of questions on international migration. They discussed the methodology to be used to conduct and process data from the microcensus, methodological challenges to measuring migrants, as well as the migration-related questions themselves. The Republic of Moldova detailed recent surveys conducted in its country to measure migration, including its Household Budget Survey (for remittances) and ad hoc labour migration modules added to its Labour Force Survey.

25. Mr Cantisani reviewed sample surveys recently implemented in the CIS region, provided some general assessment guidelines, and concluded with a set of recommendations to improve the use of sample surveys in the region. These recommendations included greater standardization of survey instruments to improve comparability of results between countries, improved documentation of meta-data associated with sample surveys, to make better use of general household surveys to measure migration, increased use of longitudinal and specialized migration surveys in the region, and exploring the feasibility of conducting two-way surveys between origin and destination countries.

26. A number of issues related to use of sample surveys were brought up during discussion. First, the potential of using on-line surveys in the region to collect information about migrants was discussed by participants, based on the German example. The Russian Federation will be using both paper and on-line collection methods for its 2015 microcensus, and participants had many methodological questions for them. In more general discussion, how to sample rare populations like migrants, how to improve response rates (particularly item non-response, e.g. income or remittance questions), and the potential of using border surveys in a visa-free climate were discussed. Recent or future plans to conduct sample surveys were also discussed. Among concerns was the lack of financial support to conduct sample surveys, particularly over a sustained period of time. More specific guidance on how to implement new ILCS labour standards was also of interest, particularly with regards to measurement of labour migration.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

27. For the purposes of generating migration statistics from administrative data sources, it was agreed that national statistical agencies should work in closer cooperation with migration services, ministries of interior, labour authorities, and other bodies responsible for the management of migration. Coordination between agencies should be included as part of statistical action plans, which would provide a legal framework for better inter-agency data exchange. In particular, more representatives from migration services should attend migration statistics events organized by UNECE and other international organizations.

28. In the chapter on household surveys, participants appreciated the rich methodological material provided. It was agreed that further work on this chapter should focus on elaborating specific recommendations for improving the use of migration-related surveys, taking into account the resources and capacities for survey-taking in the CIS region.

29. The workshop was the first opportunity for countries to react to the material being developed for the handbook. Substantial revisions will be made by the two UNECE consultants working on the chapters, with a next draft completed by the end of June. Once a final draft has been revised and edited, UNECE will circulate it among the national statistical agencies of CIS countries and CIS-Stat for feedback. The target is to publish the handbook by the end of 2015. Once released, this handbook is expected to provide data producers with the necessary tools to expand the number of resources at their disposal to measure migration.

30. Participants expressed satisfaction with the workshop and its relevance to their needs. They appreciated the opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences among countries and with international experts and welcomed further collaborative work in the future.
