

Defining and Measuring Circular Migration

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UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics
Geneva, 18-20 May 2016



Timing of work and prior consultations



- Jun 2012: Further work on circular migration recommended in “Analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions”
- Feb 2013: Bureau establishes task force
- 2013-2015: Task force working (chair: Mexico)
- Feb 2016: Bureau reviews result, requests consultation
- Feb-Mar 2016: CES electronic consultation
- Apr 2016: Guide and consultation results presented to CES

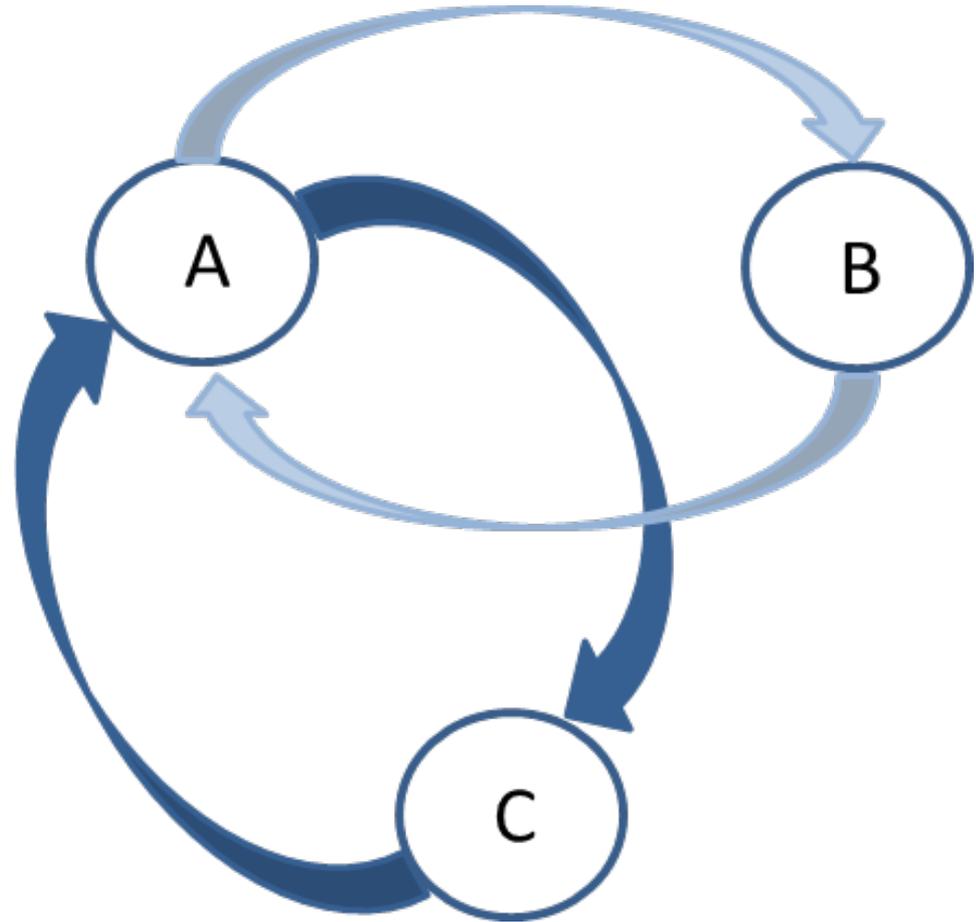
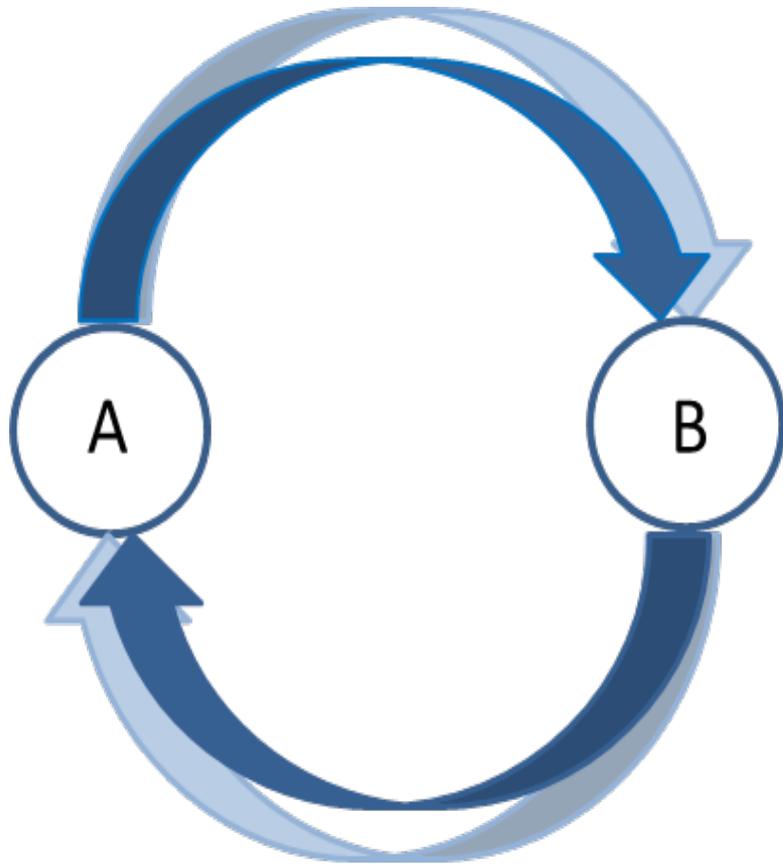
Task Force

- Mexico (Alfredo Bustos, Inegi, chair of the Task Force)
- Israel
- Italy
- Norway
- Sweden
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Eurostat
- International Organization for Migration
- UNECE

Overview of the Report

- Objective: to prepare a proposal for a common international statistical definition of circular migration
- Chapter 2: existing concepts definitions
- Chapter 3: five dimensions of circular migration
 - repetition of move (frequency)
 - directionality,
 - duration
 - purpose or reason for move
 - developmental impact
- Chapter 4: key issues for a statistical definition of circular migration
- Chapter 5: practical application, examples from Italy and Sweden

Circular Migration



Conceptual Definition

Repetition of legal migration by the same person between two or more countries.

Source: glossary of the European Migration Network

Main Statistical Definition

A circular migrant is a person who has crossed the national borders of the reporting country at least 3 times over the past 10 years, each time with duration of stay (abroad or in the country) of at least 12 months

- Tied to the international definition of migration
- Allows estimating the share of circular migrants in the total number of international migrants

Statistical Definitions: Adaptations by Direction of Flow

- A circular **immigrant** is a person who has immigrated more than once to the same country over the past 10 years when the duration of each stay (in that country or abroad) is of at least 12 months.
- A circular **emigrant** is a person who has emigrated more than once from the same country over the past 10 years when the duration of each stay (abroad or in that country) is of at least 12 months.

Statistical Definitions: Extensions Allowing for Short-term Migration



- A circular short-term **immigrant** is a person who has immigrated more than once to the same country over the past 10 years, when the duration of each stay (in that country or abroad) is of at least 90 days but less than 12 months.
- A circular short-term **emigrant** is a person who has emigrated more than once from the same country over the past 10 years, when the duration of each stay (abroad or in that country) is of at least 90 days and less than 12 months.

CES Consultation 2016: Main Comments



- 43 responses – high response rate
- 41 ready to endorse
- Issues:
 - limitation to long-term migration (at least 12 months of stay)
 - reference period of 10 years for circularity of moves
 - practical difficulty of implementing the definition
- Suggestion: to discuss further at the UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics (Geneva, 18-20 May 2016)
- Need for further work on practical testing of the definitions

Definition of short-term circular migrant proposed by Hungary

- A **short-term** circular migrant is a person who has crossed the national borders of the reporting country at least 3 times over the past 10 years, each time with the duration of stay (abroad or in the country) of at least **3 months and with total duration of stay (abroad or in the country) of at least 12 months in the aggregate level within the past 10 years.**

Definitions proposed by the Task Force

- A circular **short-term** immigrant/ emigrant is a person who has immigrated/ emigrated more than once to/ from the same country over the past 10 years, when the duration of each stay (in that country or abroad) is of at least 90 days but less than 12 months.

CES: Issues Raised

- The topic is important and complex as migration has an influence on and can benefit all the involved parties (receiving country, sending country, migrants);
- Further testing is needed to see how alternative definitions of circular migration work in practice, especially concerning the number of border crossings and length of stay used in the definition;
- The possibility of adding definitions for short-term and seasonal circular migration should be considered.

The Conference asked the Task Force to



- Review the comments made during the electronic consultation and the discussion at the CES plenary session, and reflect them in **a revised version** of the report;
- **Discuss** the definition of circular migration at the forthcoming UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics on 18-20 May 2016, including the need for developing practical guidance;
- Present the revised report to the **2016 October meeting of the CES Bureau.**

You are invited to ...

- Volunteer to test the utility of the proposed definitions with your data
- Provide suggestions to the Task Force for finalizing the report
- Provide any further comments related to the topic