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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS
Work Session on Migration Statistics
Geneva, Switzerland, 29-31 October 2019

STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION (EUROSTAT)

CALL FOR PAPERS

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Eurostat are jointly organizing a Work Session on Migration Statistics in Geneva on 29–31 October 2019. The organizers invite statistical organizations and experts to contribute papers for presentation and discussion at the meeting, on the topics described in section I below.

I. EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION TOPICS

A. Definitions of population and migration

2. Identifying and classifying different types of international migrants is becoming increasingly difficult, as many migrants do not fit neatly into standard United Nations definitions. This is particularly problematic when using administrative data, as concepts may vary from source to source, and the national statistical office may have little control over the definitions used. In view of the upcoming revision of the United Nations recommendations for statistics on international migration, this may be the right time for a critical review of the concepts used to define migration.

3. The definition of a migrant also impacts the wider issue of population definition, which is being debated in the EU statistical system. Essentially, a migrant is somebody entering or leaving a population: therefore, the definition of the rules for inclusion/exclusion in/from the population (the 'population base') has a direct impact on the definition of migration.

4. The perspective taken here could be to assess the validity/significance of alternative definitions of population from the point of view of migration. The debate may serve at least to clarify doubtful cases in the application of the usual residence concept.

5. The session will also feature an update on the revision to the 1998 United Nations recommendations on statistics of international migration.

B. Data integration for measuring migration

6. Data integration is becoming an essential tool in the production of official migration statistics. This includes:
 - (a) integrating administrative sources to measure migration;
 - (b) combining administrative and non-administrative data sources to measure migration, including statistical modelling; and
 - (c) reconciling migration figures derived from different data sources (triangulation).
7. Inter-agency cooperation on the national level needs to be strengthened since the national statistical office, which reports migration statistics, is rarely the producer of administrative data. At the same time, statistical operations such as data linkage or statistical matching may have to be run to make those administrative data fit for purpose.
8. This session will review countries' experience in integrating different data sources for measuring migration and explore ways to improve cooperation between national migration services, maintainers of central population registers, statistical agencies and other producers of administrative data.
9. This topic has featured consistently in recent UNECE-Eurostat work sessions. A panel discussion will be organized around key issues in implementing the Guidance on data integration for measuring migration published in 2019. Representatives of administrative agencies responsible for migration data will also be invited to the panel.

C. Use of longitudinal data for migration statistics

10. The longitudinal approach is well-suited to the analysis of the migrant population because settlement into a new country is a long-term process in which outcomes change over time. In many cases, the key questions when analysing migrant settlement are whether and how the socio-economic outcomes of migrants change or improve with increased length of stay or whether native-born children fare better than their migrant parents. Papers could consider how migrants interact with, use and contribute to public services over time and what that means for policy planning and decision making. Further analytical benefits include the possibility to study transition between circumstances, such as unemployment to employment, as well as duration to events, such as acquiring citizenship.
11. With the increasingly widespread use of administrative data and integration of multiple data sources for producing migration statistics, more and more countries can construct longitudinal datasets without bearing excessive costs. As a result, longitudinal and cohort studies are becoming more common and national statistical offices could consider making them part of the regular production of migration statistics.
12. This session will review examples of longitudinal analysis of migration and describe how longitudinal indicators could become part of regular production of migration statistics. The Task Force on the Use of Longitudinal Data for Measuring Migration will present its progress on developing guidance on the compilation of longitudinal statistics.

D. New methodologies and tools for measuring migration

13. This session will feature new methodologies and tools related to the production or analysis of migration statistics. It may include presentations on the use of big data, nowcasting, geospatial data and/or other topics that participants may propose. Where experience is limited within the community of official statisticians, external speakers may be invited.

Big Data and migration

14. The use of big data for official migration statistics has largely been limited to its use as a potential proxy or an auxiliary source. Experimental applications of this include the use of geo-localised data as well as use of Facebook/Twitter and mobile phone usage data. Contributions are expected to address concrete and innovative applications of big data for a better understanding of international migration; and/or to discuss possibilities for more systematic use of big data in this area, to complement official statistics.

Nowcasting

15. Official statisticians are being faced with increasing demand for timeliness from users. This is due in part to an expansion in the availability of alternative data sources which can be published faster than official statistics, though sometimes at the expense of quality. One emerging practice that could be used to improve timeliness of statistics is 'nowcasting' – the use of past data to predict the present, the very near future or the very recent past.

16. For migration statistics, nowcasting can use known historical information on migration events (immigration / emigration) and apply modelling techniques to forecast an estimate of migration flows or stocks in the current time period. The nowcast can then be updated as new information comes to light from additional data releases. The session will endeavour to review what is known about nowcasting techniques, whether they have been implemented in countries throughout the region, and what techniques can be utilised in the future for official statistics.

E. Communication and use of migration statistics

17. This session will feature experiences from statisticians on how they communicate migration statistics, and from policymakers and analysts on how they access and use the statistics.

18. A key priority for NSOs is to present statistical information clearly, in ways which maximize impact and usefulness. NSOs are also increasingly recognizing that communication is a two-way process, not limited only to dissemination, but also as an input to statistical design. These observations are crucial for ensuring that relevant statistical information is produced, and then ultimately utilized as a strategic asset for policymakers and other stakeholders. Users' demands for statistics are ever-changing and increasing, and the information and communication technologies available for producing, disseminating and communicating statistics are evolving rapidly.

19. Submissions could include:

- Examples of strategies and tools to identify stakeholders for migration statistics (e.g. policymakers, media, the general public) and their specific communication needs;

- Examples of communication challenges in migration statistics and experiences in addressing these challenges;
- Showcasing effective communication techniques, tools or products for migration statistics—what makes them effective?

F. Data exchange and mirror statistics

20. International migration is a topic that is particularly well suited to the use of data exchange and mirror statistics, since each migration event can be measured from the point of view of both the country of origin and country of destination. Consequently, there is great potential, but also many challenges to overcome when considering comparing official estimates of international migration from one country to those produced by other countries, including:

- Differences in the definition of migration;
- Methodological differences across countries and data sources;
- Differences in the timing of data collection and publication across countries; and
- Availability of information for comparison.

21. Nordic countries exchange data to ensure that flows between them are measured consistently. The Steering Group proposes to invite one or more Nordic countries to present on this topic, focusing on the legal, administrative and other processes that were necessary to set up this system. This session could assist other countries to better evaluate what they could achieve in the area of data exchange, and how flows could be consistently measured among countries of a region using common principles. Measurement of inter-regional migration flows could also be addressed. Some examples from trade statistics could also be used to broaden the discussion in the session.

G. Measuring emigrants and hard-to-reach groups of migrants

22. The collection of data about specific migrant groups remains a significant challenge in many countries. For example, such groups include short-term, temporary, and circular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and irregular migrants. Although these groups are often at the centre of public debate, their number is difficult to accurately assess via regular data sources, either because they fall outside our regular data collection methods, their records are less formalized, or because their very presence entails a legal violation. Partly due to the reasons outlined above, these groups often suffer from higher non-response to sample surveys and censuses, while also being less likely to appear in administrative data sources. The measurement of emigration faces similar issues, often because emigrants do not, or are not required to de-register (in the case of countries with a population register), or otherwise notify the relevant authorities of their intention to emigrate.

23. This session will consider different approaches to the measurement of these groups, utilizing a wide range of data sources and methods.

II. INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

24. Participants are welcome to submit a paper for any topic described in section I. Papers can be submitted in English or Russian. They will be translated within the limits of the translation capacity available.
25. All papers submitted will be disseminated on the [meeting web page](#). The UNECE Steering Group on Migration Statistics will review the submitted papers and if needed, select the papers that will be presented at the meeting.
26. The following deadlines and requirements apply:
- Meeting participants who intend to contribute a paper should inform the UNECE secretariat by **21 June 2019**, indicating the tentative title, the agenda item to which the paper refers, and attaching a short abstract (between 100 and 200 words).
 - Abstracts should be submitted through the online form on the Migration Statistics Work Session wiki page, at: <https://statswiki.unece.org/x/ZADsDg>
 - The full final versions of papers, not exceeding 15 pages including charts, annexes and references, should be sent to UNECE in Word format by **20 September 2019**.
 - Presenters are encouraged to use power point presentations, and to send them to the UNECE Secretariat by 10 October 2019.
 - Final papers and presentations should be addressed to the UNECE Secretariat, Mr. Andres Vikat (andres.vikat@un.org) with copy to social.stats@un.org
27. Contributors are reminded that the success of the meeting depends upon the ability to translate materials in advance and the opportunity for participants to read the papers before the meeting. Therefore, it is important to strictly adhere to the deadlines above.

III. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

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