

High-level Seminar on Population Censuses and Migration Statistics in CIS Countries

Data exchange through the UNECE Clearing House of Migration Statistics

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In the measurement of migration, departures tend to be less well recorded than arrivals. This is because most governments are reluctant or unable to closely monitor the exit of persons from their territory and people do not have much incentive to notify the authorities of their departure as there are no benefits to be gained. It is also difficult to count persons leaving the country from a statistical point of view because of their absence.

The resulting weakness of emigration data can to some extent be compensated by using existing immigration data in the receiving country, which requires exchange of immigration data among countries. A UNECE task force has developed guidelines on such data exchange and UNECE is promoting it through its Clearing House of Migration Statistics, available at unece.org/data. At a UNECE workshop in Bishkek in 2010, migration statisticians of CIS countries agreed upon the content of the Clearing House and UNECE has requested countries to provide data in 2011 and 2013.

Most CIS countries have shared population data by country of birth and citizenship, data on long-term immigration and emigration by previous/next residence and citizenship, as well as data on citizenship acquisition by country of previous citizenship. Six countries could share their data on short-term (3-12 months) immigration and only three on short-term emigration.

For example, the population data available in the Clearing House allows estimating the number of a country's citizens who live in another CIS country or the number of people who live in another CIS country than the one in which they were born. The Russian Federation has the highest number of citizens living in other CIS countries. By country of birth, those born in Ukraine are the largest group living outside their country of birth in the CIS region. Relative to population size, both figures are highest for Armenia.

UNECE continues to work together with the migration data focal points towards clarifying various consistency issues in the data and incorporating more metadata in the Clearing House, to increase its usefulness for the countries.
