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STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
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**STATISTICAL OFFICE OF
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
(EUROSTAT)**

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)**

Joint ECE-EUROSTAT-ESCWA work session
on Migration Statistics
(Geneva, 8-10 May 2000)

**REPORT OF THE MAY 2000 JOINT ECE-EUROSTAT-ESCWA
WORK SESSION ON MIGRATION STATISTICS**

PARTICIPATION

1. The Joint ECE-Eurostat-ESCWA Work Session on Migration Statistics was held in Geneva from 8 to 10 May 2000. It was attended by delegates of Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat. Representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Labour Office (ILO) and International Organisation for Migration were also present.

AGENDA AND PROCEDURE

2. The study programme of the meeting consisted of the following substantive topics:
- Topic 1.: Progress report on regional programmes of international migration statistics, with particular emphasis on Eurostat's EUROMED-migration project.
 - Topic 2.: Studies of the statistics on asylum seekers covering both cohort and period analysis.
 - Topic 3.: Plans and experience in implementing the new (1998) set of UN Recommendations on International Migration Statistics.
 - Topic 4.: New developments in estimating migration flows, and particularly by censuses, sample surveys and population registers.
 - Topic 5.: Outcomes of the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Demographic Data Collection.

3. Mr. David Pearce (United Kingdom) chaired the meeting. Topics 1-5 above were organised by Mr. David Pearce (United Kingdom), Mr. Marcel Heiniger (Switzerland), Ms. Thana Chrissanthaki (Eurostat), Mr. John Kelly (ECE), and Mr. Harri Cruijnsen and Mr. Rolf Verhoef (Netherlands).

FUTURE WORK

4. The participants considered that it would be useful for countries to exchange experiences on developments in this field at a future meeting. They recommended, therefore, that the Conference convene a meeting in this field in one year, jointly with Eurostat and ESCWA. Therefore they recommended to include the following in the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians:

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS (INCLUDING PROJECTIONS, MIGRATION, FERTILITY AND FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS)

Activities of the ECE:

Work session/seminar on migration statistics, jointly with Eurostat and ESCWA in 2000/2001 to consider: (i) Progress in implementation of the UN Recommendations on International Migration Statistics; (ii) Methods investigating inflows and outflows highlighting definitions, different data sources used, and checks made on coverage and reliability; (iii) Progress on the second phase of the MED-Migr project on integrating sources, developing border card systems and work/residence permit systems; (iv) Cooperation between statistical offices and other ministries in developing new types of migration data; (v) Strategies for developing statistics on international migration of workers.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

5. The participants adopted this report and the attached summary of the main conclusions of the Work Session at its closing session

6. The conclusions reached by the participants during the discussion of the substantive items of the agenda are outlined in the Annex.

ANNEX

SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY THE PARTICIPANTS DURING THE DISCUSSION

Topic 1.: Progress report on regional programmes of international migration statistics, with particular emphasis on Eurostat's EUROMED-migration project

Documentation: Invited papers by Algeria, Morocco, Netherlands and Eurostat. Oral reports by MED-Migr project countries.

1. This session was organised by David Pearce (United Kingdom) and Thana Chrissanthaki (Eurostat). It focused on the Eurostat's MED-Migr project on international migration in the Mediterranean basin which covers twelve countries and territories: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Palestine.
2. The Work Session noted the progress in individual projects allocated to the main clusters of activities: (i) Evaluation and coverage of current sources and statistics such as censuses, emigration modules, receiving countries data, labour force statistics, and to consider how they might be integrated to give a fuller migration picture; (ii) Evaluation and enhancement of border card systems to identify and measure international migrants, including pilot exercises; (iii) Evaluation and enhancement of work permit and residence permit systems.
3. The Work session discussed in detail a study on motives of migration (e.g. economic, family-related, security, quality of life and other motives). The study focussed on south-north flows and covered Mediterranean and West African predominantly migrant-sending countries: Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal and Turkey and two migrant-receiving countries: Italy and Spain. A study on motives of emigration from Algeria was also discussed at the Work Session.
4. The Work Session also noted a study on data collection, and possible enhancement through improved coordination among the Maghreb statistical systems.
5. The Work Session also noted the progress reports by representatives of Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Tunisia and Turkey.

Topic 2.: Studies of the statistics on asylum seekers covering both cohort and period analysis

Documentation: Invited papers by France, Netherlands, Switzerland and UNHCR. Supporting paper by Norway.

6. This session was organised by Marcel Heiniger (Switzerland).
7. The Work Session considered the issues related to asylum seekers as very actual. It noted that there were 4.4 millions of requests for asylum made in the Western European countries during the past 10 years. The Work Session also noted that the number of asylum requests has a growing trend, and there

was an important increase of request in Eastern Europe during the past five years. The crisis in the South-eastern Europe was mentioned as one of the sources of asylum seeking migration.

8. The estimates of the length of time of the asylum-seeking process and the recognition rate were considered by the Work Session as indicators of interest for policy-making. International comparison of data was also discussed at the meeting. In this connection the importance of knowing the breakdown of asylum seekers by geographic origin and the effect of national policies was highlighted.

9. The Work Session considered both cohort and period analysis. The meeting pointed out the importance of cohort analysis for obtaining reliable statistics on asylum seekers. However, the importance of period analysis for policy maker was also mentioned. The Work Session discussed three country case studies using a cohort analysis.

10. Given the importance of asylum statistics and the experience of some countries in analysing complex cohort-based data, the Work Session suggested to develop technical guidance for the cohort analysis of asylum data.

Topic 3: Plans and experience in implementing the new (1998) set of UN Recommendations on International Migration Statistics

Documentation: Introductory note by the ECE Secretariat. Responses to the questionnaire received from: Belgium, Canada, Israel, Italy, Norway, Romania, Slovenia and United Kingdom

11. ECE and Eurostat organised this session.

12. A Task Force was jointly set up by ECE and Eurostat, and the following countries served on it: Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Slovenia, Romania and the United Kingdom. The countries were selected so as to ensure that all main sources of migration statistics were covered (i.e. border control, surveys, registers, administrative records). The aim of the Task Force is to assess the extent to which the new set of UN recommendations on international migration can be applied by countries. Attention is particularly drawn to practical problems dealt with by NSOs when attempting to adhere to recommendations.

13. When discussing this topic, the Work Session had before it several responses to the questionnaire prepared by the Task Force members in order to identify if the various typologies of migrants, according to the recommendations, have corresponding data available. All countries taking part in the first exercise informed on coverage of main categories of migrants (long and short term migrants, citizens and non-citizens). A table summarising the situation for these countries will be produced and issued as an addendum to this report (CES/SEM.42/2/Add.1).

14. The discussion revealed some common problems: (i) For many countries, there is a lack of data on migration outflows for specific categories. (ii) have difficulty in obtaining data on immigration inflows for both citizens and non-citizens. (iii) A few countries encountered difficulties in distinguishing between tourists and immigrants. A problem of illegal immigration was also mentioned in this connection.

15. The meeting agreed that the data on international migration that national authorities produce are primarily intended to serve the national purposes. However, it was agreed that in order to facilitate

international comparisons, it would be helpful if countries provided clearer indications of the coverage of the statistics with respect to the various categories of migrants identified in the UN recommendations.

16. The ESCWA representative informed the meeting of the general situation concerning the international migration statistics in ESCWA region, and how it differs to the ECE region. ESCWA is looking into the possibility of organising workshops on international migration statistics in the ESCWA region, and foresees the possibility of drawing on experiences acquired by countries in the ECE region. ESCWA countries at the Work Session welcomed this initiative and expressed interest in participating in it.

17. During the discussion it was stressed that the coverage and reliability of data obtained from the registers and administrative records may be improved and/or made more complete using supplementary data sources, such as sample surveys. A need for links between definitions and potential data sources was highlighted.

18. In concluding the discussion on this topic, it was agreed that it would be useful to have similar types of report prepared for review at the future meeting on international migration statistics, and that these reports be prepared along the same lines as the report that the United Kingdom prepared for this Work Session (CES/SEM.42/16). The meeting agreed that the ECE Secretariat should send a circular letter to all ECE member countries prior to the next meeting, requesting them to prepare a report along the lines outlined in CES/SEM.42/16. The ECE Secretariat indicated that after the next meeting it will it would prepare an Information Note for the annual session of the Statistical Commission, in order to inform it of explanatory work being undertaken in the ECE region related to the promulgation and implementation of the new set of UN recommendations on international migration statistics.

Topic 4: New developments in estimating migration flows, and particularly by censuses, sample surveys and population registers

Documentation: Invited papers by Austria, France, Norway and United Kingdom. Supporting papers by Bulgaria and Russian Federation.

19. This session was organised by Rolf Verhoef and Harri Crujisen (Netherlands).

20. The Work Session identified different approaches to collection of data on migration flows: (i) Use of the population registers and other administrative records like work/residents permits, visas, alien registration; (ii) Collection of data through border crossing surveys; (iii) Use of topics in the population censuses which are related to migration flows (e.g. place of residence, country of origin, nationality, etc.).

21. In connection with the register-based migration statistics, the following issues were pointed out: the need of quality control and validation of data; imputing of missing data; typology of data; need to combine various administrative sources; legislation; and technological issues of data exchange. An opinion was expressed during the discussion, that in order to obtain better coverage and compliance with statistical concepts, statisticians should combine the data obtained from registers and administrative records with other sources for producing their estimates. The Work Session highlighted the importance of the date (time) reference, and the different approaches (registration/reporting date vs. date of the event) used at present have to be coordinated.

22. When discussing the border crossing surveys, the Work Session pointed out the necessity of a strong methodological basis since a complex design is required in order to select the sample and then to gross the interviews to national estimates. It was also pointed out that complementary sources are necessary for the flows that are not sufficiently covered by survey. The selection of languages in which the questionnaire is distributed was also considered important for the success of the border crossing survey.

23. The Work Session highlighted the necessity of cooperation between the national statistical offices, various ministries, governmental agencies and local authorities in obtaining the data on migration flows.

Topic 5: Outcomes of the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Demographic Data Collection

Documentation: Oral report.

24. The participants were informed about the work undertaken by the Intersecretariat Working Group constituted three years ago in response to request by reporting countries to minimise the reporting burden on them, and to enhance the consistency of published data. Migration statistics represents an important part of its work. At present Eurostat, UN Statistics Division (UNSD), UN/ECE, ILO and the Council of Europe (CoE) actively participate in the Working Group. The participating organisations agreed to prepare joint questionnaires, exchange the collected data, and to share databases. A joint Eurostat-UNSD-CoE questionnaire on demographic statistics will be sent out in 2000 to specific countries. A merged migration questionnaire meeting the needs of international organisations has been sent out since 1993, initially by Eurostat and UN/ECE, with UNSD, ILO and CoE being added in later years.

25. The Work Session suggested that other international organisations having requests for data on migration statistics from member countries should, if possible, coordinate their requests through the Intersecretariat Working Group.
