



Panel Meeting on Migration Data Management and Migration Trends

5-6 March 2015

Budapest, Hungary



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Close to 60 experts and officials from Eastern Partnership countries, EU Member States, academia, civil society and international organizations came together in Budapest to exchange and review their practices and approaches to migration data management, update each other on methodologies for data analysis and discuss how to establish the right balance between data protection principles and efficient usage of data. The meeting also focused on migration intelligence and how to analyse trends and make forecasts.

This two-day meeting of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum was hosted by Hungary and Moldova and took place on 5-6 March 2015. As usually, bringing together a multitude of participants with various backgrounds, the Panel was marked by engaged discussions in a professional and friendly atmosphere.

After opening and welcoming remarks by the European Commission, the Deputy State Secretary for the EU and International Relations from the Hungarian Ministry of Interior and the Director of the Bureau for Migration and Asylum of the Republic of Moldova underlined how important the availability of reliable and comparable migration and asylum data is to ensure overall understanding of migration dynamics and allow for timely policy response.

The Hungarian Central Statistical Office emphasized the importance of cross-border cooperation to improve data management systems and harmonize migration policies. This was confirmed by EUROSTAT, also highlighting that interlinking demographic and migration statistics can further improve the understanding of comprehensive processes. Achilles Georgiu from the Central European University (CEU) Business School then demonstrated some innovative approaches to migration data collection. The idea was carried further by the Siim Esko representing the Statistics Positium LBS from Estonia, showing how cell phone user data can be utilized for tracking the movement of persons and migratory flows in a non-personalized manner. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) summed up the session by presenting an overview of national practices as gathered through the pre-meeting questionnaire.

At the national level, Hungary showcased their successful work towards harmonized and unified definitions of scope and indicators for data collection, as well as the importance attached to the triangulation of sources. Tamaz Zubiashvili from the Tbilisi State University presented Georgia's current challenges and endeavors to create both a comprehensive legal basis and a clear strategy for collection of migration- and asylum-related data. Moldova shared its experience in developing and updating its Extended Migration Profile.

Martin Kahanec (CEU) and IOM elaborated on the processes that lead from data collection to evidence-based migration policy formulation. The CEU illustrated this with three possible basic models of European migration policies (from very liberal to most restrictive) and their probable impacts on the intensity of the migration flows from third countries. The IOM focused on recent developments and progress made in the EaP countries, which clearly show that, whilst no common approach is defined, all Eastern neighbours pay considerable attention to improving their data management and analysis systems.

Moving on to the data protection principles in the context of migration data, Jędrzej Niklas from the Polish Panoptikon Foundation shared discussion-provoking thoughts on the right balance between migration data collection and protection of the fundamental human rights, which can in practice be difficult to observe. Valeria Ferraris, representing the University of Turin added that the risk of imbalance is increased by the low level of awareness of individuals regarding their data protection rights, bearing in mind that more and more data is collected throughout the EU. Moldova presented the practical implementation of data protection principles at the national level. During the study visit to the



Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality, participants had a chance to get an even more practical impression of how technical solutions can support data collection, whilst maintaining the confidentiality of personal information.

The second day of the Panel meeting was dedicated to migration intelligence and the analysis of migration trends. In terms of planning, FRONTEX explained that its every operation has its specific data collection plan and every activity is based on risk analysis. In terms of reaction to arising trends, EASO shared the functioning of its Early Warning and Preparedness System. The Czech Republic, Sweden and Turkey provided concrete examples of the development of systems for analysis of migration data, and the importance of international cooperation thereon.

During the session on migration trends analysis, Giorgi Gogsadze from the Tbilisi State University linked its recent demographic processes with the migration situation in the country, describing shifts in remittances flows that reflect and increasing connection with the EU. Olena Malynovska, representing National Institute of Strategic Studies of Ukraine, in its turn shared estimations and predictions about Ukrainians increasingly becoming labour migrants in the EU in the coming years due to the conflict and the worsening economic situation. The Panel participants also learnt about migration profiles and the I-map function created by the ICMPD under the Prague Process.

Finally, the Panel discussed the forthcoming meeting on labour migration to be held in Minsk this May and notified the participants on the additional ad-hoc meeting on registration and integration of internally displaced persons and other migrants to take place in Kyiv this June.



5 March 2015 – Day 1

Welcome and Opening

Mr. Robert Rybicki, DG Home Affairs, European Commission, welcomed all participants and speakers, mentioning four other meetings the Panel organizes throughout the year. He underlined the value of such cooperation between the EU MS and EaP countries and wished everyone to have a productive time at the meeting.

Ms. Krisztina Berta, Deputy State Secretary for EU and Inter-national Relations, Ministry of Interior, Hungary, greeted the participants, noting this is the second time Budapest hosts the Panel's meeting. She stressed the importance of proper migration data collection and management for policy making. She also added that the gathering of EU MS, EaP countries, as well as representatives of academia, civil society and international organizations, gives the Panel a chance to create a forum for addressing common challenges and share best practices.

Ms. Olga Poalelungi, Director of the Bureau for Migration and Asylum, Ministry of Interior, Moldova, thanked Hungary for co-hosting this meeting together with Moldova and emphasized that increasing mobility of people creates new challenges and requires international cooperation and efforts. These challenges issue could be addressed only when different forms of migration are assessed, measured and analyzed, so the topic is very relevant.

Session I. General Overview

Facilitator: European Commission

Mr. Attila Melegh, Hungarian Central Statistical Office, presented an example of fruitful cooperation between the countries in the field of migration data management system in the context of the SEEMIG project. The project involved research institutions and statistical offices in ten countries from the regions affected by intra-European migratory flows and demographic processes. The project also aimed to address such challenges as need for common policies, cooperation and data exchange, emigrant vs immigrant transnational dialogues and development gaps. The project offered a transnational strategy, which includes harmonization of data collection, enhancement of data collection methodologies, increasing of transnational partnerships and cooperation, expanded data collection at the local level and greater possibilities for the EU funding. Since migration is a global phenomenon, international cooperation, integration of data systems and making available databases for policy-making becomes crucial. [Please see the presentation "Why and How to Improve Data Systems"](#)

Mr. Piotr Juchno, Statistical Officer, EUROSTAT, provided an overview the EU framework of migration data management, highlighting that the agency does not have access to the source data and that data collections are oriented at outputs. Migration data are seen within the context of demographical data, providing rich opportunities for annual data collections. Data related to migration incorporates asylum, residence permits, immigration legislation enforcement and migrant integration. The fact that not in all countries migratory populations are statistically significant should be taken into account. Free and equal access to all data collections for all users is ensured through the online database, articles explaining statistics and other relevant publications. Policy areas to be developed further include workers' mobility, short-term migration and circular migration. [Please see the presentation "EU Framework for Migration Data Management"](#)

Mr. Achilles Georgiu, IBM/CEU Business School, depicted challenges of the past decade, which dramatically changed perceptions of information available in the outside world. Rapid development of information technologies and social networking led to massive digitalisation of information and today offers very large data sets, which are difficult to process with traditional methodologies and means. However, at current situation information does not mean knowledge and the way of getting knowledge



from the information does not fit in the frames of traditional testing of hypothesis, but rather becomes a matter of raising right questions. [Please see the presentation “The Simplicity of Big Data Is a Puzzle of Complexity”](#)

Mr. Siim Esko, Product Manager, Statistics Positium LBS, Estonia, shared innovative approaches to migration data collection and analysis based on mobile positioning datasets. Since today, 96% of the world’s population carries a mobile phone and most people use it daily, they leave geographical footprint in the databases of mobile network operators. This data could be used for statistics collection without violating subscribers’ privacy. Forms of passive positioning data include domestic data (home subscribers), inbound roaming (foreign subscribers) and outbound roaming (home subscribers abroad). This allows for mapping of international mobility based on frequency, duration, geography and seasonality of visits, offering limitless opportunities for analysis. This new type of migratory lifestyle requires use of modern tools. Mobile position could even be used for tracking circular migration flows and can be a supplement to existing methods. [Please see the presentation “Measuring Migration without Bothering the Migrants: Mobile Positioning Datasets in Mobility Studies”](#)

Ms. Marina Schramm, International Organization for Migration, Mission in Ukraine, presented the discussion paper, developed based on results of questionnaires disseminated among participating countries prior to the meeting. A total of 19 countries provided input. Questionnaire replies showed that different approaches are used at the national level throughout the EaP countries and the EU MS, reflecting national contexts, policies and administrative regulations. Although the international community has put considerable efforts into establishing common terminology on migration data, national priorities and particularities still lead to differences in methods and standards. She stressed the need for balance between international comparability and compatibility of migration statistics and requirements at the national level. [Please see the presentation “Migration Data Management and Migration Trends: National Approaches and Practices in the EU and EaP Countries”](#)

Discussion

*At the end of the first session participants discussed aspects of the international cooperation within the context of migration data management. **Georgia** highlighted its cooperation with IOM and ICMPD within the projects dedicated to the development of the analytical system for migration statistics management. Georgia also mentioned the recently developed national concept for a unified migration system. **Hungary** marked its cooperation with UNHCR, ICMPD, IOM and EMN on migration data management and exchange. The issue of “big data” also raised many questions concerning possible challenges, future prospects, and possibility of using big data to address migration.*

Session II. Processing and Operationalizing Migration Data

Facilitator: Hungary

Ms. Éva Gárdos, Hungarian Central Statistical Office, reported on operations and challenges of the migration data management based on the experience of the SEEMIG project implementation, focusing on the types of migration data sources used across the participating countries. All data sources could be divided into administrative and statistical. Administrative data sources include population registers, registers of foreigners and asylum seekers, social security databases, etc. Administrative data sources contain detailed indicators and have proven to be cost effective. Access to them is often legally limited and they lack homogeneity of definitions and variables. Statistical data sources incorporate full-coverage statistical sources, sample surveys and censuses. Full-coverage sources are more detailed and comply with statistical needs and methodologies, however they are often resource consuming and have high response refusal rates. Sample surveys usually carry large numbers of variables and use standard methodology, which makes results comparable. Censuses cover entire population and provide detailed data, though have difficulties with registering emigrants/out-migration. [Please see the presentation “Managing Migration Data: Operations and Challenges – Experience from Central and South-East Europe”](#)



Mr. Ádám Dickmann, Hungarian Central Statistical Office, also discussed the Hungarian experience, which focused on managing migration data within the framework of the SEEMIG project. Immigration is not a huge problem for Hungary given the relatively low numbers here. Hungarian census provides flow data on Hungarian citizens and stock data on foreigners. Hungarian Statistical Law is a comprehensive document that allows statistical office to receive personalized individual administrative data. Moreover, there is a national programme for statistical data collection supported by the cooperation agreements between different state agencies, which facilitate the process of data transfer. Because variety of sources is used in analyzing migration data, harmonization of definitions and indicators from different registers is paramount. Data sourced from immigration statistical collections may have duplications, which is why the use of administrative sources may serve as a mean for data verification. [Please see the presentation “Managing Migration Data: Operations and Challenges – Experience from Hungary and Central and South-East Europe”](#)

Mr. Tamaz Zubiashvili, Associate Professor, Tbilisi State University, detailed current practices in migration data management in Georgia. The national migration record system requires greater regulation and a more systematic approach. Georgia needs to develop legal framework regulating access to and processing of available statistical information. Today national statistical services are more directed at foreign consumers whilst migration statistics are based on the number of people who entered and exited the country. From 2004 information on external migration has come from border checkpoints. Population census remains one of the most valuable sources of information as it provides the most comprehensive data. Additionally, private researchers conduct special surveys on migrants as part of various international projects. The sphere of migration data management and analysis requires comprehensive administrative, legal and strategic reforms.

Ms. Olga Poalelungi, Director of the Bureau for Migration and Asylum, Ministry of Interior, Moldova, shared her country’s experience creating Extended Migration Profile. Before starting the actual work on the profile, Moldova conducted a comprehensive assessment of existing sources, comparability of data, collection periods and indicators. The outcomes of the assessment were reflected in the legislation which was developed specifically for the profile. The Bureau for Migration and Asylum was appointed to be in charge of the profile creation. The first migration profile was developed five years ago with IOM’s assistance. It is structured to cover such areas as migration trends, outcomes of migration, migration policies, conclusions and recommendations. Data from national statistical services, administrative sources, and international organizations are used to produce the annual update of the profile and present migration dynamics. [Please see the presentation “Extended Migration Profile of the Republic of Moldova” \(in Russian\)](#)

Mr. Martin Kahanec, Central European University, Budapest presented the use of migration and asylum data for evidence-based policy making. Europe needs mobility and immigration because of demographic challenges such as aging and shortages of skills. It is reasonable to expect steady, modest migration flows from EaP countries (mostly Ukraine) to the EU over the course of the next decade. Moderate and temporarily increased flows can also be expected if a more liberal migration framework is put in place; however, this should be viewed through the lenses of documented generally positive effects of past and projected mobility on EU labor markets. More transparent and liberal migration framework ensures better matching and more favourable impacts on sending and receiving countries and migrants.

Ms. Marina Manke, IOM Regional Office in Vienna, focused on the data availability, comparability and the needs specific to the EaP countries. She also discussed the future of evidence-based policy-making. All of the EaP countries pay special attention to the migration data, though their activities vary from state to state. As for statistical sources, Armenia conducts migration surveys, Azerbaijan holds data on border crossings, whilst Georgia has emigration modules in censuses. Belarus uses labour migration modules and is piloting circularity of movements, Moldova tracks migration through labour force surveys, whereas Ukraine conducts a comprehensive migration and development survey and focuses on financial impacts. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova work on integration of agency databases. National data needs of the EaP states cover spheres including return and reintegration, circularity of movements and irregular migration. She added that building national capacities and promoting regional



comparability and exchange should be developed further. [Please see the presentation “From Data Collection to Evidence-Based Policy”](#)

Discussion

After the presentations, participants discussed the areas in which national migration profiles could be used. **Moldova** stated that migration profile is a comprehensive source of information for policy makers, whilst **Hungary** stressed its importance as a reference that provides an overview of the whole situation in the country. **Georgia** added that migration profiles could also be used by students, researchers, policymakers and civil society. Georgia also described progress in the areas of databases integration along with overall improvement of migration data management.

Session III. Data Protection

Facilitator: Moldova

Mr. Jędrzej Niklas, Panoptykon Foundation, Poland, talked about data protection within migration data management. Beginning in 1990s borders and airports surveillance significantly increased due to security and anti-terrorism measures. The EU government increasingly focuses on data collection, gathering a lot of personal information including fingerprints and photos. In order to enable better cooperation between authorities, data becomes accessible to more actors. The “smart border package” which proposes facilitation of border check procedures for foreigners travelling to the EU is seen as controversial by many NGOs, who claim it violates fundamental rights. It not only implies an establishment of a large database with sensitive information, it also allows law enforcement authorities to access it, making it more than just a border control system. The shift from watching external borders to tracking internal movements of migrants should not come at the cost of citizens’ rights.

Ms. Valeria Ferraris, University of Turin, continued discussing the protection of migrants’ data based on the example of Italy. The use of databases has changed the very concept of the border, as it is the databases that allow border checks to be conducted from inside the country. EU countries use the databases differently; alerts are also processed depending on the specifics of national legislations. At the EU level, there is a tendency towards multi-purpose databases, which provide access to new authorities and change the scope of data collection. People demonstrate low awareness of their data protection rights. At the national level much remains to be done when it comes to practical implementations of the declared rights, greater emphasis and attention on migrant data protection rights by lawyers, and on getting away from databases being perceived as routine practice. Greater priority is to be given to public awareness, trainings and support to national data protection authorities. [Please see the presentation “EU Border Control Databases and Data Protection of Migrants in Italy”](#)

Mr. Valeriu Certan, Bureau for Migration and Asylum of the Ministry of Interior, Moldova, discussed national migrants’ data protection mechanisms. Protection of migrants’ data rights is within the scope of the Bureau competencies. There are data protection laws in Moldova, as well as a national strategy on personal data protection set for 2013-2018. Secure information technologies are used for migration data collection, storage and exchange, whilst access to the databases is strictly limited and only available to authorized users. Data protection activities implemented by Moldova are in line with the EU standards. The approach to data protection is flexible yet constantly improving because of migration dynamics and technological advancements. [Please see the presentation “Protection of Migrants’ Data: Experience of Moldova” \(in Russian\)](#)

Study Visit to the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality

The first day of the Panel meeting continued with a study visit to the Data Management Department of the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality, where the office keeps its integrated statistical



system. The system incorporates sections on asylum data, applications of third-country nationals, migration register, visa system, archive and data on EEA nationals.

Presentations delivered by the Data Management Department staff gave the participants an opportunity to learn about procedures relating to the migration and asylum data management, such as supplying of data, processing and filtering, access to database and data protection.

6 March 2015 – Day 2

Session IV. Migration Intelligence

Facilitator: Hungary

Mr. Szabolcs Csonka, Frontex, described his agency's risk analysis activities. There is always a need to be aware and forecast the situation at EU's external borders, therefore, he explained, risk analysis is one of the key elements of the Frontex operation cycle. Every operation launched to raise awareness implies a data collection plan, which has to apply common methodology, establish adequate indicators, as well as use harmonized definitions and reliable data sources. The Frontex Risk Analysis Network provides a framework for knowledge sharing and production of analytical and strategic reports on the current state of play at the external borders. The network also allows for production of the Semi-Annual and Annual Risk Analysis documents along with tailored risk-analysis products. Full integration of the EaP states into the framework is planned by 2016. [Please see the presentation "FRONTEX Risk Analysis Activities"](#)

Mr. David Dowey, Senior Data and Analysis Coordinator, EASO, presented the Early Warning and Preparedness System (EPS). EPS is a comprehensive, accurate, timely statistical overview of asylum flows and related decision practices. With EPS, EASO produces monthly, quarterly, annual and ad-hoc analytical products based on its own data and data from Eurostat. The EPS process includes new information collection, feasibility studies within groups for statistics provision, pilot data collection, embedding of new analysis into regular products and gathering of feedback and new insights. The EPS ties the analysis into decisions and planning. EPS future plans include early detection of new trends in asylum flows, early detection of EU MS under pressure, qualitative statements on short-term prognosis, preparedness assessments, risk analysis and asylum flows modeling. [Please see the presentation "Early Warning and Preparedness System \(EPS\) of EASO and the Latest Migration Trends"](#)

Mr. Erik Esbjörnsson, Analyst, Swedish Migration Board (SMB), gave a presentation on the work of its intelligence unit, in terms of forecasting and producing prognosis in migration and asylum. The Migration intelligence unit works to strengthen surveillance and preparedness in order to assess and implement rapid changes brought on by external factors. It predicts migration into Sweden, supports and coordinates intelligence efforts, enhances analytical capabilities, develops Early Preparedness System and works on research and development with the European Migration Network. The unit produces reports on the daily basis, covering open information sources. Weekly reports have operational focus on migration routes, which carry short-term effects. The unit also develops monthly analysis and prognostic reports (five per year), as well as ad-hoc reports covering specific issues. [Please see the presentation "Migration Intelligence at the Swedish Migration Board"](#)

Mr. Radim Kristof, Ministry of the Interior, Czech Republic, detailed his country's experience in analysis of migration situation by showcasing the work of the Analytic Centre for Border Protection and Migration under the Ministry of Interior. The Center is a coordinating body for all analytical units in the ministries providing monitoring of all migration areas. It is tasked with risk analysis activities, interagency coordination over common interest issues, improvement of information exchange system and elaboration of strategic analysis reports. The centre works closely with other institutions focusing on information and data exchange based on the standing agreements. It produces monthly reports on migration trends, strategic reports for the Government along with case studies on specific issues. The Czech Statistical Office also produces its annual "Foreigners in Czech Republic" report. [Please see the presentation "Analytic Centre for Border Protection and Migration"](#)



Mr. Murat Naci Alaybeyoğlu, DG Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior, Turkey presented national approach to migration intelligence and analysis. The Migration Intelligence and Risk Analysis Center was created in 2013 as a result of extended cooperation between Turkey and Sweden. It is focused on policy-making recommendations and preparedness for different types of risks. The Center has three separate working groups covering intelligence, risk analysis and statistical analysis. The intelligence working group collects, analyzes, classifies and produces reports on migration. The risk analysis working group analyses possibilities of migration flows occurrences and their possible impacts. The statistical analysis working group classifies data and defines the relationship between data using scientific methodologies. [Please see the presentation “Turkey’s Approach to Migration Management and Data Management”](#)

Session V. Migration Trends

Facilitator: Moldova

Mr. Giorgi Gogsadze, Professor, Head of the Department of Human Geography, Tbilisi State University, discussed demographic challenges and migration trends in Georgia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union Georgia faced significant population decrease (around 1.5 million people by 2015), although managed to keep slight positive national growth due mainly to migration. Although, Georgia is one of the top emigration countries in Europe, there is no information on the precise number of emigrants. Today ethnic minority populations have decreased, so Georgia is becoming a more ethnically homogeneous country. Remittances from migrants are high and remain important for Georgian economy. Remittances from Russia, however, are decreasing each year. Similarly, remittances from Ukraine have also dropped last year. It is expected to see further decrease of remittances flows from Russia and their increase from the EU. [Please see the presentation “Georgia: Demographic Challenges and Migration Trends”](#)

Ms. Olena Malynovska, Senior Research Associate, National Institute of Strategic Studies, Ukraine, continued the session by presenting current migration trends in Ukraine. Conflict in Eastern Ukraine has greatly influenced national economy and thus led to changes in migration trends. Today, the direction of migration flows has shifted, which means less intense migration into Russia and greater mobility towards the EU. Current migration model is characterized by circular and short-term migration; top destination countries are Poland, Russia, Italy, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain and Portugal. Because the salaries have dropped by 15% compared to last year and national GDP is lower than in neighbouring countries, there is increased motivation to work abroad. In the nearest future, she added, the numbers of migrating Ukrainians will grow. Irregular migration may also increase. [Please see the presentation “Recent Trends of Migration Processes in Ukraine”](#)

Ms. Anna Bara, Project Officer, ICMPD, described the Prague Process (PP) initiative which created migration profiles and the I-map. One of the specific objectives of the PP is to maintain, update and further improve the knowledge base through collection of information in the form of Migration Profiles for participating countries. There are two types of migration profiles: extended profile, which allows to trace migration trends, and a light profile, which gives a snapshot of the migration situation based on identified parameters. I-map is an interactive IT-based tool used to exchange information on the migratory status within the participating states and support the development and implementation of cooperation initiatives. I-map could be found under the following link www.imap-migration.org. [Please see the presentation “Prague Process Knowledge Base: Migration Profiles and I-Map”](#)

Closing Session

Facilitator: European Commission

Mr. Robert Rybicki, DG Home Affairs, European Commission, concluded with general Panel business, reminding participants that the Panel traditionally holds four meetings per year. The next meeting on



labour migration is set to take place in Minsk in May 2015. Additional ad-hoc meeting on registration and integration of internally displaced persons is scheduled for June and will be held in Kyiv. New generation of the Panel website is to be designed. He also thanked to Hungary and Moldova for hosting current Panel meeting.

Ms. Tímea Lehoczki, Ministry of Interior, Hungary, highlighted once more the importance of proper data management and expressed gratitude to all participants and speakers for coming to Budapest.

Ms. Olga Poalelungi, Director of the Bureau for Migration and Asylum, Ministry of Interior, Moldova, marked the busy agenda and noted that professional discussions allowed for productive information exchange. She also thanked participants, speakers and co-host for great organization of the Panel meeting.

All presentations mentioned in this report, as well as all the material related to the meeting, can be found on the Panel website www.eapmigrationpanel.org