

Official international migration statistics in the EU – data availability and comparability

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ABSTRACT

This presentation analyses the problems of availability and comparability of data on international migration flows between the European Union member states. The presented material is based mainly on the analysis of data sent by national statistical institutes in response to the Joint UNSD-Eurostat-UNECE-CoE-ILO Questionnaire on International Migration Statistics and information collected within the recently completed THESIM (Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration) project. One of the objectives of the latter project was to support the implementation of the forthcoming *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on migration and international protection*, in particular to analyse the current functioning of migration statistics in the 25 EU countries and to identify the problems that the countries might encounter in relation to the requirements of the new regulation.

In the presentation we attempt to explain differences between the flows reported by sending and receiving countries by analysing differences in sources, definitions and coverage of the data. Inconsistencies in the data on international migration flows published in international databases are also discussed. The analysis indicates that very few countries comply with the UN recommendations and use one year duration of stay criterion in their definition, and good comparability of statistics will be very difficult to achieve. More attention should be paid to the proper documentation of the data.

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