TWINNING CONTRACT

AM/14/ENP/ST/15

Strengthening of the National Statistical System of Armenia – Phase II

MISSION REPORT

on

Demographic statistics

Activity 2.7: Methodology for migration statistics and increased use of electronic data II

Mission carried out by

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Final version

National Statistical Service
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Table of contents

List of abbreviations

EU   European Union
NSSRA   National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia
RA   Republic of Armenia

1. General comments

This mission report was prepared within the framework of a Twinning Project "Strengthening of the National Statistical System of Armenia – Phase II". This was the seventh activity in Component 2, and the actions planned for this activity were carried out as scheduled.

The purposes of the mission were as follows:

- Review of data collection and discussion on the required revisions concerning IT issues
- Continued review of methodology

Expected output:

- Mission report on recommendations for the improvement of data quality, methodology and usage of primary data sources
- Drawing up of a work program for the final activity on migration statistics
- Follow-up on achievements and recommendations for the next ISTAT and Statistics Lithuania experts visit (6–9 June 2017).

The main focus of the mission was as follows:

- to improve the migration statistics methodology
- to discuss the preparation of a technical specification for the production of international migration statistics in Armenia
- to discuss various IT issues
- technical assistance and proposals on how to make the process of production of migration statistics more efficient, etc.

The MS experts would like to express their sincere thanks to all the officials and individuals met during the visit for the kind support and the valuable information which they received during the stay in Armenia and which highly facilitated their work. The views and observations stated in this report are those of the MS experts and do not necessarily correspond to the views of the EU, NSSRA, Statistics Lithuania or Statistics Denmark.

2. Assessment and results

The mission was focused on the following: improvement of the quality of final statistical information and timeliness of dissemination of migration statistics; discussion on IT improvements needed in relation to the production of migration statistics; continued review of the migration statistics methodology; preparation of a draft technical specification as an important technical document, which should be in common usage by three divisions of the NSSRA (Population Census and Demography, Household Surveys, and IT).

The main data source for the production of migration statistics in the NSSRA is the Integrated Living Conditions Survey, ad-hoc Module on migration. This is an annual sample survey,

which enables the collection of information about demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants, together with the key information on living conditions of households, persons absent from households, remittances for their families. The survey collects statistical data on both types of migration: internal and international. The improvement of the Migration Module Questionnaire of the Integrated Living Conditions Survey was discussed by the Population Census and Demography Division of the NSSRA and Lithuanian experts in the second half of 2016. After the discussions, the NSSRA took into account the proposals for the improvement of the survey ad-hoc questionnaire. In November 2016, the Population Census and Demography Division improved the Migration Module Questionnaire for 2017 data collection, according to Lithuanian experts' recommendations: new questions about citizenship; collection of data on migration for all inhabitants of the RA (inclusion of children aged 0–14, not only the population aged 15 and older); the duration of absence of the household member only for the previous year (instead of the current three-year period). During the mission, the new questionnaire and possible outputs were discussed.

The new NSSRA publication *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia* (published on 30 November 2016) was discussed; in particular, Chapter 7 "Migration". Experts mentioned the progress in the presentation of statistical information. Despite some achievements, there is still a room for further improvements. It is important to present the main statistical information on migration in the RA: main figures, crude immigration/emigration rates, net migration, reasonable time series, etc. The explanatory notes, definitions, analysis, presented at the beginning of the chapter, need further improvement and development. The names of tables, variables should be in line with the European legislation on migration (Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 July 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection (hereinafter referred to as EU Regulation No 862/2007) and population statistics. Despite the fact that the main migration figures are calculated from a sample household survey, the variables should be renamed, for example, instead of "household members involved in the migration processes, …", it is recommended to use wording "emigrants, immigrants". There is no statistical information about the number of households, part of households (in per cent) who get remittances from family members. It is recommended to foresee publication of this information for 2017 and for the previous years.

The draft of the technical specification for the production of international migration statistics was discussed. The English translation had been sent to experts before the February mission, and the experts sent their comments and suggestions on how to improve the technical document. The comments from Statistics Lithuania were discussed. The staff of the Population Census and Demography and IT divisions took into account the experts' proposals. The specification will be finalized by the end of April.

The draft methodology for migration statistics was discussed. Since the methodology and the specification have common features, both documents should be prepared at the same time (30 April 2017). It was agreed that the experts and the NSSRA Population Census and Demography Division will work on the methodology and specification for migration statistics together, and communication will be continued in March–April 2017 by email.

Meetings with the NSSRA Population Census and Demography Division were organized in order to observe their work using IT tools provided by the IT Division. A meeting with the IT Division was organised – to observe the specifics of their work on the preparation of tools for the Population Census and Demography Division.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

On the basis of the main mission findings, the following conclusions and recommendations can be made:

1. From January 2017, the data collection with the improved questionnaire of the Migration Module of the Integrated Living Conditions Survey allows producing migration statistics of higher quality, for example, evaluating the number of international migrants by citizenship and by all age groups, following Regulation (EC) No 862/2007. The question regarding the duration of absence of the household member only for the previous year (instead of the current three-year period) related to migration experience will improve the accuracy of the survey results.

2. The new NSSRA publication *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia* was discussed; in particular Chapter 7 "Migration". There in progress in the updated publication: metadata and definitions, explanations, data sources used in the RA for the production of migration statistics.
    When preparing a publication for 2017, some clarifications are recommended: to use the same wording as in the EU legislation on international migration and population statistics; to present more general data on migration in the dedicated chapter, despite the fact that there are some main indicators of migration at the beginning of the publication; to improve the names of tables and variables (to use internationally harmonised migration statistics   definitions).
    The experts recommended developing the annual publication by including more statistical data (in absolute numbers, in per cent, visualization) on emigrants, immigrants, their main demographic and socio-economic characteristics, crude emigration and immigration rates. It is recommended to add the definitions of net migration and crude rates to the explanatory notes of the publication.

3. It is recommended in the nearest future to foresee further improvements in the dissemination of migration statistics: to prepare and publish a metadata document (quality declaration) on international migration statistics on the NSSRA website; to publish certain indicators of migration statistics: migration trends, asylum, irregular migration, etc. For users of migration statistics, statistical information about foreign labour migrants (these data are available in the Visa and Passport Department of the Police of the RA) would be very interesting and useful.

4. It is recommended to analyse possibilities to publish annual migration statistics earlier (if possible, improve timeliness).

5. Despite the fact that there is a question in the Migration Module of the Integrated Living Conditions Survey: "Did you send remittances in cash or/and in kind during the last 12 months?", it is recommended to investigate the possibilities to collaborate with the Central Bank of the RA on the remittances statistics issues.

6. It is recommended to develop a methodology for measuring immigration and emigration flows. It will be possible to make an analysis and check the data against data from the Integrated Living Conditions Survey and Population Register by the end of April.

Issues related to cooperation with the IT Division:

7. Not standardized format of communication between the Population Census and Demography and IT divisions could create problems in data quality. More productive cooperation between statistical divisions and the IT Division is recommended. For better results and efficient work with digital data production in the NSSRA, it is recommended to standardize communication between statistical divisions and the IT Division:
   - To develop standardized request forms to streamline technical specifications;
   - To use standardized forms, in order for the Statistical survey managers to clearly communicate with the IT Division;
   - Cooperation between statistical divisions and the IT Division could be formalized and approved by the top management by an internal NSSRA document;
   - When approved, the technical specifications could be used to ensure transparency in the production processes and good quality of final statistical information.

8. There is a need of technical specifications for the existing systems used by the Population Census and Demography Division, which could improve the quality of the produced data. It is recommended that technical specifications for existing systems are prepared in consultation with the IT Division. This will help clarify the current data production process and eliminate the risk of poor data quality. Having specifications in the form of a document would also shorten the adaptation period for new staff members in the Population Census and Demography and IT divisions.

9. The NSSRA IT staff is very professional and can work with administrative data at the personal record level for the production of migration statistics, but given the increased amount of work with administrative data in general, the IT staff might get overburdened, which could lead to delays and drop in quality. The usage of bigger amounts of administrative data will require:
   - evaluating possibilities to have more IT specialists (programmers);
   - organizing training for IT specialists in MS Server administration and data querying.

It is recommended to introduce appropriate instruments aimed at achieving better quality of international migration statistics. A number of them are reflected below:

Action	Deadline	Responsible person
To finalize the updated methodology on international migration statistics in accordance with the recommendations from Statistics Lithuania's experts	28 April 2017	Karine Kuyumjyan
To finalize the technical specification for the production of international migration statistics in cooperation with the IT and Household Survey divisions	28 April 2017	Karine Kuyumjyan Armine Arushanyan
To set up an internal process for cooperation with the IT Division for the development and regular updates of technical specifications, based on a standardized cooperation document	31 May 2017	Head of the IT Division, Armine Avetisyan
To prepare and publish a metadata document on international migration statistics	30 June 2017	Karine Kuyumjyan
To develop a draft version of a document on internal standardized cooperation between subject matter statistical divisions and the IT Division	31 May 2017	Head of the IT Division
To organize a high-level meeting with the National Security Service of the RA in order to discuss possibilities and a possible timetable for getting access to required administrative data from the Border Management Information System and provide the results	31 May 2017	Karine Kuyumjyan

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

EU Twinning Project AM/14/ENP/ST/15

6-10 February 2017

Component 2: Demographic Statistics

Activity 2.7: Methodology of migration statistics and increased use of electronic data II

0. Mandatory results and benchmarks for the component

Mandatory results:

- Migration statistics improved concerning data collection, coverage, timeliness and quality (July 2017)

Benchmarks:

- Methodology on migration statistics updated (April 2017)
- Staff of NSSRA trained on issues related to migration statistics (July 2017)

1. Purpose of the activity

- o Review of data collection and discussion on needed revisions
- o Continued review of methodology
- o Meeting with users of migration statistics
- o To involve relevant stakeholders in the discussions

2. Expected output of the activity

- o Implementation of new procedures to produce data defined
- o Meeting with users held
- o Possible elaborations and analyses to be published/provided to the most relevant users identified
- o Survey methodology reviewed
- o A lining up of work programme for the next activity:
    - o 2.8: Follow-up on achievements and recommendations for the future (June 2017)

3. Participants

NSSRA
Component leaders
- Mr. Gagik Gevorgyan, Member of State Council on Statistics of RA
- Ms. Karine Kuyumjyan, Head, Population Census and Demography Division

Other staff
- Ms. Anna Tokhatyan, Chief specialist, Population Census and Demography Division
- Ms. Armine Avetisyan, Leading specialist, Population Census and Demography Division
- Ms. Anna Grigoryan, 1st category specialist, Population Census and Demography Division
- Ms. Susanna Azatyan, 2nd category specialist, Population Census and Demography Division

MS experts
- Ms. Dalia Ambrozaitienė, Expert, Statistics Lithuania
- Mr. Jan Golubovič, Expert, Statistics Lithuania

Other stakeholders taking part in the activity
Representatives from:

- State Migration Service, RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development
- RA National Security Service
- Passport and Visa Department, RA Police
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)

will also be invited.

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Annex 2: Programme for the mission

Time	Place	Event	Purpose / detail
Monday, morning *(6/2)* (10:00)	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	To discuss the programme of the week Assessment of situation and presentation by BC of the work conducted since last mission, and presentation by BC of the expected outcome of current mission
Monday, afternoon *(6/2)*	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Discussions on how define implementation of new procedures for data production
Tuesday, morning *(7/2)*	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Discussion of possible elaborations and analyses to be published/provided to the most relevant users identified
Tuesday, afternoon *(7/2)*	NSSRA	Meeting with stakeholders	Meeting with: - *RA National Security Service* - *International Organization for Migration (IOM)*
Wednesday, morning *(8/2)*	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Review of: • survey methodology, • the database on migration flows
Wednesday, afternoon *(8/2)*	NSSRA	Meeting with stakeholders	Meeting with: - *Passport and Visa Department, RA Police* - *State Migration Service*
Thursday, morning *(9/2)*	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Final discussions on methodology and work to be done to ensure update of methodology by the end of April Defining homework to be done until last mission in June
Thursday, afternoon *(9/2)*	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader Ad-hoc meetings	Final clarifications with BC Experts, preparation of report and presentation for BC Project Leader
Friday, morning *(10/2)*	NSSRA	Debriefing with BC Project Leader	Presentation of MS Experts' findings and agreement on the reached conclusions Conclusions and decisions and their consequences for the next activity and the implied work programme for BC Experts

Annex 3. Persons met

NSSRA:

- Stepan Mnatsakanyan, President of the NSS RA
- Anahit Safyan, Member of the State Council on Statistics of RA
- Gagik Gevorgyan, Member of the State Council on Statistics of RA
- Vanush Davtyan, Member of the State Council on Statistics of RA
- Aida Martirosyan, Head of Information Resources, Management and Technologies Department
- Karine Kuyumjyan, Head of Population Census and Demography Division
- Anna Tokhatyan, Population Census and Demography Division
- Armine Avetisyan, Population Census and Demography Division
- Anna Grigoryan, Population Census and Demography Division
- Susanna Azatyan, Population Census and Demography Division

RTA Team:

- Peter Bohnstedt Anan Hansen, Resident Twinning Adviser
- Liana Atoyan, RTA Assistant
- Anush Poghosyan, RTA Language Assistant