



**Managing Migration and Its
Effects in South-East Europe
Transnational Actions Towards
Evidence Based Strategies**

SEEMIG

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Results and Recommendations

SEEMIG

relied on a wide network of partners, including 18 research institutes, universities, statistical offices and local government bodies from eight countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia) and observers from further three countries (Albania, Georgia, Ukraine).

Jointly for our common future



Long term development and future challenges

- ▶ In the SEEMIG project we have analysed longer-term processes of international migration, human capital, labour market and demography in South-East Europe in a comparative regional and global context. Legal, social and economic changes were taken into account and diverging types of development trajectories for the last 60 years were identified.
- ▶ Utilising knowledge on longer term historical trends and developmental patterns the project has developed new ways of population forecasts to identify future challenges.
- ▶ We have also invited experts, decision makers and civic groups to conduct foresight exercises to identify key factors of future developments.



Reviewing Data System – Steps Towards Improvement

- ▶ The partners of the project have monitored and reviewed the international, national and local data systems which are generating data for the statistics on migration, labour market and human capital.
- ▶ Following the expert assessment of the data systems we have consulted various data owners and data producers in the relevant national and local communities and prepared a set of recommendations for reforming the above mentioned data systems.
- ▶ This way the project has been giving a broad support to the public sector in conceiving and elaborating policies and strategies on regional, national and local level, which are based on high-quality databases and empirical foundations. The project has enhanced fostering transnational cooperation between statistical offices, research institutes and local governments for creating and utilising capacities and expertise otherwise unused or missing.



TRANSNATIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

on the enhancement of evidence-based policy making on migration, labour market and human capital processes in South-East Europe

The SEEMIG project has developed action plans, strategies, policy recommendations on national and local levels for each participating country and local community. Beyond these policy documents policy recommendations have been formulated on a transnational level as summed up below.



Policy Area 1: Harmonisation of data collection and exchange

► *Harmonization of definitions and methods in the European Union and relevant international bodies*

Despite the growing attempts to standardise and harmonise migration-related data collection in recent decades, fully comparable migration data are still scarce. Therefore there is a need to harmonise definitions of migration in the relevant registries of the European Union Member States, most importantly in address registration, and also in surveys conducted in these countries. There is also a need to agree on the definition of repeated shorter-term migratory moves in order to cover current changes in the nature of migration. These harmonised definitions should be elaborated in close cooperation with regional and global institutions and major migratory partner countries.



► *Continued mainstreaming of migration data*

Migration issues are increasingly taken into account in a wider range of public policy areas, including health-, education- and social policy. To promote these activities, richer information on the socio-economic situation and composition of migrants is still needed, including the level of education, labour force participation and language skills. This could be achieved through the means of broader inclusion of the indicator 'country of birth'. The introduction of this information in registries and large-scale surveys would also allow better international comparison and the clarification of the social composition of migrant groups. This would promote quick analyses aimed at identifying problems related to migration and development.

► *Harmonisation of address registration within the European Union*

In the European Union there is a need for steps toward a more unified system of address registration to be applied for all foreign citizens – including EU citizens. This would prevent their parallel registration in more than one country. While national governments maintain the right to introduce, operate and change such registries, EU level recommendations should help them in establishing a unified system that includes the trans-national needs of migration statistics.



Policy Area 2: Enhancement of data collection methodologies

► *Improvement and integration of administrative data systems*

The introduction of a unique statistical identifier (PIN) in most of the EU member countries is especially urgent, as it would sufficiently link data from different registers. To achieve this, steps need to be taken also at the European level in order to systematically follow emigration through deregistration from data systems. This would make it possible to undertake less costly and more frequent analyses and it would provide better data on the demographic and social composition of the registered migrant population. Data protection has to be guaranteed on a sufficient level so that individual data are not traceable beyond statistical purposes.

► *Improvement of data collection on the regional level*

Demographic and economic polarisations as well as persisting regional specificities are the main factors that will continue to shape the development of SEEMIG regions, also in the future. For this purpose, differentiated data for the regional level – amongst others and particularly as regards (net) migration trends – are important. The availability of such data on the regional level is still scarce. For this reason, there is a great need to enhance the collection of regional-level data.



► *Improvement of methods to estimate migration flow and stock data and use of “big data” on the transnational level*

To produce reliable estimates of migration flow data, systematic consideration and possibly a combination of several approaches is needed. These include using stock data to derive country-level flow data and also making some simple census tabulations universal (particularly the tabulation of residents by place of birth and, for the foreign-born, by year of entry). Other new approaches like using “big data” – for instance the data from social media – are still at an early stage of development. The aim of comparing, improving and checking estimates should be incorporated into various research and policy calls of international and national funding agencies.

► *Emigrant-surveys based on SEEMIG pilot methodology*

Potentials of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) should be further utilised to improve emigration statistics. The SEEMIG pilot studies in Hungary and Serbia have demonstrated how through LFS an emigrant-sample, large enough for meaningful statistical analysis can be achieved even in countries with medium level emigration. A harmonised and streamlined version of the method piloted in the SEEMIG project could serve as a basis for producing reliable estimates on the size of emigration as well as on the composition of the emigrant population across Europe in a comparable manner.



Policy Area 3: Increase in transnational partnerships and cooperation

► *Establishment of transnational dialogue between migrant sending and receiving areas*

There is an urgent need to enhance dialogues between the relevant policy makers in both types of communities in order to make migratory linkages an opportunity instead of challenges. Such transnational dialogues would be helpful in the specification of migration management policies at the local, national and regional level. This dialogue could also lead to the better articulation of interests and data problems concerning linkages between migrant-sending and migrant-receiving communities.

► *Creation of a transnational monitoring committee*

A transnational monitoring committee, composed of a multi-disciplinary group of experts from all countries in the region representing research institutes and statistical offices, which continuously observes migration processes and provides a transnational framework for better cooperation in the region should be set up. Such a monitoring committee could become the first step towards better and coordinated management of international migration within the region by fostering the improvement of evidence on migration and related processes.



Collection and exchange of data: increased cooperation between National Statistical Offices in the European Union

To capture new realities of migration, the systematic collection of data on (daily cross-border) labour mobility is needed in EU Member States as well as in their non-EU neighbouring countries. Reporting on cross-border migration should be made uniform in terms of methodology applied, in order to have comparable data. Increased partnerships for the exchange of data between statistical offices via Memoranda of understandings are needed.

Improvement of transnational databases and maintenance of the SEEMIG transnational database

Assembled national data collected and published by international organisations often still lack comparability or do not allow for regional specificities to be incorporated. Continued efforts for the harmonisation of the collection of national data and for building partnerships between statistical offices and international organisations seem essential. The SEEMIG Transnational Database, as a pilot activity, offers an important information source on migration, labour market and demography in the region regarding the recent past since 2001. Its maintenance beyond the project life span is considered to be of significant national and transnational interest for the South-East European region.



Policy area 4: Improvement of data collection and data use on the local level

► ***Enhancement of institutional capacity of local public administrations on data management as well as new forms of multi-institutional cooperation***

Implications of migration – particularly those concerning migrant integration and those related to out-migration – are dealt with mainly on the local level. Consequently, local governments need to be able to respond to these specific local situations based on clear and local specific evidence. However, local public administrations lack fundamental professional capacities in collecting relevant data on development and migration. It is of public interest that local databases – similar to the ones produced by SEEMIG – are created, preferably under statistical and expert supervision and coordination.

► ***Launch of local surveys on migrant groups, local communities and on vulnerable groups (especially young people) on the transnational level***

To understand current migration patterns and to pave the way for policy action, both the amount and quality of statistical data at the local level need to be improved, along with cross-sectional analysis methods of integrating migration, labour force and family aspects. This has to be done both from a migrant sending- and a receiving country perspective in order to support their social policies, labour market policies and local development strategies. For this purpose, surveys on emigration and emigrants also needed.

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