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Perspectives for modelling in official migration statistics

Topic 7 – Better statistics for a globalised world

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Introduction

International migration is becoming an increasingly more important aspect of social life and policy across Europe, yet many aspects of the existing official statistics on migration flows and stocks remain problematic. As the same time, there is an ever-growing demand for better and more timely data that would enable various European stakeholders better deal with the challenges posed by migration.

Methods / Problem statement

According to Article 9 of the Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 on community statistics on migration and international protection, “scientifically based and well documented statistical estimation methods may be used” to develop official statistics on migration and asylum. However, despite the presence of the legal framework, official statistical modelling of migration or asylum flow and stock data remains under-utilised in most European countries and at the EU level. As a result, the available migration data do not achieve their full information potential.

Results / Proposed solution

In the talk, I will argue for making a fuller use of statistical modelling to combine the advantages of data from different sources and to deliver new ideas – such as early warning mechanism – that will better equip European policy-makers of tomorrow to deal with the challenges of brought about by various migration forms of. The key ingredients of the proposed approach include: integration of multiple data sources, use of statistical modelling techniques, explicit acknowledgement of the uncertainty in the model results, and efficient communication of the outcomes. More direct exchange of information – as is already taking place amongst Nordic countries – could facilitate the process.

Conclusions

The challenges brought about by international migration can be made more manageable by using the already available data in a more creative way. Important tasks for the future include better coordination, harmonisation and exchange of migration and asylum data collection across Europe.