SEEMIG National Strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization for Serbia
(Proposal for a national strategy on data enhancement and utilization on migration, labour market and human capital)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bearing in mind one of the main aims of the SEEMIG project to strengthen the evidence based decision-making in the field of migration management, the main purpose of this document is to address main policy areas, key problems in the data system in Serbia related to the policy areas listed, as well as to provide the recommendations for enhancing migration data production and its utilization in Serbia. By doing so, this document will assist the decision makers in Serbia in adapting and implementing more effective policies in the evidence based migration management.

This national strategy document consists of five sections, including introduction. The second section provides the overview of the complex interaction between migration, demographic processes and changes regarding the labour market and human capital. In the third section the major societal challenges related to migration in Serbia have been listed. Major policy areas that should be further developed have been described at the end of this section. The fourth section examines key problems in the data system and their possible solutions. Main migration challenges that have been already addressed and elaborated in the SEEMIG project focus are presented within this part. The fifth section of the document gives suggestions and policy recommendations that need to be promoted and developed by the Serbian decision-makers at the national level.

Taking into account a wide range of the SEEMIG project activities and the outputs based on the extensive research sources and methods, this document establishes and identifies challenges related to migration field are founded on the comprehensive national historical analysis of the migration trends, human capital and demographic processes and the respective wider SEE context. The SEEMIG project's outputs, such as national foresight exercise and the focus group workshop, have been used as the basis for the main policy areas definition (see Annex 1). These outputs are the result of a constructive dialogue between the Serbian key stakeholder representatives such as: policy makers and public servants, researchers and practitioners, which facilitated a better understanding of the policy areas which should be additionally supported and the weaknesses that should be overcome through the suggestions and policy recommendations. The key problems elaborated have been considerably shaped by the national report on the existing data production system in Serbia and the countries of the SEE region and the Action Plan for its improvement. The time frame of this national strategy document is seven years. The outcomes of the proposed activities have been divided into short term and long-term outcomes.

2. BACKGROUND

Immediately after the establishment of the communist regime the international migration in Serbia was strictly controlled and relatively less intense. Liberalization of political conditions in the SFRY, improvement of relations with Western countries, implementation of economic reforms (1965) and the emergence of "open" unemployment resulted in a complete change in policies toward travelling abroad and massive economic migration. New conditions enabled a real expansion of external economic migration. According to results of censuses carried out in 1971, 1981 and 1991, the number of Serbian citizens working or staying abroad continually increased (from 204,000 to 269,000 and then to 274,000), which meant that around every thirtieth citizen of Serbia lived abroad at that time (from 2.8% in 1971 to 3.5% in 1991).

In the past quarter century, since 1990 up till now, demographic development of Serbia was taking place under exceptional socio-economic and historic circumstances. This period can be divided into two subperiods. The first, 1990-2000, was marked by the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, several regional wars, the United Nations Security Council's hard sanctions

against Serbia and the international isolation of the country. The second subperiod started in October 2000, characterized by the political, social and economic recovery as well as deep reforms. Both periods were characterized by personal and social insecurity of the population, and by rising unemployment. During these years the, number of unemployed persons rose from 467,000 in 1990, to 722,000 in 2000 and reaching 775,000 people in 2013[1]. Also, in 2012 the at-risk-of-poverty rate achieved 24.6% (the highest compared with 30 European countries which conducted the Survey on Income and Living Conditions - SILC).

From a demographic point of view, the last 25 years were also an extraordinary period. Demographic statistics, as well as the results of the three last censuses (from 1991, 2002 and 2011), show that some of the long-term processes were speeded up considerably (e.g., population ageing, deagrarization, homogenisation of ethnic structure, emigration from the country). At the same time, others were significantly slowed down or suddenly interrupted (urbanisation, depopulation of certain small areas). Recent demographic development of Serbia was also characterised by completely new processes (forced migration in the first place), non present between 1950s and 1980s.

On 1 January 2014, Serbia had 7,146,759 inhabitants, by 351,242 less than on 2002 Census day and 402,219 less than the population in country as measured on 1991 Census day. This means that the population decrease realised mainly after the 2000. During the 1990s, the natural growth was negative (since 1992), but the migration balance was positive, solely because of the arrival of refugees and internally displaced persons during the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and as a consequence of the regional armed conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia.

Since 2000, the number of deaths in the country is higher than the number of lives births. At the same time, the number of emigrants exceeds the number of immigrants, and the net migration is again negative, after one decade of positive difference between the immigrations to Serbia and the emigration abroad.

In the whole period since 1990 until now, the natural growth of the population is the main component of the population change. The natural movement was characterised by a downward trend in the fertility and by an upward trend in the life expectancy. Even so, in the 2000s, the fertility rate has been declining at a much faster pace than in the 1990s, and achieving up to one third below replacement level. The mortality decline was evident but quite modest, particularly in some age groups. As a result of such changes in the population movement components and because of a very advanced demographic ageing, the natural decrease of the population of Serbia in the past 25 years exceeded half a million, with one of the highest negative natural growth rate in Europe.

Contrary to the natural component of population change, which has always been experienced, was negative, while net migration was positive and negative. In the 1990s, Serbia has a positive net migration rate, while since 2000 net migration has permanently been negative. International migration, like natural movement, is also considerably affected by the political and socio-economic situation in Serbia, as well as in the most important destination countries for Serbian migrants. The following factors in particular seem to have a strong impact on migration in the country: armed conflicts, ethnic tensions, political and economic transition, visa regime, economic and financial crisis, unemployment, specific labour market demand, EU enlargement, etc.

During and after the Yugoslav wars of 1990s, Serbia, with more than 600,000 refugees in 1996 (for more information see SEEMIG Dynamic historical analysis – Serbia) became one of the main destinations for several millions of forced migrants, mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Right before and during the NATO military campaign in 1999, over 200,000 internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija came to Serbia (CRMRS, 2012). At the same time emigration has

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[1] For more information see SEEMIG Dynamic historical analysis – Serbia, and National Employment Service of the Republic of Serbia web site.

continually increased. Thus, according to the 2002 Census data the emigration stock rose to 415,000, while the 2011 Census showed that it decreased by more than 25 per cent in relation to 2002. However, based on the available data on Serbian immigrants reported in the main countries of destination, it may be concluded that the emigration stock was considerably higher than the one recorded by the Census data. Opposed to 1990s, during the years of political and economic transition of 2000s Serbia again has become a net emigration country. The main reason is a great decrease (almost ten times) in the number of immigrants, while the number of emigrants stays at the similar level.

Serbia looses considerable numbers of its young and educated working-age population due to emigration. Therefore, emigration, in joint action with low fertility, is leading to a reduction in the number of young people and their share in the total population, and to very intense demographic ageing, with many complex and long-term consequences.

If Serbia's joining the EU is a realistic future, the net emigration, roughly estimated to be around 15,000 persons per year in the period around 2010, and might reduce slightly, owing to the economic and financial crisis in Europe. In addition, the perspective of joining the EU may generate a delaying emigration, to be realized after Serbia's accession.

Serbia's accession to the EU would surely have an important effect, namely, a large-scale emigration of an explosive but relatively short-lived nature, as it happened with emigration flows in several new member countries after the 2004 EU enlargement. After the short period, it is reasonable to expect a rapid reduction of net emigration. Finally, having in mind the experiences of other transition countries after the EU accession, better economic situation, as well as the demographic characteristics in the country, a turn towards net immigration is expected some 10-15 years later.

3.   MAIN ISSUES/CHALLENGES RELATED TO MIGRATION

Assessment of Challenges

According to the Eurostat, Serbia reported one of the highest rates of natural decrease in Europe with a three-year average of -4.9 per 1,000 population (2009-2011). Serbia also has one of the oldest demographics in the continent with a median age of 42.5 years and belongs to a group of former communist countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Croatia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine) that are experiencing population decline (Eurostat online database, 2014). Reduction and ageing of the population are two clearly identifiable characteristics of contemporary Serbia. From the demographic perspective, the continuation of these trends is quite certain in the very long-term. Since the EU Council opened the negotiations with Serbia on its accession to the European Union in January 2014, the major societal challenges in the country related to migration are considered from the viewpoint of its EU future accession.

It is indicative that both qualitative methods the foresight exercise and the focus group discussion used by SEEMIG in order to identify current drivers of migration in Serbia resulted in very similar outcomes. The former employed three very different groups of participants in terms of their education, experience and viewpoint as regards to migration issues (experts, migrants/civil society and decision makers). The latter gathered only those dealing professionally with migration related topics but from three different angles (academicians, decision makers, civil society). The foresight exercise identified as the most decisive factors of migration the political stability, economic development, human capital as a resource, and system of values while the economic crisis, legislation issues, and education system were highlighted during the focus group. It turned out that the core of these factors coincided with the ones recognized in the SEEMIG analysis based on quantitative methods used to assess international migration in Serbia upon existing data. Indeed, the

qualitative methods put more lights on the relations between the factors, highlighting challenges related to migration in a clearer way.

Emigration is recognized as one of the major challenges in that regard. It can be observed as a reaction to the current labour market conditions in the country. Thus, the economic crisis was considered as the main push factor, especially for the highly skilled and highly qualified persons. As opposed to previous waves of emigration from Serbia, low-qualified and low-skilled workers cannot easily find a job abroad, except when specific professions are in question. Given the experiences of some former communist countries that joined the EU during the last decade, current net emigration could be even intensified in the immediate post-accession period. Knowing that, the emigration will certainly become a more and more important issue from now until 2021. Even if the total number of emigrants would be lower than in the 1990s, constant loss of young people who do not plan to return will certainly affect Serbian society facing intensified population ageing and reducing. Furthermore, there is no reliable estimate of the current emigration of high skilled end educated people. It seems that every loss in that group will strongly affect the already diminished human capital of the country, given the existing small share of tertiary educated persons over the total population if compared with most of European countries.

The issue of education is directly related to emigration. In addition to insufficient number of persons with high degree diplomas, the structure of Serbian labour force largely deviates from the needs of the country's labour market. Thus the growing stock of unemployed young people will represent the emigration fuel in the years to come. At the same time, the smaller portion of graduates who could find a job, namely in the areas related to new technologies, will in most cases try to go abroad looking for much better working conditions and living opportunities. Both the recovery of economy and the improving political stability in the country are not expected to be straightforward and fast enough to undermine the importance of current drivers of emigration until 2021. Thus, a possibility for significant return of Serbian nationals, particularly of those who recently left the country, does not seem much realistic from the present perspective.

According to the national population projection, increase of fertility rates itself will not be sufficient if Serbia wants to alleviate the effects of unfavourable demographic trends. The transition to net immigration is needed as well. However, the potential of immigration as a component of the country development programs is not fully recognized in Serbian professional and public circles. If Serbia experiences substantial improvements in terms of economic situation and social maturity, it will result in decrease of emigration from, and increase of immigration to, the country. The latter could be rather challenging for at least two reasons. The one relates to the absence of immigrant integration policies, particularly those directed to foreigners originating from countries outside of former Yugoslavia. The other obstacle is closely connected to the previous one. As there is no recent history of foreign immigration, there would be certainly challenging for Serbian society to accommodate immigrants. Reactions to recent sharp increase of asylum seekers in Serbia supports this assumption.[2] Growing numbers of foreigners from distant countries came as a surprise not only to majority of population but also to the legislation. Given the status of Serbia in relation to the EU, the role of this challenge will most probably rise as time passes.

Major policy areas

Better economic performances, education system in line with modern standards, and return of emigrants who recently left the country are the main pillars of the positive country scenario that experts, decision makers, migrants and representatives of civil society defined in the national

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[2] The number of expressed intentions to seek asylum in the Republic of Serbia rose from 520 to 5,065 between 2010 and 2013. The largest number of asylum seekers came from the war affected Near East countries, such as Syria and Afghanistan (CRMRS, 2014). Usually they do not intend to stay in Serbia, but want to go further into the European Union countries.

foresight exercise aimed at developing future scenarios of demographic, migratory and labour market processes in Serbia. The conclusions of the academicians, decision makers, and representatives of civil society that discussed, within the national focus group, relations between migration and the labour market in Serbia generally coincided with those of the foresight exercise. Yet, the focus group put emphasis on the need to have agreements on employment and social protection between Serbia and major countries of destination for Serbian emigrants. Also, the need for establishing a legal framework related to the employment of foreigners, including asylum seekers, was recognized as essential.

The political stability and the **economic growth** of the country can be considered as mutually connected policy areas of the highest importance for the future migration and labour market in Serbia. Economy is one of the most important areas that should be improved in order to alleviate negative effects emigration in Serbia until 2021. Strategic orientation of the country towards activities that would facilitate foreign investments implies long-term economic development and strengthening of the legal system. It implies adjustment of the Serbian **education system** to the diversified needs of the labour market, which could be considered as one of crucial policy areas.

Improvements in the stated policy areas will help reducing emigration of highly educated and highly skilled young people and will also support the return of Serbian citizens who recently left the country. In the EU pre-accession period, the legislation regarding foreign workers has to be adjusted in order to prepare for immigrants inflow. It could be helpful in the conditions of permanent emigration. However, the possible return of nationals and the integration of new immigrants could produce tensions in the labour market. To some extent, it could make residents feel concerned for their job positions because returnees will have the advantage of acquired working experience and new knowledge from more developed economies. On the other side, foreigners are usually regarded as those who took the best jobs and working positions. The main role of the state could be not to offer special incentives for returning migrants and for attracting immigrants, but to expand its engagement in the activities that would offer equal opportunities in the labour market.

However, the statistics on international migration from and to Serbia is not fully available for decision makers, academic community and other stakeholders in the country. Consequently, the first challenge with regards to improvements and development of stated policy areas refers to improvement of availability and quality of data on international migration. During the SEEMIG project, the key issues affecting the production and management of migration-related data in Serbia were identified. Those issues have been described in the following section.

4. KEY PROBLEMS IN THE DATA SYSTEM

1. *Enhancement of relevant legal framework*

The institutional framework in this field is defined in compliance with the competencies that some public administration bodies have in the domain of migration and in compliance with the Law on Migration Management, Law on Ministries, Asylum Law, Law on Refugees and various strategies of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. **The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration** is the institution in charge of managing migration flows and it carries out the following tasks:

− it establishes the type of data that need to be monitored and collected, it puts together the results and analyzes them for the purpose of monitoring the migration trends and it cooperates with the public administration body in charge of the statistics that establishes the indicators to be monitored and the required reporting on migration;

− It establishes a network for the exchange of information between the relevant bodies and the organizations that dispose the needed data.

In addition to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, the Ministry of Interior is another important institution that constitutes a major source of data on migration and it is in charge of: security of the state border and control of the border crossing and moving and staying in the border zone, sojourn of foreigners, citizenship, permanent and temporary residence of the citizens, personal ID cards and passports, international assistance and other forms of international cooperation, including also readmission, irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, etc. Also, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia plays an important role within the institutional framework for monitoring migration and it is in charge of: preparation of the methodology, collection, processing, statistical analysis and publishing of the statistical data; preparation and enactment of unique statistical standards; cooperation and professional coordination with the bodies and organizations authorized for conducting statistical surveys; cooperation with international organizations for the purpose of standardization and ensuring comparability. Apart from the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, the Ministry of Interior and the Statistical Office, it is vital to include the following ministries and public bodies into the institutional framework for monitoring migration, all in line with their respective competences within the process of collecting data on migration: the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, etc. It is essential to adopt decrees within the existing Law on Migration Management that shall specify the activities contributing to the integration of all governmental institutions and bodies regarding the types of data collected in order to ensure mutual coordination and raise the quality of data. An institutional framework thus defined will ensure monitoring of the population's migration flows through the collection and analysis of data on population migration, both at the local and the national levels. For example, there are two databases of the Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora and the Serbs in the Region – database on official evidence of organizations in the diaspora and the database of highly educated persons and experts. These databases could be used for different kinds of research in the field of sociology, psychology, economy, public opinion research etc.

2. *Establishing the Population Register*

Taking into consideration the fact that there is no population register in the Republic of Serbia and that its existence would be a uniformly integral solution for managing data on the physical persons of a country by the competent authorities, there is an essential need to have it introduced and this would simultaneously constitute a solution enabling the direct use of data on all physical persons by public institutions. The population register should list all residents of a municipality. It should be updated regularly, so that it could provide the picture of the real state of population of the given area at any point in time. Within this system of continuous registration of population, the most important data for each person are collected and updated, particularly those concerning any changes in the place of residence and it is vital to ensure notification of residence or notice of departure for the system to function well. The legal grounds that would determine the contents of the population register, exchange, keeping, maintaining, safeguarding and use of the data, setting up and using of the personal identification tag, and regulate other issues of importance would be defined by the Law on Population Register. The register ought to be managed by the public administration body in charge of IT in order to ensure electronic support and exchange of data from different databases. The data would be sorted by contents, time and territory, by the place of event, registration, permanent residence, place of birth abroad or the place of prior or future permanent residence abroad in case of moving abroad. The state bodies and other users of the register data may use them solely for carrying out tasks from their respective domain. The data from the register would be used for statistical, scientific, research and other purposes, without any designation regarding the identity of the persons to whom the data refer. The population register thus defined would represent the current and the most precise source of data on migration, both at the local and at the national levels.

3. *Establishing of the international migration researching in SORS with capacity building*

Contextually speaking, the issue of migration complexity could be defined by the need to integrate data in different ways with inclusion of migration related variables into a wide range of statistics or by supplementing socio-economic variables to migration statistics. It should be followed up by adjusted and more effective use of existing migration data sources as well as by introducing the new ones, mutually conceptualized and harmonized. Therefore, International migration statistics enhancement based on general statistical principles regarding methodology, concept and users' needs should undertake, as primary focus, to define targeted migration-related groups and to review all additional definitions and variables.

Migration management system is multi-sectoral with following institutional and legal framework and it is defined in line with competences and responsibilities of the public administration authorities relating to migration issue in the Republic of Serbia. The role that the *Statistical Office* should have is determined by the fact that increased data quality is an urgent requirement for planning and implementing specific measures for migration monitoring enhancement through new surveys introduction based on demands for evidence-based policy making. In-depth analyses of the actual migration trends and above all the ability to evaluate, make projections and estimate future migration effects on society are essential factors for governance adjustments, especially on local level. The key data source for statistics is the Census of population, with the methodology consistent with the International Recommendations on migration stock. Besides, administrative data sources that are essential for producing statistics are generally limited to those associated with the population registration or immigration monitoring such as the total population register or the foreign citizens register or datasets on issued residence permits. Therefore, the current, regularly updated data on migration and its trends are generally incomplete, incomparable, often released with delay and reflect low cooperation level among state institutions. Also, in many cases, only targeted surveys may provide the complex and multidimensional data needed for a comprehensive understanding of migration-related processes and it presents a focal point where the SORS, as an institution with the required expertise capacity, can address this challenge by establishing the Group on international migration statistics. A further step, which would present an added value to the overall reform of migration monitoring system, is to introduce supplementary by-laws/decrees to the Law on Migration Management. Also, by-laws would define the necessity of capacity building at the local level and would enable the quantitative and qualitative monitoring of migration. In the future it is necessary to strengthen the inter-institutional cooperation at all levels.

4. *Carrying out targeted migrant specific surveys*

A need for broader statistical expertise and introduction of the specific targeted surveys in a way to diversify research methods on international migration could be described by two-side aspect: *Data measurement* and *In-depth qualitative data interpretation.* Unlike standardized approaches that use predetermined concept definitions and indicators in the measurement, qualitative surveys explore concepts gradually and even redefine them during the research process. Thus, how to define and compare diverse social, local and political contexts of international migration processes is a general issue regardless of the type of empirical approach used with respect to migrant types and country specific features.

The mainstreaming of international migration and its impact on society upon current policy making with broad stakeholders involvement must be based on transnational research capacity able to develop typologies and structure of socio-migratory phenomenon. The main challenges that must be addressed today are: how to define and compare diverse social, local, and political contexts of migration processes regardless of the type of empirical approach used when faces methodological

issues like equivalence of applied definitions and units of analysis within the different societal contexts and considerable migration scope pitfalls. Since the survey results are official documents that can be used by policy makers interested in large-scale migration, newly introduced migration sampling methods should present its potential to identify those segments of population. Diverse forms of migration defined by migrants coming from different countries, with different social status and reasons to migrate, require more sophisticated research with solution that will:

- *Increase the accuracy of the applied prediction method and get internationally comparable data on migrants*

- *Interpret the multidimensional aspect of the migration process*

- *Be applicable in more than one country to study causes and consequences of international migration*

- *Present dynamics of the society changes and their impacts framed in specific geographical areas in real time*

- *Introduce decentralization of the migration management system to the local level supported by datasets*

- *Preserve both the art of quantitative and qualitative aspect of research by non-participant observation*

- *Form indicator list and allow in-depth analyses*

- *Adjust sample size; decrease the interview burden and the survey costs while preserving national representation.*

5.   International cooperation for improving emigration/immigration data

The existing need at global and national level for comparable, reliable and in-dated data on international migration pushes for a newly defined international cooperation. This would be upheld with the aim of increasing the national capacity to produce internationally comparable migration statistics by achieving harmonization with the EU regulations in national practice.

The identified challenges on migration data for evidence-based policy making could be summarized in the following way:

- ***Availability*** *of migration data at national level often unsystematic in regard to the data collection, compiling and dissemination.*

- *Data **accuracy** is required considering migrant registration (emigrants) due to migrant behaviour.*

- ***Comprehensiveness*** *of migration processes observation depends upon the extent to which data are comparable, completed and updated.*

- *Data **timeliness** is assumed as a crucial factor for reflection of the actual migration trends and migrant needs.*

- ***Comparability*** *of data on migration by establishing a common methodology for collecting and presenting migration data in the EU countries. This is a hardly achievable objective considering the applied national legal framework, the internal policies, the priorities and the structure of the system of migration data collection in Serbia.*

- *Data **confidentiality** must be taken into account during data collection and data sharing, so to protect both state and personal interests.*

- ***Limitations*** *of migration management system are directly connected with its difficulties to produce projections or to make assumptions on future migration trends reliable for policy making.*

The Republic of Serbia as many other countries is not in a position to produce good-quality statistics that will cover on regular basis the issue of emigration in all its complexity. In general, for most of the countries it is more difficult to collect information about emigration than about immigration. There is a need to find ways to compensate the system *weaknesses* in collecting reliable emigration data in the sending country by using existing immigration data in the correspondent receiving country/countries. This method represents a promising statistical source of emigration data and can be achieved either by estimating missing data or improving existing figures in order to increase data quality. One possibility could be to establish a central data system for the countries in the region, coordinated by regional thematic experts from relevant institutions and regulated by transnational agreement on cooperation, in the form of a data exchange platform with online access to basic migration statistics with a user-friendly interface and flexible tools for data sharing. Another solution is to apply individual emigrant record exchange between countries based on upholding inter-national bilateral agreements in order to avoid mistrust in statistics and with respect to confidentiality regime. Considering decision-making process and its legislation related to best practices in creating tools for the establishment of a mechanism for migration data exchange, an *Agreement* should specify terms, relationships, responsibilities and conditions for the data and metadata sharing between countries.

Overview table:

Key Issue/Challenge	Strict definition of the institutional competencies in the migration monitoring system	Setting up the Population register	Capacity building in the SORS and introduction of the survey on external migration	Developing new surveys / improvement of existing surveys/state administrative evidences	Establishment of international cooperation/exchange of data and experience between relevant institutions
Key proposed activities to handle the challenge	*Introducing specific legislations/amendments to the existing legal framework*	*Implementing IPA 2012 project in Serbia concerning the Population register*	*Establishment of the Unit/Group for migration statistics in the SORS*	*Regular surveys/evidences adapt to the improvement of collection of population migratory characteristics*	*Agreed cooperation among relevant international institutions*
Level of intervention	*Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Ministry of Interior and other relevant ministries*	*Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia*	*Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia*	*Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Interior, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, other state authorities*	*Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia*
Relevant stakeholders	*Statistical Office, all administrations producing/need migration data (national/local level)*	*State administration (national/local level)*	*Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, relevant ministries*	*Commissariat for Refugees and Migration*	*Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Ministry of Interior* *other relevant state authorities*
Relevant political level endorsers	*Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Ministry of Interior*	*Relevant ministries, local authorities*	*Government of the RS*	*Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Ministry of Interior*	*Government of the RS/Commissariat for Refugees and Migration*

Previous policy attempts to tackle the issue (if any)	*Law on Migration Management 2012*	*No*	*Proposals for introduction of the new survey on external migration in the official Plan of statistical surveys*	*No*	*No*
Short term (2/3 years) outcomes/achievements of the proposed activities	*Improvement of responsibilities between institutions in the state authority*	*Reliable, comprehensive, updated data on population*	*More systematic approach to national and EU requirements on migration statistics*	*Reliable, comprehensive data on migration*	*Knowledge shared, quality of data assured, shortcomings in data surpassed*
Long-term (6/8 years or longer) outcomes/achievements of the activity	*Better evidences/ improved data quality and coverage*	*Insured possibilities for improved migration data quality, coverage*	*Organized and developed statistical unit/system on expert level*	*Shortcomings in migration data surpassed*	*Organized and developed statistical system on international migration*
Potential risks and suggested solution to overcome risks	*No priority of the highest national importance in making sub-laws*	*Financial feasibility*	*Financial feasibility*	*Financial feasibility*	*No risks*
Links to national/EU level policies // transnational character	*Reliable data needed for international reporting/policy making*	*Reliable data needed for international reporting/policy making*	*Reliable data needed for international reporting/policy making*	*Reliable data needed for international reporting/policy making*	*Reliable data needed for international reporting/policy making*
Financial feasibility and sustainability	*It will require no additional maintenance costs*	*It will require continuous additional maintenance costs*	*It will require continuous additional maintenance costs*	*It will require continuous additional maintenance costs*	*It will require no additional maintenance costs*
Proposed monitoring of implementation	*Commissariat for Refugees an Migration*	*Relevant ministries*	*Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia*	*Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration*	*Commissariat for Refugees an Migration*
Pipeline interventions	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*

4.2. Key challenges related to data improvement that have been already handled by SEEMIG

The SEEMIG project initiated a discussion between various stakeholders, experts and practitioners on significance of migration relevant data in Serbia. It pointed to the need for migration data enhancement aimed at better data utilization at various levels of governance. Through the publication of the *Demografski pregled,* published by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, the objectives, activities and outputs of the SEEMIG project have been presented to various stakeholders in Serbia.

Serbia is the only SEEMIG country/partner outside of the EU. Through THE undertaken comparison of existing data production systems Serbian project partners gained knowledge on good practices in migration data collection from various countries in South-East Europe. The international and national partnerships established during the SEEMIG project will be maintained.

Within the framework of the Project internationally comparable migration data for Serbia, relevant from the point of view of the region, have been included in constructed SEEMIG transnational database. All indicators in the SEEMIG database will be regularly provided and updated by SORS during the period covered by the SEEMIG Action Plan, 2015-2019.

Implementation of multi-staged pilot study in Serbia contributed to better knowledge on emigration, as the key challenge in Serbia. The *potentials and the limitations of an innovative method of researching emigration have been tested, where t*he international migrants were identified through the households included in the LFS household-sample.

In the *Action Plan to improve and enhance the migratory data production system and data sources in Serbia* concrete measures for improving coverage of migration data in Serbia but also methods and conceptualisations in data production have been defined. Every measure foresees an institution competent for coordination and implementation as well as the level of intervention it relates to (national, local, regional). For each measure the priority level is indicated, as well as its necessity and degree of urgency for realization. Additional value was generated through measures and experiences of other SEEMIG partners on national and local/regional level especially those with the same migration challenges.

At the Master Class held in the Municipality of Kanjiža, the national level stakeholders discussed the Serbian Action plan's (national and local level) acitivities for migration related data system improvements, with brainstorming on the eventual obstacles and the potential difficulties in the implementation of the actions and recommendations included in the AP.

The local authorities need to fill migration relevant data gaps for effective long term policies. The Municipality of Kanjiža through the joint activity with other SEEMIG partners from Serbia organized training aimed at better data collection on local level. The presence of representatives of local and stakeholders from neighbouring and other municipalities was very important. Besides transfer of knowledge and capacity building in data collection and utilization on local level, the cooperation of migration relevant institutions on national and local level has been facilitated. It was agreed that local authority in cooperation with SORS and relevant research institutes will conduct migration relevant local surveys and develop appropriate methodologies but also create a local developmental database on migration, labour market and human capital.

Foresight exercise carried out in the Municipality of Kanjiža, as one of the activities of SEEMIG was designed to address questions that might significantly shape the future of the country in the coming years. As a qualitative approach, it intended to provide additional insights to quantitative methods in forecasting future of the country. Participants discussed relevant implications that different futures might have in regard to migration, human capital and labour market in Serbia in the forthcoming period that could be inspiring for policy makers.

In order to promote discussion of experts, practitioners and relevant state institutions the focus group discussion has been organized that covered the impact of migration on the labour market in Serbia, including both emigration and potential future immigration. Participants from a wide variety of research and development expertise in the field of demography, migration and labour market trends gathered and shared their personal views on this topic.

5.　　　SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The first step in outlining the national strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization is to define the different institutional competencies in the migration monitoring system considering the fact that the Republic of Serbia is faced with different types of migration: international (especially emigration), internal, coerced, voluntary, legal, illegal, etc. In order to keep the migratory movement framework under control and ensure proper management, the state government is expected to define precise institutional competencies in this domain. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration is the institution in charge of managing migration flows. In order to implement the national strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization the first task in the future will be to **introduce specific legislation/amendments to the existing legal framework** (the Law on Migration Management "Official Gazette of RS", No 107/12, defined the basic concepts of migration and established a coordinated system for migration management). The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and the Ministry of Interior provide the main source of data on migration. The effective implementation of laws and by-laws would allow the defined cooperative inter-institutional relationship within additional commitments in the migration monitoring process and in analyzing migration flows.

The expected short term (2/3 years) outcomes/achievements of better defining the institutional competencies in the migration monitoring system are significant improvements in the implementation of the newly defined responsibilities by the state authority institutions. In the long term (6/8 years or longer) the outcomes/achievements of this activity are to obtain better evidences and to improve data quality and coverage. This activity requires no additional maintenance costs.

The second step is **setting up the population register.** The population register would be set up on the basis of the data from the register of unique personal ID numbers, address register, register of permanent and temporary residence, citizens' register, civil registries and other records that are kept on the basis of the respective laws and other regulations. The data on the persons would be set up on the basis of the registration and changes made in the data source. This Population register's concept would constitute a reliable basis for population data as well as a monitoring tool for migration stocks and flows. It will require continuous additional maintenance costs. The short term (2/3 years) outcomes/achievements of setting up the population register are to provide reliable, comprehensive, updated data on population. The long–term (6/8 years or longer) outcomes/achievements of this activity are to improve migration data quality and data coverage.

Although the patterns and drivers of migration processes will change over time, the complexity of migration-related issues will remain. This presents a challenge to policy mainstreaming of migration and to the official statistics that seek the new ways to ensure that policy decisions are based on statistical information of increased quality. The statistical mainstreaming of migration is a prerequisite for the evidence-based policy making, which would ensure a wide range of reliable and harmonized demographic and socio-economic data on migrants. Furthermore, it means that its implementation is more demanding with taking place in some areas not previously associated with standard statistics on migration. In connection with this challenge it is necessary to carry out activities that **involve capacity building at the SORS and the introduction of the survey on external migration as well as the establishment of the Unit/Group for migration statistics inside the SORS**.

The capacity building of the SORS in the first place requires: institutional coordination among all involved stakeholders and the legal steps to be undertaken to harmonize institutional efforts. Also, the SORS comparative advantage would be evident due to the experience gained in the participation in other projects of the similar kind (SEEMIG). Further capacity building for SORS staff in upgrading knowledge and number of experts involved is needed to achieve this aim.

These activities will require continuous additional maintenance costs. The short term (2/3 years) outcomes of this activity are to develop a more systematic approach to migration statistics following the national and EU requirements. The long term (6/8 years or longer) outcome of this activity is to organize and develop a statistical unit/system at expert level.

An additional step would be that of **developing new surveys and/or improve existing surveys/state administrative evidences**. The introduction of targeted statistical surveys and the consequential benefits would improve the monitoring of international migration at the state level. The short term achievement of this proposed activity is to obtain reliable, comprehensive data on migration while on the long term the expected outcome is to surpass shortcomings in migration data. This activity will require continuous additional maintenance costs.

Countries with large number of nationals living abroad, such as Serbia, have a great interest for gathering information on emigrants and their families. Availability of **reliable data on emigration** would help the state to have a more supportive role toward the Diaspora. **Data on financial remittances** are also important to evaluate the impact of these financial inflows on: savings; the investment cycle; and the local communities' development in the country of origin. Further improvement of international cooperation/exchange of data and experiences between relevant institutions is necessary for the realization of this step. The short term achievements are to share knowledge and experience in solutions found for exchange and use of different sources of data, to assure data quality (through cross-checking – using available migration statistics at national statistical offices and international organizations, etc.) and to surpass shortcomings in data. The long term outcome is to create an organized and developed statistical system on international migration. This activity will require no additional maintenance costs.

One of the forms of cooperation and exchange of data among countries would be an example of development and use of the newly formed transnational database within the SEEMIG project. In order to improve the use and exchange of all relevant data necessary for defining migration flows, SORS has to emphasize the importance of the established SEEMIG transnational database. The database provides a centralized and comprehensive approach to the demographic, social and economic indicators for the countries in the SEE region. This step would provide a basis for better understanding and sharing of migration data at the transnational level, with the aim of improving data quality, accessibility and transparency.

ANNEX 1: Stakeholder events, scholarly analyses and policy documents used to develop the strategy proposal.

The SEEMIG strategy proposal has been developed using/referring to the following stakeholder events, scholarly analyses and policy documents, detailed SEEMIG analyses:
SEEMIG STAKEHOLDER EVENTS
• Training – *16-17 January 2014, Institute of Social Sciences, SORS, Municipality of Kanjiža* • Foresight Exercise – *12-13 December 2013, Institute of Social Sciences, SORS, Municipality of Kanjiža* • Master Class – *15 April, SORS, Institute of Social Sciences, Municipality of Kanjiža* • Focus Group – *3 April 2014, Institute of Social Sciences* • Local Roundtable – *30 June 2014, Municipality of Kanjiža*
REFERENCED SCHOLARLY ANALYSES AND POLICY DOCUMENTS
• National Migration Management Strategy, The Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2009 • Migration Profile for 2011, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2012 • Migration Profile for 2013, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2014 • Population projections of the Republic of Serbia 2011-2041, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2014 • The Survey on Income and Living Conditions in Serbia, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2013
DETAILED SEEMIG ANALYSES **SEEMIG project outputs are available under http://seemig.eu/index.php/downloads-project-outputs**
• Conceptual framework for modelling longer term migratory, labour market and human capital processes • Dynamic historical analysis of longer term migratory, labour market and human capital processes in Serbia • Dynamic historical analysis of migratory, labour market and human capital processes - Synthesis report • Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and major data sources in Serbia • Action Plan to improve and enhance the migratory data production system and data sources in Serbia • Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and major data sources in eight South-East European countries - Synthesis report • Surveying Emigration I. Report on the first stage of the SEEMIG pilot study in Hungary and Serbia • Surveying Emigration II. Report on the second stage of the SEEMIG pilot study in Hungary and Serbia • Foresight synthesis report