



Challenges in Migration Data Dissemination and Communication

The Experience of Switzerland

Marcel Heiniger, Federal Statistical Office

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Outline of Presentation

- Principles and Guidelines for Data Dissemination
- Dissemination of Official Migration Statistics in Switzerland:
Two Major Players
- Release Calendar for Migration Data Outputs
- Lessons Learned / Conclusions



Principles and Guidelines for Data Dissemination (1)

- relevance
- quality (comprehensive and accurate statistics)
- objectivity, integrity, confidentiality
- periodicity, timeliness
- accessibility





Principles and Guidelines for Data Dissemination (2)

Types of data dissemination / channels for distribution

- standard tabulations, databases
- special tabulations on request
- microdata
- documentation and metadata
- visualization (graphs, charts, maps etc.)
- electronic media, paper format



Principles and Guidelines for Data Dissemination (3)

User groups, information needs, communication strategies

- conceptual reference: user segments <-> information needs
- user groups: policy-makers / general public (non specialist audience) / researchers / non-users who are potential users
- targeted dissemination and communication strategies
- pre-announced release calendar
- information needs will change over time



The Swiss Framework for Migration Statistics

Two government agencies that disseminate official migration data at national level:

1. FSO (Federal Statistical Office)
2. SEM (State Secretariat for Migration)

-> different objectives with respect to data dissemination



FSO Migration Data (1)

Part of population statistics -> in the context of the annual demographic balance

Data sources: administrative registers (at federal and municipal level)

Internationally recommended concepts and definitions: permanent resident population (usual residence, 12-month duration rule)

Long-term migrant stock, long-term immigration and emigration (disaggregated by sex, age, citizenship, marital status)



FSO Migration Data (2)

Migrant population stock (three classifications):

- by citizenship status
- by nativity status (country of birth)
- by migratory status

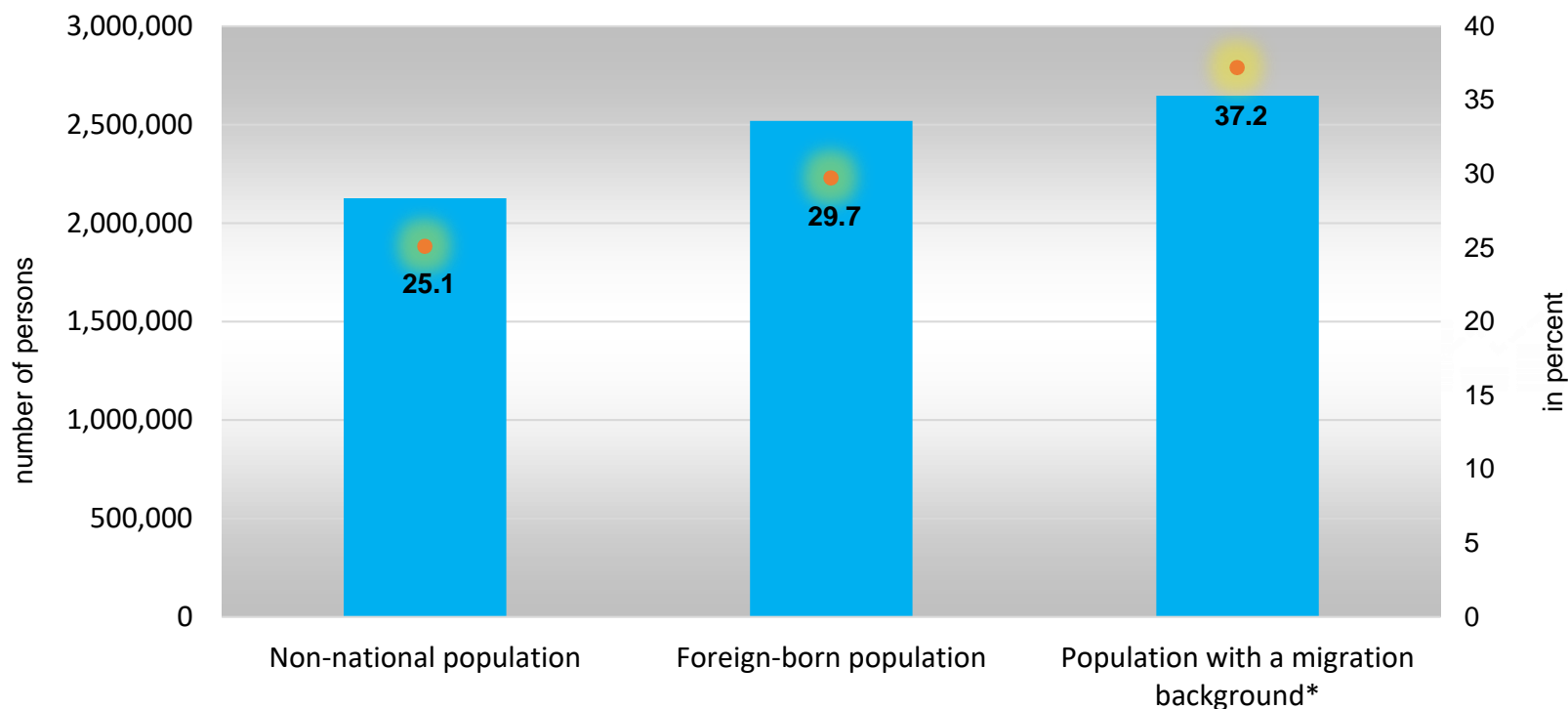
based on

- permanent resident population
- register and survey data





Migrant Population Stock According to 3 Classifications, 2017



* 15 years and older

Source: FSO/STATPOP, SLFS



FSO Migration Data (3)

Other data sources:

- Structural Survey
- Labor Force Survey
- various data sources for socio-economic conditions of the migrant population



FSO Migration Data (4)

Other statistical outputs, e.g.:

- economically active migrant population (LFS data)
 - labor force immigration and emigration (as part of LMA statistics)
 - foreign students with foreign school education
 - indicators of immigrant integration
- > data based on different population concepts



SEM Migration Data

Two federal laws governing entry and residence of non-nationals:

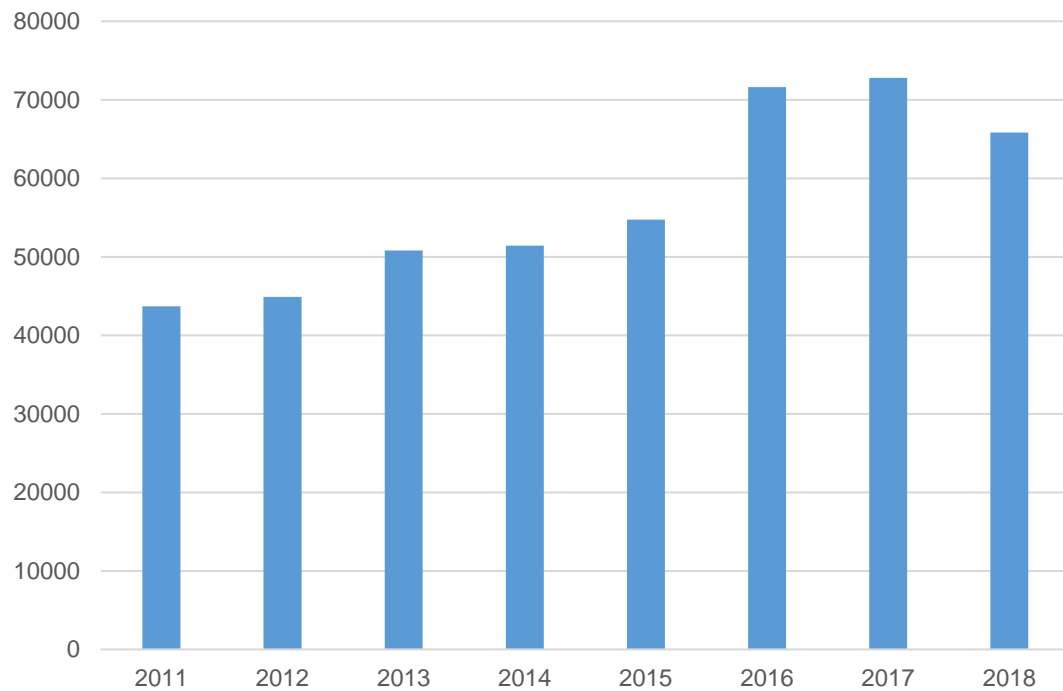
- Foreign Nationals and Integration Act → Foreign Population Statistics
- Asylum Act → Asylum Statistics

Data source:

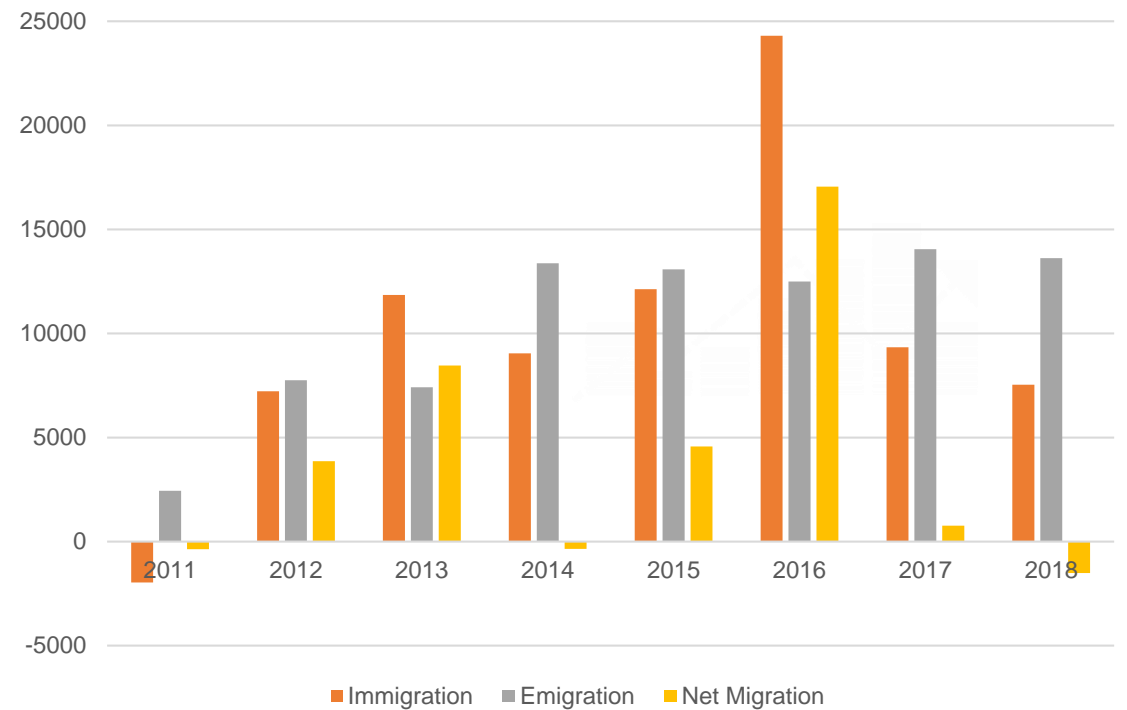
- Central Migration Information System (= federal register of foreigners)



Foreign Population Stock - Differences FSO-SEM



Migratory Flows of Foreign Nationals - Differences FSO-SEM





FSO and SEM Migration Data (1)

NSI – Federal Statistical Office (FSO)	Immigration authority – State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)
<p>Focus: statistical code of practice, adherence to statistical concepts and definitions of international migration (e.g. place of residence, time criterion)</p>	<p>Focus: statistics as by-product of administrative actions (immigration control and related processes), adherence to national laws on immigration and asylum</p>
<p>Data production: subject to detailed verification processes (quality and process checks) - compliant with Code of Practice for Official Statistics</p>	<p>Data production: subject to less stringent verification processes -> produced for operational management purposes (“management information system”)</p>



FSO and SEM Migration Data (2)

NSI – Federal Statistical Office (FSO)	Immigration authority – State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)
<p>Data reflect demographic aspects of migration: socio-demographic characteristics of migrants (gender, age, citizenship, place of birth, place of previous/next residence, duration of stay etc.)</p>	<p>Data reflect administrative procedures involved in obtaining permission to reside in the country: admissions, visas, permits (issuance, renewal, cancellation), citizenship, purpose of stay, asylum etc.</p>
<p>Statistics cover all non-nationals</p>	<p>Statistics cover specific groups of non-nationals (subject to Foreign Nationals and Asylum Acts)</p>
<p>Dissemination of consistent, harmonized data from different administrative register</p>	<p>Dissemination of “raw” results drawn from one register</p>



Release Calendar: FSO and SEM Migration Data Outputs (1)

Periodicity: annual (reference period: previous calendar year)

Release Date	Agency	Data Coverage + Status
February	SEM	Foreign Population Statistics (final figures)
April	SEM	Asylum Statistics (final figures)
April	FSO	«Demographic» Migrant Stock and Migration Flow Data (preliminary figures)
April	FSO	LFS Migration Data
August	FSO	«Demographic» Migrant Stock and Migration Flow Data (final figures)
October	FSO	Migrant Stock Data: Migratory Status



Release Calendar: FSO and SEM Migration Data Outputs (2)

Periodicity: monthly/quarterly (reference period: current calendar year)

Periodicity	Agency	Data Coverage	Timeliness
Monthly	SEM	Foreign Population Statistics Asylum Statistics	1 month after end of month
Quarterly	SEM	Foreign Population Statistics Asylum Statistics	2 months after end of quarter
Quarterly	FSO	Migrant Stock Data (citizenship) – no flow data	3 months after end of quarter



Lessons Learned (1)

- Communicating and reporting conflicting data: different figures from individual sources - even if not contradictory - pose some risks and challenges for data dissemination and interpretation

Within FSO:

- Focus on demographic aspects of migration. Reliance on international recommendations about change of usual residence and duration of stay -> still adequate/sufficient?
- Timeliness and periodicity of disseminating migration data



Lessons Learned (2)

- There is not necessarily a single, easily identifiable reason why migration figures differ across sources. Instead, there are a surplus of factors that each contribute to observed differences.
- Use (integrate?) data from multiple official sources: consider all available data sources to make the best assessment of the overall patterns in international migration
- Migration is a cross-cutting topic -> sectoral vs. holistic approach



Lessons Learned (3)

Objectives of different players: a common goal? or divergent needs?

- How to reconcile the different needs of a statistical office and administrative authorities in data dissemination?
- Inter-agency cooperation and coordination



Lessons Learned (4)

- International recommendations (concepts, definitions) vs. national information needs
- Use different terminology for different concepts/definitions
- Coordinate release schedules and main messages among all players involved in migration data dissemination



Some Final Conclusions (1)

- Which are the 'correct' data? Should there be only one reference source for dissemination purposes? Or should divergent data be made available to users of official statistics?
- While the designation of a specific data source as the base of reference for a certain kind of information can avoid confusion among users, it may also be argued that different data sources serve different purposes.



Some Final Conclusions (2)

- If divergent data from different sources, how can the reasons of such differences be explained in a transparent and comprehensible way? -> provide metadata
- Guidance to users: “Which data (source) should I use?” The answer is often context specific, meaning it depends on the ultimate objective of the data user/analyst.



Thank you for your attention

Additional information:

Federal Statistical Office, Demography and Migration Section

e-Mail: info.dem@bfs.admin.ch