

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



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**2014**

The national strategy was developed in the framework of SEEMIG – Managing Migration and its Effects in SEE – Transnational Actions towards Evidence-based Strategies. SEEMIG is a strategic project funded by the European Union’s South-East Europe Programme.  
Project code: SEEMIG - SEE/C/0006/4.1/X

The national strategy was prepared within the SEEMIG activity *Strategies, capacity building and transnational dialogue* coordinated by University of Trento.

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Suggested citation: Institute for Economic Research and Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Art (2014): SEEMIG National Strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization for Slovenia (Proposal for a national strategy on data enhancement and utilization on migration, labour market and human capital).

<http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGNationalStrategySlovenia.pdf>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of drafting proposals for developing the national strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilisation (henceforth: Strategy) is to get a better understanding of migration policy areas that need better data/empirical evidence and steps that could be made in order to address these needs and build up the data for policy making. These proposals could be integrated in the national migration strategy. In the long-term, the Strategy will support the capacity building process of national authorities on how to collect, analyse and utilise data. The Strategy proposal's time frame is seven years from now, that is, until the year 2021. This period is long enough to achieve at least some progress in solving the key problems pointed to in this document.

The Strategy proposal builds on previous SEEMIG project outputs and events. The background chapter refers to the Work package 3 (WP3) overview of the major migratory and demographic trends in Slovenia since 1990 up till now (<http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGHistoricalAnalysisSlovenia.pdf>) and points to the challenges resulting from these processes. It also briefly explains the socio and economic situation of the country and how it has developed over this period of time. The following chapter deals with main issues/challenges identified by the WP5 national Foresight exercise<sup>1</sup> and the WP6 Focus group<sup>2</sup>. Five key problems related to the data system and possible solutions are then presented based on the WP4 analysis of existing migratory data production systems and data sources (<http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGDataSystemsCountryReportSlovenia.pdf>) and the Action Plan, as well as on the WP6 Master Class session on National level activities for improving migration related data systems. The document concludes with suggestions and policy recommendations.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Slovenia was part of the former socialist Yugoslavia until 1991 when it gained independence and fully embraced a market economy. Slovenia joined the European Union in 2004, together with Hungary and Slovakia, and was the first new Member State (EU10) to adopt the euro as its common currency (in 2007).

During the first years of the new millennium, Slovenia's economy, like those of the other SEE countries, developed dynamically, with annual growth rates of per capita GDP as much as five or six times higher than the EU27 average (Fassmann et al. 2014). Generally, Slovenia ranked quite highly in most socio-economic indicators in comparison with the EU averages. This also applied to the amount of social policy funding available to individuals and to the extent of social inequalities. However, there was an increase in social and economic inequalities, especially in the period of the economic crisis, from 2009 onwards. Evident were unfavourable developments in the labour market that are reflected in increasing unemployment rates, even among those with higher education, which bears implications for the brain drain from Slovenia which has gradually become apparent in the last few years (Cukut Krilić et al. 2013). At the end of the decade, in 2009, the global economic crisis caused a decrease in per capita GDP, which had serious consequences not only in Slovenia, but across the entire SEE region. Most of the SEE countries experienced a period of outright recession. GDP per capita in Slovenia declined by 8.8 per cent compared to 3.1 per cent in Serbia (Fassmann et al. 2014: 18). In the last three years, after a period of stagnation, annual economic growth rates have once again begun to increase, but have remained low. Nevertheless, Slovenia, together with Hungary and Slovakia, is one of the countries where income inequalities have remained relatively low. In terms of economic growth, Slovenia is ranked between the Western and Eastern European countries.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see Annex 1.

<sup>2</sup> For more information see Annex 1.

Slovenia's per capita GDP reached its highest position relative to the world average in 1975 (251%). In 2010 it amounted to 224 per cent of the world average (Fassmann et al. 2014: 20).

Similar to the Western European countries (and joining Austria and Italy in the SEE region), Slovenia became an immigration country as early as the 1970s (Fassmann et al. 2014; Cukut Krilić et al. 2013).<sup>3</sup> Prior to 1991 it did not have significant experience with international migration movements, as internal migration from the former Yugoslav Republics (especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia) was the prevailing form of immigration. After the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, migration from this region gained an international character and the territory of the former Yugoslavia remained the most significant area of origin of immigrants coming to Slovenia. This trend continued after Slovenia joined the EU in 2004 and will most likely remain in the future (Cukut Krilić et al. 2013). This is largely a consequence of historical connections with these territories.

From the beginning of the 1990s some general immigration trends can be identified. From 1990 to 2004 the number of immigrants to Slovenia was quite low (from around 2,000 to 10,000 a year), but from 2004 to 2008 a sharp increase was registered (with a peak of 30,693 immigrants in 2008). In 2009 the number of immigrants to Slovenia fell slightly, but the drop was most pronounced in 2010 and 2011, with only 15,416 and 14,083 immigrants respectively. This could be explained by the effects of the economic crisis and the growing restrictions for non-nationals on the Slovenian labour market (Cukut Krilić et al. 2013).

In the last 50 years, emigration from Slovenia has been lower than immigration, and has remained less important until the last decade. The net migration was negative only in 1991 and 1992, and then again in 1998 and 2010<sup>4</sup> (Cukut Krilić et al. 2013) In 2004, emigration from Slovenia started to increase, which may be explained by Slovenia's joining the EU in that year, which in turn facilitated emigration to other EU countries. Since the onset of the current economic crisis emigrant flow has further increased. According to data provided by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), the number of emigrants from Slovenia (in the period 2000–2011) was highest in 2009 (18,788<sup>5</sup>). In the emigration flows, during the same period, the share of foreign citizens was higher than the share of nationals. However, the share of Slovenian nationals emigrating from Slovenia started to increase in 2009. From 2008 onwards, the majority of Slovenian citizens emigrated to Germany, followed by Austria, Croatia, North and Central America and Switzerland (Cukut Krilić et al. 2013).

According to the estimates provided by SORS, the number of Slovenians abroad (as of 1 January 2013) is 108,317 (Cukut Krilić et al. 2013: 51). The data is calculated on the basis of registered residency in countries of destination. Detailed characteristics are not available, as data on the emigrant stock are incomplete (Stropnik et al. 2013).

In the last few decades, Slovenia has been experiencing a significant population change. Especially evident, as in many SEE countries, is the ageing of population. In 2001, 14.1 per cent of the population were 65 or older; in 2011 this share was 16.5 per cent, and 17.1 per cent in 2013. The natural increase was negative in the period from 1997 to 2005, and it amounted to 3,248 persons in

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<sup>3</sup> Observed over a longer time span, Slovenia was historically an emigration country. From the 1890s up to the 1970s several hundred thousand people left the territory of present-day Slovenia. However, these emigration flows were not reliably statistically documented.

<sup>4</sup> In the future, Slovenia will experience a trend of gradual decrease of net migration. According to Eurostat and UN population projections decrease of net migration will occur in the second half of the projected period 2015-2060. Net migration (calculated per 1000 population) is expected to be reduced by the end of the projected period in 2060 in comparison to its beginning in 2015. Significant fall in net migration is expected from 4.1 per 1000 population in 2015 to 1.9 per 1000 population by 2060 (Pilinská and Vaňo 2013).

<sup>5</sup> The data is incomplete, but it is the best official data available.

2011. The data on deaths show a constant increase in life expectancy: it was 70.1 years in 1990, 71.7 years in 2001 and as high as 75.5 years in 2011. The death rate was quite stable in the period from 1990 to 2011 (between 9.1 and 10) (Cukut Krilić et al. 2013: 49).

Life expectancy has been rising in the last two decades in Slovenia, reflecting the rising levels of social and economic development. However, there is a pronounced gender difference: on average, women live significantly longer than men. In the period from 1990 to 1991 the life expectancy at birth was 69.54 years for men and 72.13 years for women; in the period between 2000 and 2001 it was 77.38 years for men and 79.57 years for women; and in the year 2011 it reached 76.76 years for men and 82.9 years for women. The total fertility rate decreased in the period between 1990 and 2003 – it was 1.46 in 1990 and 1.2 in 2003. In 2003 the value of this indicator started to increase again: it was at 1.38 in 2007 and 1.56 in 2011. Nowadays women in Slovenia tend to give birth much later than in the past. The mean age of women at the birth of their first child was 23.9 years in 1990, 26.7 years in 2001 and 28.8 years in 2011. Compared to Slovenian citizens, the total fertility rate of foreign citizens has been slightly higher while their mean age at childbirth has been lower (Cukut Krilić et al. 2013: 49).

Compared to other countries in the region (included in the SEEMIG project), Slovenia shows the most pronounced demographic growth right after Austria and Italy. In line with their status as mature immigration countries, Austria and Slovenia are the only countries experiencing population growth due to positive net migration and birth surplus as demographic components (Fassmann et al. 2014: 30).

### **3. MAIN ISSUES/CHALLENGES RELATED TO MIGRATION IN SLOVENIA**

Key problems and challenges related to migration in Slovenia include unfavourable demographic dynamics, structural unemployment, emigration of the highly skilled, and increased cross-border commuting with some neighbouring countries.

Population projections for Slovenia indicate unfavourable demographic dynamics: an increase in the number of people over 65, and particularly over 80, with a simultaneous decrease in the number of children and a worsening of the ratio between the active and the dependent population. Overall, the population will begin to decline from the 2030s. Immigration does not and will not have a significant impact on the population, since annual net migration remains modest (EUROPOP 2013). The largest migration flows to Slovenia since independence in 1991 have been observed from the countries of former Yugoslavia, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina. The demand for labourers in the construction sector and manufacturing has created vacancies that were largely filled with foreign labour. After the economic crisis, however, and due to reports of deplorable treatment of foreign labourers by many employers, Slovenia became a less desirable destination (Focus Group).<sup>6</sup> The majority of labour migrants still remain from the former Yugoslavia, while a moderate amount of immigration from some other EU countries, especially Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, has been observed in recent years. According to the Employment Service of Slovenia, the number of work permits issued in 2013 was 21,033, making the total number of valid work permits issued in Slovenia 27,124 (over 85% to labour migrants from former Yugoslavia). Although registered unemployment in Slovenia is high, 13.4 per cent in April 2014 (Labour force 2014), this is mostly due to discrepancies in labour market demands and the labour supply. There is still a demand for low-skilled workers from abroad who are willing to take positions that Slovenians are reluctant to take, and hence active recruitment of workers from Bosnia and Herzegovina began in 2013, when a bilateral agreement between the two countries was signed.

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<sup>6</sup> SEEMIG focus group discussion report.

In general, Slovenia has a highly educated population and university degree holders are in high supply, but they cannot be absorbed by the Slovenian labour market. Structural unemployment is particularly high for the population between 15 and 24 years of age, who have difficulties finding employment due to low demand for their educational profile and excessive protections for the highly-paid but often unproductive employees (on permanent contracts) guaranteed under the current legislation and from trade unions. Increasing numbers of young people are therefore moving abroad to find suitable employment. It is estimated that more than 14,000 people emigrated from Slovenia in 2013 (Natural and migration changes of population, 2014), a large proportion of those being young and highly educated. The exact numbers are unknown and estimates rely on educated guesses, but it is evident that emigration of Slovene nationals has been on the increase since 2008. The immediate effect of emigration from Slovenia is currently not significant and emigration is somewhat desirable, especially in the case of young PhDs who cannot find suitable employment, but the loss of human capital is expected to have negative consequences on the future country development and economic growth (Focus Group). The Slovenian Labour Migration Strategy for the Period 2010-2020 (2010) acknowledges the emigration trends and is supportive of emigration as long as the emigrants eventually return to Slovenia. It encourages circular migration in order to prevent a permanent brain drain, which is the strategy advised by the EU. It is less clear how return migration will be facilitated and what measures will be taken to attract emigrants back to Slovenia. Some experts propose reallocation of transfers, increases in salaries and incentives for job creation, while others suggest the introduction of a universal basic income, labour market reform and encouraging interconnection between labour market needs and the educational system in order to ensure the employability of graduates (Focus Group).

Daily cross-border labour migration, most often referred to as cross-border labour mobility or cross-border commuting, is observed in the border regions. Slovenians mostly commute to Austria and Italy to take up a variety of jobs, and less to Croatia and Hungary, where salaries are lower. Reliable statistical data on cross-border commuting are not available, but experts agree that cross-border commuting of workers is substantial and that it has a positive impact on the regional economy and social stability, especially in the economically disadvantaged regions of Štajerska and Koroška, bordering Austria (Focus Group). Improved statistical data is particularly required by the border municipalities, which are currently basing their planning of infrastructure and public services on mere speculations about their population dynamics.

It is expected that migration and labour market dynamics will continue to be primarily affected by the economic situation and development, but also by the adoption of policies and reforms. Labour market reform, pension reform and coherent, strategically planned migration policies that take into consideration the multiplicity of migration processes (immigration, emigration, return migration, integration and reintegration) are required (Foresight).<sup>7</sup> The ability to pass reforms and policies that address major problems such as demographic structure, in particular population ageing, labour market functioning and structural unemployment, emigration of young population, brain drain, and efficient recruitment and integration of labour migrants, is a prerequisite for further socio-economic development.

#### **4. KEY PROBLEMS IN THE DATA SYSTEM**

The principal migrant groups and migration-related events for which the data is available in Slovenia are: immigration/emigration flow, acquisition of citizenship, return migration, immigrant/emigrant stock, potential immigration/emigration flow of foreigners and potential return migration of foreigners, seasonal workers, asylum seekers, irregular migration, and remittances. Data on

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<sup>7</sup> SEEMIG National Foresight Report in Slovenia.

immigrants are particularly rich. Various situations of migrants are covered, such as their official stay and residing in Slovenia (obtaining international protection, residing in Slovenia, registration of residence, etc.), labour force participation, enrolment in tertiary education, etc. Information on the socio-demographic, economic, labour market and human capital characteristics is collected. Categories of migrants can be derived using the variables: country of birth, citizenship, and ever having resided abroad.

The data from various data sources can be linked, if so envisaged or required by the law. The institutions that register data (the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the Ministry of the Interior, the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia, the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of Slovenia, the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia, the Tax Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, etc.) have mutual access to registers, so there is no need for them to collect all relevant information themselves. The Central Population Register is integrated with other public data registers, applications and information systems. The system ensures automated data transfer between databases. The personal identification number (PIN) is used in Slovenia as a key identifier for the data access and for data integration in the official records and other administrative records. This enables the organisation of data collection where, as a rule, particular information is collected only once. Where this is not the case, the data source with a more/most complete (in terms of data coverage) and up-to-date information is used in the preparation of statistics.

Although the data on migration, foreigners and migrants, collected in Slovenia, are of a very good quality, there is still room for improvement. The historic analysis of migratory-, demographic-, economic-, labour market- and human capital processes in Slovenia (see section 2 of this document), as well as the SEEMIG focus group discussion and the foresight exercise that pointed to the main issues/challenges related to migration in Slovenia (see section 3) contributed to the identification of key problems in the Slovenian data system. Finally, five key issues/challenges related to migration have been selected from the SEEMIG WP4 Action Plan to improve and enhance the migratory data production system and data sources in Slovenia:<sup>8</sup>

1. non-registration of emigration from Slovenia,
2. lack of comprehensive data on daily cross-border commuting,
3. lack of reliable and in-depth knowledge on possible emigration and possible reasons for it,
4. lack of reliable and in-depth knowledge on emigrants and their reasons for emigration, and
5. insufficient availability of comparable migration data in the SEE region.

These five key issues/challenges are systematically presented in the overview table below, each in a separate column. For each issue/challenge

- Key activities to handle it are proposed;
- Level of intervention is set;
- Relevant stakeholders and political level endorsers are suggested;
- Previous (policy) attempts to tackle the issue (if any) are named;
- Short-term (2-3 years) and long-term (6-8 years and over) outcomes/achievements of the proposed activities are foreseen;
- Potential risks are foreseen and solutions to overcome those risks suggested;

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<sup>8</sup> The process of identification of key problems/challenges has benefited from the WP6 Master Class and Focus Group.

- Links to national/EU level policies are named;
- Financial feasibility and sustainability is evaluated; and
- Monitoring of implementation is proposed.

**Overview table:**

Key Issue/Challenge	Non-registration of emigration from Slovenia	Lack of comprehensive data on daily cross-border commuting	Lack of reliable and in-depth knowledge on possible emigration and the reasons for it	Lack of reliable and in-depth knowledge on emigrants and their reasons for emigration	Insufficient availability of comparable migration data in the SEE region
<p><b>Key proposed activities to handle the challenge</b></p>	<p>Lower property tax for non-residents. Lower utility charges for non-residents. Awareness-rising initiatives regarding deregistration. Detecting persons to whom official mail could not be delivered. Checking persons receiving Slovenian pensions in another country. Checking those residents to whom social benefits are transferred to another country. Checking those residents who are not using health and educational services, but would be expected to do so. Deleting persons from the Central Population Register at a certain age threshold.</p>	<p>Collection and exchange of data on daily cross-border commuting between countries, with preferably a central database at Eurostat.</p>	<p>The module on the reasons for (possible) emigration, for instance, in the Labour Force Survey (LFS); or possible additional questions in the (national) LFS related to the intention to emigrate: “Have you ever thought of looking for a job in another country?”, “In which country?”, “Are you currently looking for a job abroad?”, “In which country?”, “What is the reason?”, etc.; or a survey on intentions to emigrate (among the total population in active age or only among unemployed persons).</p>	<p>A survey on the characteristics of emigrated Slovenian citizens and their reasons for emigration would be welcome. It may cover as many emigrants as possible, or focus on former registered unemployed persons or former EURES job-seekers. A follow-up survey on the emigration of researchers would also be useful.</p>	<p>Maintenance of SEEMIG transnational databases beyond SEEMIG’s lifespan.</p>

<b>Level of intervention</b>	National; local.	National; bilateral; transnational.	National; transnational.	National.	National; transnational.
<b>Relevant stakeholders</b>	Government of the Republic of Slovenia; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Finance; local authorities; Postal Service of Slovenia; Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia; Institute of Pension and Disability Insurance of Slovenia; Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.	The Employment Service of Slovenia, EU Member States and EU neighbouring states; Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and of other EU Member States (and possibly EU neighbouring countries); Eurostat.	Eurostat; Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and possibly also of other countries that conduct the LFS; organisation conducting the Slovenian Public Opinion Survey (Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre); Employment Service of Slovenia; research institute or other organisation with adequate references.	Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia; research institute or other organisation with adequate references.	A public institute; Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia; Ministry of the Interior.
<b>Relevant political level endorsers</b>	Government of the Republic of Slovenia; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Finance; local authorities; Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	Governments and Ministries of Labour of Slovenia, other EU Member States and EU neighbouring states.	Government of the Republic of Slovenia; Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.	Government of the Republic of Slovenia; Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.	European Commission; Government of the Republic of Slovenia; Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
<b>Previous (policy) attempts to tackle the issue (if any)</b>	<i>Residence Registration Act (2001)</i> , including penalties for failing to deregister amounting to € 400-1,200. (Article 13).	For the cross-border daily commuting from Slovenia there is a voluntary non-systematic bilateral exchange of data with the Employment Services of neighbouring	There is a practice of adding questions to the core surveys. The survey on the brain drain among researchers in Slovenia (conducted in 2010).	The survey on the brain drain among researchers in Slovenia (conducted in 2010).	-

		countries. As for now, a good cooperation with the Austrian Employment Office has been established.			
<b>Short-term (2-3 years) outcomes/achievements of the proposed activities</b>	Improvement in the Central Population Register; a more realistic estimate of the emigrant stocks; some savings in social transfers, but somewhat less income and property tax collected; better matching of international migration data.	Improvement in data on daily cross-border commuting from and to individual EU Member States and from the EU to its bordering countries.	If appropriate short term actions/measures are adopted, some potential/planned labour emigration might be prevented.	Based on the new knowledge, adequate actions and measures could be initiated that would result in return migration (particularly labour migrants whose expertise and skills are needed in Slovenia). Some potential/planned labour emigration might be prevented.	Improved regional migration data (quality and comparable data) available and accessible for policy making and research.
<b>Long-term (6-8 years or longer) outcomes/achievements of the activity</b>	The same as short-term outcomes; a greater cumulative effect.	Reliable and comprehensive data on daily cross-border commuting from and to EU Member States and from the EU bordering countries to the EU.	If – based on the new knowledge - appropriate short term and long term actions/measures are adopted, a considerable proportion of potential labour emigration might be prevented.	Appropriate activities and measures would result in substantial return migration (particularly labour migrants whose expertise and skills are needed in Slovenia). A considerable proportion of potential labour emigration might be prevented.	A relatively long time series of quality and comparable migration data available and accessible for policy making and research.
<b>Potential risks and suggested solution to overcome risks</b>	Potential risk: national and local authorities may not be sufficiently interested in the	Lack of initiative. Non-readiness at the EU level to adopt	The decision at the Eurostat level that such a module is not needed.	Lack of sufficient Government's interest. Solution: (financing of)	Lack of initiative. Non-readiness of countries to participate.

	adoption of relevant regulation. Solution: Educating stakeholders and policy makers on the importance of realistic statistical data on population.	relevant regulation. Non-readiness of the Eurostat to engage. Non-readiness of some Employment Services to participate.	The willingness of interviewees to participate in the field surveys has been decreasing lately in Slovenia (and the length of the questionnaire influences the willingness to participate heavily). Solution: (financing of) research that would prove the benefits resulting from additional/knew knowledge on potential emigration.	research that would prove the benefits of surveying the reasons for emigration.	Solution: EU financing of a consortium that would regularly update the SEEMIG database.
<b>Links to national/EU level policies // transnational character</b>	-	A regulation at the EU (Eurostat) level would be needed if the activity overcomes bilateral exchange of data.	The decision on the LFS module has to be taken at the EU level.	-	The activity was started by the SEEMIG project.
<b>Financial feasibility and sustainability</b>	The proposed activities would require some initial and continuous investment/costs, but this should not be a major problem.	Financially feasible and sustainable.	An ad hoc LFS module would need additional funding at the national and the Eurostat levels. Additional question(s) in the LFS would be financially sustainable. A specific survey on the intentions to emigrate would need to be financed from the general state budget (or budget	A survey would need to be financed from the general state budget (or budget allocated to an individual ministry). This would be feasible if the need for such a survey is politically recognised.	Financially feasible and sustainable only if continuous financing is granted.

			allocated to an individual ministry). This would be feasible if the need for such a survey is politically recognised.		
<b>Proposed monitoring of implementation</b>	Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia	Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia	Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.	Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.	A body named by the grant provider(s).
<b>Pipeline interventions</b>	(None, as to our knowledge.)	(None, as to our knowledge.)	(None, as to our knowledge.)	(None, as to our knowledge.)	(None, as to our knowledge.)

### **1. Non-registration of emigration from Slovenia**

Migration flows do not include unregistered emigration of the Slovenian citizens and non-nationals with permanent residence in Slovenia (mostly labour migrants) to abroad. Consequently, the data on the emigrant stock is not complete and the number of non-nationals in Slovenia is over-estimated. Some Slovenian citizens tend to deregister with a delay, that is, only once they have permanently settled abroad. According to the *Residence Registration Act* (2001: Article 13), the person intending to leave Slovenia for more than three months has to inform the competent authority about that (i.e., deregister). The penalty for failing to do so amounts to € 400-1,200 (Article 25), which does not seem to be fully effective. Due to that, deregistration has to be stimulated in other ways and emigrated but not deregistered Slovenian citizens and non-nationals have to be detected.

### **2. Lack of comprehensive data on daily cross-border commuting**

Slovenia (and countries in general) disposes of data on daily cross-border immigration of labour, while daily cross-border emigration of labour from Slovenia is not comprehensively registered. A systematic collection of data on daily cross-border commuting is needed – not only in Slovenia, but in all EU Member States and their non-EU neighbouring countries. It should be in the interest of all EU Member States that the reporting on daily cross-border commuting is made uniform in terms of methodology applied, in order to have comparable data.

### **3. Lack of reliable and in-depth knowledge on possible emigration and possible reasons for it**

In order to design appropriate activities/measures that may eliminate the reasons for emigration (of labour, in particular) policy makers need to get an insight in the situation of persons who intend/plan to emigrate and their reasons for leaving the country. This can only be identified through (preferably focused) research that is currently missing in Slovenia.

### **4. Lack of reliable and in-depth knowledge on emigrants and their reasons for emigration**

The knowledge on the emigrated Slovenian citizens is limited. A lack of in-depth knowledge prevents any proper policy making aimed at attracting the emigrants and designing of effective measures that would result in a return migration. A survey on the characteristics of emigrated Slovenian citizens and their reasons for emigration would thus be welcome.

### **5. Insufficient availability of comparable migration data in the SEE region**

The issue of migration data improvement in order to enhance their quality and quantity and make them comparable, available and accessible for policy making and research was the main focus of the SEEMIG project. The resulting SEEMIG transnational database that contains indicators on migration, labour market and human capital is an excellent starting point for the construction of long series of these indicators to be used in policy making and research.

## **5. SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Some possible **solutions for preventing non-registration of emigrants** are: lowering of property tax and/or utility charges for non-residents; awareness-rising initiatives regarding deregistration; detection of persons to whom official mail could not be delivered; checking of persons who receive Slovenian pensions or other social benefits in another countries, or those residents who are not using health and educational services in Slovenia, but would be expected to do so; and, finally, deleting of persons from the Central Population Register at a certain age threshold.

The need of a **systematic collection of data on daily cross-border commuting** would be best met through a central database at Eurostat. Relevant regulation should be adopted at the EU level and then extended through bilateral agreements between the EU and individual neighbouring countries. An initiative may come from an Employment Service or Statistical Office of any of the countries involved and interested in such data. A periodical in-depth analysis of these data would be welcome and useful, too. A less satisfactory alternative would be a survey on daily cross-border commuting. We are in favour of registers to be set up for that purpose rather than a survey because: 1) it is not realistic to expect that a longitudinal survey would be set up, and 2) a full coverage of the phenomenon can only be achieved through the exchange of relevant information based on the registers kept by the Employment Services of neighbouring countries. In addition to the number of daily cross-border commuters, at least the basic demographic data should be reported as well (the municipality of residence, sex, education, profession, etc.).

**Research** is needed **to identify people's intentions/plans to emigrate**. One option is to implement a specific Labour Force Survey (LFS) module on emigration. Questions regarding possible emigration and reasons for it can be added to the LFS and the Public Opinion Survey, too. Possible additional question could be: "Have you ever thought of looking for a job in another country?", "In which country?", "Are you currently looking for a job abroad?", "In which country?", "What is the reason?", etc. It would be also possible to conduct a survey on intentions to emigrate (among the total population in active age or only among unemployed persons).

A **survey on the characteristics of emigrated Slovenian citizens and their reasons for emigration** could either cover as many emigrants as possible or focus on former registered unemployed persons or former EURES job-seekers. A follow-up survey on the emigration of researchers would be also useful.

Due to the importance of transnational data exchange and for practical reasons (policy making, research, etc.) it would be reasonable and useful to **maintain the SEEMIG transnational databases beyond the SEEMIG project's lifespan**. This task could be entrusted to a public institute that would cooperate with the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and the Ministry of the Interior. For this purpose the funding would need to be provided.

We envisage both short term (in two to three years) and long term (in six to eight years) impact of the proposed activities to handle the key challenges related to the Slovenian data on migration and migrants. Short term impact includes: improvement in the Central Population Register, a more realistic estimate of the stock of emigrants, better data on cross-border commuting from and to individual EU Member States and from the EU to its neighbouring countries, better matching of international migration data, and better, comparable, available and accessible regional migration data to be used in policy making and research, etc. Long term impact is of the same kinds, but greater, also due to a cumulative effect.

### **5.1. Relevance of stakeholders, political level endorsers and strategic documents**

Policy support is essential for addressing the key problems in the data system. In particular, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities have to be engaged in setting the basis for the proposed activities. The Ministry of Finance and local authorities, as well as the European Commission, have to take an active part as stakeholders and political endorsers, too.

Of course, there are some risks associated with the proposed activities. We may face a lack of initiative on the stakeholders' side. National and local authorities and the European Commission may not be sufficiently interested in the adoption of relevant regulation, but this could be overcome by educating stakeholders and policy makers on the importance of realistic statistical data on population. The same may happen with some countries' Employment Services that are expected to participate in the exchange of data on the cross-border commuting. Eurostat may not be ready to

engage in the LFS related activities or may claim that the emigration module is not needed. A longer LFS questionnaire may heavily influence the willingness of interviewees to participate (the same applies to specific field surveys).<sup>9</sup> Some SEE counties may not be interested to participate in a SEEMIG database updating, which may be solved by the EU financing of a consortium that would regularly update it.

The *Resolution on Immigration Policy of the Republic of Slovenia* was adopted in 1999 and the *Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of Slovenia* in 2002. None of them deals with data on migrants. The *Aliens Act* (2011) contains a chapter on evidences where data to be collected for the purpose of issuing the residence permit, visa and other documents are listed. The issue of data is seriously dealt with in the *Labour Migration Strategy for the 2010–2020 Period* (2010). There are ten guidelines (strategic mechanisms) directed towards a more coherent and effective management of labour migration elaborated (Milohnič 2013), which are then summarised in the document's action plan.

Guideline 10 is on the improving of an integrated system of managing labour migration (*Labour Migration Strategy for the 2010–2020 Period*, 2010: 59-62). It is stressed that the implementation of this strategy asks for a continuous follow-up and periodic reporting, for which the collection and analysis of the migration- and migration related statistical data on the national and other levels are essential. For that purpose, a systematic process of identification of relevant institutions and their capacities and mechanisms for research on and managing of labour migration, as well as a more intensive cooperation of various ministries is needed. Further on, the provision of uniform, regular, timely, reliable and comparable data should be ensured, and these data have to be publicly accessible in a user-friendly form. In the process of collecting and providing data on migration, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia respects the international statistical recommendations and practice, including those of the European Union, particularly as regards common definitions, quality standards and data sources. Other evidences and data systems' information management support IT mechanisms have to develop in a way to be able to provide the data needed. In line with this, one of the action plan's focus areas is the ensuring of an efficient mechanism of data collection and analysis of labour migration and migration on general.

The document also stresses the importance of inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination in the area of (economic) migration. A continuation and enforcement of inter-ministerial collaboration regarding migration" is recommended.

An increase in the migration flows (immigration, in particular) is among the presumptions of a draft *Slovenia's Development Strategy 2014-2020* (2013) since the population of Slovenia has been ageing and a decrease in the labour force is foreseen.

The present SEEMIG strategy proposal can be well integrated into the next *Strategy of Labour Migration* (for the period 2021–2030) and the national Development Strategy (for the period 2021–2027) and thus become a part of strategic/policy documents.

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<sup>9</sup> Preliminary research might thus be needed to prove the benefits of additional/new knowledge on (potential) (e)migration.

**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 – 15 January 2013**, participating institutions:  
*Centre for Social Work Maribor  
 Institute for Economic Research  
 Maribor Development Agency  
 Municipality of Maribor, Department of public utilities, transport and space  
 Municipality of Maribor, Department of education, health and social services  
 Municipality of Ptuj  
 Joint Administration of Municipalities in the Lower Drava Region  
 Employment Service of Slovenia  
 Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj  
 ZRC SAZU  
 ZUM Urbanism, Planning, Projecting Ltd.*
- **Foresight Exercise –3-5 and 17 December 2013**, participating institutions:  
*Adult Education Centre  
 Institute for Ethnic Studies  
 Ipok Ltd.  
 Maribor Development Agency  
 International African Forum  
 Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
 Slovene Philanthropy  
 University of Maribor, Faculty of Arts  
 Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development  
 Employment Service of Slovenia  
 ZRC SAZU*
- **Master Class – 26 March 2014**, participating institutions:  
*Centre for Social Work Maribor  
 Social Science Data Archives, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana  
 Institute for Economic Research  
 Institute for Ethnic Studies  
 Maribor Development Agency  
 Municipality of Maribor  
 Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
 Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia  
 University of Trento, Italy  
 Maribor Administrative Unit  
 Employment Service of Slovenia  
 ZRC SAZU*
- **Focus Group –15 April 2014**, participating institutions:  
*Institute for Economic Research  
 Institute for Ethnic Studies  
 Maribor Development Agency  
 Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
 Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia  
 University of Primorska, Science and Research Centre of Koper  
 University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics  
 University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences  
 Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development*

Employment Service of Slovenia  
ZRC SAZU

- **Local Roundtable – 11 June 2014**, participating institutions:  
Employment Service of Slovenia, Regional Office Maribor  
Institute for Economic Research  
Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development  
Maribor Administrative Unit, Section for foreigners  
Maribor Development Agency  
Municipality of Maribor  
Regional Destination Organisation, Ptuj  
University of Trento, Italy  
University of Maribor  
ZRC SAZU

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#### **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 (<http://seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGWorkingPapers1.pdf>).
- Dynamic historical analysis of migratory, labour market and human capital processes – country report for Slovenia, local chapter on the Podravje region (<http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGHistoricalAnalysisSlovenia.pdf>).
- Dynamic historical analysis of migratory, labour market and human capital processes - synthesis report (<http://seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGHistoricalAnalysisSEERegion.pdf>).
- Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and data sources – country report for Slovenia, local chapter on the Podravje region (<http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGDataSystemsCountryReportSlovenia.pdf>)
- Action Plan to improve and enhance the migratory data production system and data sources in Slovenia
- Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and data sources – synthesis report (<http://seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGWorkingPapers2.pdf>).
- Comparative analysis of existing major population projections in eight South-East European countries (<http://seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGOverviewofpopulationprojections.pdf>).
- Foresight synthesis report
- National Foresight Report in Slovenia
- The Focus Group Discussion Report, Slovenia