

Extended abstract to EPC 2016 in Mainz

Register for mapping circular migration

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Summary

In the budget bill for 2016, the Swedish Government allocated funds to Statistics Sweden to produce yearly statistics on circular migration. In 2016 will Statistics Sweden begin the process of creating a register based on persons that has been registered in the population register to produce statistics on circular migration. This will probably be the first register in the world focusing on circular migration, and we have several challenges ahead of us. Firstly there is at the moment no generally accepted definition on circular migration. Furthermore, we need to decide what information is of interest to connect to the migrants.

Introduction

In July 2009 the Swedish Government decided to appoint a Parliamentary Committee to examine circular migration. The Committee was tasked with mapping out circular migration and identifying the factors that influence migrants' opportunities to move between Sweden and their countries of origin.

In 2014 the Government gave Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Migration Agency the task to undertake a new mapping study of available statistical data on migration. This study suggested among other thing that a new migration register should be established.

In the budget bill for 2016, the Swedish Government allocated funds to Statistics Sweden to produce yearly statistics on circular migration.

Register-system in Sweden is based on personal identification numbers

All persons registered in Sweden is assigned a number as identifier. Anyone who have ever received a personal identification number will keep the same number for life, unless it needs to be corrected. The personal identification number does not change when a person migrate from or to Sweden.

In 1947 Sweden introduced a system of birth numbers consisting of date of birth plus a three-digit birth number. In 1967 there was a fourth digit introduced as a check digit.

The personal identity number as the identifier has been widespread use not only in the population register but also in other prefectures, for example in taxation, in the general insurance, the registration of



cars, driving license and passport records and within teaching field. The personal identity number is widely used even outside the public sector, including the company's accounting practices and insurance and bank records.

Personal identity is therefore used as a search term in registers on individuals and link variable when joining different registers.

Even persons not registered in Sweden can in some cases get a individual coordination numbers. It's mostly used for foreigners that have to pay taxes in Sweden but there are plans to widen the group of people that shall get individual coordination numbers.

Migration statistics in Sweden – state of play, future needs and proposals for improvements

In March 2014, the Swedish government gave Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån) and the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket) the task to undertake a mapping study of available statistical data on migration in Sweden. The study was finalized and submitted in early December 2014.

During the drafting of the study, it became clear that solid statistical data on longer-term migration (in the sense that foreign nationals take residence in Sweden) is already available, while there is a lack of data on foreigners coming to Sweden for shorter periods of time. While the Swedish Migration Board does have certain information on short-term migrations, such as data on temporary residence permits or visas, this information is not passed on to Statistics Sweden since people who stay for shorter periods than one year are normally not considered residents. Thus, they will normally not be covered by the Swedish population register, which is the main base of Swedish population statistics.

Current migration statistics are mainly based on the population register, which is run by the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). Sweden applies a 12-month criterion, which means that persons who stay in Sweden or abroad for shorter time spans than one year will normally not be covered. Thus, they are not included in official migration statistics either. The Tax Agency may, however, issue individual coordination numbers (samordningsnummer) for persons who are not registered as living in Sweden. This is mainly done for individuals who pay taxes in Sweden without being residents in the country. In order to be able to statistically capture individuals with short stays, the study proposed to widen the practice of issuing coordination numbers.

Further to this, the study outcomes also suggested that a new migration register be established, which would include all migrants or migratory events with durations of three months or longer.

But since there isn't yet a wide spread use of the individual coordination numbers in the Swedish society there were another suggested solution, a simpler register, including only migration involving registration in (and de-registration from) the existing population register, i.e. longer-term stays. The register would for example contain information on education, income, grounds for settlement and profession.

References

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