

SHORT REVIEWS

PRIKAZI

Joint Eurostat–UNECE Work Session on Demographic Projections

The Palace of Serbia, Belgrade, 25–27 November 2019

Konferencija Evrostata i Ekonomske komisije UN za Evropu o demografskim projekcijama

Palata Srbije, Beograd, 25–27. novembar 2019

The joint Eurostat-UNECE Work Session on Demographic Projections is part of a series of meetings jointly organized in this domain since 1994 by the European Union's Bureau of Statistics (Eurostat) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Since 2005, these meetings have been held regularly, every two to three years. The eighth meeting was held in Belgrade from 25 to 27 November 2019 and was hosted jointly by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the Minister in charge of Demography and Population Policy, and the Demographic Research Centre of the Institute of Social Sciences. This presented a great opportunity for participants from Serbia to take part in the meeting and exchange experiences with leading

researchers and experts from other countries.

Mr. Paolo Valente (UNECE) and Mr. Giampaolo Lanzieri (Eurostat) opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. They presented a brief history of previous work sessions and highlighted the importance of this type of international meeting. The introductory welcoming remarks were given by Dr Miladin Kovačević – Director of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Dr Mirjana Rašević – Head of the Demographic Research Centre, and Dr Slavica Djukić Dejanović – Minister without portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policy. All three of them, besides welcoming the participants, emphasised the relevance of demographic projections for

policymaking and presented the development of demographic projections in Serbia.

The organisers themselves set the objectives of the work session, which were to bring together projection-makers from the National Statistical Institutes, as well as those from other national and international organisations, demographic researchers, and users of demographic projections, in order to:

- review and discuss the current practices at both the national and international level;
- illustrate research approaches and innovative methodologies;
- draw attention to the different uses of demographic projections;
- improve the communication between producers and users of demographic projections.

A three-day work session was attended by participants from National Statistical Institutes, demographic research institutes, universities, and other institutions from around 25 countries, and included discussions of the following substantive topics:

- Methodology
- Assumptions on migration
- Assumptions on fertility
- Communicating projections
- Population projections at the national level
- Assumptions on mortality
- Population projections at the sub-national level.

Moreover, on the second day of the meeting, the session “Assumptions on mortality” was followed by the

“Workshop on future mortality,” which was organized by Prof. Fanny Janssen from the University of Groningen (The Netherlands), as a part of the research project on forecasting mortality (“Smoking, alcohol and obesity – ingredients for improved and robust mortality projections”). The main aim of this was to discern the effects of lifestyle factors (smoking, alcohol, obesity) on long-term mortality trends in Europe and to advance mortality forecasts by incorporating these effects (Please consult www.futuremortality.com for more information).

Participants from Serbia actively took part in two sessions. Dragana Paunović Radulović and Ljiljana Sekulić from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia participated in the session “Assumptions on migration” with the presentation “Using administrative and statistical data sources to estimate international migration trends for Serbia.” Dr Vladimir Nikitović, Senior Research Associate from the Demographic Research Centre of the Institute of Social Sciences, presented a paper entitled “Are we facing regional depopulation in Serbia? A subnational population projection” in the session “Population projections at the sub-national level.”

Each session was followed by questions and discussions, which also prompted some general issues, such as – are the terms *projections* and *forecasts* used correctly or, for example, how come despite so many technological and methodological innovations, projections today are not more accurate than before? What makes these meetings especially important is that

participants are mostly projection-makers. While the current practices, research approaches, and innovative methodologies presented during the meeting might be too technical for members of the broader public, from the scientific point of view, they are essential for further developing demographic projections.

A summary of the main matters discussed is available in the Report of the Eurostat–UNECE Work Session on Demographic Projections, together with all papers and presentations (Please see <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51942>).

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