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Response paper to the research report “The impact of labour migration on the demographic situation of Armenia”

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CARIM-East
Creating an Observatory of Migration East of Europe

Analytical and Synthetic Note
CARIM-East AS 2013/01

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(CARIM-East RR 2012/27)

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The project's two main themes are:

- (1) migration from the region to the European Union (EU) focusing in particular on countries of emigration and transit on the EU's eastern border; and
- (2) intraregional migration in the post-Soviet space.

The project started on 1 April 2011 as a joint initiative of the European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy (the lead institution), and the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw, Poland (the partner institution).

CARIM researchers undertake comprehensive and policy-oriented analyses of very diverse aspects of human mobility and related labour market developments east of the EU and discuss their likely impacts on the fast evolving socio-economic fabric of the six Eastern Partners and Russia, as well as that of the European Union.

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- builds a broad network of national experts from the region representing all principal disciplines focused on human migration, labour mobility and national development issues (e.g. demography, law, economics, sociology, political science).
- develops a comprehensive database to monitor migration stocks and flows in the region, relevant legislative developments and national policy initiatives;
- undertakes, jointly with researchers from the region, systematic and *ad hoc* studies of emerging migration issues at regional and national levels.
- provides opportunities for scholars from the region to participate in workshops organized by the EUI and CMR, including academic exchange opportunities for PhD candidates;
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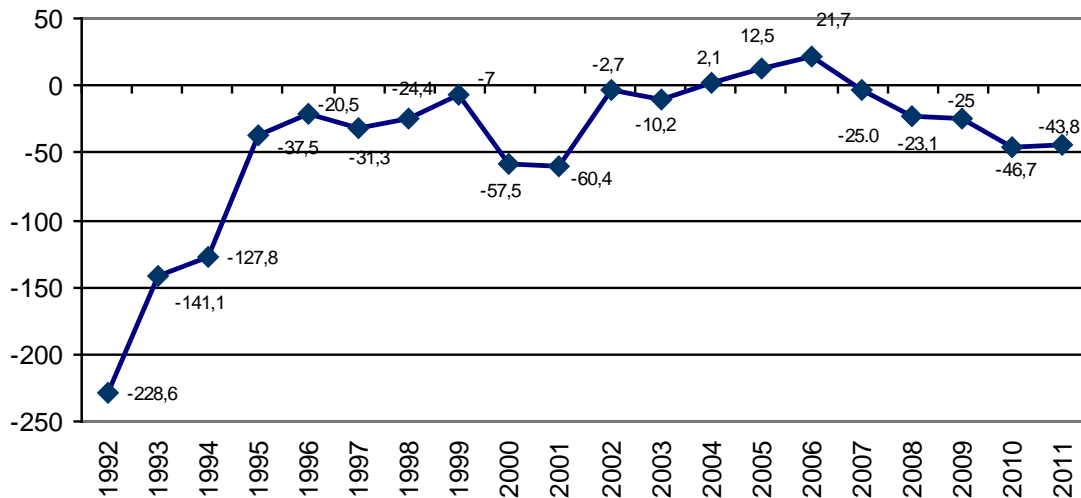
Introduction

“The impact of labour migration on the demographic situation of Armenia” is an interesting research report describing issues relating to the demographics of labor migration in Armenia in the last 40 years. The paper contains worthwhile discussions, rich statistical material and interesting conclusions. However, there are parts of the paper which deserve, in our opinion, to be contested. Also, several of the author’s judgments are not sufficiently objective and the paper neglected some important aspects, which we would like to bring up below. The methodology used by the author did not address the actual impact assessment of migration on the demographic situation and on demographic processes. The author described the demographic situation through assumptions. Therefore, we lack a realistic impact analysis in the paper. Another weak side of the paper is the fact that the author assesses the impact of labor migration on demographic processes (marriages, births, deaths...) from a quantitative perspective, neglecting qualitative effects.

In the following, we comment on each section of the aforementioned paper.

1. Migration phases (labor vs other types of migration)

Thinking now about the massive migration movements in Armenia after independence, the author unfortunately left to one side the crucial Karabakh war. During this period the male population of the Republic of military age (sometimes even those under age) were drafted into the army off the streets, from apartments, and sometimes through violence. This is crucial information for understanding why in 1992-1994 the negative net migration of passenger transportation by air was 497,500 (see figure 1) (Aghazaryan, 2003). People who avoided conscription left the country by overland transport. Note too, by way of confirmation, that after the truce in 1995 negative net migration decreased about four times (1994 -122,900, 1995 -35,600, 1996 -26,000 and etc) (NSS, 2011). The fear of arrest for those avoiding conscription was a strong reason either not to return to Armenia, or to return only after getting beyond the age of eligibility for the army and also after paying all necessary taxes. The original paper should have mentioned that there were numerous cases of returning to Armenia in that following years when the superior court announced an amnesty for all those who surrendered themselves voluntarily in this regard. The sex structure of migrants is another important factor – in 1992-1993 73.5%-81.8% of migrants were males (Aghazaryan, 2006).

Figure 1. Net Balance of Passenger Transportation 1992-2011 (thsd. persons)

Source: "The Demographic Handbook of Armenia", National Statistical Service (NSS), various years.

In the original paper it is supposed that migration in 1992-1994 was predominantly about labour, which is conditioned by the decreasing share of males 15-29 and 30-44 age groups, who stayed in Armenia. Rather though the core of mobilization was males 20-44, and the males 15-19 have left in order to avoid conscription. Second, no male migrant will admit that he is leaving the country in order to avoid conscription. Instead "leaving to get a job" was the obvious thing to say, because in their country there were in a very poor social-economic conditions, high unemployment, low salaries, high level of poverty and etc. Labor migration started to dominate in 1995, because though the socio-economic conditions of the population were constant in the same year negative net migration decreased four times.

In terms of migration phases presented in the paper (1992-1994, 1995-2001, 2002-2011), there is more to be said about migration sensitivity. We should think, in fact, of migration sensitivity in terms of the domestic political situation, which depends on sex and age structure of the participants, the social and educational situation, migration volume and its causes. Looked at in this way migration would be better classified in the following phases. First phase – covering 1992-1994, economic collapse and war. Second phase – covering 1995-1999 October; establishing peace in region, economic recovery and formulation of new political situation after the parliamentary elections. Third phase – 1999 October- 2003 –migration control and slow growth. Fourth phase – 2004-to present – migration volume growth, which is grounded in remittance growth.

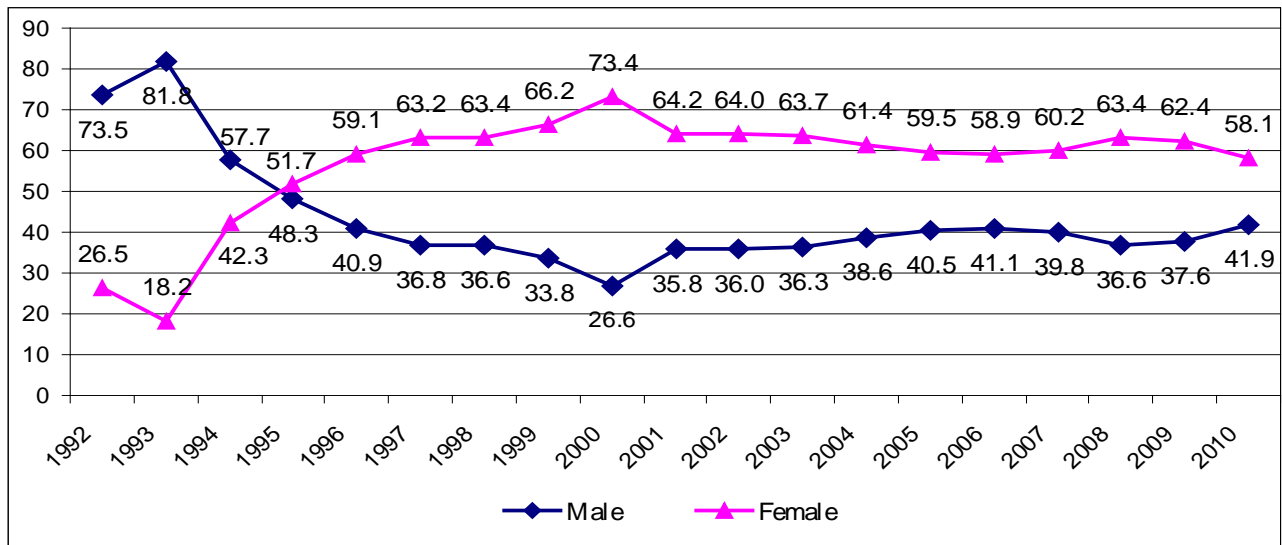
The "Migration survey" data was conducted by the RA National Statistical Service in 1999 covered people who emigrated from Armenia 1991-1998 and who were still abroad at the moment of the survey (1999). According to this survey sex and age specifications and reasons for population emigration activity were significant. The emigration activity of the 25 and under age group was 11.5%. The same indicator for 30-34 age group shot up to 21.1% and the 50-54 age group, 16-17%. In total, the number of persons leaving Armenia and the share of travelling males exceeds the female share twice over: 64.5% versus 35.5%. The main reasons for the actual and potential migrants were the following: lack of jobs, respectively 33.8% and 26.1%; impossibility of earning enough for normal living conditions, 18.7% and 25.9%; absence of trust on positive development prospective in Armenia, 6.0% and 11.8%; reuniting family, 12.2% and 13.2%; and socially unhealthy atmosphere, 4.9% and 9.6%. As we see, the lack of working places was more important for actual migrants than for potential migrants, but other reasons were more important for potential migrants. According to the same survey,

in 1999 the number of employers among emigrants exceeded the same indicator among those who had not migrated more than five times. This could be explained in the following way. First, there was not a favorable climate for entrepreneurship. Second, an active-innovative business element of the population was excluded from society, which could be a serious risk for the economic development prospects of the country (NSS, 1999). Emigration even increased after the terror attack in the RA Parliament 27 October, 1999. It negatively affected the domestic political situation in the country and the net balance of passenger transportation become even more negative passing from 25,700 people in 1999 to -57,500 in 2000 (Diagram 1) and net migration was -21,900 in 2000 instead of -17,600 in 1999 (appendix 1).

The paper does not mention the gender aspect of labor migration. In the case of Armenia the sex structure of migrants is a very important characteristic of labor migration (diagram 2).

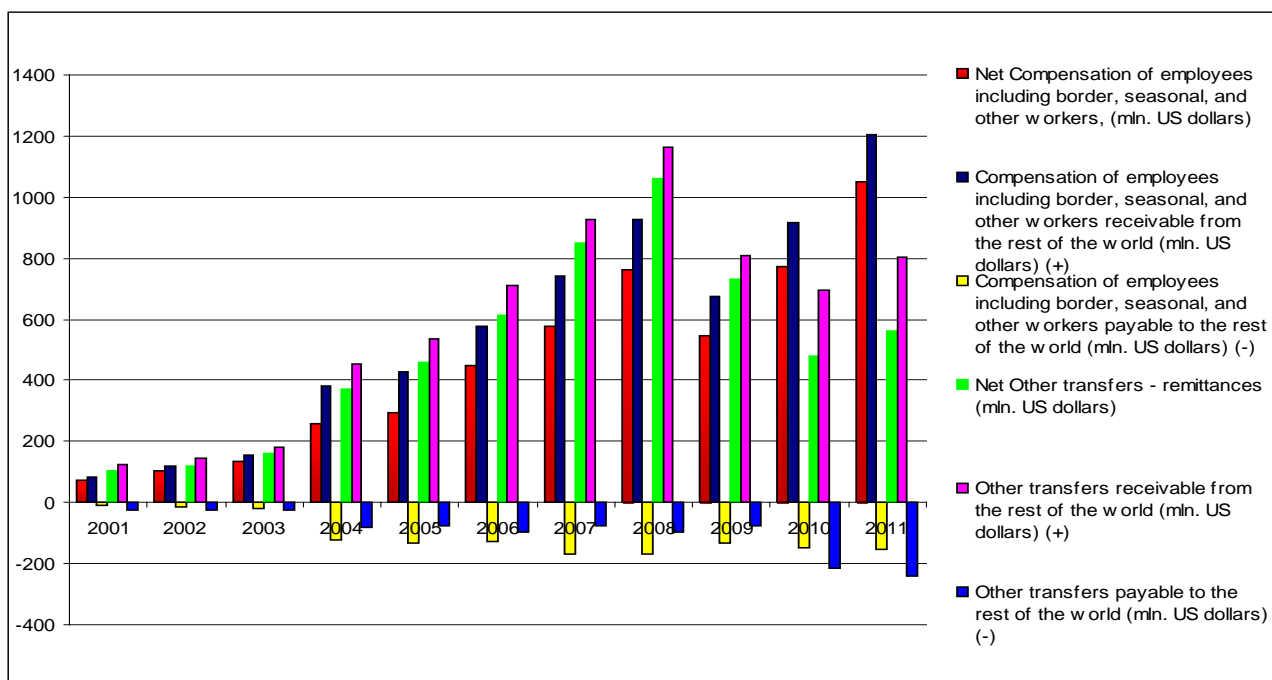
Figure 2. Gender structure of Net Migration

Source: "The Demographic Handbook of Armenia", National Statistical Service (NSS), various years.



For example, migration trends are clear till 2000/01: at the beginning of this period, males migrated probably, for short-term purposes, then they became long-term migrants or permanent inhabitants of host countries, and later their wives and other family members joined them. Starting from 2001, emigration trends gradually became more balanced in gender terms. Based on expert estimates and public declarations, the female labor migrants' main migration destinations have been SIC countries, Turkey, East Europe and Arabic countries. International organizations have begun to talk of female trafficking in their reports.

We agree that it is difficult to believe that migration decreased 2003-2011. In fact, this will probably be contradicted with the preliminary data of the 2011 Census. There are some other indicators which show migration development trends even in the case of underestimated labor migration volumes. For instance, changes in remittance volumes.

Figure 3. The Structure and Dynamic of Factor Incomes and Remittances (*)

Notes: (*) "Other transfers" mean remittances sent by permanent emigrants who are no longer residents of Armenia

Source: balance of payments' statistics, NSS.

It is difficult to suppose that, since 2004, short-term Armenian labor migrants (under 1 year) have earned more and more, and long-term migrants have delivered more transfers to Armenia. As short-term migrants are still residents in the country (permanent inhabitants), the income earned abroad (and delivered to Armenia) is considered factor income according to the Balance of Payments methodology. Long-term migrants are not residents in Armenia and, therefore, any income delivered to Armenia have to be considered remittances. Research papers on migration and volumes of passenger transportation (diagram 1) show the migration volumes growth, which is illustrated in table 1. Since 2011 a new information system of border electronic management registration has come into play, thanks to which it is possible to conduct a more realistic assessment of migration volumes.

Table 1. Number of RA board passes in 2010 and 2011 (Persons)

Years	Enter		Exit		Balance	
	total	of which, RA citizens	total	of which, RA citizens	total	Only relating to RA citizens
2010	1754214	905691	1800898	962931	-46684	-57240
2011	1945118	1038404	1988938	1087530	-43820	-49126

Source: NSS

2. Analysis and assessment of changes of demographic situation

In this part of the paper changes in infant mortality and fertility are illustrated compared with the 1980s. In our opinion it is necessary to pay here attention to a very important factor: 1989-1990/91 Azerbaijani, Kurd and Eizids, national minorities living in Armenia, left the country in large numbers. This was the ethnic minority within Armenia which traditionally had high fertility levels. Thus, we consider that the fertility decrease described by the author (p.10) needs to be understood in terms of the ethnic structure of births and infant mortality (for example for 1987). On the other hand, the explanation that after 2000 the growth of births was a result of the age-specific fertility of the 1980s generation is not grounded. In the 1990s other generations (for instance, the 60- and 70-year-olds) were in the fertility age group.

The methodology of assessing labor migration's impact, suggested by the author is theoretically acceptable, notwithstanding some restrictions;

First, official Armenian statistics periodically calculates the population and its sex and age structure. Then, after each census a re-calculation (update) of the indicators of the previous years is conducted. Second, it is not clear how it is possible to estimate in methodological terms the impact of labor migration, using the indicators calculated and employed by the author. He considers them as conditional indicators.

Third, the practical significance of the suggested method for the assessment of the dynamic situation, and especially, for decision-making purposes is unclear.

Fourth, there is no positive and negative impacts of labor migration classification for the demographic situation. Also, there is no mention in the paper of other social, economic, behavioral factors: for example increasing marriage age or the tradition of having fewer children.

With regard to any situational analysis, it is desirable to use not only descriptive statistics methods and tools. It is also important to employ inferential and forecasting statistical methods and tools. It helps to calculate the annual number of actual migrants, the population number etc and also to estimate the real impact of migration on the demographic process.

3. Gender aspects of migration

Relating to the section on "impact of migration on age and sex structure of population", we would like to make the following comments.

1. The method suggested by the author would be more effective, if a regression model was developed, which showed the association between population change and migration and mortality trends. Based on this model it would be possible to estimate the demographic, social and economic effects of migration. Such a model would help policy makers to develop more effective migration policy taking into account the propensity for migration of different sex and age groups in the population. The calculation of indicators by the suggested method would be more effective, if it focused on official statistics relating to population changes by sex and age structure and also on existing contradictions, which are highlighted in red in table 2. After that, it would be necessary to compare conditional data, which have been calculated according to the suggested methodology with official data available and offer some conclusions. Judging from the table data a strange fact is that the population in 0-4, 5-9 and 35-39 age groups was registered only after 5 years in 2006 and in correspondent age groups 5-9, 10-14 and 40-44. It is interesting that, in 2011, notwithstanding the fact that the population in the correspondent age group decreased, it was still greater than in the corresponding age group in 2001 (196,100 (0-4) in 2001 and 209,000 (10-14) in 2011, 258,500 (5-9) in 2001 and 272,300 (15-19) in 2011) and etc.

Table 2. Distribution of the *de jure* population by sex and age group (as of the beginning of the year), (thousand persons)

Age, years	2001	2006	2011
0-4	196.1	179.3	205.5
5-9	258.5	210.5	178
10-14	325.4	274.7	209
15-19	313.6	320.2	272.3
20-24	267.6	304.5	317.5
25-29	222.6	254.9	300.1
30-34	204.6	210.5	250.3
35-39	244.3	202.4	206.2
40-44	276.1	252.9	198
45-49	211.5	259.4	247.2
50-54	153.8	193.1	251.3
55-59	80.1	133.6	183.8
60-64	147.3	76.7	124.2
65-69	118.7	137.2	69.5
70-74	107.1	93.8	117.3
75-79	55.1	78.2	71.2
80+	30.6	37.3	61.2

Sources: population census (2001); The Demographic Handbook of Armenia, NSS (2006, 2011), NSS

2. In comparison with 2001, in 2006, age groups 0-9 and 35-39 grew instead of declining. This could only happen due to re-emigration (relating to these age groups net migration might be +39,200, even more considering that some among them inevitably died between 2001 and 2006) which is not proved by the data on officially estimated migration. The data on population migration is defined based on the statistical processing of data from statistical records (forms on arrivals and departures) presented by the territorial passport services of the police: they are compiled by the information at the time of the population's registration and at the time of the registration of departures. They do not include double counts: i.e. people who enter/exit Armenia more than once a year. The data of 2001-2006 Interstate migration is as follows:

Table 3. Interstate migration 2001-2006 (thousand persons)¹

\Year	Arrived	Departed	Net migration (+,-)
2001	1.6	-11.9	-10.3
412002	1.7	-10.9	-9.2
2003	1.9	-9.5	-7.6
2004	1.5	-9.2	-7.7
2005	1.5	-9.3	-7.8
2006	1.3	-8.0	-6.7
Total	9.5	-58.8	-49.3

Source: The Demographic Handbook of Armenia- 2011, NSS

¹ The Demographic Handbook of Armenia 2011, NSS of RA, Yerevan 2007, p. 103.

This chapter (3.3) of the paper would be better grounded scientifically if the paper had included a comparison of estimated indicators. It is, after all, possible to obtain the migration picture of population by age groups by minusing the number of mortality cases from the population by age groups. It is then possible to compare these figures with the conditionally estimated indicators using correlation and regression analysis.

From our point of view the impact of migration on fertility is not satisfactorily represented in the paper. Data specified in tables 3 and 4 in the context of discussing issues are either contradicted or imply that migration has little impact on fertility. In 1990 the number of reproductive age women was 910,000 and the number of births was 80,000. In 2002 the number of reproductive age women was 907,300 and the number of births was 32,000. According to the author's estimates, in 1990-2002 migration of reproductive age women stood at 160,000. The number of reproductive women was almost the same (1990-2002). The number of births decreased almost two and a half times. But the author states that if there was not female migration (160,000) then in 2002 the number of births would have been 36,500. However, in table 4, the picture suggests the reverse of this. In 2002 and 2009 approximately 38,000 women/female migration of reproductive age saw an increasing number of births, namely 12 000 (according to the author, if there will be no migration the number, would be bigger by additionally 2 000 births).

Thus, it should be considered that, first, the migration of women of reproductive age had little correlation with their births. The majority of them were not labor migrants, but had either accompanied labor migrants-husbands, or were family members. This is not, we would suggest, the impact of labor migration, but the impact of *general migration*.

Second, as we mentioned above, the author did not discuss gendered labor migration. For instance, there is no male labor migration impact on birth, because male migration improves the material/financial situation of the family and thus improves possible future births. So, if we do not consider labor migration, then the number of births would be smaller, because, generally speaking, the social-economic situation of the economy and the living conditions of population directly affected birth numbers. Our approach is conditioned by the fact, that fertility is strongly correlated or has a strong correlation with the social-economic situation of the country, and the social-economic situation in Armenia was in decline not only in the 1990s, but also in 2009-2011 being conditioned by the global economic crisis. A big impact on decreasing birth numbers has the distribution of HIV and other venereal diseases caused by labor migration, and also infertility (according to expert estimates stands at about 29-35 %), stresses and other factors.

To assess the impact of labor migration on fertility it is necessary to discuss the following factors, which were neglected in the paper;

1. The age structure of migrant women, for example, in 2003-2010 shares of migrant women under 20-49 was 61.5-68.7%.
2. Distribution of births by birth order,

Table 4. Birth Distribution by Order of Birth for 2000-2010

Year	Total	of which by birth order				
		first	second	third	fourth	fifth and higher
2000	34276	15637	11155	5085	1637	762
2001	32065	15660	10325	4210	1220	650
2002	32229	16637	10370	3665	1027	530
2003	35793	18369	11865	4016	1007	536
2004	37520	19441	12822	3963	851	443
2005	37499	19286	12953	4014	858	388
2006	37639	19601	13271	3758	705	304
2007	40105	20525	14277	4263	708	332
2008	41185	21292	14270	4520	761	342
2009	44413	22472	15431	5289	849	372
2010	44825	21954	15881	5683	929	378

Source: The Demographic Handbook of Armenia-2011, NSS

3. Increase in marriage age among males and females.
4. Tendency to have fewer children among young families and etc.

Besides the recalculation and discussion of mortality cases by age group, it is necessary to pay attention to infant mortality (0-1 year) and stillbirth. These need to be discussed together with migration processes and venereal disease distribution by age groups (and other negative outcomes of migration), which certainly would have directed correlation in regional level analysis.

Table 5. Live Births, Still Births, Perinatal, Neonatal, Post neonatal and Infant deaths for 1995-2010 (person)

Year	Live births	Still births	Neo-natal deaths 0-27 days old	Post neo-natal deaths from 28 days up to 12 months old	Infant deaths
1995	48960	331	369	328	697
2000	34276	289	325	215	540
2001	32065	269	342	155	497
2002	32229	236	301	149	450
2003	35793	289	289	133	422
2004	37520	290	278	152	430
2005	37499	358	320	140	460
2006	37639	662	401	122	523
2007	40105	563	334	99	433
2008	41185	601	307	135	442
2009	44413	802	319	135	454
2010	44825	844	344	168	512

Source: The Demographic Handbook of Armenia-2011, NSS

Another key aspect that was neglected was the financing of household health expenditures by remittances, in terms of recovery and general improvement in health. According to the National Health Account of Republic of Armenia data in 2005-2010 the volume of out of pocket expenditure in households decreased notwithstanding the high level of poverty in the country.² This problem also needs to be examined seriously.

Unfortunately there is a very limited and indirect information available relating to the direct assessment of labor migration impact on marriages and divorces. But there are some indirect data on divorces.

To our mind, the impact of migration on divorces could be indirectly assessed by taking into account statistics of divorces by marriage years. For example, in 2010, in the case of 2997 registered cases of divorces 917 were after 20 and more years of marriage. An interrelation with migration could explain the status of divorcers in terms of involvement in migration processes.

Simultaneously, the correlation between migration and divorces would be more visible in regional level classification, because the population of different regions in Armenia, which have been included in the migration processes of the post-soviet period, are characterized by high level of migration prosperity and volume.³

Table 6. Divorces by Duration of Marriage for 2002-2010, Out of total number of divorces, in %

Year	Total number of registered divorces	of which by the duration of marriage, year					
		under 1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20 and more
2002	100	1.8	13.2	19.5	24.0	17.4	24.1
2003	100	2.3	12.0	19.2	22.6	19.5	24.4
2004	100	2.2	13.5	17.4	23.0	18.3	25.6
2005	100	3.0	14.5	16.5	21.7	18.9	25.4
2006	100	2.9	13.2	14.1	24.0	21.9	23.9
2007	100	2.4	15.8	14.0	18.2	19.3	30.3
2008	100	3.7	17.1	15.4	15.8	18.1	29.9
2009	100	3.2	19.5	15.7	15.1	18.2	28.3
2010	100	3.3	21.2	16.8	12.9	15.2	30.6

Source: The Demographic Handbook of Armenia-2011, NSS

Policy recommendations

There is incomplete information available on migration and especially, on labor migration. It is not collected periodically, it does not address present development goals, policy (demographic, social, economic) directives. It is not satisfactory and comprehensive for use in analysis and effective decision making strategies. We would like to suggest the following:

- In labor migration studies a very broad scope of related issues is being left out of consideration. It is necessary to include in future questionnaires such issues, which would

² National Health Account of Republic of Armenia, 2005-2010, Yerevan, Health PIU

³ The Demographic Handbook of Armenia 2011, NSS of RA, Yerevan 2011, pp. 107-110.

give an opportunity to assess the impact of migration on demographic processes, social situation (living standard, education, health, directions of households' income distribution), economic situation and etc.

- For comprehensive and complete information relating to migration, instead of the small sample surveys necessary to conduct broader investigation. In this case, it would allow us to assess the real situation of migration (including labor migration), long-run and short-run risks, demographic, social and economic loses and benefits and challenges coming from that.

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Appendix 1.**The components of changes in population numbers, 1990-2010 (thousand persons)**

Year	Population number (at the beginning of the year)	Total increase/ Decrease (+, -)	Natural increase	Net migration	Population number (at the end of the year)	Annual increase/ decrease %
1990	3514.9	59.6	57.9	1.7	3574.5	1.70
1991	3574.5	58.8	54.4	4.4	3633.3	1.64
1992	3633.3	-169.6	44.7	-214.3	3463.7	-4.67
1993	3463.7	-107.0	31.6	-138.6	3356.7	-3.09
1994	3356.7	-96.4	26.5	-122.9	3260.3	-2.87
1995	3260.3	-11.5	24.1	-35.6	3248.8	-0.35
1996	3248.8	-2.8	23.2	-26.0	3246.0	-0.09
1997	3246.0	-7.8	20.0	-27.8	3238.2	-0.24
1998	3238.2	-6.1	16.2	-22.3	3232.1	-0.19
1999	3232.1	-5.2	12.4	-17.6	3226.9	-0.16
2000	3226.9	-11.6	10.3	-21.9	3215.3	-0.36
2001	3215.3	-2.4	8.1	-10.5	3212.9	-0.07
2002	3212.9	-2.6	6.6	-9.2	3210.3	-0.08
2003	3210.3	1.9	9.8	-7.9	3212.2	0.06
2004	3212.2	3.6	11.8	-8.2	3215.8	0.11
2005	3215.8	3.4	11.1	-7.7	3219.2	0.11
2006	3219.2	3.7	10.4	-6.7	3222.9	0.12
2007	3222.9	7.2	13.3	-6.1	3230.1	0.22
2008	3230.1	7.9	13.8	-5.9	3238.0	0.26
2009	3238.0	11.5	16.8	-5.3	3249.5	0.36
2010	3249.5	13.1	16.9	-3.8	3262.6	0.40

Source: NSS, 2011