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**TOWARD LABOR MIGRATION AND POVERTY IN BALKAN COUNTRIES  
IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH**

# **Toward Labor Migration and Poverty in Balkan Countries in the Context of Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth**

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## **Abstract**

The Balkans is well known for playing a considerable role in changes and migrations on a global level. This chapter discusses the relationship between labour migration and poverty in Macedonia and other Balkan countries, during a period of rapidly growing inequalities. This is placed against the on-going debates on changes in the patterns of employment and job creation, during the period of economic liberalisation, under the Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth policies, and also under the impact of the global financial crisis. The focus is on migration in Macedonia compared with the other Balkan countries that have been analysed, and whether or not economic growth signifies a route out of poverty, and the specific policies that should be improved and recommended. The chapter argues that the Gini index is connected with migration dynamics, but that it is not the crucial. There are a lot of variables, economic or social, that have an influence on migration and it is hard to find their dependency with migration, because it is a very complex process that has impacted on different spheres of peoples' lives. This is directly relevant for policy and the Smart Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth model and an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of migration.

**Key words:** Sustainable Development, Inclusive Growth, labor, migration, poverty.

## Introduction

Increasing environmental and international migration awareness and concern, digitalization, urbanization and technological development have together resulted in an urgent need and opportunity to rethink how we construct and manage our society. Over the last decades, these interlinked issues and developments have started to converge under the new heading of a Smart Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth policy. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda pays special attention to common sustainability goals and problem solving questions, more than on the needs of migrants, refugees and displaced persons.

The chapter considers, to the extent that existing data will allow, whether it is likely that patterns of migration and their links with poverty have changed since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and whether current social policies under the government of different countries have become inclusive of poor labor migrants. Governance and the regulation of international migration require by definition international cooperation and partnerships. Governance of migration similarly requires the international exchange of reliable and comparable disaggregated data on migration, including on migrant and refugee skills, educational attainment, employment, labor market participation, development contributions, and social protection and other factors. This chapter discusses the relationship between labor migration and poverty and the policy of Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth in EU, Macedonia and other Balkan countries.

## Addressing Weaknesses in Sustainable Development Studies

Approximately 9 per cent of the world's people are international migrants. It is commonly assumed that international migration has accelerated over the past half century, that migrants travel over increasingly greater distances, and that migration has therefore become much more diverse in terms of the origins and destinations of migrants (Czaika and de Haas, 2014).

The global pattern reflects migration tendencies from developing countries to developed countries. Large and persistent economic and demographic asymmetries between countries are likely to remain the key drivers of international migration for the foreseeable future. Between 2015 and 2050, the top net receivers of international migrants (more than 100,000 annually) are projected to be the United States of America, Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and the Russian Federation. The countries projected to be net senders of more than 100,000 migrants annually include India, Bangladesh, China, Pakistan, and Indonesia. Figure 1 lists average annual net migration by regions over more than 25 years.

More people are on the move now than ever before. The overwhelming majority of migrants leave their countries of origin voluntarily, in search of better economic, social and educational opportunities and a better environment. At the end of 2015, there were estimated to be over 244 million international migrants, representing an increase of 77 million – or 41 per cent–

compared with the year 2000 (World Health Organization, 2018). According to Figure 1 where net migration is presented by region we can notice that Europe is very interesting and popular for the migrants and it is the region with the highest migration. Europe is attractive for the migrants from the countries of other regions such as Asia and Africa, but developing countries in this region are most attractive for migrants from the Balkan countries.

Globalization has made the free flow of goods and ideas an integral part of modern life. The world has benefited greatly from the accelerated exchange of products, services, news, music, research and much more. Human mobility, on the other hand, remains the unfinished business of globalization. Migration policy and cooperation frameworks struggle to address the push-pull forces of migration and the cascading effects that migration has on communities of origin and destination.

Considering both its positive and negative impacts is essential to fully realizing a range of development objectives, including food security, decent work and access to health care and basic services. Links between underdevelopment and forced and unsafe forms of migration should also be taken in account. Governments increasingly recognize that migration is both inevitable and necessary, and that it can contribute to inclusive and sustainable social and economic development, benefitting countries of origin and destination as well as migrants and their families (United Nations, 2017).

### **The Relationship between Development and Migration**

What is development? A multi-dimensional process by which a more balanced distribution of wealth and prosperity, and better opportunities for a viable future, including poverty reduction, and the reduction of insecurity are achieved. The consequences are: an increase in individual opportunities to migrate, which will in turn necessitate fewer people having the need or desire to migrate.

The causes of migration are manifold and complex, but include:

- Stagnating economic growth;
- Poverty;
- Rapid population growth;
- Unemployment and underemployment;
- An unbalanced distribution of wealth;
- Pressure on agricultural and other resources;
- Globalization;
- Bad governance and human rights abuses;
- Violent conflict and a lack of security;
- A "Culture of Migration".

The motives of individual migrants are often made up of a mix of voluntary and forced aspects that cannot be separated from structural conditions. Moreover, migration decision-making involves both the individual and his/her family. In the last few decades, the key drivers of migration have evolved from predominantly political and security reasons to socio-economic forces. The skill criterion is thus becoming an ever more important qualifying factor in various migratory flows. At the same time, the share of youth involved in migration is increasing. This trend is particularly relevant for shorter-term and temporary migration, as more and more young people leave their countries of origin in search of employment abroad.

The development processes and migration in different phases are connected differently. Speaking for this connection we have 3 different types of connection such as:

- Early development: where migration opportunities are available to few (because of high material and immaterial costs);
- Middle development: where expectations increase, but there are still insufficient opportunities to effectuate them in the home country; and also, migration increases as more people can afford the costs;
- Further development: where the opportunities increase to build a viable future at home, and the need for migration decreases.

The positive consequences of (labor) migration for development are: 'remittances', though these are selective in nature); transnational activities (local effects); the transfer of skills and knowledge; and social and political influences on migrants. The negative consequences of (labor) migration for development are: a brain drain, or the loss of human capital, including highly-skilled and educated people); the social aspect, involving the disruption of family life; the export of labor which can be sensitive to economic fluctuations; and inflationary effects on local economies; the increase of local inequalities and the emergence of a 'culture of migration'.

The governance and regulation of international migration require by definition international cooperation and partnerships. The governance of migration similarly requires the international exchange of reliable and comparable disaggregated data on migration, including on migrant and refugee skills, educational attainment, employment, labor market participation, development contributions, social protection and other factors.

### **The Development-Migration Models and Poverty in Macedonia and other Balkan countries**

Migration as a continuous process in The Republic of Macedonia is analyzed during the period of 10 years, from 2007 to 2016. According to the data of the State Statistical office of The Republic of Macedonia just 8,021 citizens emigrated from the country (See Table 1). But there are data published by the World Bank Group where The Republic of Macedonia is in the list of top 30 countries in the world for the number of citizens that have emigrated.

According to that data in Figure 2, The Republic of Macedonia in 2013 is in 25<sup>th</sup> place in the world where the number of emigrated citizens is 30.2 per cent of the population. Calculated in numbers, from a total population of 2,000,000 in The Republic of Macedonia, there are around 600,000 people that have emigrated to Europe, the USA or Australia. Analyzing the real situation it seems that the data provided by the World Bank is more accurate. According to some statistical data, the desire of citizens in Macedonia, to leave the country is much higher, at 55.1 per cent. That means that the wish to emigrate is almost twice as high the actual emigration. Because of this, it is expected that this emigration trend will continue and maybe increase in the future. But, this process is not just happening in The Republic of Macedonia. Part of this list of top emigration countries includes other Balkan countries such as: Montenegro (at 45.4 per cent) – 15<sup>th</sup> place, Bosnia and Herzegovina (at 44.5 per cent) – 16<sup>th</sup> place, Albania (at 43.6 per cent) – 17<sup>th</sup> place and Kosovo (at 30.3 per cent) – 24<sup>th</sup> place. These countries have the same problems with emigration as The Republic of Macedonia.

Because of the size of the numbers of emigration in The Republic of Macedonia, we will make an analysis of the emigrants according to the age and gender in Table 2. There, it can be noticed that there are more male citizens that have emigrated than females, and according to the age most of the citizens that are leaving the country, they are in the age range from 30-64 and 15-29. That means that the emigrants are younger and capable of working.

Speaking about the reasons for moving away most of them have listed: family reasons, employment, education, and a combination of all of these previous mentioned reasons, but some are without response (See Table 3). What is the right reason for these people? We will try to make an analysis of the economic situation of the country in order to have an answer to this question.

Most important for every household is to be able to meet basic living needs. This can be achieved by continuously receiving income. To better understand income distribution in the country which is very close to the poverty rate in that country we will use as a measurement the Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient (sometimes expressed as the Gini ratio or the Gini index) is a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent the income or wealth distribution of a nation's residents, and is the most commonly used measure of inequality. Calculating this index is based on measuring the inequality among values of a frequency distribution (for example, levels of income). The value of zero expresses perfect equality, where all values are the same (for example, where everyone has the same income) and the value of 1 (or 100 per cent) expresses maximum inequality among values (for example, for a large number of people, where only one person has all the income or consumption, and all others have none). In other cases, where the results for the Gini index, is the value above 50, which is considered to be high inequality; whilst the value of 30 or above is considered as the mean and a value lower than 30 is considered as low inequality.

According to the data taken from Eurostat, the base for the Gini index in Table 4 is analyzed at its value for a period covering six years, from 2011 to 2016 for The Republic of Macedonia

and the EU. The EU during these years has the same value on the Gini index of around 30 which can be interpreted as medium inequality, and in The Republic of Macedonia starting from 2011 with value of 38.5 per cent for this index, during the years it has decreased and in 2016 the Gini index has value of 33.6 per cent, which also puts the country among the group of countries with medium inequality.

From an analysis of the Gini index according to the World Bank data base for each country separately we have Table 5 where a comparison is made between The Republic of Macedonia and other Balkan countries in the period from 2010 to 2015. Here The Republic of Macedonia has higher value for the Gini index than in Table 4 and its value in 2010 was 42.8 per cent which has since decreased and in 2015 it was at 35.6 per cent. These values for the Gini index still put The Republic of Macedonia in the group of countries with medium inequality. Compared with Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania we can see that The Republic of Macedonia has a higher Gini index. According to the data in Table 5, The Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina are in the group of medium inequality and Albania, Kosovo and Serbia are in group of low inequality. It shows that maybe the Gini index is not the real reason for migration, because, although the countries have low inequality of income, they are part of the top 25 emigration countries in the world (Figure 2). Also, people from these countries have emigrated to EU countries where the Gini index and inequality are medium, which means that they move to countries with the same or higher levels of inequality. It hints that something else can be the real motive and reason for emigration.

There is a big difference between the developed countries, developing countries and “third world countries”. Specifically, The Republic of Macedonia like the developing countries has been too long in a period of transition and changes to society, as it transits from socialism into capitalism. This process of changes has brought about a big difference in income distribution and has deepened the gap between the rich and poor people. This bad social situation for most people was motive for moving away to developed countries in order to find better standards of living. The situation maybe will be better but this transition period has been prolonged for many years and young people have little hope of changing the present condition. Because of this, when they finish their University education or Masters degrees, and the situation remains as before they start looking some opportunities outside their own country. Some of them find an opportunity to continue their education at a higher level in one of the developed countries in the hope that they will eventually find a better job. Others are just looking for a job with a university degree. It is sad that most of the youth that are going abroad are well educated and their knowledge and skills are being used in another country instead of their native country. This problem is connected with the other social problem where for a short period of time, because of this trend of massive emigration and the “brain drain”, maybe The Republic of Macedonia will have deficit of professionals in different areas, especially in medicine. This situation is similar for the other Balkan countries that have been analyzed.

For this purpose we have compared the important information for the Republic of Macedonia and the other Western Balkan countries of Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina in Table 6; and Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia in Table 7.

Given the data in Table 6 it is clear that the countries with a higher rate of unemployment and poverty ratio are experiencing a higher rate of emigration. The most interesting destinations for emigrants from the Balkan countries are European countries such as: Germany, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, and Sweden. In Table 7 we see Bulgaria (19.5 per cent) and Croatia (20.9 per cent), which are already part of the EU, but they still have the same trend of high emigration as other countries in Europe. Slovenia has the lowest rate of emigration at 8.3 per cent when compared with all the other Balkan countries. As member of the EU, Slovenia is a good example of a country with lower emigration, which can be seen in Table 7. As we can see there are other indicators that can influence the migration process.

Our research does not support a direct causal correlation that poverty *per se* is a key driver of migration. The poorest generally don't emigrate, unless compelled to do so by *force majeure* factors such as warfare, expulsion from the land, or environmental degradation. However, social protection, access to resources and resilience capacity provide the key to sustainability of remaining in place, as well as in ensuring a decent life for migrants.

An unexpected and surprising situation has arisen when capital does not flow from developed to developing countries, despite the existence of migration problems and the fact that in developing countries there is a lower amount of capital for each employee, and hence the income from capital injection is higher. So says the "Lucas paradox", derived by Nobel laureate Robert Lucas from the University of Chicago, who put forward this idea in his work in 1990 (Lucas, 1990). The measures of "Lucas paradox" problem solving closely correlate the solving of migration problems. A number of solutions to the Lucas paradox have been proposed in the literature: thinking of a worker in a rich country as effectively the equivalent to multiple workers in a poor country, adding human capital as a new factor of production, allowing for sovereign risk, and adding in the costs of goods trade, a poor country with an inefficient financial system but a low expropriation risk may simultaneously experience an outflow of financial capital but an inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI), resulting in a small net flow and others (International Monetary Fund, 2018). Our analysis of the Balkan countries explains that they are not very poor countries, but compared with developed countries are poorer, have higher unemployment rates, whilst these who are in works have a lower income. In essence, people are emigrating from the Balkan countries in the quest for better living conditions and life styles, which include: a good economic situation, better medical services, a transparent judicial system, political independence, legal fairness, equal treatment and security.

## Conclusion

According to World Bank data, The Republic of Macedonia in 2013 was in 25<sup>th</sup> place in the world for the number of citizens who emigrated, which is 30 per cent of the population, and those wishing to leave the country is almost twice as high. Because of this it is expected that this emigration trend will continue and maybe increase in the future. But, as part of the list of top countries of emigration there are other Balkan countries such as: Montenegro – in 15th place, Bosnia and Herzegovina – in 16th place, Albania – in 17th place and Kosovo – in 24th place.

The Republic of Macedonia and other Balkan countries like developing countries have been in a period of transition for too long with the changes in society from socialism into capitalism. This process of change has engendered a big difference in the income distribution of these countries and has deepened the gap between rich and poor people. This bad social situation has motivated the desire to move away developed countries in search of better standards of living.

Our analysis of the Balkan countries explains that they are not very poor countries, but compared with developed countries are poorer, have a higher unemployment rate and those who work have lower incomes. In essence, emigration from the Balkan countries is based on the quest for better living conditions, which include: a good economic situation, better medical services, transparent judicial systems, political independence, legal fairness, equal treatment and security. Because of these variables that influence emigration process for analyzing emigration is very complex.

The most popular destinations for emigrants from the Balkan countries are European countries such as: Germany, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, and Sweden. Bulgaria and Croatia, although they are part of the EU, still have a tendency towards higher emigration, but Slovenia, also, as member of EU, is a good example of a country with lower rates emigration.

For countries at all levels of development, developed infrastructure, high quality of institutions, capital market performance, protection of investments and an adequate supply of jobs are the foundation of sustained prosperity and economic and social inclusion. Access to decent jobs for all is key to helping people pull themselves out of poverty, reducing income inequalities and achieving social cohesion and one of the ways in which the migration problem can be solved.

The markedly different patterns of international capital mobility during the historical and the modern era can be explained within an extended Lucas framework that combines “unproductive capital” and “capital market failure” views.

The governance and regulation of international migration require by definition international cooperation and partnerships. Important strategic and technical cooperation, training and capacity building on migration governance and management should be provided by the EU



and Eurasia international aid joint programs and agreements. Increasing attention should be focused on supporting regional capacities to obtain, analyze, exchange internationally, and apply reliable and comparable migration and labor migration data and measures to develop policy and administration.

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## Tables:

**Table 1:** Number of emigrated citizens of The Republic of Macedonia

International migration	2007	2008	2009		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Emigrated citizens of The Republic of Macedonia	224	740	769	923	1143	1330	945	740	767	440

Source: State Statistical Office of The Republic of Macedonia

**Table 2:** Emigrated citizens of The Republic of Macedonia abroad by gender and age

Year	Total	Gender		Age			
		males	females	age 0 – 14	age 15 – 29	age 30 – 64	age 65 and over
2007	224	130	94	34	81	95	14
2008	740	414	326	84	271	385	27
2009	769	425	344	79	215	430	45
2010	923	540	383	68	247	545	63
2011	1143	608	463	68	213	771	91
2012	1330	708	622	37	204	912	177
2013	945	522	423	31	189	586	139
2014	740	436	304	30	173	415	122
2015	767	427	340	43	219	393	112
2016	440	225	215	30	140	219	51

Source: State Statistical Office of The Republic of Macedonia

**Table 3: Emigrated citizens of The Republic of Macedonia abroad by reasons for moving away**

	Reason for moving away							
Year	Total	employment	marriage	family reason	education	all	without response	unknown
<b>2007</b>	224	46	9	123	2	44	44	16
<b>2008</b>	740	174	73	372	13	108	104	4
<b>2009</b>	769	184	88	338	35	124	124	0
<b>2010</b>	923	192	77	300	30	324	318	6
<b>2011</b>	1143	314	119	497	26	187	185	2
<b>2012</b>	1330	247	101	614	32	336	336	0
<b>2013</b>	945	127	65	383	19	351	342	9
<b>2014</b>	740	85	42	292	14	307	306	1
<b>2015</b>	767	83	54	263	18	349	346	3
<b>2016</b>	440	43	36	78	6	277	275	2

Source: State Statistical Office of The Republic of Macedonia

**Table 4: Gini index for The Republic of Macedonia and EU according to Eurostat**

Gini index in %	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>EU (28)</b>	30.8	30.5	30.5	31.0	31.0	30.8
<b>Macedonia</b>	38.5	38.8	37.0	35.2	33.7	33.6

Source: Eurostat: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&language=en&pcode=tessi190>**Table 5: Gini index for The Republic of Macedonia and other Balkan countries to World Bank**

Gini index in %	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Macedonia</b>	42.8	40.2	40.1	38.5	36.9	35.6
<b>Kosovo</b>	33.3	27.8	29.0	26.3	27.3	26.4
<b>Montenegro</b>	28.9	30.8	32.3	32.4	31.9	-
<b>Serbia</b>	29.0	-	-	29.0	-	28.5
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	-	33.0	-	-	-	32.7
<b>Albania</b>	-	-	29.0	-	-	-

Source: World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

**Table 6: The Republic of Macedonia and other Balkan countries by World Bank**

	<b>Macedonia</b>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>Kosovo</b>	<b>Serbia</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>
<b>Population</b>	(2014) 2.1 millions	(2013) 621.8 thousands	(2014) 1.8 millions	(2014) 7.1 millions	(2014) 2.9 millions	(2014) 3.8 millions
<b>Labor force</b>	(2013) 952.7 thousands	(2013) 251.7 thousands	/	(2014) 3.1 millions	(2014) 1.3 millions	(2014) 1.5 millions
<b>Unemployment rate (% of labor force, 2014)</b>	27.9	19.1	/	22.2	16.1	27.9
<b>Stock of emigrants, 2013:</b>	626.3 thousands	281.8 thousands	550.0 thousands	1,292.9 thousands	1,264.2 thousands	1,699.9 thousands
<b>Stock of emigrants as percentage of population, 2013:</b>	30.2	45.4	30.3	18.0	43.6	44.5
<b>Top destination countries, 2013:</b>	Germany, the U.S., Turkey, Italy, Switzerland, Australia, Serbia, Austria, Croatia, Slovenia	Serbia, Turkey, Croatia, Germany, the U.S.A., Austria, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Albania, Italy	Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Slovenia, Austria, the U.S.A., France, Sweden, the U.K., Belgium	Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Croatia, the U.S.A., Turkey, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia	Greece, Italy, the U.S., Germany, Macedonia, Montenegro, the U.K, Canada, France, Belgium	Croatia, Serbia, Germany, Austria, the U.S.A., Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia, Canada
<b>Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of pop.):</b>	(2010) 27.1	(2013) 8.6	(2011) 29.7	(2011) 24.6	(2012) 14.3	(2011) 17.9

Source: The World Bank Group, Migration and Remittances, Factbook 2016, 3rd edition

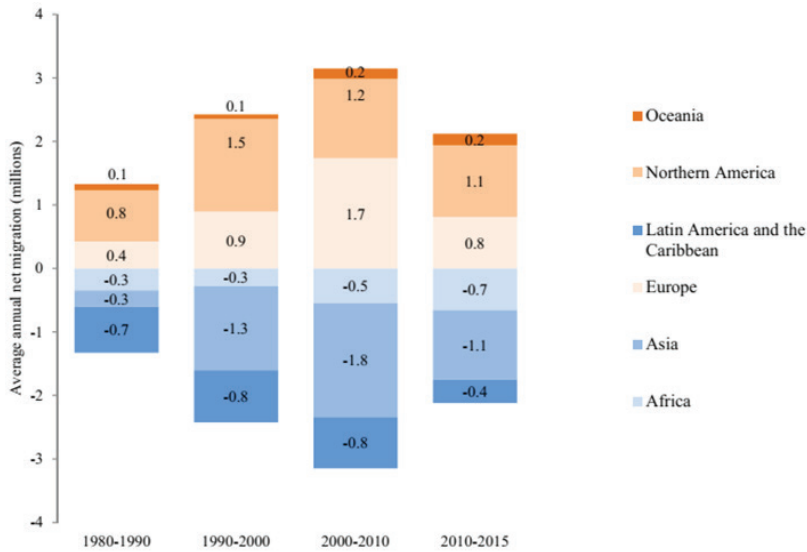
*Table 7: EU members Balkan countries by World Bank*

	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>
<b>Population</b>	(2014) 7.2 millions	(2014) 4.2 millions	(2014) 2.1 millions
<b>Labor force</b>	(2014) 3.3 millions	(2014) 1.8 millions	(2014) 1.0 millions
<b>Unemployment rate (% of labor force, 2014)</b>	11.6	16.7	9.5
<b>Stock of emigrants, 2013:</b>	1,416.6 thousands	888.2 thousands	171.3 thousands
<b>Stock of emigrants as percentage of population, 2013:</b>	19.5	20.9	8.3
<b>Top destination countries, 2013:</b>	Turkey, Spain, Germany, the U.S.A., the U.K., Italy, Greece, Belgium, Canada, Romania	Serbia, Germany, Australia, Slovenia, Canada, the U.S.A., Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Albania	Croatia, Germany, Austria, Serbia, Canada, the U.S.A., Australia, Switzerland, Italy, France
<b>Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of pop.):</b>	(2013) 21.0	(2012) 19.5	(2012) 14.5

Source: The World Bank Group, Migration and Remittances, Factbook 2016, 3rd edition

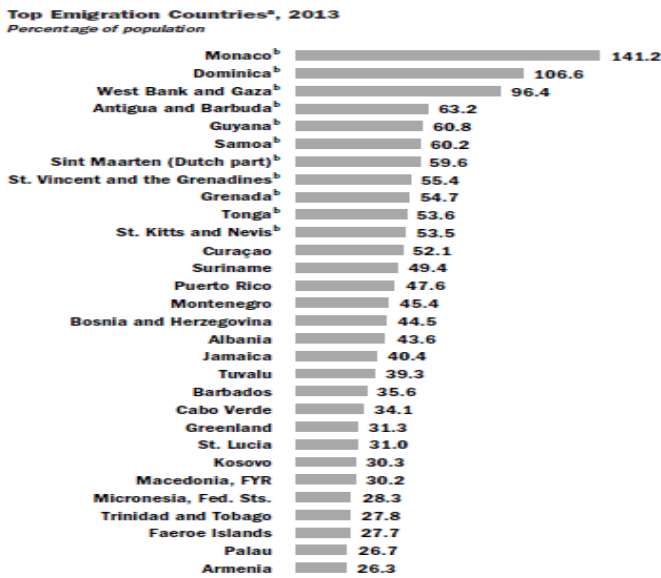
Figures:

Figure 1: Average annual net migration by regions



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*. New York: United Nations.

Figure 2: Top emigration countries in the World, 2013



Sources: Development Prospects Group, World Bank; UN Population Division 2012; national censuses.  
 a. Includes countries and territories (see Data Notes).  
 b. Top 10 country.  
 c. Puerto Rico is treated as a separate country and, therefore, Puerto Ricans residing in the United States are considered foreign born.

Source: The World Bank Group, Migration and Remittances, Factbook 2016, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 4