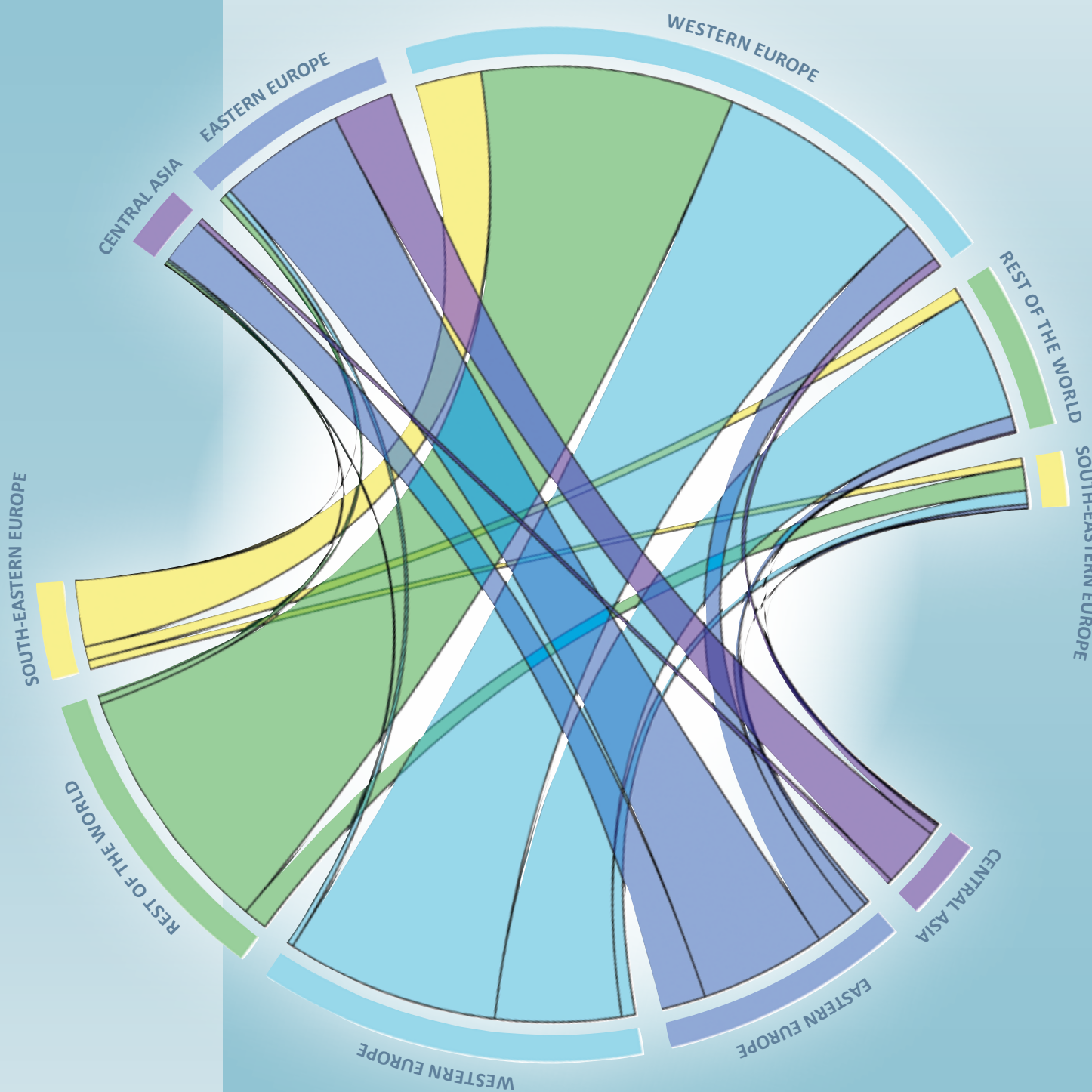


MIGRATION FACTS AND TRENDS: SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE, EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

IOM refers to the UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo in an abbreviated manner as “Kosovo/UNSCR 1244”. For the purpose of this report, it has been agreed to reference UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo as “Kosovo*”, this designation being without prejudice to positions on status and in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Cover image:

The circular plot depicts sub-regional distribution of migrant stocks in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEECA), Western Europe and the rest of the world based on 2013 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) estimates. To ensure better visualization of SEECA migrant stocks, migration within the “Rest of the World” grouping was excluded from the plot.

The regional groupings around which the plot is generated comprise the following countries:

Central Asia:	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
Eastern Europe:	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine.
South-Eastern Europe:	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Montenegro, Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.
Western Europe:	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Faeroe Islands, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montserrat, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
Rest of the World:	Countries not included in the above lists.

The plot was produced by Thomas Manke from the Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology and Epigenetics in Freiburg, Germany. The circo plot was generated using the R software and the circlize library from Zuguang Gu, Lei Gu, Roland Eils, Matthias Schlesner and Benedikt Brors, “Circlize Implements and Enhances Circular Visualization in R”, *Bioinformatics*, volume 30, issue 19, pages 2811-2812, 2014.

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MIGRATION FACTS AND TRENDS: SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE, EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of the migratory situation in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEEECA), a region that includes 20 countries and territories¹ covered by the IOM Regional Office in Vienna. The paper identifies a number of key trends observed in the region for the last 20 years and that are expected to shape the regional migratory landscape in the years to come. The trends have been identified using a combination of publicly available data, thematic studies, subregional and national surveys, and expert opinion.

The document provides a summary that includes key regional migration figures and a snapshot of the trends identified. The introductory section comprises a brief presentation of the economic and demographic characteristics of the region that affect the migration patterns in SEEECA, followed by an overview of the regional migration situation. The next section contains more in-depth analysis of the regional migration dynamics over the past two decades and possible future developments presented as 12 key regional migration trends.

The identified migration trends present both challenges and opportunities to the region's governments, societies and migrants. While some of these are highlighted, their analysis and implications for policy and practice are outlined in greater detail in the *2015–2020 IOM Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia*.² The strategy also presents the IOM vision of ways to address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the regional migration realities and outlook, and can be viewed as an operational document complementing this analytical paper.

1 The SEEECA region includes the following countries and territories: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kosovo* (this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence), Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

2 IOM, 2014a.



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Special thanks are due to Thomas Manke from the Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology and Epigenetics in Freiburg, Germany for producing the migration Circos graph for the region used as the cover image.

ABOUT THE SEECA REGIONAL OFFICE

IOM works to help facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration and mobility, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration challenges and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, be they refugees, displaced persons or other uprooted people.

IOM has been active in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia from the early 1990s, when it established presence in most of the countries in the region to help governments address the highly complex mix of migration and displacement challenges which had emerged following the major political changes of that period. As the migration trends in the region continue evolving, IOM remains committed to providing comprehensive support to governments in refining their policies, frameworks and practical mechanisms for migration management at national and multilateral levels, and ensuring protection and assistance to migrants in need. IOM has a large footprint in the region with offices in 19 out of the 20 SEECA countries and territories and a vast variety of activities covering the full range of migration management issues. The IOM Regional Office located in Vienna supports further improvement in quality and diversification of programmatic activities at country level, promotes regional initiatives and enables IOM to provide better support to interstate dialogue and cooperation.

South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

List of Countries and Territories:

Albania
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Georgia
Israel
Kazakhstan
Kosovo/UNSCR 1244³
Kyrgyzstan
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Republic of Moldova
Montenegro
Russian Federation
Serbia
Tajikistan
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
Uzbekistan

³ Hereinafter referred to as *Kosovo**. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
FMS	Federal Migration Service (Russian Federation)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
Rub	Russian rouble
SEECA	South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
THB	Trafficking in human beings
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD	United States dollar
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics



METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Much has been said about the lack of reliable data hampering quality analysis of migratory processes and inhibiting elaboration of informed, proactive and forward-looking policies. Migration data deficiency is related, first and foremost, to the complexity and varied nature of the very phenomenon of migration, which can be categorized according to several factors, such as *voluntariness* (i.e. whether it is forced, voluntary or in between the grey area); *reasons* (e.g. labour, student, family migration, environmental or conflict-related); *duration* (short-term, long-term, temporary or permanent); and *mode* (e.g. regular and irregular). To further complicate the matter, migration may happen several times in a person's life, be it one-ended, circular or multi-directional. The statistical community through the United Nations recommendations agreed to use "change of usual residence" as the key criterion for defining migration. However, as is becoming increasingly evident, modern policymaking should be similarly concerned with cases that do not necessarily involve change of residence, those which are better described by the term *human mobility*. All these complexities mean that there is no single all-encompassing source of migration-related data, either at the national or international levels. So any migration analysis or trend assessment should rely on several sources, make a number of assumptions and involve estimation techniques. Further, in the twenty-first century, calls have been made for data revolution and the need to look for alternative and non-traditional sources, such as substantive data, expert opinions and qualitative indicators. These are particularly relevant for such a complex phenomenon as migration.

Limited national capacities and resources for gathering migration data, in all its complexity, is another much quoted reason for migration data scarcity. Furthermore, migration-related data collected at the national level are often incomparable as differing national priorities and legislation affect existing approaches to collecting evidence on migratory processes. This is a serious challenge, as international migration, by its nature, always involves more than one country. Lack of comparability among the estimates made in different countries is a particularly acute challenge in case of irregular migration, as differing typologies and standards are used to record irregular migration. Clandestine nature of some forms of migration, including those related to transnational organized crime – such as trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling – make the assessment of their volume and characteristics an even bigger challenge. As a result, analyses of such phenomena usually have to rely on extrapolations from limited available data.

Given the limitations of the existing data on migration at the regional and global levels, this document was prepared using primarily recently released, publicly available data from the international stakeholders – namely the 2013 revision of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) data on international migration stocks; the World Bank’s annually updated World Development Indicators and 2014 data on remittances (November release); forced migration data on refugees and asylum-seekers from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates up to 2013 on internally displaced persons (IDPs), partially publicly available on the IDMC website; Eurostat data on residence permits in the European Union (accessed in September 2014); and UNESCO data on student migration, last updated in 2013. These data sets were analyzed to identify most of the migration trends presented in this paper and prepare the graphs and tables illustrating them. It should be kept in mind that the data gathered by these international stakeholders are provided by governments, who, as mentioned above, may use different definitions and data collection methods. This highlights the importance of verifying the “metadata” – or detailed explanations on how data was gathered – before coming to final conclusions. When governments provided no data, the estimates proposed by the respective international stakeholders are used. It should also be noted that the way countries or territories in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia are geographically defined can vary from dataset to dataset, and from year to year. In each case, this document used the definitions applied in the source dataset. In some cases, in the absence or unavailability of regionally comparable data, results of national surveys and thematic studies were used as the basis for the analysis, together with the expert opinions of the IOM regional specialists.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEEECA) is a vast and diverse region that includes countries with different economic, demographic, political and migratory contexts, cooperation and partnership frameworks and varied approaches to migration management. However, migration flows connect many of these countries, particularly those in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA), and many SEEECA countries face similar challenges in the migration sphere.

SEEECA lies on the crossroads of active migratory movements with significant migration from, within and through the region, as well as growing inflow to the region itself. While in the past, emigration was the main trend in SEEECA countries, this picture grew in complexity in recent years. Today, the patterns of movement are such that most countries in the region are simultaneously, albeit to a varying extent, countries of origin, of transit and of destination. In addition, regional migratory flows involve a large variety of categories of people on the move: (a) short-term, temporary and long-term migrants; (b) those moving voluntarily to reunite with families or in search of economic opportunities, better jobs or education; (c) those forced to flee from persecution, political instability, conflicts or natural disasters and environmental degradation; (d) migrating with proper documentation or in breach of entry, stay, residence and/or employment regulations in destination countries; and (e) with different vulnerabilities and protection needs, including refugees and asylum-seekers, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants, stranded migrants, unaccompanied and separated children, those subject to violence and psychological distress and trauma during the migration process, vulnerable individuals such as pregnant women, children and the elderly, and migrants detained in transit or upon arrival.

Migration in SEEECA – key facts⁴

Unless stated otherwise, the data provided are for the year 2013.

- There are nearly 29 million international migrants in SEEECA, which is over 12 per cent of all international migrants in the world; migrants represent a 7.5 per cent share in the total population of SEEECA, which is double the world average of 3 per cent.
- The Russian Federation is the second largest destination country for international migrants in the world; it hosts over 11 million migrants, which is nearly 5 per cent of all international migrants.
- Over 52 per cent of all international migrants residing in the region and all migrants worldwide who have a SEEECA country as their country of origin are women, which is above the world average of 48 per cent.

⁴ The data on migrant stocks and population figures provided are for 2013 and calculated for the SEEECA region based on the following:

- UN DESA, Population Division databases (2013b and 2013c) The figures presented by UN DESA are estimates and based on official statistics on foreign-born or foreign population.
- The data on refugees and asylum-seekers provided is calculated for the SEEECA region based on the figures from the UNHCR Population Statistics Global Trends 2013 Database, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, www.unhcr.org/globaltrends/2013-GlobalTrends-annex-tables.zip (accessed 25 March 2015). These data are “provisional and subject to change,” and based on data provided by governments, who use their own definitions and data collection methods.

- On average, over 9 per cent of international migrants residing in the region are between 15 and 24 years of age, which is approximately double of the global average of 4.7 per cent of migrants within this age group.
- There are over 37 million emigrants from SEECA, which is 16 per cent of all international migrants in the world; the emigrants amount to nearly 10 per cent of the SEECA total population.
- Worldwide, the top two remittance recipients relative to the GDP are Tajikistan (42%) and Kyrgyzstan (31.5%).⁵
- In 2012, approximately 48,000 people were displaced by natural disasters in Central Asia, nearly 40,000 in Southern Europe and 34,000 in Eastern Europe.⁶ Most of these displacements were results of climate- and weather-related hazards.
- There were nearly 2 million⁷ persons displaced by conflict and violence in the SEECA region by the end of 2013, which was approximately 6 per cent of all IDPs displaced by conflict and violence in the world. This figure continued rising throughout 2014 particularly as a result of clashes in Ukraine. While no displacement figures were available for Ukraine in 2013, over 1 million people⁸ were displaced in the country by conflict by February 2015.
- Nearly 700,000 refugees (excluding people in refugee-like situations) were present in the SEECA region in 2013, which is over 6 per cent of the total number of refugees worldwide and represented a 60 per cent increase from the year before (2012). Over three quarters of these were Syrian refugees in Turkey. This figure continued to grow throughout 2014 and reached over 1.5 million by the end of 2014.⁹
- In 2013, there were nearly 282,000 refugees in the world originating from a SEECA country, which was less than 3 per cent of all refugees worldwide; this represented a more than a 50 per cent drop compared to the year before (2012).
- There were approximately 73,000 asylum-seekers in SEECA countries in 2013, which was over 6 per cent of all asylum-seekers worldwide; almost three quarters of these were in Turkey.¹⁰
- In 2013, there were approximately 110,000 asylum-seekers in the world who originated from a SEECA country, amounting to 9 per cent of all asylum-seekers worldwide.

5 Own calculation based on the World Bank's Migrant Remittance Inflows database http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1288990760745/RemittanceData_Inflows_Apr2014.xls (accessed on 25 March 2015) and the GDP data from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators* database, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD> (accessed 25 March 2015). Please note that remittance figures for 2014 used in this document are estimations, and may be corrected over time by the World Bank.

6 IDMC, 2013. The subregions group the countries based on categories used by the UN Statistics Department; not all the countries included in the Southern Europe and Eastern Europe group are part of the IOM SEECA region.

7 Own calculation based on IDMC (2014). The data gathered by IDMC are based on figures provided by national governments, who may have distinct ways of collecting data and defining concepts. For the following countries of the SEECA region, no data are available and thereby excluded from the calculation: Albania, Belarus, Israel, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine. Therefore, the given number of persons displaced by conflict and violence in the SEECA region is most likely to be an underestimate.

8 UNHCR, 2014c.

9 UNHCR, 2014d. Data sources are from the Government of Turkey, UNHCR and AFAD (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

10 No figures are available for asylum-seekers residing in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Key regional migration trends – an overview

Based on the analysis of the available data and other relevant information, 12 regional migration trends were identified. These are summed up below and presented in more detail in the trends section.

► Trend 1: Significant intraregional migration

Most of the region's migrants originate from another SEECA country, making intraregional migration a predominant form of migration in the region.

► Trend 2: Increasing migrant inflow from outside SEECA

While in the past, SEECA was characterized primarily by outflows of migrants, there has been a gradual increase in the number of extraregional migrants coming into SEECA countries, most notably from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and South-East Asia. Going forward, demographic and labour market trends in SEECA, including labour and skill shortages exacerbated by emigration, indicate that SEECA countries will be increasingly serving as countries of destination for migrants, including from other regions.

► Trend 3: Diversification of migration patterns, with temporary mobility on the rise

There is a diversity of patterns of human mobility in SEECA, ranging across short-term movements, longer-term temporary assignments, permanent relocation and even multistage itineraries between the points of origin, transit and destination. In particular, there is a high level of temporary mobility and multiple short stays, including on a seasonal basis, mainly for work.

► Trend 4: Consistently prevalent female migration

While the majority of international migrants globally are male, more than half of all migrants moving both to and from SEECA countries are women.

► Trend 5: Ageing migrant population and high youth emigration

While the share of youth among migrants in the region has been steadily declining, the rate of youth emigration remains high, and in some countries represents a dominant trend. High levels of youth unemployment and lack of economic opportunities for young people are likely to continue, leading to large numbers of young people leaving their countries of origin in search of better life, education and employment abroad. This trend is particularly relevant for shorter-term and temporary migration.

► Trend 6: Search for employment as the main reason for migration

The available evidence shows that search for employment is the dominant reason for migration in the region. Furthermore, persistent economic disparities and labour market gaps both within the region and the European Union indicate that search for work is likely to remain a key reason for migration in SEECA countries in the years to come.

► Trend 7: Growing efforts to promote engagement of diasporas in development

The long history of outmigration from SEECA countries, along with historic factors – such as the dissolution of the USSR and former Yugoslavia – created large population groups residing abroad, variously referred to by the region's governments as *diaspora*, *emigrants*, *expatriates*, *compatriots abroad* or *migrants abroad*. Whatever the term used and whether these groups

reside in another SEECA country or outside the region, enhancing their engagement in the country of origin's development is increasingly recognized by the governments as an important policy priority. This is manifested in the introduction of a variety of strategic, administrative and legislative changes to promote and enable such engagement.

► **Trend 8: Robust and resilient remittance flows at low and falling costs**

Remittances received by SEECA countries are among the highest in the world and of great importance for many of the region's economies. Low remittance transfer costs to the region's countries, particularly from the Russian Federation to the EECA, contribute to the high rate of remittance receipts in SEECA. Over time, remittances to SEECA have shown robust growth and proven resilient in the face of the global economic downturn, resuming growth after a brief dip. It remains to be seen whether similar resilience will be proven in impending drop linked to the economic and political woes affecting the Russian Federation and the European Union.

► **Trend 9: Abuse of legal entry and unauthorized employment as major routes into irregularity for migrant SEECA citizens**

Irregular migration is prevalent in SEECA. This concerns intraregional movements, as well as migration from and to the region. However, the predominant ways to fall into irregularity differ among these migratory flows. As visa liberalization regimes involving SEECA countries become more common, the main forms of irregularity for migrant SEECA citizens can be expected to further shift from illegal border crossings to overstaying, irregular employment and unfounded asylum claims. At the same time, in the absence of adequate regular migration channels and due to high migration pressures, as well as the existence of irregular movement facilitation networks, illegal border crossings by extraregional migrants are likely to remain at a high level.

► **Trend 10: Rising share of trafficked males and trafficking for labour exploitation**

Trafficking in human beings (THB) is a major challenge for the region, with consistently high rates of trafficking affecting many SEECA countries. A growing proportion of trafficking into and within SEECA countries is for labour exploitation, with an increasing share of persons identified as trafficked being men and boys. There is a potential for an overall increase in trafficking within, from, to and through the region as a result of instability in SEECA and neighbouring regions.

► **Trend 11: Sharp rise in forced migration**

The conflicts and violence in the 1990s led to a significant population of IDPs in the region, many of whom are in protracted situations. Following a period of relative stability, increased political instability and conflicts in neighbouring regions and, most recently, within SEECA itself, led to a marked increase in the number of persons displaced within a country or forced to move across an internationally recognized border. Ongoing conflicts in and near SEECA, as well as some risk of the spread of instability, suggest that forced movements within, into and from the region will continue.

► **Trend 12: Weather- and climate-related hazards as the main trigger of environmental internal displacement**

In line with the global trend, the vast majority of environmental internal displacements in the region are triggered by weather- and climate-related hazards. In the case of SEECA, floods are responsible for the overwhelming majority of internal displacements. Going forward, as climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of both sudden and slow-onset weather-related natural disasters, the risk of environmental displacement in the region is expected to rise.

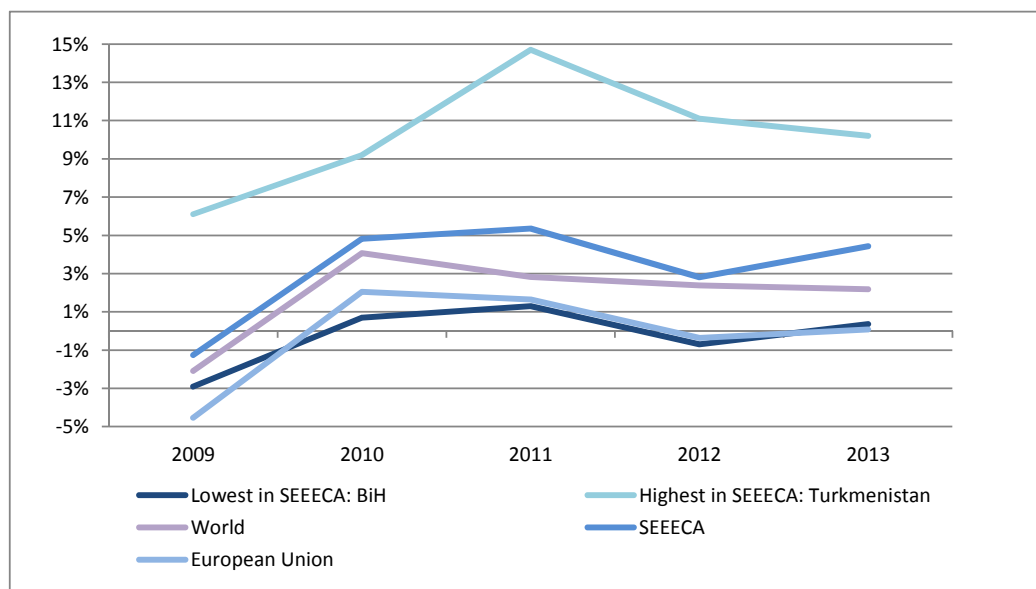
INTRODUCTION

Regional socioeconomic and demographic context

The direction and volume of migration flows are affected by a complex combination of push and pull factors. This section outlines basic economic and demographic characteristics of the region, as these are among the key drivers of migration. Economic forces affect movements of people in the short to medium term, while demographic changes have a longer term effect. Other more specific but also important drivers, such as political instability and conflicts, environmental change, as well as structural adjustments in the labour markets are discussed in the context of relevant trends.

Although there are vast differences within SEECA, most of the countries in the region are developing middle-income economies, as defined by the World Bank (2014d), with the exception of the Russian Federation and Israel, which are classified as high-income. On average, their combined GDP has been persistently growing above the global average; in 2013, the average regional GDP growth was at 4.4 per cent, in comparison with the world average of 2.2 per cent (see Graph 1). The Central Asian countries, with growth rates of up to 10 per cent and more, are largely responsible for the growth in the region. Turkmenistan enjoyed the highest growth rate in the SEECA region throughout 2009–2013. Other parts of the region enjoyed lower and less consistent growth, particularly most Eastern European and Western Balkan countries.

Graph 1:
Annual GDP growth rates, 2009–2013



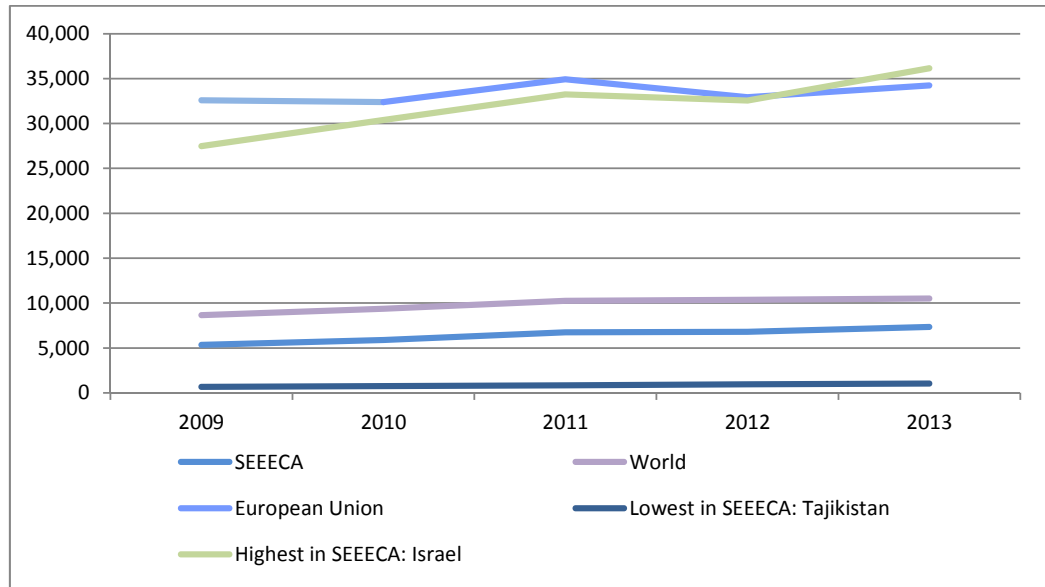
Source: World Bank, 2014a.

The 2014 figures for the GDP growth are expected to show a downward trend due to the contraction of Ukraine's economy in the wake of the escalating conflict and the deterioration of the economic situation in the Russian Federation.

Despite considerable growth rates of the region's economies, in percentage terms, SEECA has a significantly lower average GDP per capita than the global figure: the regional average GDP per capita was USD 7.3 in 2013 compared to the global average of USD 10.5 (see Graph 2).

Only a few countries outperform the global average, such as Israel, which is by far the regional leader, as well as Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkey. Central Asian countries have particularly low levels of GDP per capita, with Tajikistan showing the lowest level in the region in 2013.

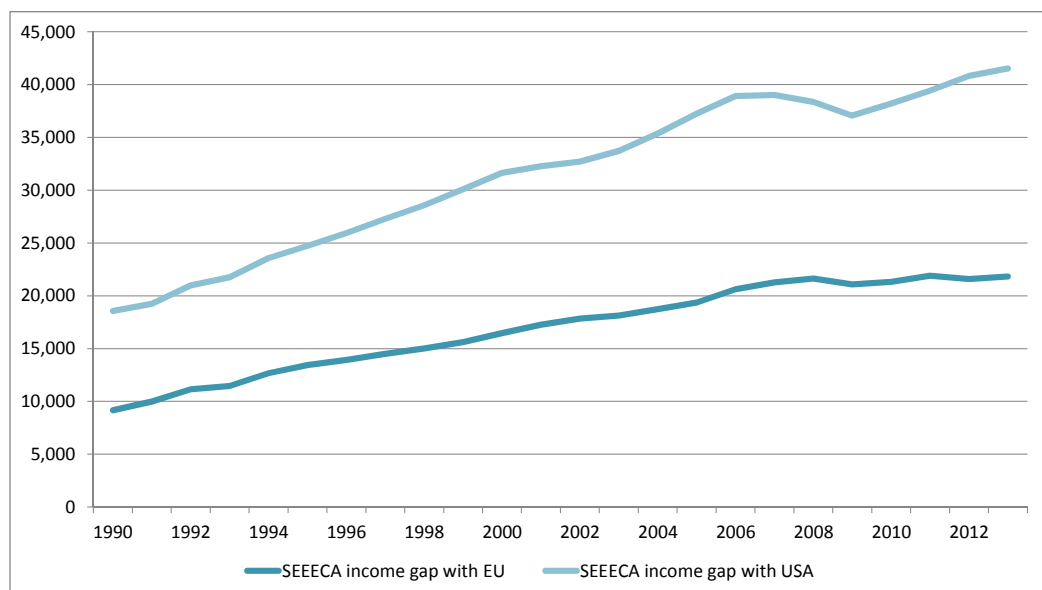
Graph 2:
GDP per capita (in USD), 2009–2013



Source: World Bank, 2014a.

Furthermore, an alarming development of the last 25 years, the socioeconomic reforms and transition towards market initiated in most countries of the region did not result in creating considerable wealth to counteract exodus of their population. Graph 3 shows that the difference in per capita income between the two key destinations for migrants moving from the region – the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA) – and the average per capita income in the SEECA region continued to grow over the past 23 years. By 2013, the European Union had a per capita income that was almost three times the SEECA region’s average in 2013, while the United States had four times the SEECA regional average.

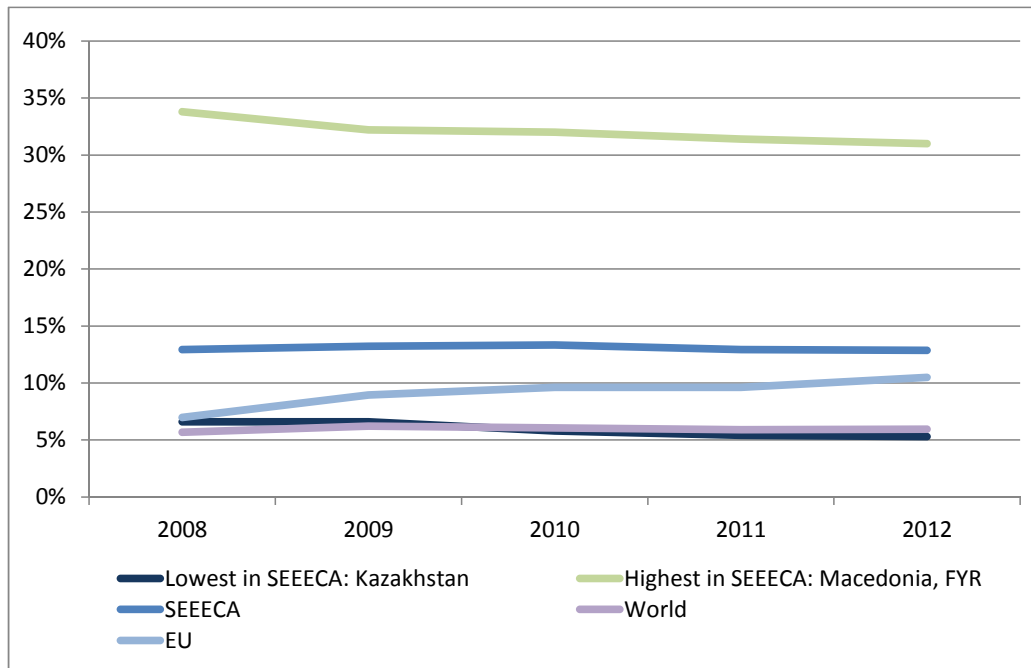
Graph 3:
Income gap between SEECA and EU-USA, gross national income per capita in purchasing power parity (in USD), 1990–2013



Source: World Bank, 2014a.

Disparities in employment opportunities across and within regions, just as disparities in income, are another important factor for migration. Unemployment in SEECA countries is almost twice above the world average (see Graph 4). It remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2012, at around 13 per cent, while globally, unemployment was approximately 7 per cent lower over the same period of time. In the European Union, an increase of 3 per cent in unemployment can be observed between 2008 and 2012, up from 7 per cent to 10.5 per cent. Again, major differences exist within the SEECA region, as illustrated in Graph 4: unemployment in Kazakhstan was approximately 5.5 per cent in 2012 compared with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which had a 31 per cent unemployment rate in the same year.

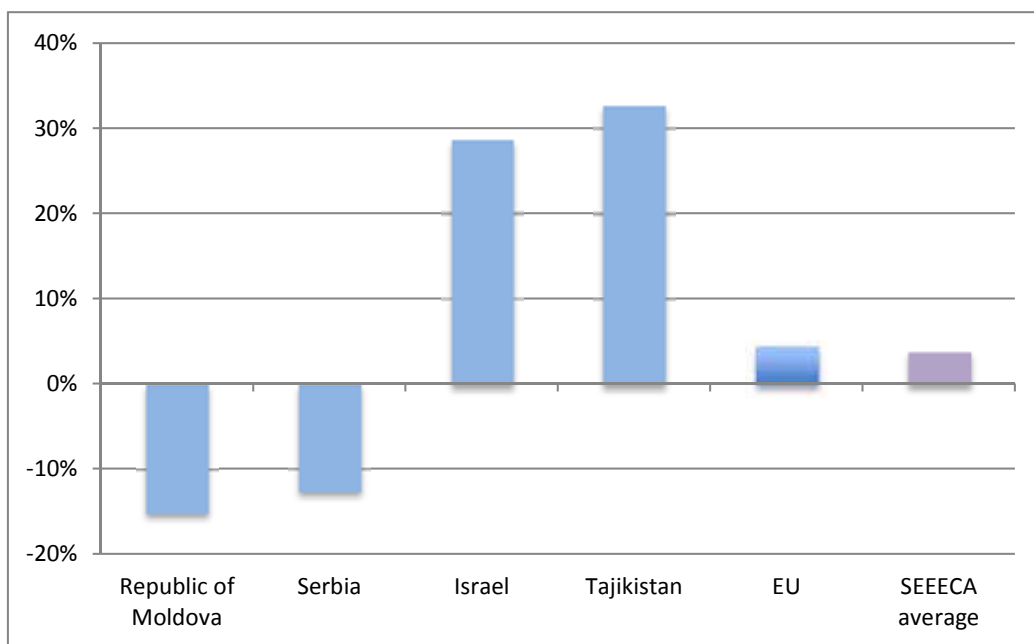
Graph 4:
Unemployment as a percentage of total labour force (modelled ILO estimate), 2008–2012



Source: World Bank, 2014a.

Though positive, the regional demographic growth is also well below the global rate. The population of the region has grown by 3.7 per cent between 2000 and 2013, from approximately 370 million to about 384 million people, which accounts for more than 5 per cent of the world’s population. The global population growth over the same period was nearly five times higher at 16.9 per cent. The population dynamics in the region are highly varied. Only several countries are responsible for the positive regional population growth, namely the Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan, Israel and Turkey. At the same time, in most Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe countries, the population size remained stagnant, or even decreased over the same period. Most notably, the population of the Russian Federation shrank by 4 million people between 2000 and 2013. This situation is also reflected in the low average annual growth rate of the population in the region, which was 0.4 per cent in 2013, compared to the global average of 1.1 per cent (see Graph 5).

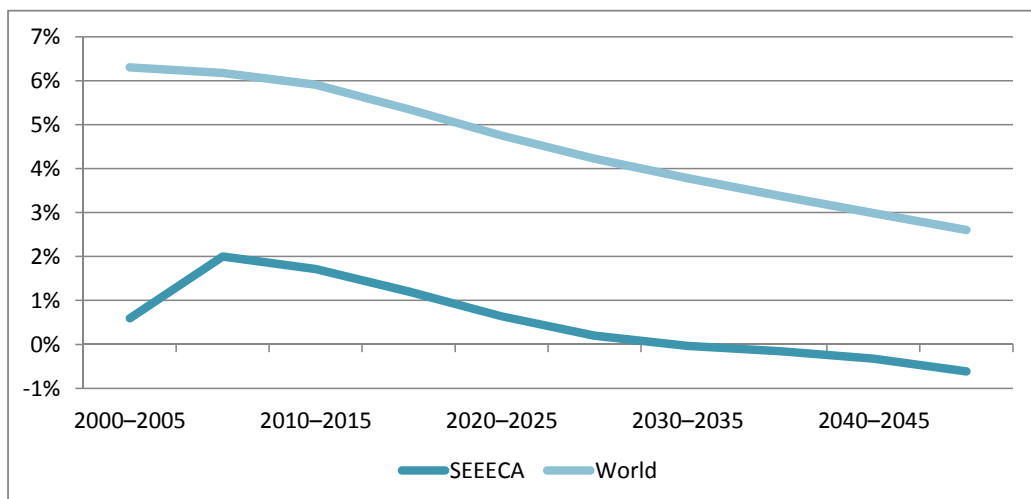
Graph 5:
Population growth rate for selected SEECA countries,
the European Union and regional average, 2000–2013



Source: UN DESA, 2013a.

Going forward, population growth in the Central Asian countries is expected to slow down, and further population decreases are expected in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (UNECE, 2013), leading to a projected negative growth rate for the whole region for the period 2030–2040. As seen on Graph 6, assuming that there is medium fertility on a global scale, population will continue to grow, albeit at a declining rate.

Graph 6:
Projected population growth rates in SEECA and the world, 2000–2050



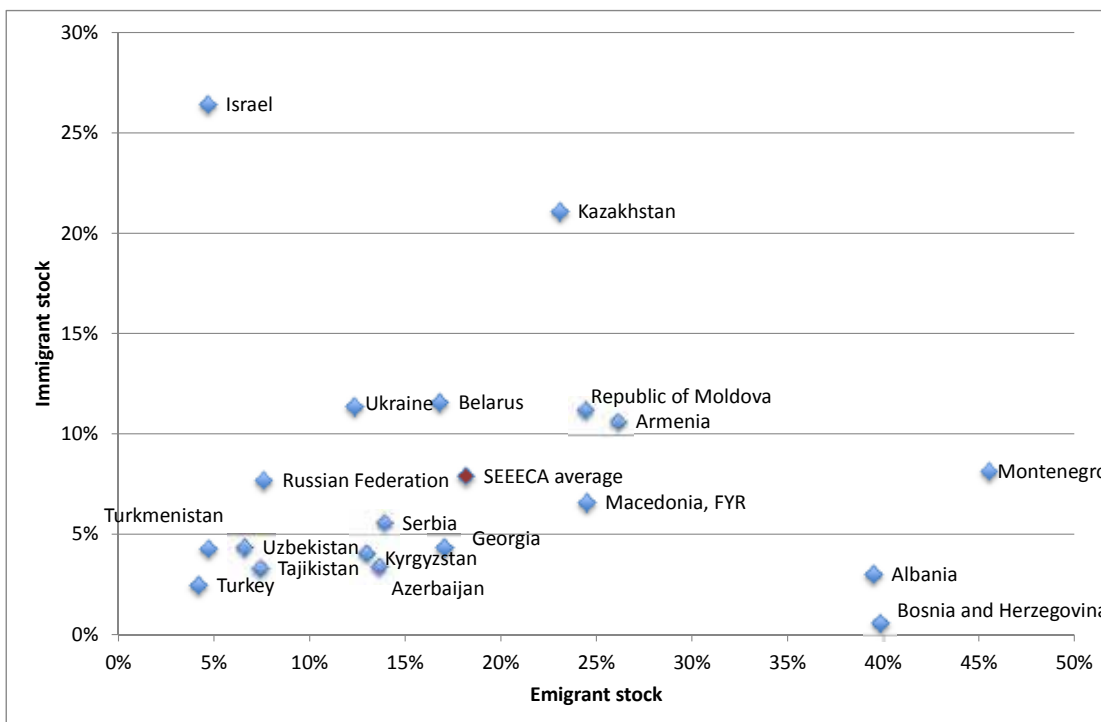
Source: UN DESA, 2014.

One of the interesting demographic characteristics of the SEECA region is a large proportion of women in the total population. In 2013, 52.4 per cent of the population was female, while the world's average was at 49.6 per cent (UN DESA, 2013a). Belarus and the Russian Federation have the highest shares of females among its population (almost 54% in 2013). As with the analysis of migration trends, a similar gender distribution can be observed among the region's migrants.

Regional migration outlook

Since the 1990s, migratory flows in the SEECA region, as well as related policy and governance approaches, have become more varied and complex. International migration is a significant phenomenon affecting all 20 countries and territories in the SEECA region; in 2013, both the average shares of migrants residing in the region and migrants originating from a SEECA country in relation to the total population were well above the world's average migration rate of 3.2 per cent. Graph 7 shows that many countries in the region had high shares of immigrants and emigrants as a percentage of the total population in 2013.

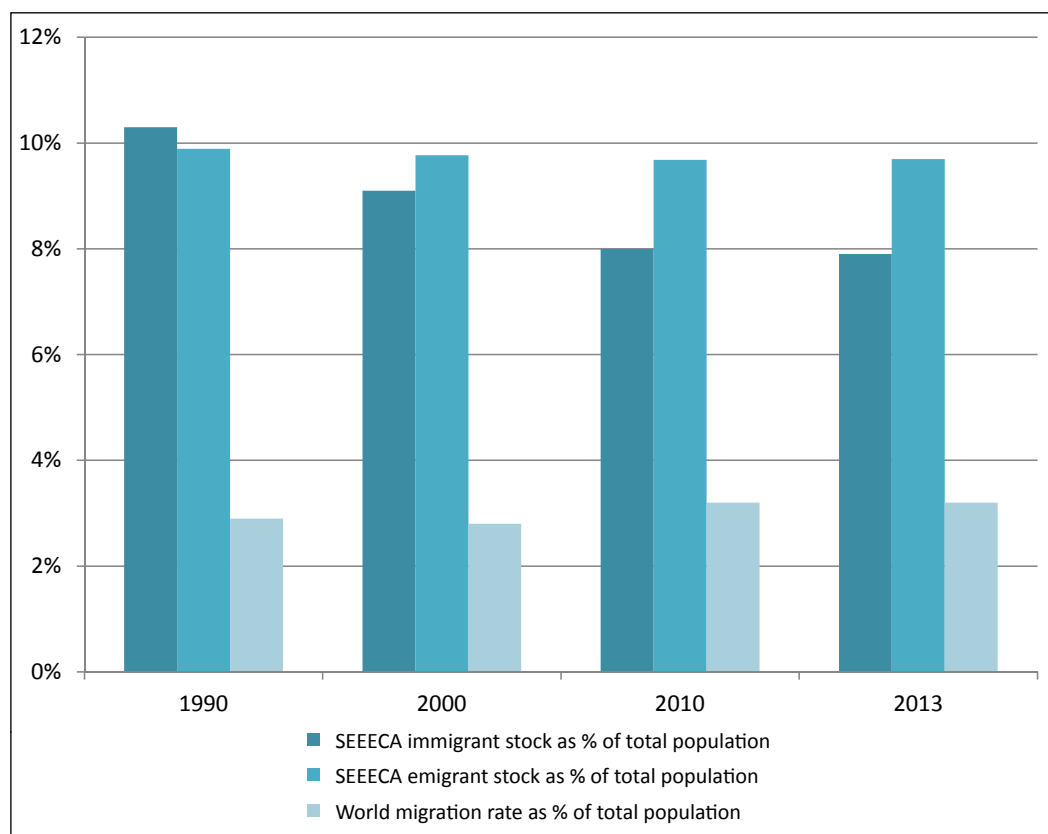
Graph 7:
Immigrant and emigrant stocks as a percentage of the total population of SEECA countries, 2013



Source: UN DESA, 2013a, 2013c.

Overall, longer-term emigration has remained a consistent trend in the region during 1990–2013, with the region's emigrant population growing from the absolute of 35.6 million to 37.2 million, and the share of emigrant population staying at around 10 per cent of the SEECA's total population. At the same time, the countries in the region also host significant numbers of migrants from within the region and other parts of the world. Even though the total number of immigrants hosted in the SEECA region decreased from 31.3 million to 28.7 million during 1990–2013, the latest estimations of the region's average share of immigrant population in the total population stock (7.5%) remains significantly higher than the world average of 3.2 per cent (see Graph 8).

Graph 8:
Emigrant and immigrant stocks in SEECA and world as a share in the total population, 1990–2013



The net migration rate in the region is negative for most of the countries, except for Israel (7.8%) and the Russian Federation (1.6%). The Russian Federation and the European Union attract the highest number of SEECA nationals, mainly from the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Following the global economic downturn and more stringent enforcement of readmission agreements signed by most countries in the region, return migration has increased in recent years. In the short to medium term, the 2014 slowdown in the Russian Federation, lack of employment opportunities and more restrictive policies in the European Union and the Russian Federation are likely to result in continuing return migration in the region.

Irregular and increasingly forced migration is a growing challenge for the governments in the region. Inflow of irregular and forced migrants are generated from both within SEECA and other regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and South-East Asia. As the extraregional migrants often have the European Union as their final goal, there is significant transit mixed migration¹¹ through SEECA affecting, first and foremost, the Western Balkans and Turkey, as well as Central Asia.

¹¹ Mixed flows are complex population movements including refugees, asylum-seekers, economic migrants and other migrants, as opposed to migratory population movements that consist entirely of one category of migrants (R. Perruchoud and J. Redpath-Cross (eds.), 2011).

Largely owing to its strategic geopolitical location, the Western Balkans and Turkey are experiencing a large influx of asylum-seekers and migrants with irregular status en route to the European Union. Many lodge asylum claims in one or more of these countries, but often depart before having their asylum claims processed and their protection needs determined. Of particular concern is the high number of unaccompanied or separated children moving irregularly, mostly from Afghanistan. The crisis in Syria is a major factor that drives irregular and mixed migration flows in this part of SEECA as well as the Mediterranean Sea; in particular, it generated a large refugee population in Turkey. Irregular migration and mixed flows are also major concerns in Central Asia. The disaster-prone environment as well as political uncertainty in Central Asia and neighbouring countries may exacerbate the current situation.

Migration-related crime, such as migrant smuggling and human trafficking, is also prevalent in SEECA. While countries in the region have traditionally served as the origin and transit of trafficking, much of it directed towards Western Europe, many SEECA countries now also serve as destinations for trafficked persons. Destabilization in the region related to the conflict in Ukraine and geopolitical tensions surrounding it, coupled with the impact on the region of the economic downturn in the Russian Federation, may increase vulnerability of people in parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia to human trafficking and other forms of organized crime. As a result of the conflict in Ukraine, the region saw a sharp increase in forced migration in 2014, particularly internal displacement. While the situation with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine is acute, several other countries in the region have significant IDP populations in protracted situations.

Other negative aspects of migration, such as the separation of families, brain drain and waste, increased health risks and health inequity as well as xenophobia and discrimination, are important challenges for SEECA.

In this context, the growing attention to the protection of the migrants' human rights shown by the SEECA States in recent years is of particular importance. Currently, legislative and policy frameworks, as well as law enforcement and law application practices to ensure migrant rights' protection, are underdeveloped in many parts of the region. Furthermore, migrants often lack access to information about rights protection mechanisms, both judicial and nonjudicial, including appeal systems. However, this topic is increasingly becoming centre stage in the region's migration policies and practice, and many of the region's governments are working to reform their systems to bring them into line with the international standards and good practices. Other issues likely to gain ever increasing importance as migrants continue to choose SEECA as their destination include migrant well-being, migrant integration, social cohesion and public perception of migrants and migration.

However, despite these and other migration-related concerns, governments and the civil society in the region increasingly recognize that migration is not only an integral part of the global economic landscape but can and does contribute to inclusive and sustainable social and economic development. This has been substantiated by the growing evidence on the positive impact that migration has for both countries of origin and destination, but also migrants themselves and their families.

This role of migration in development has already received recognition in SEECA States, including in the national and regional consultations for the UN post-2015 development agenda. As the whole migration and development discourse further matures, the focus on the role of remittances will be giving way to greater attention to other less measurable, but no less significant, migrant contributions, such as social remittances and transfers of ideas and knowledge, as well as transnational and diaspora networks.

Going forward, the region-wide figures for 2014 are expected to show some changes in the rate and direction of migration flows within Eastern Europe and Central Asia as a result of the politico-economic developments that affected this part of the region. Legislative changes introduced by the Russian Federation at the beginning of 2014 to tighten controls over migration flows, followed by the significant worsening of the Russian economic situation in the second half of 2014, led to a reduction in migrant inflow and, as the rouble depreciated, a drop in the value of migrant earnings. Consequently, there is likely to be a reduction in migrant flows to the Russian Federation and a potential for gradual redirection of some flows from SEECA countries that have the Russian Federation as the main destination country – such as Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – to other countries and regions. The growing approximation between the European Union and some countries in Eastern Europe may contribute to this process. At the same time, the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which officially came into being on 1 January 2015 and brings together Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan (pending ratification of the accession treaty by Kyrgyzstan) and the Russian Federation, could bring significant changes to the regional migration dynamics in the long term. The EEU foresees deep economic integration covering, inter alia, the free movement of people within the single market.

If the conflict in Ukraine continues into 2015, forced migration will remain an important trend in the region. Some risk of the destabilization spreading to other countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia remains, as the existing geopolitical tensions may reignite some of the frozen conflicts in the region, while the economic spillover from the downturn in the Russian Federation and Ukraine and the increased pressure on the labour markets as a result of large returns of migrant workers may combine with pre-existing political and economic challenges to generate new tensions and vulnerabilities, including potential for radicalization.

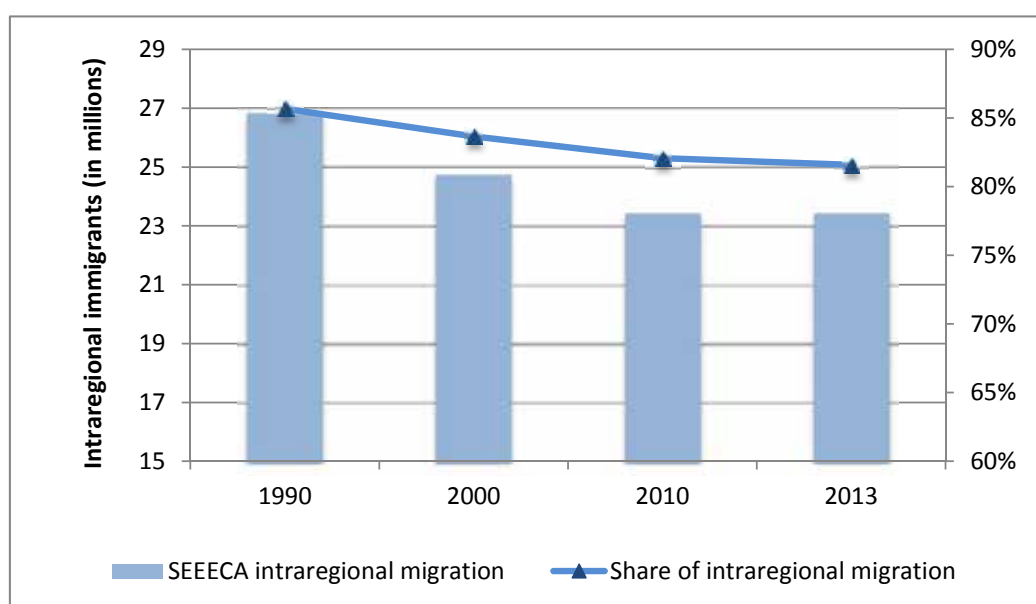
REGIONAL MIGRATION TRENDS

Trend I: Significant intraregional migration

Most of the region's migrants originate from another SEECA country, making intraregional migration a predominant form of migration in the region.

Although intraregional migration has been slowly declining since 1990, both in absolute terms and in relation to total immigration to the region (see Graph 9), still, in 2013, nearly 82 per cent of all migrants in SEECA moved within the region. In other words, four out of every five migrants in SEECA were intraregional.

Graph 9:
Intraregional migrants in SEECA as a share of total immigration, 1990–2013



Source: UN DESA, 2013c.

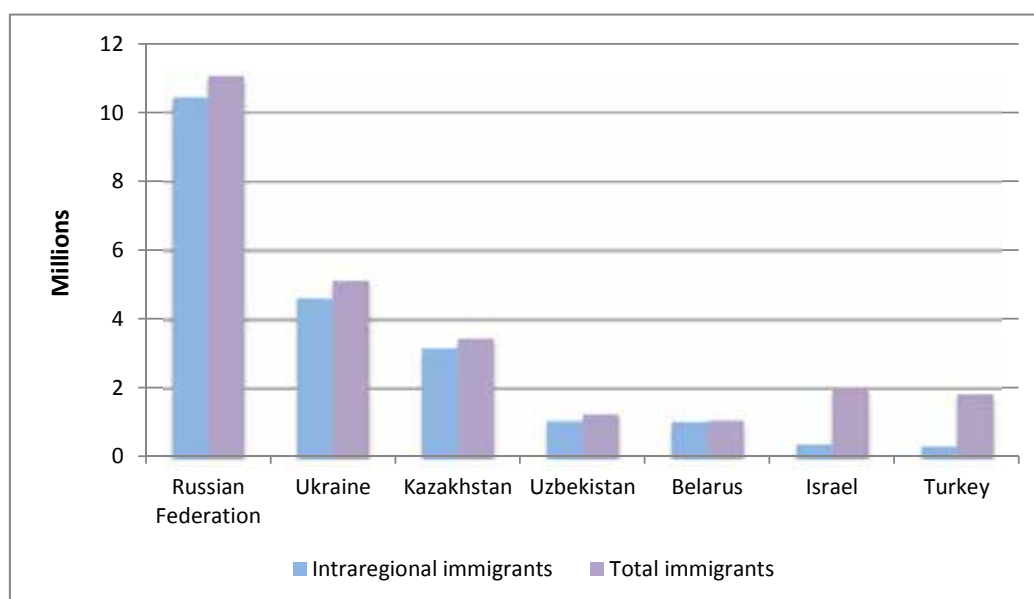
The Russian Federation is the top destination country in SEECA overall (and the second top destination country globally). In 2013, nearly 95 per cent of all migrants in the Russian Federation came from within the region, especially from Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Overall, five of the seven top destination countries in SEECA receive migrants primarily from within the region. Turkey and Israel are the only exceptions (see Graph 10).

SEECA is home to some of the top South-South migration corridors in the world¹² – from the Russian Federation to Ukraine (3.5 million migrants in 2013), from Ukraine to the Russian Federation (2.9 million migrants in 2013), from Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation (2.5 million migrants in 2013), and from the Russian Federation to Kazakhstan (2.4 million migrants in 2013).

¹² See IOM, 2013.

Graph 10:

Top destination countries in SEECA for intraregional immigrants and total immigrants, 2013

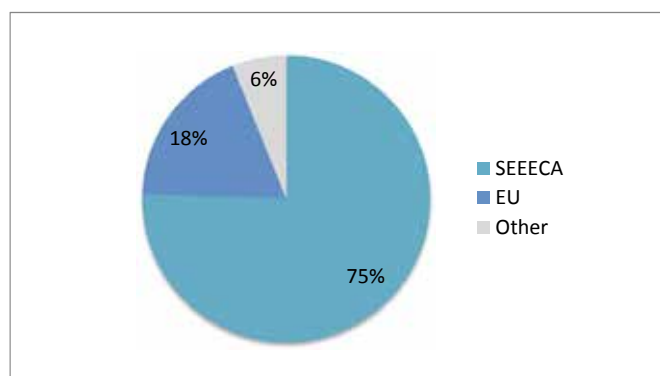


Source: UN DESA, 2013c.

As illustrated in Graph 11, 75 per cent of all emigrants from the region moved to another SEECA country in 1990, while 18 per cent moved to the European Union. Six per cent of all emigrants moved to destinations outside of SEECA or the European Union. In 2013, the share of emigrants moving to another SEECA country went down to 63 per cent, as shown in Graph 12, while the share of emigrants moving to the European Union went up 10 per cent compared to 1990. Still, less than 10 per cent of emigrants from SEECA moved to other destinations.

Graph 11:

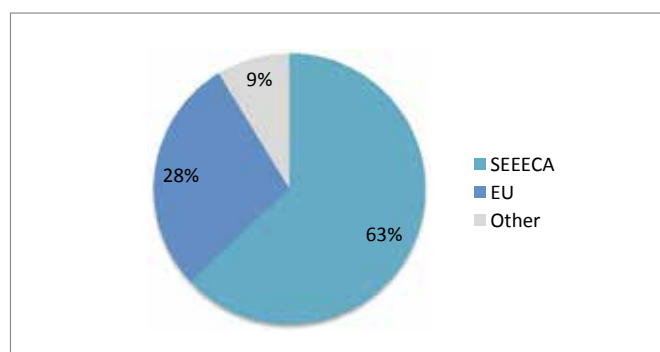
Emigration destinations for SEECA emigrants, 1990



Source: UN DESA, 2013c.

Graph 12:

Emigration destinations for SEECA emigrants, 2013

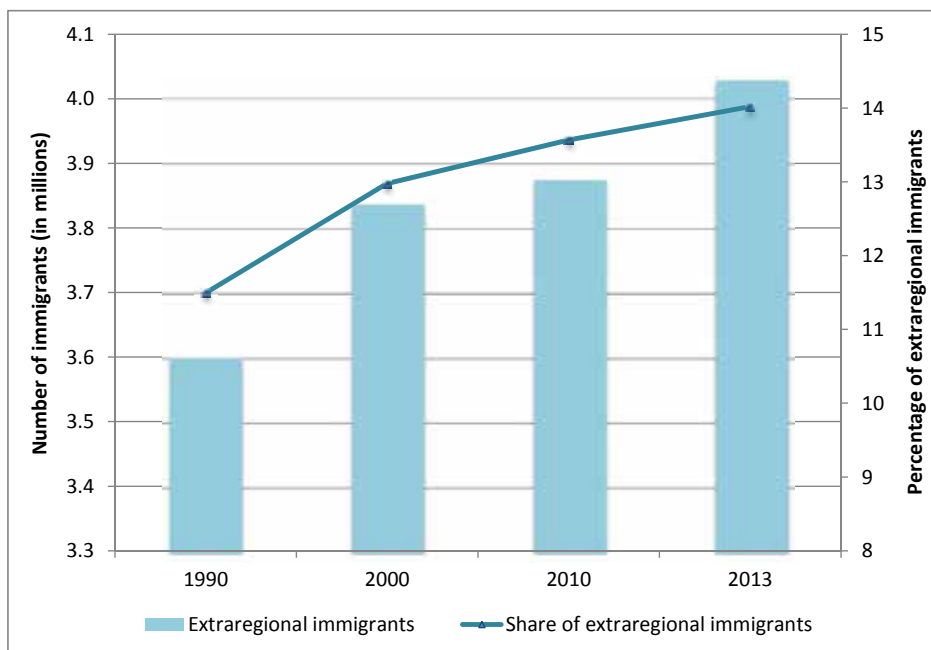


Source: UN DESA, 2013c.

► Trend 2: Increasing migrant inflow from outside SEECA

While in the past, the region was characterized primarily by outflows of migrants, there has been a gradual increase in the number of extraregional migrants coming into SEECA countries, most notably from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and South-East Asia. Going forward, demographic and labour market trends in SEECA, including the labour and skill shortages exacerbated by emigration, indicate that SEECA countries will be increasingly serving as countries of destination for migrants, including from other regions.

Graph 13:
Extraregional immigrants to SEECA, 1990–2013



Source: UN DESA, 2013c.

Even though the total number of migrants hosted in the SEECA region decreased from 31.3 million to 28.7 million during 1990–2013, the share of extraregional migrants has been slowly growing during the same period. As illustrated in Graph 13, in 1990, the share of migrants originating from a country outside the region was at 11.5 per cent of all migrants hosted by SEECA countries. This figure increased steadily over the following 23 years both in absolute terms and proportionally. In 2013, 14 per cent of all migrants in SEECA were extraregional.

The key destinations for extraregional migrants are Turkey and Israel: over 1.5 million and over 1 million extraregional migrants respectively resided in these two countries in 2013. Other main destinations are the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Serbia. The bulk of extraregional migrants in SEECA are from the European Union, which is in line with the emerging global trend of growing North-South migration.¹³ In Turkey, mostly Bulgarian and German nationals make up the number of extraregional inflow; in Israel, the largest groups are Romanian and Polish nationals, along with Moroccans. Extraregional migrants to the Russian Federation are mostly from the Baltic States or Germany. Germans and the nationals of the Republic of Korea are the largest groups in Kazakhstan, while Croatians represent the largest share of extraregional migrants in Serbia.

Although no precise figures exist, the number of irregular migrants in SEECA originating from other regions is likely to be significantly higher, including those who are transiting the region on the way to the European Union.

¹³ IOM, 2013.

► Trend 3: Diversification of migration patterns, with temporary mobility on the rise

There is a diversity of patterns of human mobility in SEECA, ranging across short-term movements, longer-term temporary assignments, permanent relocation and even multistage itineraries between the points of origin, transit and destination. In particular, there is a high level of temporary mobility and multiple short stays, including on a seasonal basis, mainly for work.

In addition to longer-term migratory processes, temporary mobility of the population reaches significant levels in the SEECA region and is likely to continue growing. This is at least in part related to the growing number of visa-free arrangements for short-term travel along the main migration corridors used by the citizens of SEECA countries. Though consistent and precise data on the percentage of the population in temporary migratory processes are hard to obtain, estimates show that as many as 600,000 to 700,000 citizens of Tajikistan (roughly 10 per cent) circulate between their home country and countries of their employment – the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. A similar share of 10 per cent of the total population is estimated to be involved in temporary employment abroad in the Republic of Moldova (around 300,000 per year, with the total population of 3.5 million in 2012). According to a recent IOM study, the number of Kyrgyz citizens engaged in temporary employment activities abroad varies, depending on the season, between 5 and 10 per cent of the economically active population.¹⁴ Seasonality and temporary character of migration are particularly typical of labour migration in specific economic sectors, such as construction, with the majority of migrant workers leaving in spring and summer for an average duration of five to nine months.¹⁵ Temporariness and repetitiveness of migration is similarly characteristic of migration taking place in the eastern part of the region, i.e. migration towards the labour markets of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, rather than the European Union. Arrivals to the Russian Federation of temporary migrant workers have been gradually increasing between 2010 and 2013 (see Graph 14).

Graph 14:
Temporary labour migration to the Russian Federation, 2010–2013



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013 (unpublished).

14 IOM, 2015.

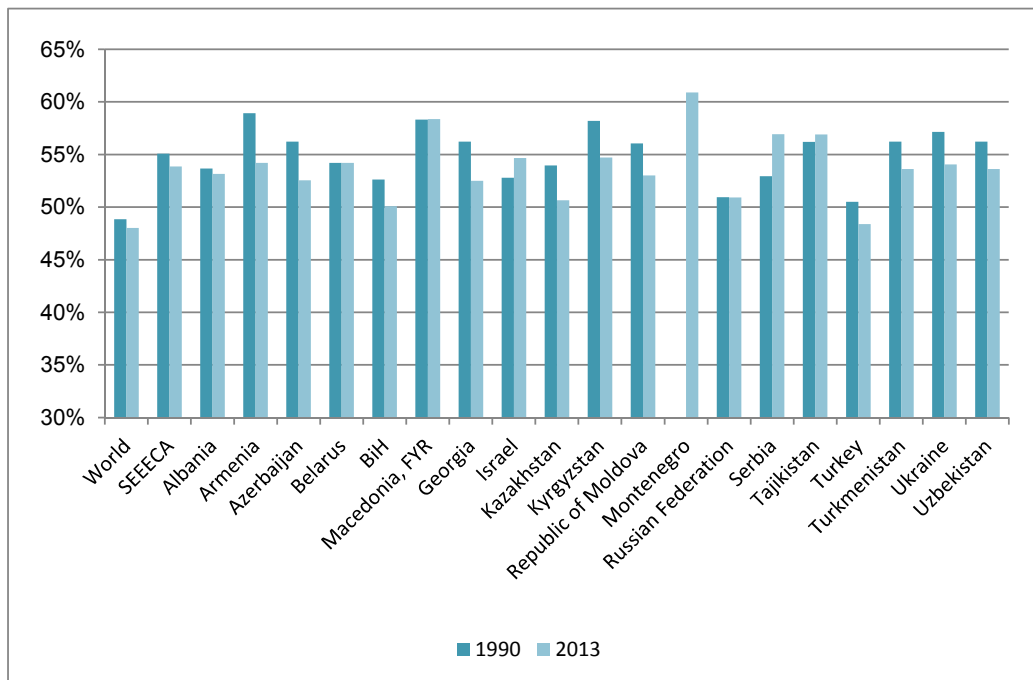
15 IOM, 2007.

Trend 4: Consistently prevalent female migration

While the majority of international migrants globally are male, more than half of all migrants moving both to and from SEECA countries are women.

In 2013, 52.2 per cent of all international migrants residing in SEECA were women. This is above the global average of 48 per cent. However, there is a significant variation among the countries in the region: in 2013, at 60.9 per cent, Montenegro had the highest share of women among its migrants, while Turkey, with just 48.4 per cent of women in its migrant stock, had the lowest (see Graph 15).

Graph 15:
Share of female immigrants as a percentage of the international migrant stock, 1990 and 2013



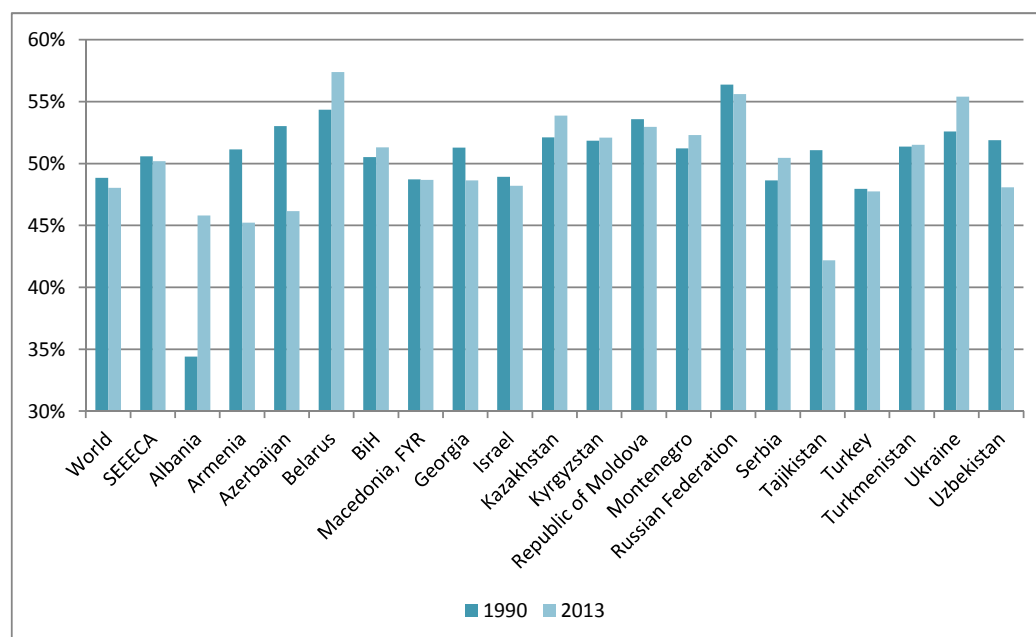
Note: There is no relevant data for Montenegro in 1990.

Source: UN DESA, 2013b.

Both globally and regionally, the proportion of women in the total migrant stock remained quite stable between 1990 and 2013: in 23 years, it dropped by less than 1 per cent globally, while regionally, it declined by about 1.7 per cent. A few countries, however, experienced a larger change in this period: in Serbia, the proportion of female to male migrants increased by 4 per cent, while in Armenia, it dropped by 4.7 per cent.

Proportionally, at 52.5 per cent in 2013, women constitute a similar share among the SEECA emigrants as among the migrants residing in the region. This is not surprising, given that the majority of SEECA migrants move within the region. At the regional level, this share remained remarkably stable between 1990 and 2013, going down only minimally (by 0.7%). However, in some countries, there was a significant change in the gender composition of the migrant outflows (see Graph 16). For instance, there was an 11.4 per cent increase in the share of women among the Albanian emigrants in the 23-year period, though it still remained well below the regional and global averages. In contrast, the share of emigrants from Tajikistan who are female went down by almost 9 per cent in the same period.

Graph 16:
The share of female emigrants as a percentage of total emigrants, 1990 and 2013



Source: UN DESA, 2013b.

Migration of women is driven by a number of factors, including family ties, migrant networks, and a set of socioeconomic push and pull factors, namely: (a) income discrepancy; (b) high level of unemployment and in particular female unemployment in many SEECA countries; and (c) skill shortages and a growing demand for labour in the domestic and care sectors in Western Europe. The latter is a result of ageing population and expanding life expectancy coupled with growing female employment in Western Europe. All these factors have driven not only longer-term female migration, but also shorter-term migration of women in and from SEECA. Reliable region-wide figures for short-term migration do not exist; however, national statistics, as well as data available for the European Union, provides some insights. For instance, residence permit statistics gathered by Eurostat point to a predominantly female character of migration from Eastern European countries towards the EU-15 plus region, with the share of women consistently at 68 per cent during 2010–2013.

Key sectors of employment for female migrants are domestic work, cleaning and personal care, which are the sectors where women are traditionally engaged. These are also the sectors with high rates of informal employment: the majority of migrants engaged in these sectors do not get properly documented; they often do not receive a work permit and overstay their tourist visa and, thus, become irregular. These factors, combined with the vulnerability of migrant women to various forms of discrimination based on sex, religion or racial or ethnic origin, form multiple vulnerabilities.

It should be noted that a number of employment sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as construction, are also affected by high rates of informal employment. Men from a number of SEECA countries move on a longer-term or short-term basis to work in construction predominantly in the Russian Federation and the European Union. For instance, the large drop in the share of female migrants from Tajikistan reflects the increasing engagement of Tajik migrants, mainly men, in construction work.

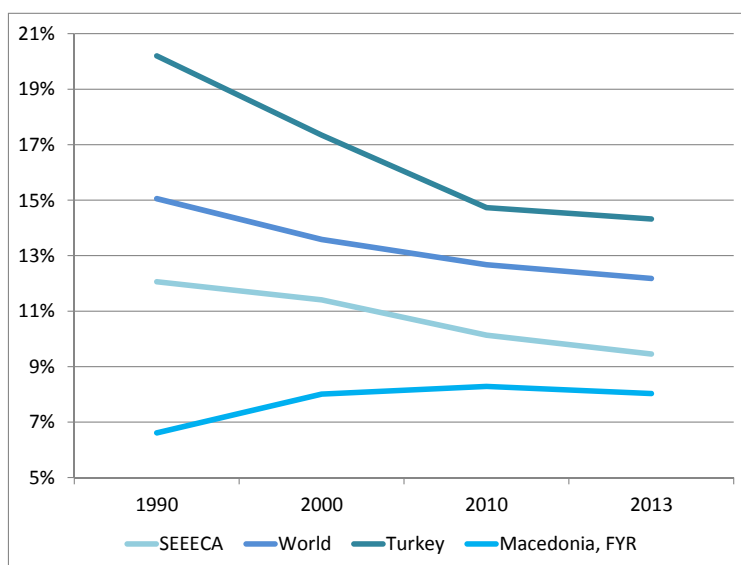
► Trend 5: Ageing migrant population and high youth emigration

While the share of youth¹⁶ among migrants in the region has been steadily declining, the rate of youth emigration remains high, and in some countries represents a dominant trend. High levels of youth unemployment and lack of economic opportunities for young people are likely to continue, leading to large numbers of young people leaving their countries of origin in search of better life, employment and education abroad. This trend is particularly relevant for short-term and temporary migration.

Overall, migrant population in SEECA aged significantly between 1990 and 2013 (see Graph 17). The average share of young people (between the ages of 15 and 24) among the region's migrants continued declining over this period – from 12 per cent in 1990 to 9.5 per cent in 2013. This decline is in line with the change in the global share of youth among migrants, which went down from 15 per cent to 12 per cent over the past 20 years. It should be noted, however, that much of youth migration is not captured in these figures, as many young people move on a short-term temporary basis.

Graph 17:

Youth migrants as a percentage of total migrant stock, 1990–2013



Source: UN DESA, 2013b.

Although the quality of data available to assess the ages of migrants from SEECA countries is significantly lower than that for migrant stocks, there is sufficient evidence to show that the proportion of young people among migrants moving away from SEECA countries is much higher than the youth share among migrants present in the region. For instance, the share of 15–24 year olds in relation to all SEECA emigrants to the European Union was around 25 per cent in 2012 (going slightly down from 26% in 2008).¹⁷

Major reasons for youth migration include lack of economic opportunities at home, the desire to study abroad, to follow paths of friends and relatives, or to get married. High rates of youth unemployment in SEECA are a major push factor for outmigration of young people. Youth unemployment in the SEECA region stayed between 25 to 27 per cent in 2008–2012, while the global average was a good 12 per cent lower. Youth unemployment in the European Union increased by 9 per cent over the same period, which was closer to the SEECA average. Within the SEECA region, a lot of variance is observed in youth unemployment, as shown in Graph 18. Kazakhstan enjoys the lowest youth unemployment rate, at only 5 per cent in 2012, while the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has a rate of approximately 54 per cent. Kosovo*¹⁸ is not included as a separate entity in the World Bank estimates; however, according to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, the youth unemployment rate there reached over 55 per cent in 2012.¹⁹ Overall, the highest youth unemployment rates are in South-Eastern Europe. This is also the subregion with a particularly high proportion of youth among its emigrants.

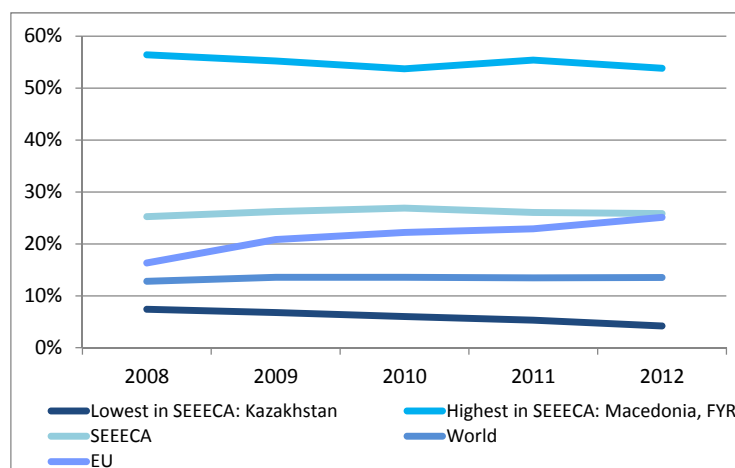
¹⁶ UNESCO, 2015. While the age bracket used to define the youth varies from country to country, the UN, for statistical consistency across regions, defines *youth* as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.

¹⁷ Eurostat, 2014a.

¹⁸ IOM refers to the UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo in an abbreviated manner as “Kosovo/UNSCR 1244”. For the purpose of this report, it has been agreed to reference UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo as “Kosovo*”, this designation being without prejudice to positions on status and in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

¹⁹ Republic of Kosovo, 2012.

Graph 18:
Youth* unemployment as a percentage of total labour force, 2008–2012

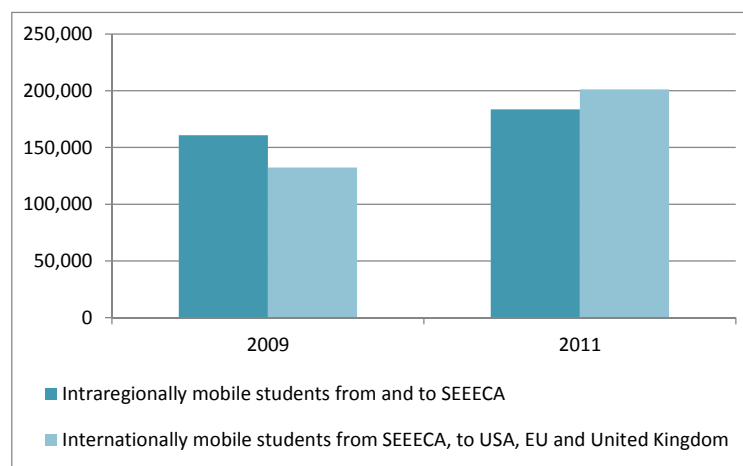


Note: *Ages 15–24 (modelled ILO estimate)
Source: World Bank, 2014a.

The desire to obtain education abroad is another important reason for emigration of young people. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of young people from the region studying in tertiary educational institutions in the European Union doubled, from 93,000 to more than 200,000.²⁰ In 2009, around 12,500 students from Bosnia and Herzegovina, or 4.4 per cent of all students, left the country to study abroad.

In general, the number of tertiary students from the SEECCA region studying abroad is rising. Intraregionally, most tertiary-level students studying abroad in the SEECCA region study in the Russian Federation, accounting for almost 70 per cent of all students in 2011. The European Union remains the main destination for students moving beyond the region (see Graph 19).

Graph 19:
Internationally mobile students from SEECCA, to SEECCA, the USA, the EU and the United Kingdom, 2009 and 2011



Source: UNESCO, 2013.

Significant outmigration of young people is a major concern to policymakers, as it can worsen demographic prospects, reduce the workforce at various skill levels and undermine development prospects overall. Additionally, risks of migration are particularly acute for young people, especially those under 18. At the same time, a positive migration experience during the formative years in a person's life can set young migrants on a successful path towards capitalizing on their accomplishments and developing economic and social assets for their future.

²⁰ Eurostat, 2014b.

► Trend 6: Search for employment as the main reason for migration

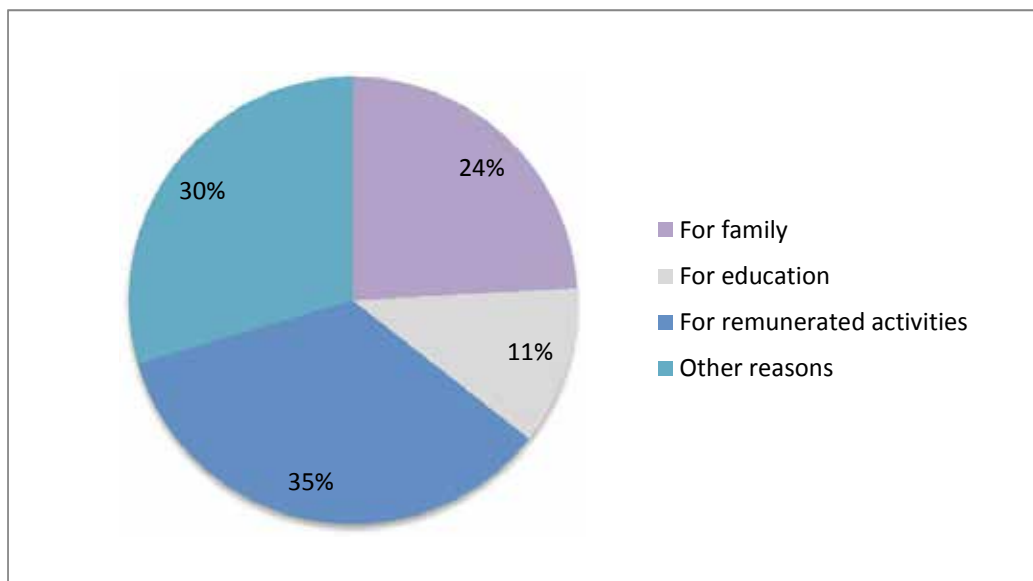
The available evidence shows that search for employment is the dominant reason for migration in the region. Furthermore, persistent economic disparities and labour market gaps both within the region and with the European Union indicate that search for work is likely to remain a key reason for migration in SEECA countries in the years to come.

The Russian Federation is the main destination country in the region for various categories of migrants, with 38.4 per cent of all immigration directed towards this country. The 2010 census showed that 865,200 of foreign citizens resided in the country for longer than one year. This is almost equal to the number of foreign workers (863,000) who were documented with a work permit in the same year. The number of work permits issued in the Russian Federation in 2011 grew to almost 1.2 million. In addition, around 783,200 foreigners were issued with patents, enabling them to work in the domestic sector in 2011.

It should be noted that the 2014 figures are likely to be lower. Changes in the legislation of the Russian Federation aimed at tightening control of migration flows introduced at the beginning of 2014 resulted in a significant number of migrants being denied re-entry into the country. This, combined with the economic slowdown, led to a reduction of inflows of migrant workers.

Employment is similarly a major reason for migration of SEECA nationals to the European Union, as shown by the residence permit data from Eurostat. In 2013, over 35 per cent of all residence permits granted to SEECA migrants in the European Union specified employment as the main reason for the permit issuance. This represented the largest share of first permits for SEECA migrants in the European Union (see Graph 20). Over the period between 2009 and 2013, the biggest share of residence permits issued in the European Union for SEECA migrants cited remunerated activities as the main reason, as Graph 21 illustrates. The only exception was in 2011, when, in the immediate aftermath of the global economic crisis, family reunification rather than employment reasons became the main reason for granting permits.

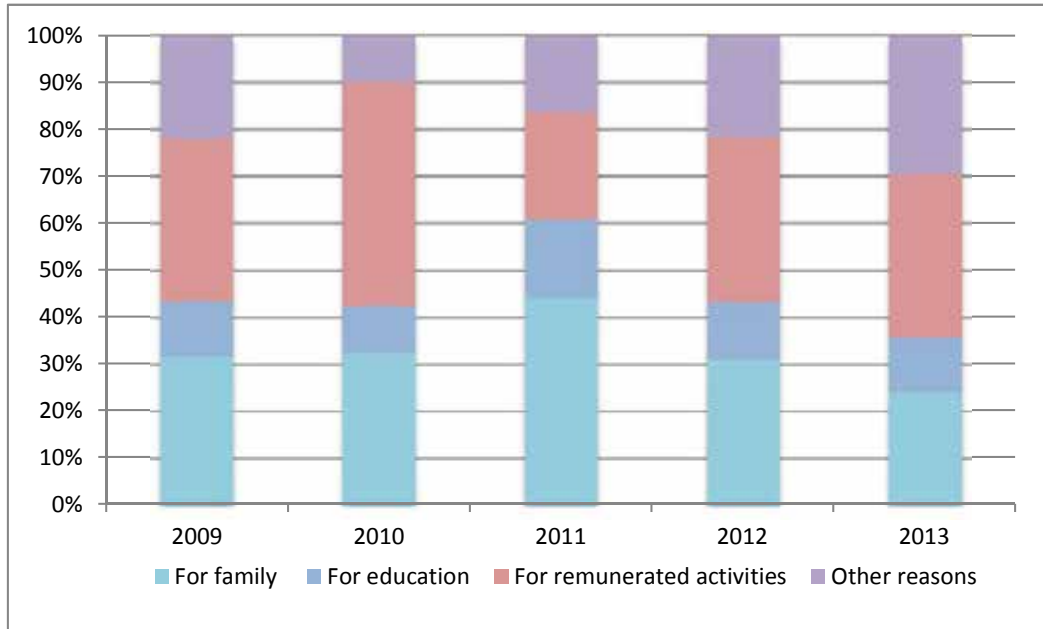
Graph 20:
Reasons for granting first permits to SEECA migrants by the EU, 2013



Source: Eurostat, 2014.

A high proportion of migrants seeking employment abroad, combined with insufficient legal migration channels for labour migration, create conditions for high rates of irregular employment, making migrants vulnerable to human rights abuse, exploitation and trafficking. As discussed in trend 9, unauthorized employment is one of the main pathways into irregularity for migrants from SEECA countries, while trend 10 highlights that labour exploitation is an increasingly important purpose of human trafficking in the region.

Graph 21:
Reasons for granting first permits to SEECA migrants by the EU, 2009–2013



Source: Eurostat, 2014c.

► Trend 7: Growing efforts to promote engagement of diasporas in development

The long history of outmigration from SEECA countries, along with historic factors – such as the dissolution of the USSR and former Yugoslavia – created large population groups residing abroad, variously referred to by the region’s governments as diaspora, emigrants, expatriates, compatriots abroad or migrants abroad. Whatever the term used and whether these groups reside in another SEECA country or outside the region, enhancing their engagement in the country of origin’s development is increasingly recognized by the governments as an important policy priority. This is manifested in the introduction of a variety of strategic, administrative and legislative changes to promote and enable such engagement.

While there is no universal definition of the term *diaspora*, IOM uses the following working definition: “emigrants and their descendants, who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry, either on a temporary or permanent basis, yet still maintain affective and material ties to their countries of origin.”²¹ Estimating the size of diasporas using this definition, however, is highly challenging, as it requires including people who may never have moved themselves but have migrant ancestry and approximating the degree of “ties” the migrants or their descendants feel with their ancestral country or country of origin. The best proxy for assessing the size of diaspora, currently available globally, is migrant stocks by country of birth, even though these figures do not incorporate the above-mentioned aspects of migrant descendants or strength of ties with home countries.

Based on the latest United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) migrant stock estimates, many SEECA countries have considerable diasporas: the average share of emigrants in relation to the overall population across the region has hovered close to 10 per cent between 1990 and 2013. The largest diasporas are located within the region, with the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Kazakhstan having the largest concentrations of diaspora groups from other countries in the region.

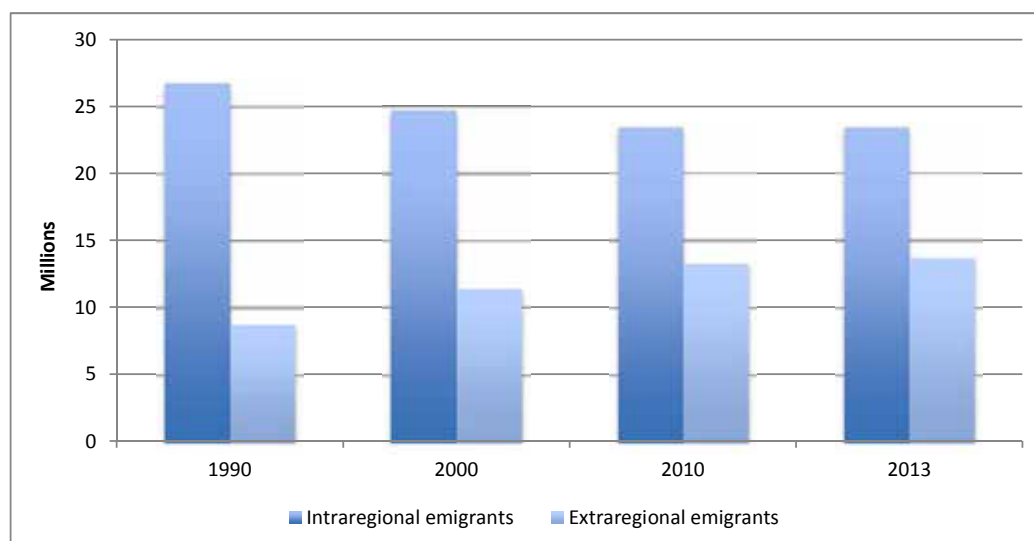
Migration from SEECA to other regions is, by comparison, much smaller, as only about 37 per cent of the region’s emigrants lived in a non-SEECA country in 2013. However, this share has been gradually increasing (see Trend 1). The European Union and the United States have been the main destinations for extraregional SEECA emigrants. For example, in 2013, more than 1 million Albanians, almost 2 million Russians and about 2.5 million Turkish emigrants were hosted by the European Union. The number of SEECA emigrants to the European Union²² increased from 6.5 million in 1990 to 10.5 million in 2013, while for the United States, this number increased from 1.2 million to 1.8 million in the same period (see Graph 22). Other key destinations from the SEECA region are Canada, Switzerland and Australia. Graph 23 shows the dynamics of flows to these countries.

In absolute terms, the Russian Federation has the largest migrant population residing outside the country among SEECA countries: in 2013, there were 10.8 million migrants originating from the Russian Federation in the world. However, if measured as a share of the total population, Montenegro had the highest ratio of emigrants at 45.5 per cent in 2013. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania follow closely with 39.8 per cent and 39.5 per cent respectively. Turkey, on the other hand, had the lowest share of emigrants compared to the total population, with only 4.2 per cent in 2013. In terms of the share of diaspora in non-SEECA destinations, Albania, Israel and Turkey are clear leaders, with more than 90 per cent of emigrants from these countries having resided outside the region in 2013.

21 D.R. Agunias and K. Newland, 2012.

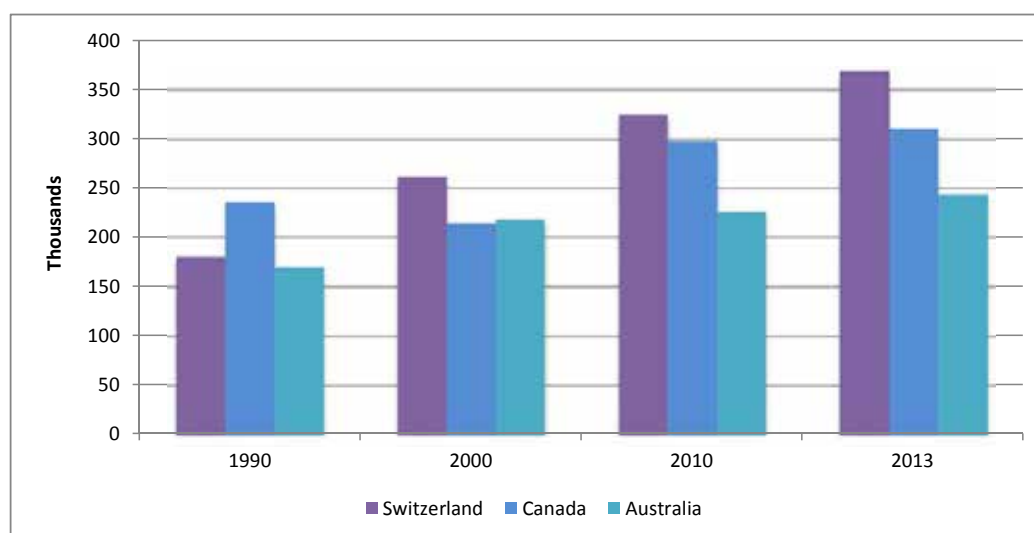
22 The European Union is here used for the territory of the 28 Member States as of 2014. For reasons of comparison, the territory of the EU-28 is always used to calculate the data in this trend, even when the data is referring to a period when the European Union had a smaller membership.

Graph 22:
Emigrants to the EU and the USA from the SEECA region, 1990–2013



Source: UN DESA, 2013c.

Graph 23:
Emigrants to Australia, Canada and Switzerland from the SEECA region, 1990–2013



Source: UN DESA, 2013c.

Diasporas may have an impact on economic, political, social and cultural aspects of life in their countries of origin. The contribution of the diaspora to development, poverty reduction, economic growth and trade or post-crisis recovery is most often emphasized; however, the extent of this contribution is difficult to assess. The engagement of diaspora takes many forms, and includes, for instance, transfer of knowledge and ideas, as well as financial transfers.

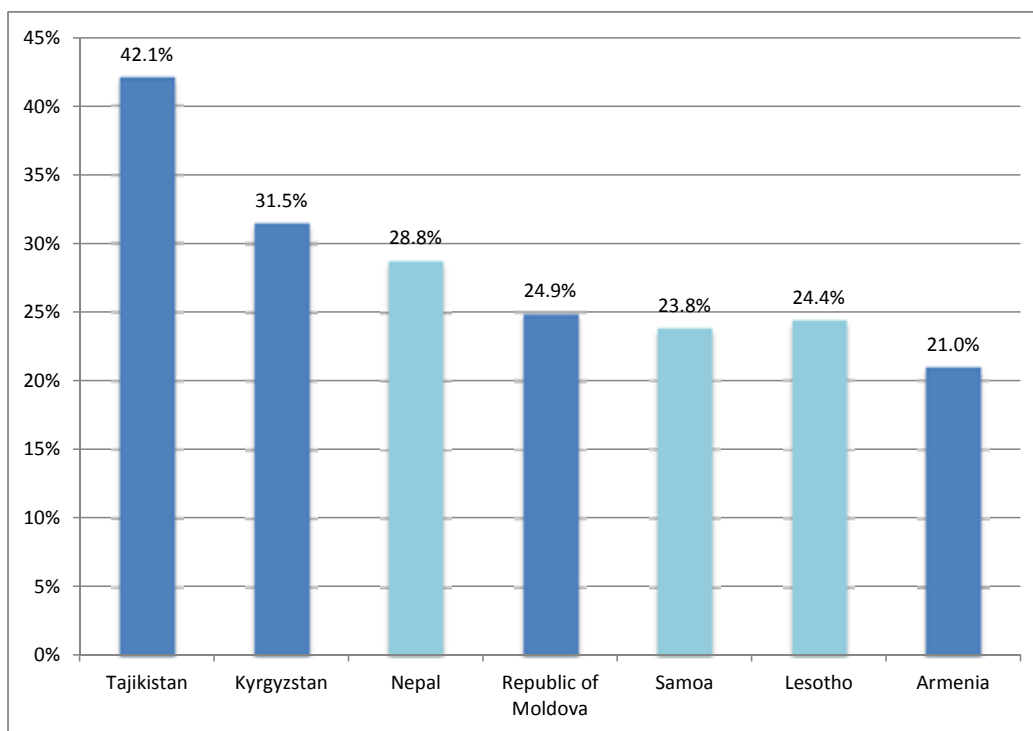
In recent years, the governments in SEECA have shown growing recognition of the role of diasporas and increased efforts to strengthen collaboration with diaspora communities to maximize their potential for development. Overall, a wide range of measures are taken to engage diasporas in development in the fields of immigration, taxation, customs, foreign investment, consular services and outreach abroad. Establishing or strengthening institutional structures within governments, as well as developing policies and implementation mechanisms to engage diasporas are clear indications of the commitment of SEECA government to connect with diasporas in leveraging their various resources for development. By the end of 2014, at least half of the SEECA governments are implementing an active policy of engagement with their respective diasporas and had established specialized government institutions responsible for such engagement.

► Trend 8: Robust and resilient remittance flows at low and falling costs

Remittances received by SEECA countries are among the highest in the world and are of great importance for many of the region's economies. Low remittance transfer costs to the region's countries, particularly from the Russian Federation to the EECA, contribute to the high rate of remittance receipts in SEECA. Over time, remittances to SEECA have shown robust growth and proven resilient in the face of the global economic downturn, resuming growth after a brief dip. It remains to be seen whether similar resilience will be manifested in the impending drop linked to the economic and political woes affecting the Russian Federation and the European Union.

Several SEECA countries are among the top remittance receivers in the world in relation to GDP.²³ As illustrated on Graph 24, out of the top seven countries receiving remittance worldwide, four are from the SEECA region, namely Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan. Tajikistan's remittance inflow of 42.1 per cent of GDP for 2013 is on top of the list. On average, remittance inflow accounts for 10 per cent of GDP in the SEECA region, which easily exceeds the global average of 5.9 per cent.

Graph 24:
Top seven remittance receivers in the world, inflow as a share of GDP, 2013



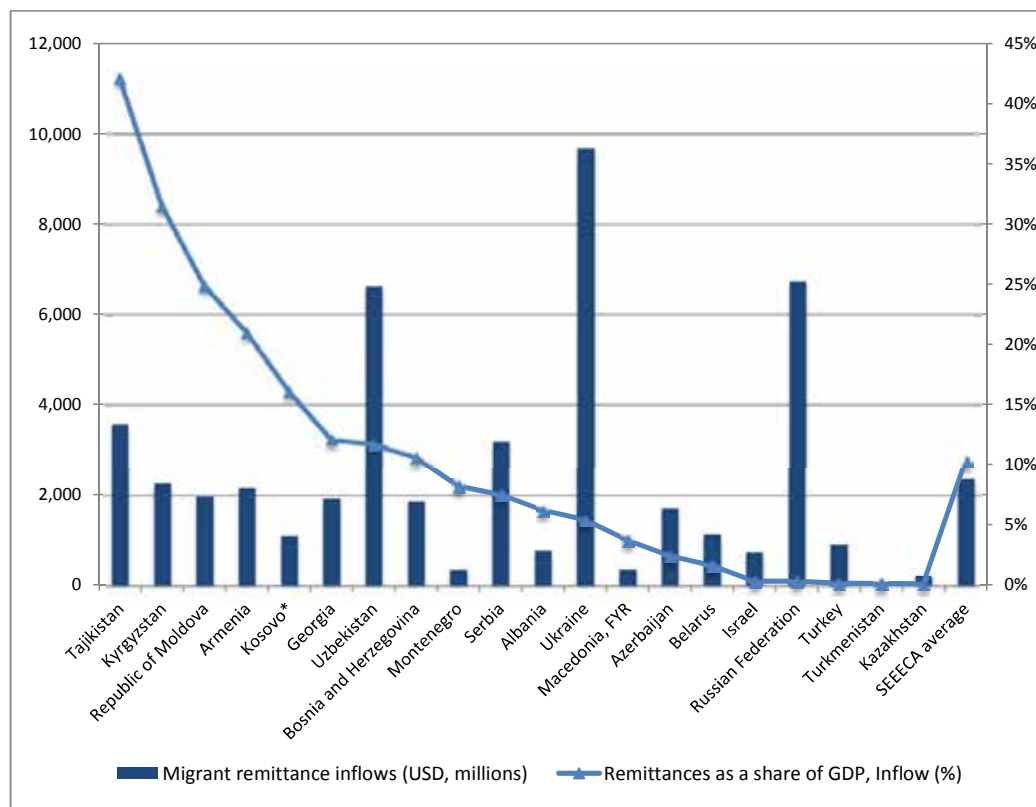
Source: World Bank, 2014b.

Ukraine and the Russian Federation topped the regional list of remittance inflow in absolute terms in 2013 (see Graph 25), with USD 9.7 billion and USD 6.8 billion respectively. However, as a share of the GDP, these transfers only account for 5.4 per cent of the GDP of Ukraine and 0.3 per cent of the Russian GDP. The total amount of remittances received by SEECA countries has steadily increased in the period between 2000 and 2013, as Graph 26 indicates. Aside from two dips caused by recessions both at the start and the end of the 2000s, remittances into SEECA countries have more than quadrupled over this period, up from approximately

²³ Here, and throughout the text of this trend, SEECA does not include Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as there is no World Bank remittances data available for these countries.

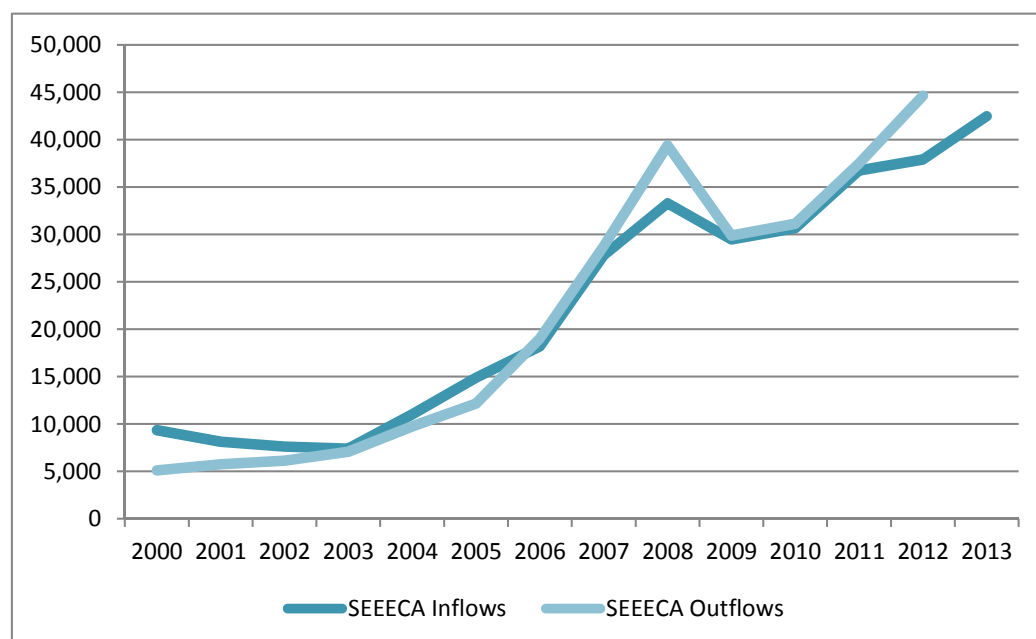
USD 9.4 billion in 2000 to USD 47.6 billion in 2013. Over the same period, a similar trend can be seen in the outflow of remittances from the SEECA region (Graph 27). Around USD 51.3 billion were being sent from SEECA countries in 2013, compared to just USD 5 billion in 2000. The Russian Federation generated more than 70 per cent of all remittance outflow in the SEECA region in 2013, with more than USD 37.2 billion transferred from the country in that year. In 2000, only USD 1.1 billion of all outflowing remittances from SEECA came from the Russian Federation, which represented about 22 per cent.

Graph 25:
Migrant remittance inflow to SEECA countries, in million USD and as a share of GDP, 2013



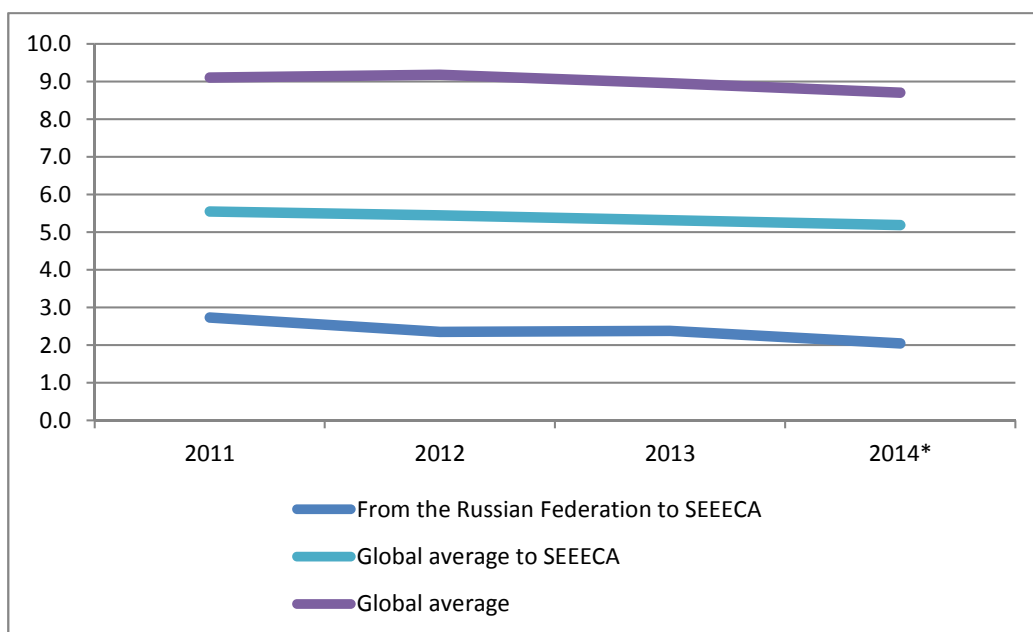
Source: World Bank, 2014b.

Graph 26:
Total remittances in million USD, 2000–2013



Source: World Bank, 2014b.

Graph 27:
Remittance prices, as a percentage for sending USD 200, 2011–2014



Note: 2014 data based on the first two quarters of 2014.

Source: World Bank, 2014c.

Towards the end of 2014 and in 2015, a decline in remittance outflows from the Russian Federation and remittance receipts in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia – with the Russian Federation as the main destination for their migrant workers – can be expected. The main reasons include the Russian Federation’s imposition of stricter migration policies, which resulted in large numbers of migrant workers who were denied re-entry into the country and a drastic depreciation of the Russian currency in 2014. For example, the National Bank of Moldova reported an over 20 per cent drop in remittances received in the last quarter to 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.²⁴

Only four SEECA countries have a positive difference between migrant remittance outflow and inflow: the Russian Federation – with a positive difference of USD 30,466 is by far the leading remittance sending country in the region – and to a lesser extent Israel, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

The amount of remittances being sent from the Russian Federation is also reflected in the price money handlers and bank charges on these transactions. Overall, the Russian Federation is the least expensive remittance sending country among the G20 and enjoys one of the lowest sending costs in the world.²⁵ The average price to send USD 200 from the Russian Federation to other SEECA countries has gone down from 2.7 per cent in 2011 to 2.0 per cent in 2014²⁶ (see Graph 27). Remittance prices in the region are lower than the global average: to make a transaction of USD 200 to a SEECA country costs 5.2 per cent on average, while the global average stands at 8.7 per cent in 2014. Both the global and SEECA regional average prices have been declining since 2011, as Graph 27 shows.

²⁴ National Bank of Moldova, 2014.

²⁵ World Bank, 2015.

²⁶ Figures for 2014 are based on the first two quarters of that year.

► Trend 9: Abuse of legal entry and unauthorized employment as major ways into irregularity for migrant SEECA citizens

Irregular migration is prevalent in SEECA. This concerns intraregional movements, as well as migration from and to the region. However, the predominant ways to fall into irregularity differ among these migratory flows. As visa liberalization regimes involving SEECA countries become more common, the main forms of irregularity for migrant SEECA citizens can be expected to further shift from illegal border crossings to overstaying, irregular employment and unfounded asylum claims. At the same time, in the absence of adequate regular migration channels and due to high migration pressures, as well as the existence of irregular movement facilitation networks, illegal border crossings by extraregional migrants are likely to remain at a high level.

Irregular migration is a broad term that encompasses all movement outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries, it is entering, staying or working in a country without the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations. From the perspective of the sending country, the irregularity is in cases, for example, where a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfil the administrative requirements for leaving the country.²⁷

Irregular migration is identified as one of the main migration challenges by most countries in the region. Whatever the mode of a migrant's irregularity, it places him/her in a vulnerable situation. Irregular migration is also linked with organized crime, particularly in smuggling and human trafficking, and with other criminal activities and corruption.

Illegal crossings of border are often seen as the key indicator of irregular migration. However, this indicator is less relevant for assessing irregular migration of significant share of SEECA nationals, as a growing number of the main migration corridors used by the region's nationals (both within SEECA and between some SEECA countries and the European Union) are becoming visa-free.²⁸

Migration among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries is visa-free based on a series of bilateral and regional agreements, which allow, in many cases, a 90-day stay. However, there are some exceptions. In 2000, the Russian Federation reintroduced visas for citizens of Georgia. Turkey and Israel allow visa-free travel, albeit for different lengths of stay, to citizens of the vast majority of SEECA countries. Similarly, the Western Balkan countries, except Kosovo*, have visa-free travel arrangements with the European Union Member States and Schengen Associated Countries in 2009–2010. Since April 2014, the Republic of Moldova has also joined the ranks of countries whose citizens can travel to the European Union without a visa for up to 90 days. As over 90 per cent of SEECA migrants moved either within the region or to the European Union in 2013 (see Trend 1), it is likely that a large proportion of irregular migrants also choose the same destinations.

Therefore, as a result of these arrangements, illegal entry of SEECA nationals to the main destination countries is comparatively rare. Instead, with some important exceptions, most of the irregular migration is due to overstaying, irregular employment and misuse of the asylum system. Following the introduction of the visa-free regime, the majority of illegal crossings into

²⁷ R. Perruchoud and J. Redpath-Cross (eds.), 2011.

²⁸ The length of stay allowed in the framework of different visa waver agreements varies between 30 and 90 days. In some cases, additional conditions apply, such as a biometric passport.

the European Union from the five Western Balkan countries subject to the regime have been carried out by transiting third-country nationals. In 2013, only 18 per cent of all detections of illegal border crossing in the Western Balkans were citizens of the Western Balkan countries, while 60 per cent were extraregional migrants²⁹ – the share that went up from less than 10 per cent in 2009.

Launching an asylum application following legal entry as a way to stay in the European Union is a method often used by Western Balkan nationals. The number of asylum applications submitted in the European Union by citizens of the five visa-free Western Balkan countries has been rising since the visa liberalization.³⁰ In 2012, there were 53 per cent more asylum applications submitted in the European Union by citizens of the five visa-exempt Western Balkan countries compared to 2011.³¹ The number of applications further increased in 2013, and the overall figures for 2014 may be even higher.³² It should be noted that Kosovo* is a special case in the Western Balkans, as its citizens need to obtain a visa for travel to the European Union. There is a high volume of illegal border crossing into the European Union by Kosovo* citizens as well as a high rate of asylum applications. In 2014 and at the beginning of 2015, there was a steep rise in asylum applications from the Western Balkan nationals claimed in the European Union and Switzerland, especially from the nationals of Kosovo*. At the same time, the asylum recognition of applications from the Western Balkans is among the lowest; for instance, in 2013, on average, less than 4 per cent of asylum applications from the Western Balkan nationals were accepted.³³ This suggests that the majority of applicants are using the asylum channel for economically motivated migration. Other abuses of legal travel channels were linked to overstaying in the European Union; nationals of Western Balkan countries (including Kosovo* citizens) represented 11 per cent of all illegally stayers detected in the European Union in 2013.³⁴

A similar shift can now be observed in the case of citizens of the Republic of Moldova. Following the introduction of the EU-Moldova visa-liberalization regime, the number of illegal border crossings of Moldovan citizens drastically dropped, while detections of illegal stay significantly increased.³⁵ As a number of other countries in the region are at various stages of moving towards the approximation and eventual visa-free regime with the European Union, including Kosovo*, Turkey and several Eastern Partnership Countries, similar transition can be expected with the movement of their citizens to the European Union once they join the visa-free regime.

In terms of intraregional migration, particularly the migration of SEECA citizens to the main destination countries in the region, the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, overstaying and unauthorized unemployment are the main forms of migrant irregularity. Various reports show that many migrants are not aware that they are in breach of regulations. In other cases, corruption, complicated procedures, high cost of registration and unwillingness of the employers to comply with the procedures were cited as the reasons for failure to fulfil the administrative requirements.³⁶ The extent of the problem is illustrated by the recent figure provided by the Federal Migration Services (FMS) of the Russian Federation, which estimated that, in 2013, over 20 per cent of migrants present in the country, most of them from CIS countries, were irregular. Overstaying and/or unauthorized employment were highlighted as the predominant reasons for irregularity.³⁷ Another important indicator is the number of migrants affected by the re-entry bans against foreign nationals found in breach of the residence

29 IOM, 2014b.

30 European Commission, 2015.

31 Frontex, 2012.

32 European Commission, 2015.

33 EASO, 2014b, p. 30.

34 European Commission, 2015.

35 Frontex, 2015.

36 IOM, 2015.

37 Egorova, 2013.

and administrative regime imposed by the Russian Federation in August 2013. The IOM study found that 43,000 Kyrgyz migrants and 202,000 Tajik migrants were affected by the re-entry ban by July 2014.³⁸ In February 2015, the head of the FMS Russia announced that 545,000 people were subject to the bans overall and that the figure continued growing.³⁹ Failure of the migrants to comply with the administrative requirements for temporary residence and employment of foreigners are also the main challenges for Kazakhstan. Annually, up to 300,000 non-nationals are employed in Kazakhstan without following proper procedures; particularly, this includes Central Asian migrants engaged in construction or child care without declaring employment as the purpose of their stay. Furthermore, every year, around 100,000 migrants in Kazakhstan do not comply with the residence regime, with the citizens of Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation topping the list.⁴⁰

The establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU),⁴¹ which came into being on 1 January 2015, foresees free movement of people between its members to live, work, study or retire in another country. The removal of certain administrative requirements for migrants moving within the EEU will mean that the incidence of irregular migration among its members is likely to go down. On the other hand, it is unlikely to alleviate the situation of migrants who are already subject to administrative sanctions, such as re-entry bans into the Russian Federation.

At the same time, as inflows of migrants from beyond the region into SEECA are growing (see Trend 4), the region is increasingly becoming a destination and transit for extraregional irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and South-East Asia.

38 IOM, 2015.

39 Interview with the Head of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, 4 February 2014 www.kp.ru/daily/26189/3077873/ (accessed 30 March 2015).

40 IOM, 2015.

41 The members of the EEU are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Kyrgyzstan (pending ratification of the accession treaty by Kyrgyzstan).

► Trend 10: Rising share of trafficked males and trafficking for labour exploitation

Trafficking in human beings (THB) is a major challenge for the region, with consistently high rates of trafficking affecting many SEECA countries. A growing proportion of trafficking into and within SEECA countries is for labour exploitation, with an increasing share of persons identified as trafficked being men and boys. There is a potential for an overall increase in trafficking within, from, to and through the region as a result of instability in SEECA and neighbouring regions.

There are no reliable estimates on the number of persons trafficked from, to and through SEECA. Furthermore, even at the national level, this data is limited. The trafficking patterns are identified based on a number of IOM studies in different parts of the region and, most reliably, the operational data collected by IOM in providing assistance to victims of trafficking. The actual volume of human trafficking is likely to be significantly larger than the available numbers. There are indications that trafficking is highly prevalent in SEECA. For instance, a 2009 study estimated that, in a year, there are between 1 million and 1.5 million victims of trafficking just among the citizens of the five Central Asian countries (trafficked either within state borders or abroad).⁴²

In general, THB tends to follow the same pathways as migration – irregular and forced migration in particular – as traffickers take advantage of the gap between the existing migration push and pull factors on the one hand, and limited opportunities for regular movement, staying and employment on the other. So, as with migration flows, the majority of countries in SEECA are primarily countries of origin of trafficked individuals, with several of the top origin countries worldwide located in the region. However, SEECA countries are also increasingly becoming countries of transit, as well as destination, for victims of THB. Most of the human trafficking originating in SEECA is intraregional, more specifically within subregions (Central Asia, South Caucasus, Western Balkans and Eastern Europe). Israel, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkey are the main countries of destination for persons trafficked from within the region. Trafficking beyond SEECA is directed mainly towards the European Union and the Middle East; the same main destinations are the aim of extraregional trafficked persons transiting through SEECA.

THB within the boundaries of individual SEECA countries is also an important growing phenomenon. For example, in 2009, it was estimated that over 60 per cent of the trafficking cases involving Central Asian nationals were internal.⁴³ Similarly, a 2014 study in the Western Balkans identified internal trafficking as the predominant form of trafficking.⁴⁴

In the past, most trafficking cases in the region were carried out for sexual exploitation and involved women and girls. However, there has been a notable change both in the main purpose of trafficking in, from and through the region and in the gender composition of the identified victims. Forced labour, including in the construction and agricultural sectors, domestic servitude and begging, has now emerged as the main purpose for human trafficking in SEECA. Minors are among those targeted, in particular for forced begging. The number of persons who were trafficked for forced labour and assisted by IOM went up from 1,102 individuals in 2011 to 2,138 in 2014. Over the same period, the number of persons trafficked for sexual exploitation and who were assisted by IOM decreased from 655 cases to 312 cases. This change correlates with another important shift in trafficking trends that occurred at the same time: a notable increase in the number of men and boys identified as victims of trafficking

42 T. Kydyrov and J. Abakirova, 2010.

43 Ibid.

44 IOM, 2014c.

has led to them now representing a majority of human trafficking cases in SEECA. In 2011, 739 male victims of trafficking were assisted by IOM. However, at that time, the majority of almost two thirds (1,168) were female victims. Recent statistics indicate a reverse trend in this proportion. Of the 2,646 trafficked persons assisted in 2014, 67 per cent were men (1,773).

With the search for employment as the dominant reason for migration in the region (see Trend 6) and limited opportunities for regular labour migration, the current trends of a high proportion of THB carried out for forced labour, coupled with a high share of men among the victims of trafficking, are likely to persist. It should be noted, however, that while most men are trafficked for forced labour – hence the correlation between the two trends – there are instances that all genders are being trafficked for both sexual exploitation and forced labour, as well as for other purposes, such as organ harvesting.

A recent increase in the number of forced migrants in the region, including refugees and displaced persons, is likely to lead to an increase in the overall incidence of human trafficking. Syrian refugees, including those settled in refugee camps in Turkey and elsewhere, are highly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Based on an analysis of the situation by the IOM mission in the country, Ukraine may also soon face a dramatic increase in human trafficking, which may result to a sharp and continuous rise in the number of IDPs, as well as those who have fled or are seeking to flee the country. These groups of people are particularly targeted by unscrupulous intermediaries who offer brokerage services for emigration and receiving refugee status abroad.

► Trend 11: Sharp rise in forced migration

The conflicts and violence in the 1990s led to a significant population of IDPs in the region, many of whom are in protracted situations. Following a period of relative stability, increased political instability and conflicts in neighbouring regions and, most recently, within SEECA itself, led to a marked increase in the number of persons displaced within a country or forced to move across an internationally recognized border. Ongoing conflicts in and near SEECA, as well as some risk of the spread of instability, suggest that forced movements within, into and from the region will continue.

Following the conflicts and unrest in the 1990s and until recently, SEECA has seen a period of relative stability, during which the level of forced migration generated within the region went down, with a notable exception of recurrent natural disasters that have been generating new displacements each year. At the same time, SEECA has long been a point of destination and transit for forced migrants from other regions, with complex migration flows triggered by political instability in neighbouring countries, particularly Afghanistan, which is a long-standing challenge.

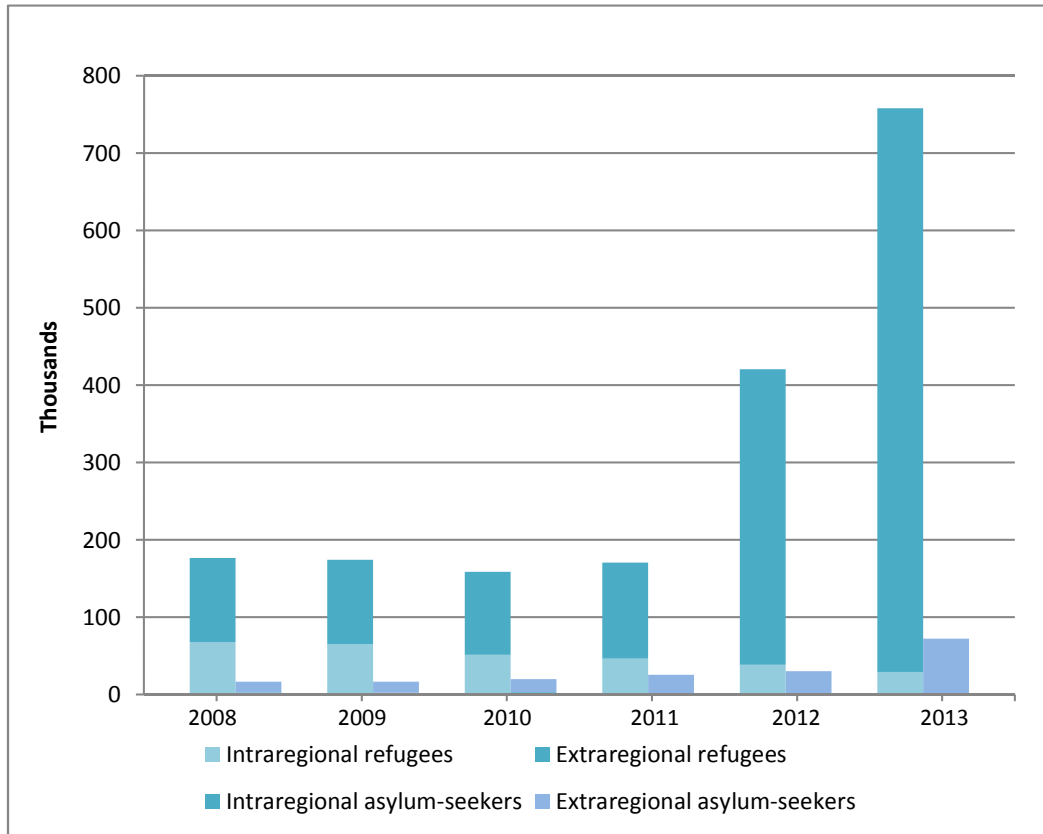
Deterioration of the political situation in North Africa and the Middle East in the last few years has led to a significant and continuing growth of inflow of forced migrants into SEECA. As shown in Graph 28, by 2013, the number of refugees and asylum-seekers in SEECA had more than quadrupled in comparison to 2010. The bulk of this increase can be ascribed to a sharp growth in the number of extraregional refugees, and more specifically Syrian refugees. Nearly 760,000 refugees (excluding people in refugee-like situations) were present in the SEECA region in 2013, which amounted to over 6 per cent of the total number of refugees worldwide and represented an 80 per cent increase from the year before (2012). Over three quarters of these were Syrian refugees in Turkey. The number of extraregional refugees and asylum-seekers in SEECA continues to grow; for instance, the number of Syrian refugees reached over 1.5 million in Turkey alone by the end of 2014.⁴⁵ In addition, a risk of increased inflow of refugees and migrants into Central Asia from Afghanistan remains in the context of the changes brought about by the reorganization of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops in Afghanistan. So far, only a small proportion of Afghan refugees had fled to Central Asia.⁴⁶

In contrast, the number of forced migrants (cross-border and internally displaced) originating from SEECA has been declining until 2013. Most notably, the number of refugees originating from a SEECA country went down by 60 per cent between 2008 and 2013 (see Graph 29). This decline reflects the period of relative stability in the region. Although the annual figures do not show this yet, the situation has changed in 2014 as a result of the escalating conflict in Ukraine.

⁴⁵ UNHCR, 2014d. Data sources are from the Government of Turkey, UNHCR and AFAD (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

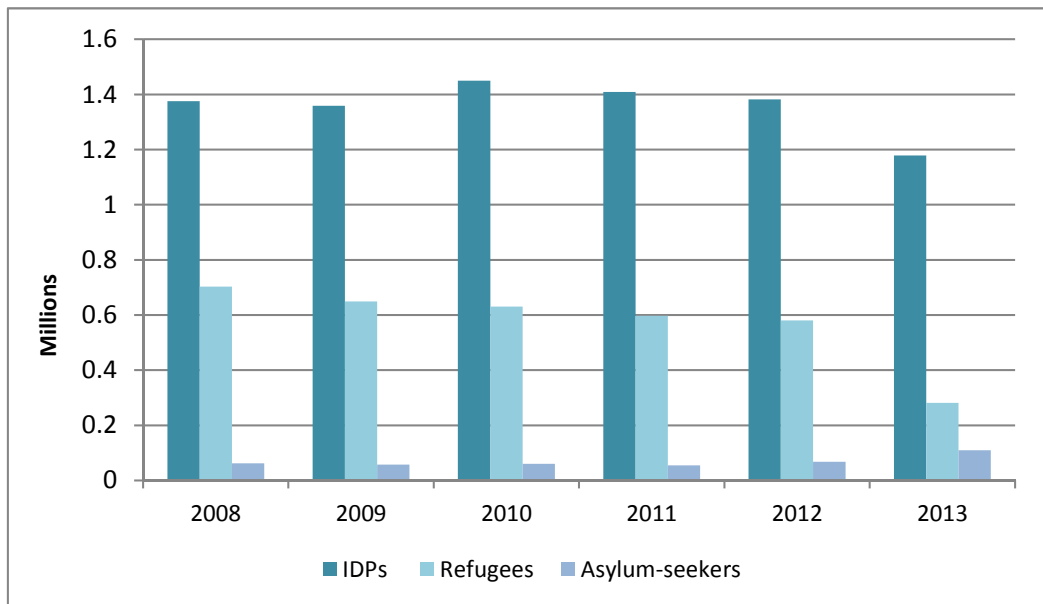
⁴⁶ For a more detailed discussion, see IOM, 2015.

Graph 28:
Refugees and asylum-seekers seeking protection in SEECA countries, 2008–2013



Source: UNHCR, 2014a.

Graph 29:
Forced migration from SEECA by type, 2008–2013



Source: UNHCR, 2014a.

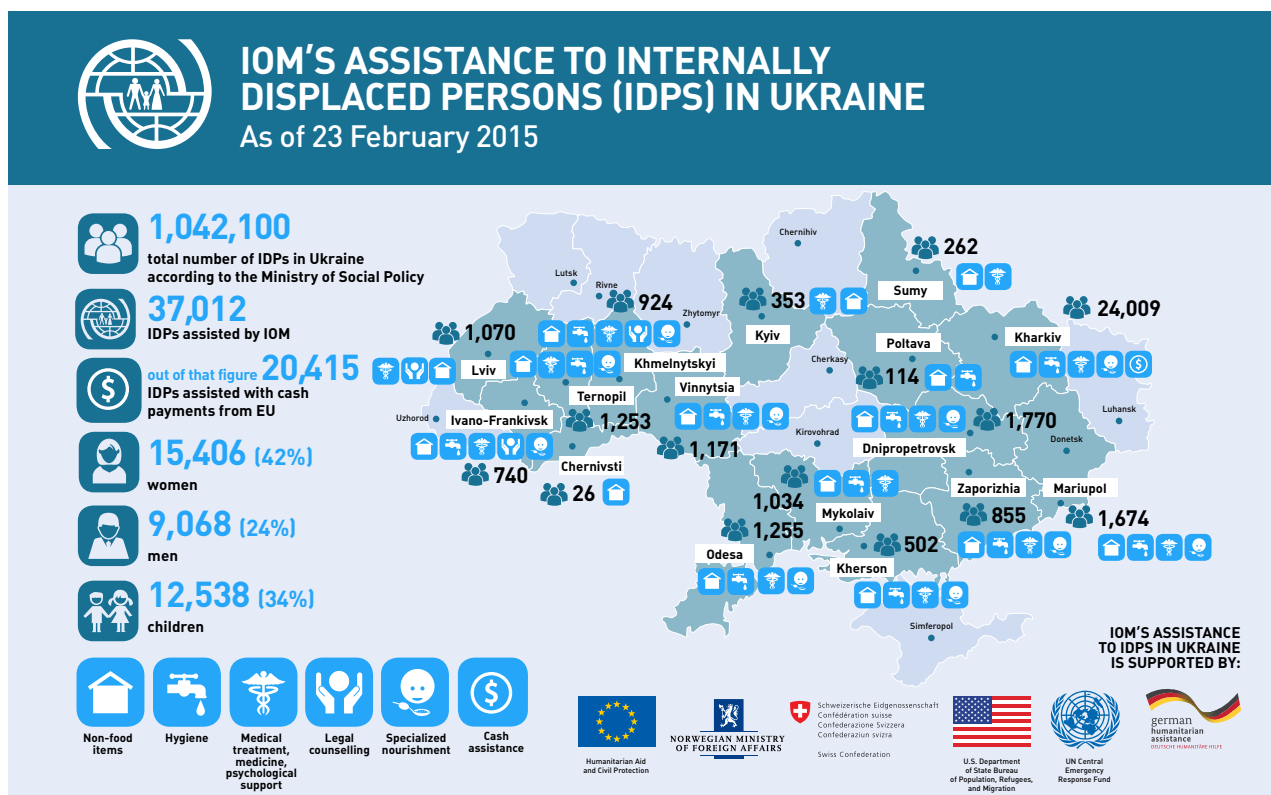
The number of asylum-seekers from SEECA continued to grow at the time when the refugee figures were falling: the number of persons from a SEECA country seeking asylum almost doubled between 2008 and 2013 from 61,909 persons to 109,373. Almost half of the latter figure came from either Serbia and Kosovo/UNSC 1244 or the Russian Federation. The year 2014 has seen a further increase. For example, over 10,000 nationals of UNSCR 1244 Kosovo

applied for asylum in Hungary in January 2015, compared to 11,220 in the entire year of 2014. However, the vast majority of these claims are rejected: around 94–96 per cent of all claims made in the European Union countries by the citizens of the Western Balkan countries are rejected.⁴⁷ Such a low rate of success of asylum claims indicates that this channel is often misused by those wishing to migrate for economic or family reunification purposes in the absence of adequate legal channels for such migration.

In 2014, the overall number of refugees and asylum-seekers originating in SEECA are likely to be higher as a result of the situation in Ukraine. While the majority of people leaving Ukraine have so far been seeking other forms of legal stay abroad, a growing number applied for international protection, particularly in the Russian Federation, Germany, Poland, Italy, France, Sweden and Belarus. As of February 2015, 264,777 Ukrainians have applied for international protection in the Russian Federation.⁴⁸ In 2014, between 1 January and 31 October, more than 8,936 Ukrainians have applied for asylum or other forms of international protection in the European Union, and this figure continued growing towards the end of the year.⁴⁹

With internal displacement, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported just under 1.2 million IDPs in the region in 2013, which is down from 1.4 million in 2010. However, situations can change dramatically in a short time, as observed in the Ukrainian crisis. At the end of 2013, no displacement was reported in Ukraine, yet by February 2015, the number of IDPs in the country exceeded 1 million. The distribution of IDPs in Ukraine and assistance provided by IOM are shown on Infographic 1.

Infographic 1:
IDPs in Ukraine and IOM IDP assistance as of 23 February 2015⁵⁰



47 EASO, 2014b.

48 UNHCR, 2015.

49 UNHCR, 2014e.

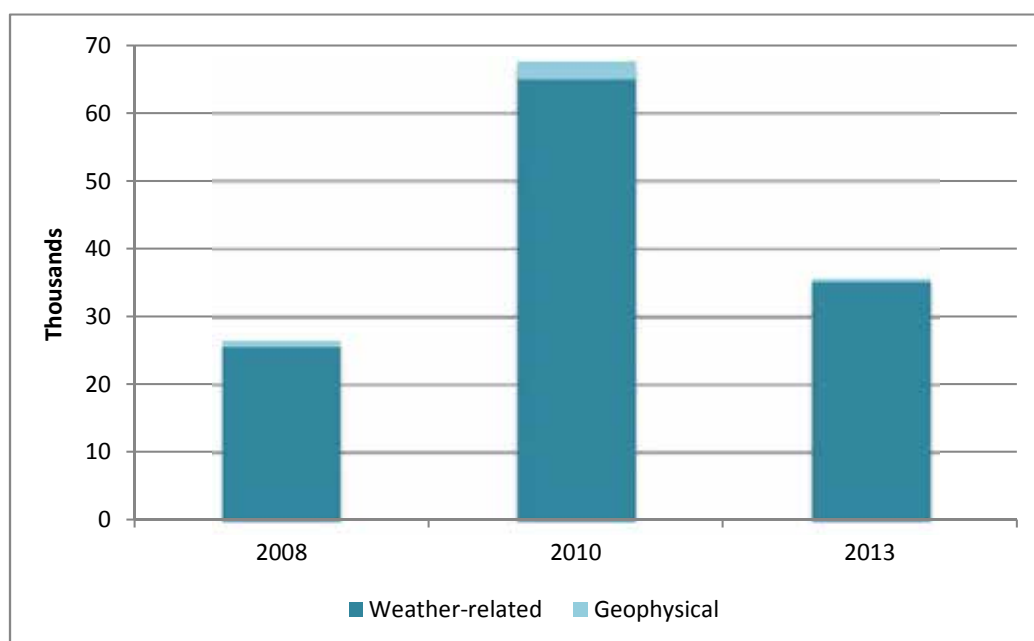
50 The latest information on the IDP situation in Ukraine and assistance provided by IOM is available on the website of the IOM office in Ukraine www.iom.org.ua/en.

► Trend 12: Weather- and climate-related hazards as the main trigger of environmental internal displacement⁵¹

In line with the global trend, the vast majority of environmental internal displacements in the region are triggered by weather- and climate-related hazards. In the case of SEECA, floods are responsible for the overwhelming majority of internal displacements. Going forward, as climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of both sudden and slow-onset weather-related natural disasters, the risk of environmental displacement in the region is expected to rise.

SEECA is affected by both sudden and slow-onset natural disasters, including floods, earthquakes, landslides, droughts and forest fires, as well as increased water scarcity and land degradation. These disasters displace significant numbers of people each year. Graph 30 shows the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's (IDMC) estimates on the number of persons newly displaced each year in the SEECA region as a result of natural disasters. The number of such new displacements ranged between 26,555 persons in 2008 and 35,678 in 2013, with a notable spike of 67,644 new environmental IDPs in SEECA in 2010. This number can be attributed to major floods in Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. Another sharp increase can be expected in 2014: although region-wide figures are still unavailable, significant internal displacements were triggered by the devastating floods that hit the Western Balkans in the first half of 2014. There were 90,000 people who were temporarily displaced and more than 40,000 took extended refuge in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, according to the post-disaster needs assessment by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵²

Graph 30:
New IDPs in SEECA due to natural disasters caused by geophysical or weather-related hazards, 2008–2013



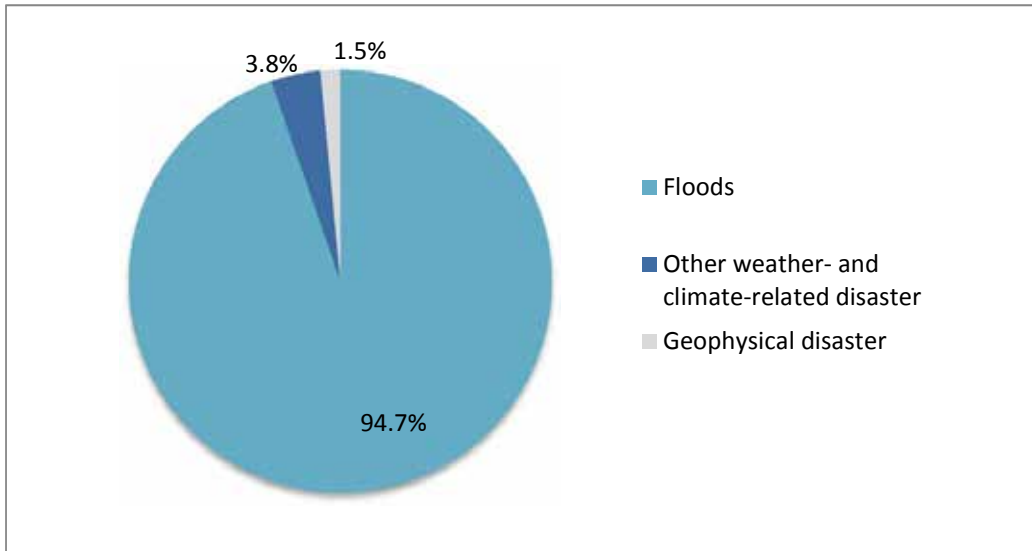
Source: IDMC, 2014.

⁵¹ IDMC identifies two types of hazards: (a) geophysical hazards; and (b) weather- and climate-related hazards. Geophysical hazards include rapid-onset earthquakes, volcanic eruptions or dry mass movements and slow-onset subsidence of a land mass; while according to their typology, there are three types of weather- and climate-related events, namely (a) meteorological events, such as storms; (b) hydrological events, such as floods and wet mass movements; (c) and climatological events, such as wildfires or extreme temperatures. For more information, see Annex A of IDMC, 2014.

⁵² European Commission (2014) by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of the European Union, the World Bank and the United Nations.

Despite significant fluctuations in the overall number of new displacements, the share of weather-related displacements as opposed to those caused by geophysical hazards remained consistently high. In 2010, 96 per cent of all new environmental internal displacements was the result of weather-related events, especially floods. In 2013, this share rose to 98.5 per cent, of which almost 94.7 per cent were displacements by floods (see Graph 31).

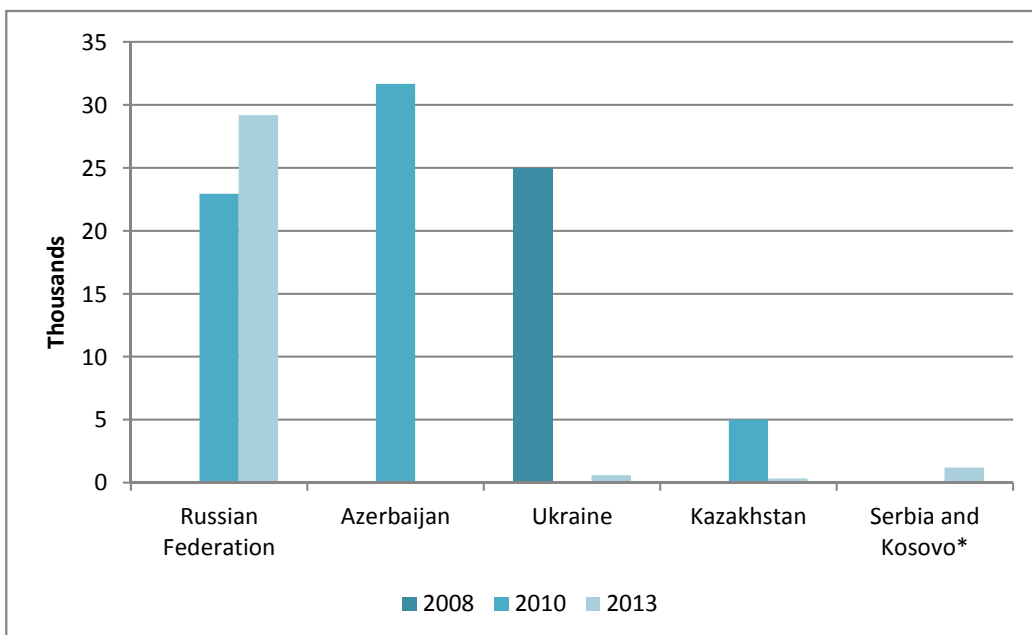
Graph 31:
Share of persons internally displaced in SEECA by type of natural disaster, 2013



Source: IDMC, 2014.

Graph 32 shows the top five SEECA countries for internal displacement triggered by weather-related hazards between 2008 and 2013. The graph indicates that countries from all over SEECA are represented. In 2008, the highest number of people (25,000) was displaced in Ukraine by floods. In 2010, 31,000 people in Azerbaijan were internally displaced, also due to floods. In 2013, more than 29,000 persons were displaced internally in the Russian Federation because of several floods hitting the country over the course of the year.

Graph 32:
Top five SEECA countries for IDPs due to weather-related disasters, 2008–2013



Source: IDMC, 2014.

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