

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
COUNCIL OF EUROPE

SECOND ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
FOR THE REGIONAL POPULATION
MEETING

Strasbourg (France)
28-29 October 1998

REPORT OF THE MEETING

The Advisory Group for the Regional Population Meeting met at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg during 28-29 October 1998. The meeting reviewed the preparations for the Budapest Meeting carried out since the 1-2 October 1998 meeting of the Advisory Group and made several recommendations to the organisers as to how to proceed with preparations during their final stage. This report summarises main points discussed and principal recommendations made during the meeting.

1. *Activities during the month of October.* The meeting took note of the developments since the early-October meeting of the Advisory Group, in particular those pertaining to a) the information note prepared for the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians on the preparations for the Budapest meeting and b) the information on these preparations to be shared with the Missions to the United Nations in Geneva, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations invited to the Meeting. Among other things, the meeting was also informed of the preparations and processing of background papers and other documents for translation, reproduction and dissemination. The participants were given a brief presentation of the web site for the Budapest Meeting, which is one of the means of dissemination of the documentation.
2. *Background papers and national reports.* The meeting was informed that the paper on international migration had been finalised and that its author would deliver it within a few days. The Council of Europe will translate it into French and copies of the French version will be made available at the Meeting. Also, the meeting was informed that the Hungarian Central Statistical Office is receiving the national reports and that the United Nations Office at Geneva will disseminate copies of the reports along with other meeting documents. In view of the late receipt of many reports, the Advisory Group recommended that no synthesis report of the national reports be commissioned. A possibility will be explored to have a synthesis report prepared and published soon after the Meeting.

3. *Changes in the programme proposed by the UNFPA.* The meeting considered the proposals for changes in the programme of the Budapest Meeting received from the UNFPA on 23 October 1998. The proposal for adding discussants who would comment on the background papers and, as appropriate, expand on the papers was well received by the Advisory Group. The names of discussants proposed by the UNFPA were considered and the names of alternative discussants were proposed by the Advisory Group. Some of the proposals for changes in the titles of the sessions have been accommodated. However, the Advisory Group considered that some other related proposals could not be accommodated at this late stage of preparations. Provisional Order of Business for the Meeting will present the names and affiliations of all the persons who will make presentations of background papers or act as discussants. Further to the post-meeting consultations between the ECE and UNFPA, it was decided that the following persons will act as discussants: Ms. J. Gierveld for the session on salient population developments; Ms. G. Lazdane for the session on fertility and reproductive rights; a staff member of the WHO Euro for the session on mortality and health, including reproductive health; Mr. A. De Bono for the session on population ageing; and Mr. P. Schatzer for the session on international migration. The Advisory Group suggested that the comments by all discussants except Ms. J. Gierveld should refer to and expand on the background papers rather than be independent presentations.
4. *Draft Report of the Meeting.* The Advisory Group suggested that in this draft, which will be disseminated with the other documentation for the Meeting, the wording clearly indicate that the Report along with its annexes will be simultaneously transmitted through three different channels. Firstly, the Report and the annexes will be submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for its consideration and adoption. The Executive Secretary of the ECE will transmit the annexes now titled "Conclusions" and "Co-operation in Population Analysis" to the UN Secretary-General. Also, the Chairperson of the Meeting will transmit the two annexes to the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly.
5. *The conduct of the Meeting.* The Advisory group considered the rules of procedure used at the 1993 European Population Conference and suggested that those rules be suitably amended and used to guide the conduct of the Budapest meeting. The amended rules would not be presented to the Meeting for adoption. Rather they will be used by the Bureau of the Meeting as the guidelines for the conduct of the Meeting.
6. *Information Notice No. 2.* Items to include in this information notice were considered. The principal item will be on informal consultations for governments to be held on Sunday, 6 December, starting at 9 a.m. at the Budapest Hilton, the venue of the Meeting. The consultations will focus on a) the composition of the Bureau, b) the information concerning the conduct of the Meeting, and c) the proposed Draft Conclusions and the Draft Co-operation in Population Analysis. Other items will include information on the new venue - the Budapest Hilton, and accommodation arrangements and the like.

7. *Publicity.* The earlier proposals for preparing a press kit and for disseminating it have been endorsed. It was recommended that the press kit include a) a press release and b) five to six brief substantive pieces, including the executive summaries of the background papers. The press kit, it was suggested, should be sent to a number of major dailies and weeklies. A press conference will be staged in Budapest during the Meeting.
8. *Draft Conclusions.* This draft was well received by the Advisory Group. It was pointed out that it represents a very good starting point for any negotiations prior to and during the Meeting. Advantages and disadvantages of not having in the draft operational paragraphs regarding future population-related policies were considered. It was concluded that such paragraphs should not be added at this stage as they may make the negotiations more difficult. The Advisory Group made several recommendations concerning the revision of the draft. It stressed the fact that the revised draft will represent the basis for the negotiations of the Governments leading to the final version of the document, Conclusions. Information Notice No. 2 will inform the Governments that the negotiations will start during the informal consultations of 5 December.
9. *Draft Co-operation in Population Analysis.* This draft has been extensively discussed and numerous suggestions have been made concerning changes in and additions to the draft. Among the most important are as follows; a) the document should be transmitted, among others, to Governments, intergovernmental organisations, national research and academic institutions, national statistical offices and other institutions taking part in population analysis; b) a very brief inventory of the contributions of intergovernmental organisations to co-operation in population analysis in recent years should be included; c) the contribution of the Conference of European Statisticians to the co-ordination and harmonisation of statistical activities resulting in the data used in population analysis should be highlighted; d) the proposed regional co-ordinating committee should be presented as a mechanism for ensuring sustained regional co-operation in population analysis; e) the co-ordinating committee will consist of population experts from regional intergovernmental organisations active in population analysis, and from selected national population institutes, national statistical offices, and academic institutions. The Advisory Group stressed the fact that the revised draft will represent the basis for the negotiations of the Governments leading to the final version of the document, Co-operation in Population Analysis. Information Notice No. 2 will inform the Governments that the negotiations on this document will also start during the informal consultations of 5 December.
10. *Final meeting.* It was agreed that the final meeting of the Advisory Group will take place on 5 December, starting at 2:30 p.m. at the Budapest Hilton.