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### **ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL DATA IN AN INTEGRATED STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

Submitted by Statistics Denmark<sup>1</sup>

#### **Contributed paper**

#### **Summary**

1. As a part of the security measures adopted in Statistics Denmark the access to confidential data is restricted. Only a very small number of staff members are authorised to access a file containing such data.
2. In order to limit the number of different data on a certain individual which can be accessed in a single file, the data has been organised in a system of registers - each one of these related to a specific field of statistics. So only a limited number of data are available to the accessing person. This strategy was decided at the beginning of the era of using administrative data for statistical purposes. Data from different registers can be linked by means of the personal identification number, but these identifications must be deleted from the file as soon as the link process is carried through and the results accepted.
3. Recently, there has been an increasing demand for data compositions across different registers and this development has led to another strategy as far as the register system is concerned. Big registers crossing the traditional boundaries of the different statistics have been established. The appearance of these integrated registers breaks with the principal model. Staff members authorised to access these registers will have the opportunity to see a very wide range of information on individuals.
4. The registers are organised in an Oracle data base or in traditional files and the extent of the problems we are facing depends to a certain degree on this organisation.
5. The problems can be viewed from different angles. First, we must be aware of the security itself. The possible reduction in data security caused by the integrated registers must be eliminated. Secondly, it is important to focus on the public opinion. We must be sure that the security measures still are convincing. Even the smallest mistrust of the data security may have enormous consequences for the production of statistics in the future. Thirdly, it has to be considered how new security

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measures will influence the data processing. Too many obstacles with limited importance for the data security must be avoided.

6. Measures are to be imposed to meet the different problems mentioned above, and the goal is to achieve a reasonable balance between the different considerations.