

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2019/2020 Bureau  
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 25-26 February 2020

Item 3(a) of the Provisional  
Agenda

STEERING GROUP ON POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES:  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Note by the Secretariat

*This note proposes new terms of reference for the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses. The Bureau approved the terms of reference of the Steering Group for the coming five years.*

I. BACKGROUND

1. Between 2012 and 2015 the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses coordinated the preparation of the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing<sup>1</sup>. The CES endorsed these Recommendations in June 2015.
2. After the endorsement of the Recommendations, the Steering Group coordinated UNECE activities supporting the member countries in fulfilling the Recommendations. The progress reports of the Steering Group presented to the Bureau in February 2016 (ECE/CES/BUR/2016/FEB/6), in January 2018 (ECE/CES/BUR/2018/FEB/6) and in February 2020 (ECE/CES/BUR/2020/FEB/6) summarize these activities.
3. With the 2020 census round now underway, the focus of the Steering Group must shift to reviewing countries' experiences in conducting these censuses and using such experiences to inform development of the next edition of the Recommendations.
4. In light of the issues raised in the draft document *Future Censuses Beyond 2020* (ECE/CES/BUR/2020/FEB/19), the next edition of the Recommendations will need to consider fundamental questions about the way censuses are conducted, their frequency, content, concepts and sources. The Steering Group will need to guide the CES work to ensure that these issues are suitably addressed in the Recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> Available in English, French and Russian at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41398>

## II. MANDATE AND REPORTING

5. The Steering Group works under the mandate of the CES and regularly reports to the CES and its Bureau on its activities and outputs.

6. The Terms of Reference of the Steering Group will be reviewed by the CES Bureau after the adoption of the new CES Census Recommendations, at the Bureau's October 2025 meeting.

## III. OBJECTIVES

7. The main objective of the Steering Group is to coordinate, provide advice and contribute to the UNECE programme on population and housing censuses. This entails:

(a) Supporting UNECE member countries in preparing and conducting censuses and in disseminating and communicating results in accordance with the *CES Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*;

(b) Developing a set of Recommendations for the 2030 round. The "2030 round" is understood here to refer principally to the decennial population and housing data collections, while recognizing that the Recommendations will need to be consistent with the move towards more frequent census-like collections of population data as foreseen, for example, in the Eurostat *Vision for Census Statistics After 2021*<sup>2</sup>.

## IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

8. The following activities and outputs are planned for the Steering Group:

(a) Oversee the work of the ongoing Task Force on Measuring the Quality of Administrative Sources for Use in Censuses until its completion in 2021;

(b) Review the format and content of the UNECE census wiki for the 2020 round and revise as necessary; coordinate the collection of updates from CES member countries; analyze the results and present an overview of pertinent findings to the 2020 and subsequent Expert Group Meetings;

(c) Taking the analytical report *Future Censuses Beyond 2020* as a starting point, establish a set of Task Forces on the key areas deemed by the Steering Group to be necessary for the review and reformulation of the Recommendations to update them for the 2030 round. The proposed set of Task Forces and their terms of reference and work plans, along with an overarching work plan for the revision of the Recommendations, will be discussed at the UNECE-Eurostat expert group meeting in September 2020 and presented to the Bureau in February 2021;

(d) In consultation with the members of the Task Forces, prepare and conduct a survey of national practices in the census 2020 round; prepare a publication summarizing the results of this survey;

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/e9072c55-f448-47f6-b4e2-cb3697ae7dc1/DSS-2016-Oct-3.2%20Census%20post%202021%20vision.pdf>

(e) Coordinate the work of the Task Forces from 2021 to 2024, provide advice on the preparation of the CES Recommendations for the 2030 round and ensure their consistency. Compile the results into a coherent set of Recommendations to be presented to the Bureau in February 2025;

(f) Work with the UNECE secretariat to prepare the annual UNECE-Eurostat Expert Meetings on Population and Housing Censuses in 2020, 2022 and annually thereafter;

(g) Ensure the coordination between the preparation of the CES Recommendations for the 2030 round and the preparation of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) Global Principles and Recommendations for the 2030 round.

## **V. METHODS OF WORK**

9. The Steering Group works mainly by email and online discussion via the UNECE wiki platform, as well as a face-to-face meeting each year during the UNECE-Eurostat Expert Group Meeting. Informal meetings of the Steering Group may be organized on the margins of other expert meetings attended by a significant number Steering Group members.

## **VI. MEMBERSHIP**

10. The Steering Group currently includes representatives of the following countries: Armenia, Canada (Chair until March 2020), France, Georgia, Italy, Netherlands (Chair from March 2020), Poland, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America. CIS-Stat, the European Free Trade Association, Eurostat, the United Nations Population Fund and the UNSD also participate.

11. The Group is currently chaired by Canada, but the Canadian representative will step down in March. From March 2020, the Steering Group will be chaired by the Netherlands.

12. UNECE will act as Secretariat of the Steering Group.

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