

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

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

Item 3(d) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**TASK FORCE ON MEASURING SOCIAL EXCLUSION:  
PROGRESS REPORT**

**Prepared by the Secretariat  
and the Task Force on measuring social exclusion**

*In June 2018, the Bureau approved the terms of reference of the Task Force on measuring social exclusion. The Bureau reviewed the progress report of the Task Force and extended its mandate by one year to allow to finalise the work.*

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. In February 2018, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) conducted an in-depth review of measuring social exclusion led by Statistics Canada and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) (document ECE/CES/BUR/2018/FEB/2). The Bureau asked the UNECE Secretariat and the Steering Group on measuring poverty and inequality to prepare a proposal for follow-up work to address the priority areas raised in the in-depth review for the next CES Bureau meeting.

2. In June 2018, the Bureau approved the terms of reference for the Task Force on measuring social exclusion (document ECE/CES/BUR/2018/JUN/2). The Task Force was established with the objective to consolidate current and emerging good practices in measuring social exclusion and in assessing their potential for delivering comparable results. The Bureau asked the Task Force to pay special attention to these aspects of social exclusion that were not addressed under the work on poverty measurement. The Task Force held its first teleconference in December 2018 to initiate the work and agree on first steps. Discussions were based on a briefing note prepared by the Chair (United Kingdom). In February 2019, the Task Force presented to the Bureau planned first steps. The Bureau expressed support to the work and encouraged the Task Force to continue its work.

3. The following 13 countries and 5 international organizations and academia are participating in the Task Force: United Kingdom (Chair), Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Canada, Czechia, Germany, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Eurostat, OECD, United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean UN ECLAC), and Oxford University.

**II. PROGRESS OF WORK**

4. The Task Force implemented the first steps as outlined in its progress report to the Bureau in February 2019 (document ECE/CES/BUR/2019/FEB/8), which included drafting and dissemination of survey questionnaires to collect information on countries' practices of

measuring social exclusion, based on evidence from relevant literature together with material from Canada and Eurostat. The work has taken longer than originally planned because of the amount of work required and delays resulting from changes in leadership of the group.

5. During 2019, two rounds of discussions based on the questionnaires were conducted among all Task Force members to identify how social exclusion or other related concepts are currently being measured in their country. The first round consisted of a survey carried out in February 2019 to check to which extent the Task Force members collect data on topics across various socio-economic dimensions such as health and well-being, living environment, social and cultural participation, and how are these used to measure social exclusion. The second round gathered examples of data collection, analysis, dissemination and linkage to the SDGs. In the cases when countries were not currently measuring social exclusion, the discussion focused on what might be possible to measure given the available data.

6. The comprehensive information collected in the two consultation rounds showed considerable differences between countries in the use of concepts and data. Most countries collect data on economic dimensions, among which the most common were household income, low income/poverty and material deprivation, whereas collection on social dimensions varies substantially across countries.

7. The Task Force met face-to-face on 3 December 2019 in Geneva, back-to-back to the UNECE meeting on poverty measurement. The meeting confirmed the need for further analysis of the information on national practices to identify a core set of domains for measuring social exclusion, map SDG indicators to the core components of social exclusion and measure social exclusion in different contexts with examples relating to individuals, households, communities, and a country's total population.

8. The Task Force's report aims to highlight the value of social exclusion measurement by showing practical examples, including on how to capture certain population groups who may be more likely to experience social exclusion and for whom data would be most probably unavailable; for example, people who may find it difficult to get employment because of convictions. The Task Force is currently analysing the information on country practices.

9. The Task Force is seeking **the extension of its mandate by one year, until June 2021**, in order to complete its work. Updated Terms of Reference with a proposed extended mandate are presented in the Annex.

10. The updated timetable for the remaining activities is the following:

February-March 2020	Analysis of the information on country practices
April-July 2020	Drafting the report, including recommendations and conclusions
August-September 2020	Editing the report
October 2020	Review of the full report by the CES Bureau
November-December 2020	Edits based on the Bureau's comments
February-March 2021	Electronic consultation among CES members

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June 2021

Expected endorsement of the report at the CES plenary  
session

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### **III. PROPOSAL**

**11. The Bureau is invited to review the progress report of the Task Force and extend its mandate by one year.**

## ANNEX

**UPDATED TERMS OF REFERENCE  
FOR THE TASK FORCE ON MEASURING SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

**Prepared by the UNECE Secretariat and the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality**

*At its February 2018 meeting, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) conducted an in-depth review on measuring social exclusion. Based on the conclusion of the review, the UNECE Secretariat together with the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality prepared terms of reference for a Task Force on Measuring Social Exclusion. The Bureau approved the terms of reference at its June 2018 meeting (ECE/CES/BUR/2018/JUN/2). **The terms of reference are updated to reflect the new timetable for activities under an extended mandate (subject to Bureau's approval).***

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. In February 2018, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) conducted an in-depth review on measuring social exclusion. Statistics Canada and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) prepared a paper summarizing the international activities in this area, which provided the basis for the review (document ECE/CES/BUR/2018/FEB/2). The Bureau asked the UNECE Secretariat together with the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality, to prepare a proposal for follow up work to address the priority areas raised in the in-depth review for the next CES Bureau meeting.

2. Social exclusion is a broad concept for which no exact or widely accepted definition exists. As the methodology changes based on the definition used, this makes it challenging to quantify the number of people who face social exclusion, or the degree to which people are at risk of social exclusion. While many countries measure different aspects of social exclusion, very few surveys or statistical methods are specifically designed for this. Most numeric measurements of social exclusion rely heavily on methods that measure material and social deprivation, and then interpret an individual's level of social exclusion.

3. The concept of social exclusion is linked to that of poverty and material deprivation, and disentangling them is conceptually challenging. Moreover, social exclusion is generally discussed within the social cohesion and social inclusion framework, which although often used as synonyms, contain important differences. Distinction between these concepts, like social exclusion, social cohesion, material deprivation or multidimensional poverty is relatively nuanced and makes social exclusion complex to communicate.

4. Social exclusion strongly depends on the economic, cultural and policy context in the country. Although full harmonisation of measures should not be the aim, designing and implementing policies for social exclusion requires far more detailed information. It is important to understand the prevalence, persistence and depth of social exclusion, the multiple dimensions in which people could be excluded, and the policies that exist to combat social exclusion in the societies.

5. The traditional measures of exclusion or inclusion are changing with generations. Digitalisation, for example, is bringing a range of new issues and forms of social exclusion. In this context, a life-course perspective is important for measuring and understanding social exclusion.

6. Following the pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first, work is needed on collecting and systematising country experiences on measuring different aspects of social exclusion, and linking them to SDG indicators. A collection of such case studies would allow to better support policymaking in this area. The present terms of reference were developed for carrying out such work. The work builds on existing UNECE networks and expertise in the related area of measuring poverty and inequality.

## **II. MANDATE**

7. The Task Force on Measuring Social Exclusion reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) through its Bureau. The Task Force will present its full report to the October 2020 meeting of the Bureau. The Task Force will finalise the report based on comments from the CES Bureau and from the consultation among all CES members, prior to submitting the report to the CES 2021 plenary session for endorsement.

8. The Task Force's work will be taken forward under the guidance of the CES Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality.

## **III. OBJECTIVE**

9. The objective of the Task Force is to consolidate current and emerging good practices in measuring social exclusion and in assessing their potential for delivering comparable results.

## **IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS**

10. During the first two years, the Task Force has collected national practices on the following:

- a) Concepts and frameworks for measuring social exclusion on the national level, including factors that lead to social exclusion, and groups of people facing social exclusion.
- b) Indicators used for measuring social exclusion.
- c) Measuring emerging aspects and forms of social exclusion resulting from recent developments in the society, e.g. digitalisation.
- d) Communicating measures of social exclusion.

11. The Task Force will analyse the collected good practices. The analysis will aim at the following outputs:

- a) Taxonomy of the use of different concepts related to social exclusion, including social cohesion, social inclusion, poverty and material deprivation.
- b) Identification of good practices in the production, analysis and dissemination of social exclusion measures.
- c) Demonstration of linkages to SDG indicators.

## **V. TIMETABLE**

12. The following timetable is foreseen for 2020-2021:

February-March 2020	Analysis of the information on country practices
April-July 2020	Drafting the report, including recommendations and conclusions
August-September 2020	Editing the report
October 2020	Review of the full report by the CES Bureau
November-December 2020	Edits based on the Bureau's comments
February-March 2021	Electronic consultation among CES members
June 2021	Expected endorsement of the report at the CES plenary session

## **VI. METHODS OF WORK**

13. The Task Force is expected to work mainly via email and telephone conferences and using a common workspace at the UNECE wiki platform. It will meet once a year back-to-back with the meetings of the UNECE Expert Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality.

## **VII. MEMBERSHIP**

14. The following 13 countries and 5 international organizations and academia are participating in the Task Force: United Kingdom (Chair), Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Canada, Czechia, Germany, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Eurostat, OECD, United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oxford University. UNECE provides the secretariat.