

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2014/2015 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 17-18 February 2015

Item 5 (f) of the Provisional
Agenda

**REPORT OF THE STEERING GROUP
ON POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES**

Note by the Steering Group

Attached are the draft Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing (document ECE/CES/BUR/2015/FEB/18/Add.1), prepared by the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses and the nine UNECE Task Forces on censuses. The Bureau commented on the draft Recommendations and decided that they can be circulated for electronic consultation among all CES members with a view to be presented to the CES 2015 plenary session for endorsement.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The CES at its June 2012 plenary session endorsed a work plan for the preparation of the new CES Recommendations for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses (ECE/CES/83). The plan included the creation of nine UNECE Task Forces on censuses, reporting to the UNECE Steering Group on censuses. Terms of Reference for the Steering Group and the task forces were endorsed by the CES Bureau in November 2012 (ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/7).

2. In January 2015, the Steering Group and the task forces completed the final draft of the *CES Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*. Section II of this note summarizes the work of the Steering Group and the task forces. Section III gives a brief overview of the Recommendations. Section IV puts forward the proposal for the Bureau. The Recommendations are provided in document ECE/CES/BUR/2015/FEB/18/Add.1.

II. PROGRESS OF WORK

3. Between the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, the Steering Group and the task forces prepared a questionnaire for an online survey of national practices in 2010 census round, carried out by UNECE in February 2013. Based on the results of the survey, the Steering Group and the task forces prepared in the course of 2013 a number of papers on national practices in the 2010 census round, and on possible changes to the CES recommendations for the 2020 census round. These papers were discussed at a joint UNECE-Eurostat expert meeting on censuses in October 2013¹.

¹Joint UNECE-Eurostat Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses, Geneva, 30 September to 4 October 2013 (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=31953>)

4. Based on the outcomes of the discussion at the October 2013 expert meeting, the Steering Group and the task forces prepared draft chapters of the new census recommendations, which were discussed at the subsequent UNECE-Eurostat expert meeting on censuses² in October 2014. Between October 2014 and January 2015, the Steering Group and the task forces finalized the draft recommendations with the contribution of a consultant. In this phase, the Steering Group, leaders of the task forces and experts from selected international organizations (such as ILO, UNESCO and FAO) reviewed and edited all chapters and annexes to ensure coherence and consistency across chapters.

5. The material produced for the preparation of the CES census recommendations was also used by UNECE to produce other census outputs. In particular, the papers on national practices in the 2010 census round were elaborated in order to produce the publication *Measuring population and housing – Practices of UNECE countries in the 2010 round of censuses*, published by UNECE in 2014³. Moreover, information collected through the UNECE survey on national census practices was made available on the UNECE Census Wiki where information and material on the census of the 2010 round for all UNECE countries can now be conveniently accessed⁴. UNECE is regularly updating this material.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE FINAL DRAFT

6. The Recommendations consist of 15 chapters divided in three parts, and 3 appendices. The first part (Chapters I-IV) presents a broad description of how countries conduct censuses. Chapter I on methodology provides a broad overview of the range of methodologies adopted by UNECE countries, with particular emphasis on the use of administrative registers and multi-modal approaches to data collection. Chapter II on technology looks at some innovative technologies which are being increasingly adopted by countries in the UNECE region (i.e. Internet data collection, and use of geographic information systems (GIS) for both data collection and output dissemination) and addresses various aspects related to the outsourcing of different census operations. Chapter III covers some operational aspects of the census, including legislation, communications and publicity, dissemination, documentation, costs and benefits. Chapter IV is dedicated to census quality and contains two major subchapters, the first one on quality assurance and quality management, and the second on quality evaluation.

7. The second and third parts of the publication present recommendations for the collection of information and classification of data on a range of population and housing topics. They describe the topics that are relevant for censuses in the UNECE region, present standard practices and definitions, and analyse their relevance to, and relationship with, other census topics and other non-census data collection activities. Chapters V-XIV cover those topics on which data is often collected in a population census. Chapter XV describes those topics that are usually included in a housing census.

8. All Chapters V-XV on population and housing topics include a number of substantive changes compared to the recommendations for the 2010 round concerning definitions, classifications and other aspects of selected topics. In particular, Chapter VIII on Economic characteristics was substantially revised to conform to the new international recommendations

²Joint UNECE-Eurostat Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses, Geneva, 23-26 September 2014 (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=33636>)

³ Available in English and Russian in printed and electronic form (<http://www.unece.org/stats/census.html>)

⁴ <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/censuses/2010+Population+Census+Round>

concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, adopted in 2013 by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians⁵.

IV. PROPOSAL FOR DECISION BY THE BUREAU

9. The Bureau discussed the final draft of the *CES Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing* and agreed on the proposed further steps of work:

Time plan for the remaining work

Date	Activity
February 2015	Incorporation of comments from the CES Bureau members
March 2015	Electronic consultation with CES member countries and organisations
April-May 2015	Incorporation of comments from the CES electronic consultation
June 2015	Subject to the positive outcome of the electronic consultation, submission of the final version of the Recommendations to the 2015 CES plenary session for endorsement
Second half 2015	UNECE will publish the Recommendations in electronic and printed versions in English and Russian

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⁵ Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, adopted by the Nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, October 2013), available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/19/WCMS_230304/lang--en/index.htm