

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2016/2017 Bureau  
Ottawa, 11-12 October 2016

Item VI (c) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS ON AGEING-RELATED STATISTICS**

Note by the Secretariat

*This note summarizes the revisions made to the Recommendations on ageing-related statistics following a consultation among CES countries in February-March 2016. In the light of these revisions, the Bureau endorsed the Recommendations on Ageing-related Statistics (document ECE/CES/BUR/2016/OCT/19/Add.1), and expressed views on the proposed directions for future work.*

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics was set up in 2013 to develop recommendations to improve the availability, accessibility and comparability of statistical data in support of ageing-related policymaking. The Task Force presented the draft Recommendations to the CES Bureau in October 2015.
2. Following the decision of the Bureau, the secretariat carried out a consultation on the draft Recommendations with CES members in February-March 2016. The results were presented to the CES plenary session in April 2016 as document ECE/CES/2016/4/Add.1. A total of 36 replies were received to the consultation. Countries and organizations showed broad support to the Recommendations and made a number of suggestions for editorial changes, minor clarifications and additions. Some comments were more substantive and required consideration by the Task Force.
3. At its 2016 plenary session, the Conference supported the Recommendations and asked the Task Force to:
  - a) Review the comments made during the electronic consultation and reflect them in a revised version of the Recommendations;
  - b) Consider the proposals made for further work;
  - c) Present the revised Recommendations and the plan for further work to the 2016 October meeting of the CES Bureau.
4. The Conference also noted that some of the comments required more extensive consideration and the Bureau would decide on the need for a second round of electronic consultation of the revised Recommendations among all CES members.

## II. SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

5. The Task Force considered all the comments received through the electronic consultation, and made changes to the Recommendations accordingly. The revised Recommendations as contained in document ECE/CES/BUR/2016/OCT/19/Add.1 have been reviewed and agreed by the Task Force.
6. The Task Force is of the opinion that all the comments, including those requiring extensive consideration, are adequately addressed in the revised Recommendations, and a second round of electronic consultation among CES members would thus not be necessary.
7. Two sections were added to the Recommendations following the consultation:
  - a) Section 9.5 on further work;
  - b) Section 9.6 containing a summary table of suggested indicators.
8. The Recommendations were reviewed for consistency with the Active Ageing Index that UNECE is promoting for its member countries. As a result, indicators on political participation, educational attainment and unmet need for health care were added to the Recommendations.
9. The following clarifications were added to the text of the Recommendations:
  - a) the topic areas covered by the Task Force correspond to the policy areas identified in the Vienna Declaration<sup>1</sup>, which relate to the personal and interpersonal aspects of ageing;
  - b) presentation of indicators by five-year age groups is desirable and should be viewed as a general goal, recognising that it may not be achievable in some circumstances;
  - c) age, sex, urban/rural residence, and migration status are considered as important dimensions but it is not expected that data producers can provide full cross-disaggregation along all these dimensions;
  - d) the Recommendations call for increased sample sizes of older people in surveys and for improving dissemination of ageing-related statistics. However, this should not be pursued at the expense of other activities of the national statistical office;
  - e) the recommendation related to the use of proxies in surveys now only requires that this activity adheres to “strict eligibility criteria”.
10. A number of other editorial changes, clarifications, footnotes and references were added or altered to improve the accuracy and readability of the Recommendations.

## III. FURTHER WORK

11. Based on the Task Force’s recommendations and the proposals put forward by countries in the CES consultation, **further work** is suggested in the following areas:

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<sup>1</sup> 2012 Vienna Ministerial Declaration. *Ensuring a society for all ages: Promoting quality of life and active ageing* ECE/AC.30/2012/3, available at [www.unece.org/population/ageing](http://www.unece.org/population/ageing)

- a) **Conceptual** work is needed to develop clear concepts and operationalize many indicators before they can be produced in a harmonized way across countries. This need is particularly pronounced in the domain of intergenerational solidarity.
  - b) **Methodological** work is needed to improve response rates of older people in surveys, in the context of online data collection in particular, and to harmonise approaches in the use of proxy respondents. Attention should also be paid to the potential of administrative data and new or alternative data sources for production of ageing-related statistics.
  - c) The term “**institutional population**” should be more clearly defined, in line with the CES census recommendations. Once a clear definition for the institutional population is developed, countries need to consider ways to include those populations in survey frames or develop separate data collection tools for them. Coverage of people living in institutions is essential to the development of robust measures of older people, for indicators of health and independence in particular. Further work towards establishing efficient data collection mechanisms for this population could start with compiling an overview of national practices.
  - d) **Many countries would benefit from the development or compilation of detailed guidelines for the production of the suggested indicators.** These could include details of recommended approaches for tackling challenges related to sampling, use of administrative sources and methodology for the calculation of the less commonplace indicators. It would be useful to **share experience** on testing and data collection practices and provide technical assistance to countries that would benefit from capacity-building. Compilation of links to existing methodological details would be a valuable first step in this direction.
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