

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

**Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics,
(Geneva, Switzerland, 14-16 April 2010)**

Working paper 7
7 April 2010

Topic 3 of the provisional agenda

COLLECTING DATA ON MIGRATION IN THE 2010 ROUND OF POPULATION CENSUSES

Measuring migration in the 2011 UK and Albanian censuses

Note by the United Kingdom and Albania*

Summary

The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Recommendations on core topics and census definitions for the 2010 round of censuses¹ form the basis of the information to be collected on migrant stocks and migration flows from national population censuses, and which in turn, provides the basis for information to be transmitted to the European Commission (Eurostat) under the provisions of the relevant Council and European Parliament and Commission Regulations^{2,3}. However, different national needs in different countries may determine different approaches. The paper reports on how the UK and Albania propose to collect such information in their respective censuses, and notes some of the potential difficulties in doing so.

I. BACKGROUND

As noted in the CES Recommendations, two different aspects relevant for migration can be identified through the population census:

1. the measurement of stocks of international migrants and other groups relevant to international migration, with information on timing and geographical patterns of their international migrations;
2. the measurement of stocks of internal migrants, with information on timing and geographical patterns of their internal migrations.

* Prepared by Ian White, UK Office for National Statistics and Emira Galanxhi, Institute of Statistics Albania

For 2011 both the UK and Albanian censuses will attempt to collect information relating to migrant stocks and flows. The design of the questions quoted in the paper are those that refer to the questions included in the 2009 Census Rehearsal in England and Wales (slightly different versions of some of the questions are being adopted in Scotland and Northern Ireland) and the Albanian Census Pilot currently planned to take place in late April/early May this year

I am grateful to Emira Galanxhi, Director of Social Statistics at INSTAT in Albania for permission for me to refer to the Albanian questions

II. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Two population groups relevant for international migration are usually identified for the purposes of population censuses:

The foreign-born is the group of persons who were born in another country. This group corresponds to the stock of international migrants that migrated at least once in their life and who reside outside of their country of birth at the time of the Census. Persons born in the country are defined as native-born.

Foreign nationals comprise the group of persons who do not have the citizenship of the country in which they are resident at the time of the Census. Foreigners can be foreign. Foreign nationals can thus be foreign-born or native born.

However, information on these two groups is not always sufficient in some countries to monitor and analyse the impact of international migration. To do this it is often necessary to consider two additional population groups:

The descendants of foreign-born form the group of persons born in the country whose parents was born abroad. Several generations of descendants can theoretically be distinguished in a census: for example, persons whose parents or grandparents were born abroad. However, in population censuses the focus is generally restricted only to those persons whose parents were born abroad (this group is often referred to as *second generation migrants*).

Ever-international migrants are defined in the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration⁴ as persons who change their country of usual residence. According to this definition, the stock of *ever-international migrants* in a country is the set of persons who have ever changed their country of usual residence. This group includes all foreign-born plus those native-born who have ever-resided abroad.

III. INTERNAL MIGRATION

Internal migrants are broadly defined as persons who are usually resident in a particular geographical area and who have previously been resident in another geographical area within the same country. In operational terms the geographical area is usually identified as the smallest civil division, measurement of internal migration can be made at whatever geographical unit is

appropriate for the purposes of estimating local population change. In order to provide relevant information on internal migrants, a detailed classification should distinguish local, intra-regional and inter-regional moves. Movements within smallest civil divisions are often considered to be *residential mobility*, rather *internal migration*.

Persons who are international immigrants – who, regardless of country of birth or citizenship, have at some point in their lives been usually resident in another country – may also be counted as internal migrants if, since their most recent international move, they also moved internally and they were resident elsewhere in the country prior to the census.

IV. CENSUS METHODOLOGIES IN UK AND ALBANIA

The UK is a country with a long-standing history of a traditional census taking. Its 2011 Census will be the 21st in a continuous decennial series going back to 1801 (with the single exception of 1941). It should be noted that in the first four of these censuses (1801-1831) the enumeration was carried out through the door-to-door collection of information by enumerators; but from 1841 to the present day census information has been collected through a self-completion questionnaire.

In Albania the 2011 Census will be the 11th since the first census in modern times in 1923. The early pre-war censuses were little more than cadastres in which householders had to report on Census day to local officials to register. More recently, full census have been carried out decennially using an interview-based enumeration.

V. UNECE RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS

So how do we best measure both types of migration in the census? And how do the two countries at opposite ends of Europe, with their different census methodologies, compare.

Both the UK and Albania are aiming to carry out their 2011 Census, particularly in respect of the questions for collecting information on migration in broad compliance with both the CES Recommendations and EU Census regulations – but the questionnaire designs inevitably have some differences.

Country/place of birth

Place of birth is related to the geographical unit in which the birth took place or according to the place of usual residence of the mother at the time of the birth. Although the UNECE recommends that for persons born in the country, information on the smallest civil division should be collected, it also notes that countries should collect the information according to the criteria that better suits their data output needs. For persons born outside the country, it is usually sufficient to collect information on the country of birth.

The UK chooses to collect information only on *country* of birth through a question that separately identifies the constituent countries of the UK plus a tick box for Republic of Ireland and a write in facility for any other country:

What is your country of birth?

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Republic of Ireland
- Elsewhere, write in the name of the country

The Albanian approach is to ask for district/municipality and town/village of the birth if this is in Albania, and for the country if it is abroad:

Where was your place of birth?

In Albania

District/Municipality

Town/village

Abroad

Country

Information on the country of birth is used to distinguish between native-born and foreign-born residents, and provides estimates of the numbers and circumstances of (sometimes small) immigrant communities from various countries, who may have particular needs.

Country of citizenship

Citizenship is often defined as the particular legal bond between an individual and his/her State, acquired by birth or naturalization, whether by declaration, option, marriage or other means according to the national legislation. Citizenship is used to identifying the foreign resident population, that is, the resident persons who do not hold the citizenship of the country of enumeration, and provides key dimension when considering both the stock and flow of migrants.

The UNECE recommends that provisions should be made to collect information on all citizenships held by respondents, in order to identify the portion of population with dual or multiple citizenship, and that separate data for stateless persons, that is, those without a recognized citizenship of a state should also be recorded.

For the UK a question on citizenship in the 2011 Census will be a new departure, since the concept of ‘citizenship’ is generally not well understood by the public and there has been little domestic requirement to capture this information. Testing has shown, however, that by wording the question in terms of ‘passports held’ a good approximation to country of citizenship can be obtained. Albania, on the other hand, asks a straightforward write-in question:

UK

What passports do you hold?

United Kingdom

Irish

Other, write in

None

Albania

What is your country of citizenship?

Specify

In case of dual citizenship specify

Ever resided abroad and year of entry

This question focus on all persons who have ever resided outside the current country of usual residence, regardless of their country of birth or citizenship and regardless of any other changes of usual residence that may have occurred *inside* the country. In order to collect information on this topic, individuals are usually asked if they have ever had a usual residence abroad. The information collected allows the identification the group of ever-international migrants.

For those who ever-resided abroad, the year of arrival in the current country of residence is usually also collected. This should be the calendar year when the person most recently established usual residence in the country. Since the purpose of the question is to measure the duration of residence of international migrants in the host country, it is generally preferable to collect information using the year of arrival (or even month of arrival for recent migrations) rather than on the number of years elapsed since arrival in the country as this is likely to yield more accurate information.

The year of the *most recent* arrival to the country is generally adopted rather than the year of *first* arrival since this will provide less ambiguous information. Furthermore, the duration of stay since the ‘year of last arrival’, should refer to an uninterrupted period of residence in the country. The year of last arrival can also provide useful information on recent immigration flows. In carrying out the census it is important therefore that guidance to enumerators and respondents should emphasise that this item relates only to the most recent immigration to the country since difficulties of understanding may occur where a person has established residence in the country on more than one occasion.

Additionally the CES Recommendations suggest (but as a non-core topic only) that census information is also collected on the country of previous usual residence abroad.

Albania’s census questionnaire fulfils all the requirements of the CES Recommendations and EU Regulation by specifically asking:

Have you ever lived outside Albania for a continuous period of one year or more?

Yes ► Country of last usual residence before coming to Albania

Year of arrival in Albania

No

However, the UK question on year of entry, which is new to the Census in 2011, is limited to those born outside the UK:

If you were not born in the United Kingdom, when did you most recently arrive to live year?

Month Year

Nor does the UK Census enquire into the country of previous residence. However, many of the UK's national needs for information in order, for example, to:

- allow reconciliation of stock and flow estimates;
- obtain more accurate picture of trends in immigration and a better understanding of the proportion of recent in-migrants that remain in the UK (in particular how many asylum seekers or post-accession migrants are still resident in the UK in 2011); and
- to estimate and forecast international migration trends (particularly short-term migration) at the local level to assess the implications for local labour markets and the planning of local services

will be met by this question, together with an additional question asking about *intended length of stay* for persons who arrived less than a year before the census:

Including the time already spent here, how long do you intend to stay in the United Kingdom?

Less than 6 months

6 months or more but less than 12 months

12 months or more

Previous place of usual residence and data of arrival at place of current residence

This topic focuses on internal migration since it provides information on geographic and time patterns of moves to the current place of residence, where the place of residence is defined in terms of the smallest civil division. In operational terms this topic can be implemented in one of two alternative ways.

The *extensive mode* asks generally about both year and month of arrival at the current place of usual residence and previous place of usual residence, while the *reduced mode* asks a more specific question about place of usual residence one year prior to the census

Both the UK and Albania have elected to go with the reduced mode approach, but with some differences in question wording:

UK

One year ago, what was your usual address?

Same address as on the front of the questionnaire
Student term-time address in the UK (write address below)
Another address in the UK (write address below)



Outside the UK, write the country

Albania

Where did you reside one year before the census?

Same place as usual residence
Somewhere else in Albania

Town/village

Abroad

Country

To provide more information on the type of move Albania also asks about the reason for the move.

What is the reason for changing the place of usual residence?

Employment
Study
Family reasons
Other reason

Place of usual residence five years prior to the census

The CES recommendations notes that if a question on the place of usual residence one year prior to the census is asked then the place of usual residence five years prior to the census might also be asked as a non-core topic. This extension of the time interval clearly provides the opportunity for the census to capture a larger number of moves but at the cost of an increased uncertainty about the exact timing of the migration.

The lack of accuracy that such a recollection brings with it is one of the reasons why the UK no longer includes such a question in its census. However for 2011 Albania is considering including a question on usual residence at 1 April 2001 – in order to provide a link to the usual residence at the time of the previous census.

VI. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH COLLECTING INFORMATION ON MIGRATION IN THE CENSUS

Individually, topics aimed at measuring migration in the census, such as the ones discussed above as recommended by UN-ECE and Eurostat may not be regarded as having particular problems in general – although in the UK, the new questions on *citizenship* and in *intentions to stay* are as yet unproven in a full census environment.

However, when included in the Census as a suite of questions (and most of the questions discussed are, in fact, designated as ‘core’ in the CES Recommendations and for which there is an now obligation on EU Member States to collect information under EU law) there is a risk that the Census may be perceived as focusing on only a small sub-group of the population – in this case immigrants.

Difficulties arise from the fact that migrant communities are frequently wary of official inspection and enquires, such as a census. Such a perception is likely to create concern about the purpose of the Census and to re-arouse the sort of suspicion and public mistrust that was prevalent at the time when, for example, the ethnicity question were first being considered in the UK the 1970s at a time of some anti-immigrant hostility. And yet, there is a growing need for countries, particularly EU Member States to seek to collect this information in order to be able to better measure and understand patterns of cross-European and other international migrations.

This poses something of a dilemma, and particularly so in UK where there is serious concern that the census is becoming an instrument solely to enquire about immigration and migrants – purposes for which generally the Census is poorly equipped.

In Albania, however, where there is a much stronger incentive for people to be identified as migrants or residents, such concerns about the emphasis of migration questions in the census may be less of a problem.

VII. CONCLUSION

Both the UK and Albania are aiming to adopt the CES Recommendations for including questions in the 2011 Census to collect information on migrant stocks and flows. The Albanian census questionnaire, in particular, will confirm fully with the requirements imposed by the EU Census Regulation on the provision of statistical outputs.

Though adopting different field enumeration methodologies and different question wordings in some cases, the information on migration to be collected by the two countries in their respective censuses should, however, be broadly comparable.

References

- 1 UN Economic Commission for Europe (2006). *Conference of European Statisticians' Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing*. ECE/CES/STAT/NONE/20006/4. United Nations, New York and Geneva. ISSN 0069-8458.
- 2 Official Journal of the European Union (2008). *Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on population and housing censuses*. OJEU, 13 August 2008.
- 3 Official Journal of the European Union (2009). *Regulation (EC) No 1201/2009 of the European Commission of 30 November 2009 implementing Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on population and housing censuses as regards the technical specifications of the topics and of their breakdowns*. OJEU, 15 December 2009.
