



Potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the 2021 EU census programme

David Thorogood, Eurostat

Overview of the 2021 EU census programme

- Extremely large, detailed and tightly defined data collection
 - Common rules, key concepts and definitions, breakdowns, cross-tabulations, metadata and quality reporting all defined in detailed implementing legislation
 - Reference date – any date in 2021
 - Deadline for most data to be available – March 2024
- Output harmonisation with input data based on the separate national data collections
- Countries free to use any appropriate data sources and methods
 - 11 NSIs will use administrative data sources,
 - 11 will combine administrative sources with either sample data or a limited enumeration;
 - 5 NSIs plan to use a ‘traditional’ full census enumeration - (including updated enumeration methods such as on-line/internet participation, or enumerators using electronic devices)

Initial Eurostat investigation into possible impact of the pandemic

- Initial enquiry to all EU and EFTA countries in April 2020
- Issues addressed:
 - *Problems with particular variables or breakdowns*
 - *Changes to the census reference date*
 - *Meeting the deadlines for data provision*
 - *Changes to census methodology or data sources*
- Ongoing bilateral discussions with some countries as necessary

Outline of results - 1

- ***Problems with particular variables or breakdowns***
 - Only one country highlighted a problem related to the use of survey data sources for employment-related variables
- ***Changes to the census reference date***
 - Six countries reported that some delays might be necessary
 - Estimated delay of several months
- ***Compliance with the deadlines for data provision***
 - Seven countries reported potential difficulties
 - Related to any delay in census exercise and impacting mostly on the earlier end-2022 deadline for the population grid data

Outline of results - 2

- ***Changes to census methodology or data sources***
 - Four countries reported that significant changes were being considered
 - Main reported aim was to reduce or remove any need for face-to-face interviews or enumeration by changing collection mode, with a move towards CATI and online response.
 - One country was considering more fundamental changes to the census methodology and was investigating making greater use of administrative data sources, as well as the use of online response modes.

Overall situation and conclusions

- Impact of the pandemic is clearly closely related to the data sources and methods used
- Situation is (was) still evolving
 - Countries reported that final decisions would not be made until September/October 2020 or later
 - Decisions might be subject further last-minute changes
- The situation differs greatly between countries. NSIs are best placed to decide on what, if any, changes need to be made to the national census exercises
- Eurostat will monitor this situation closely and will work on a bilateral basis with NSIs to minimise any impact on the EU census programme

Thank you



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