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Topic (iii) How to present metadata

**METADATA ON THE STATISTICAL PORTAL FOR THE BORDER REGION OF
SAARLAND – LORRAINE – LUXEMBOURG – RHINELAND-PALATINATE – WALLONIA**

Supporting Paper

Submitted by STATEC Luxembourg¹

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The so-called “Grande Région” is made up of very different regions. Four European countries are present in the region:

- Germany
- France
- Luxembourg
- Belgium (since 1994)

2. This region contains five different and highly disparate geographical entities:

- the entire French region of Lorraine
- the entire sovereign state of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
- the entire German Bundesland of the Saarland
- the entire German Bundesland of Rhineland-Palatinate
- the entire Belgian Wallonia region

3. This diversity within the Grande Région has given rise to a number of problems, requiring considerable effort to gather relevant and comparable statistical documentation. On that regional level, the statistical systems are still quite different. The task to make variables comparable is laborious and needs skilled and experienced staff. Complete, well-structured and easy accessible metadata is vital to guarantee a high transparency of the collected statistical information.

4. Since 1970, the statistical offices of the Grande Région have been working together in a permanent working group to gather comparable statistical documentation for this region. The directors of the Statistical Office of Saarland, INSEE (Lorraine), STATEC (Luxembourg), the Statistical Office of Rhineland-Palatinate and, since 1994, IWEPS (Wallonia) determine the group’s annual work programme. The results of this work can be viewed on the www.grande-region.lu website.

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II. PROJECT SUBSIDIZED BY THE INTERREG IIIC EBIRD² REGIONAL PROGRAMME

5. The future statistical portal will provide access to all harmonized economic and social data from this border region. Available from 30 November 2006, it will offer more than figures: maps, graphs, definitions, glossaries, useful addresses, bibliographical references, press releases and links will be grouped together on a single bilingual (French and German) internet site. The URL will remain unchanged from the former website:

- www.grande-region.lu
- www.grossregion.lu

6. This statistical portal will facilitate the duties of decision-makers and researchers, whilst allowing savings on funds granted for data research by researchers or consultants financed by regional, national or European authorities. The site also surveys the need for further statistical data, leading to initiatives to improve the Grande Région's statistical resources.

7. Statistical data rendered comparable by the group of statisticians are assembled thematically: territory and population, employment and unemployment, social life, income and prices, and the environment. Tables, administrative maps and graphs will be accompanied by detailed methodological notes. By selecting a title, variable, region, etc., users can display definitions, sources, units, nomenclatures and other metadata necessary to interpret the figures. Structured browsing will be assisted by a key-word search facility, comprising a thesaurus that will be updated according to the most frequently used terms by internet users.

III. THE METADATA

8. Metadata, that is, information on statistical data, are available at several levels:

- **basic information** (headings, unit, source, symbols, key words) are visible above or below the selected statistical table
- **additional information** (definitions, notes) are accessible via links in the table
- **complete methodological notes** are also accessible via the INFOTHEQUE menu

A. Basic information (see Figure 1 below)

9. Metadata essential for understanding the data presented in a table are immediately visible on the selected table. These are:

- the table's main title, and where applicable, a sub-title. The sub-title is occasionally used to provide additional information on variable features
- the unit in which the figures are expressed (number, ton, millions of euro, etc.)
- table headings in columns and rows (variable, region, etc.). Most of the tables are structured to display the five regions in columns and years in rows
- the source of data per region. This is the primary source of data, either the source organization or, if the data came from a statistical office, the relevant department or survey
- key words which have a link to the list of tables containing data on the same or related topic
- a key explaining special symbols used in the table or related metadata

² INTERREG IIIC is a programme funded by the European Union, which helps Europe's regions form partnerships to work together on common projects. e-based Inter Regional Development (e-Bird) is an initiative within that programme.

Figure 1: Basic information

| Population totale | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Evolution | | | | | | |
| Unité : Nombre | | | | | | |
| Année | Saarland | Lorraine | Luxembourg | Rheinland-Pfalz | Wallonie | Grande Région |
| 2004 | 1 058 853 | 2 330 504 | 453 300 | 4 058 737 | 3 388 220 | 11 289 614 |
| 2003 | 1 063 070 | 2 326 553 | 449 950 | 4 056 737 | 3 374 374 | 11 270 684 |
| 2002 | 1 065 390 | 2 322 250 | 446 175 | 4 051 567 | 3 363 405 | 11 248 787 |
| 2001 | 1 067 254 | 2 315 804 | 441 795 | 4 041 174 | 3 352 509 | 11 218 536 |
| 2000 | 1 069 684 | 2 313 838 | 436 570 | 4 030 400 | 3 342 987 | 11 193 479 |
| 1999 | 1 072 598 | 2 312 330 | 430 475 | 4 028 335 | 3 335 985 | 11 179 723 |
| Source | | | | | | |
| Saarland : Bevölkerungsforschreibung | | | | | | |
| Lorraine : INSEE, Estimations localisées de population | | | | | | |
| Luxembourg : population calculée par le STATEC et recensements | | | | | | |
| Rheinland-Pfalz : Bevölkerungsforschreibung | | | | | | |
| Wallonie : INS, Statistiques démographiques et recensements de la population. | | | | | | |
| Mots-clés : démographie | | | | | | |
| Légende | | | | | | |
| - Néant | | | . Donnée non disponible | | | |
| : Donnée pas encore disponible | | | e Estimation | | | |
| c Confidentiel | | | (i) Non significatif | | | |

B. Additional information (see Figure 1 above)

10. When the table heading is selected, a window opens containing a brief definition of the variables listed in the table. Where applicable, there is a link to more detailed methodological notes. To facilitate return to the initial table, these notes are displayed in a new window.

11. When the region name is selected, a window opens containing warnings and notes on regional particularities, in most cases linked to the statistical system of the relevant region.

12. When a figure inside a table is selected, a window opens containing notes on particularities of that specific figure.

13. Notes on regional particularities and information on specific figures in a table appear as footnotes on the printable version of the tables.

C. Complete methodological notes

14. A series of methodological notes, explaining in detail the concepts used, the degree of harmonization and regional differences, is accessible via two different pathways:

- through the definitions to which the table title link points (see Figure 1 and 2).
- through the main INFOTHEQUE menu, METHODOLOGY heading. This heading is structured according to the six main themes of the portal (see Figure 3 and 4)

Figure 2 – definitions



Figure 3 – methodological notes, menu

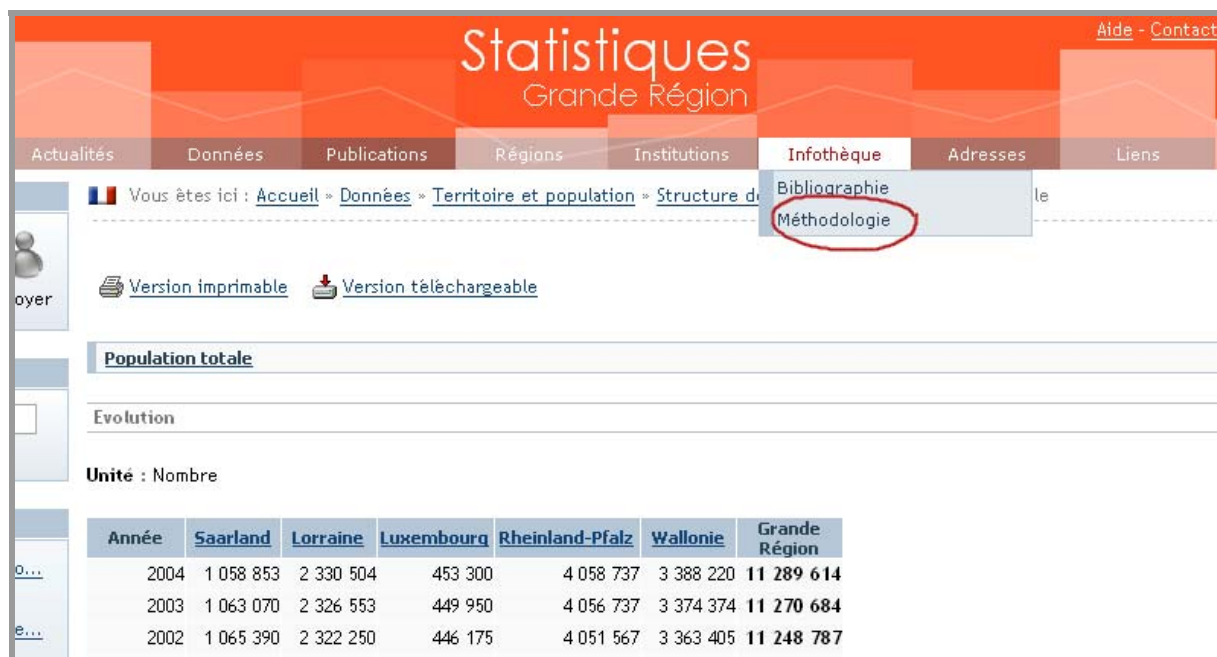
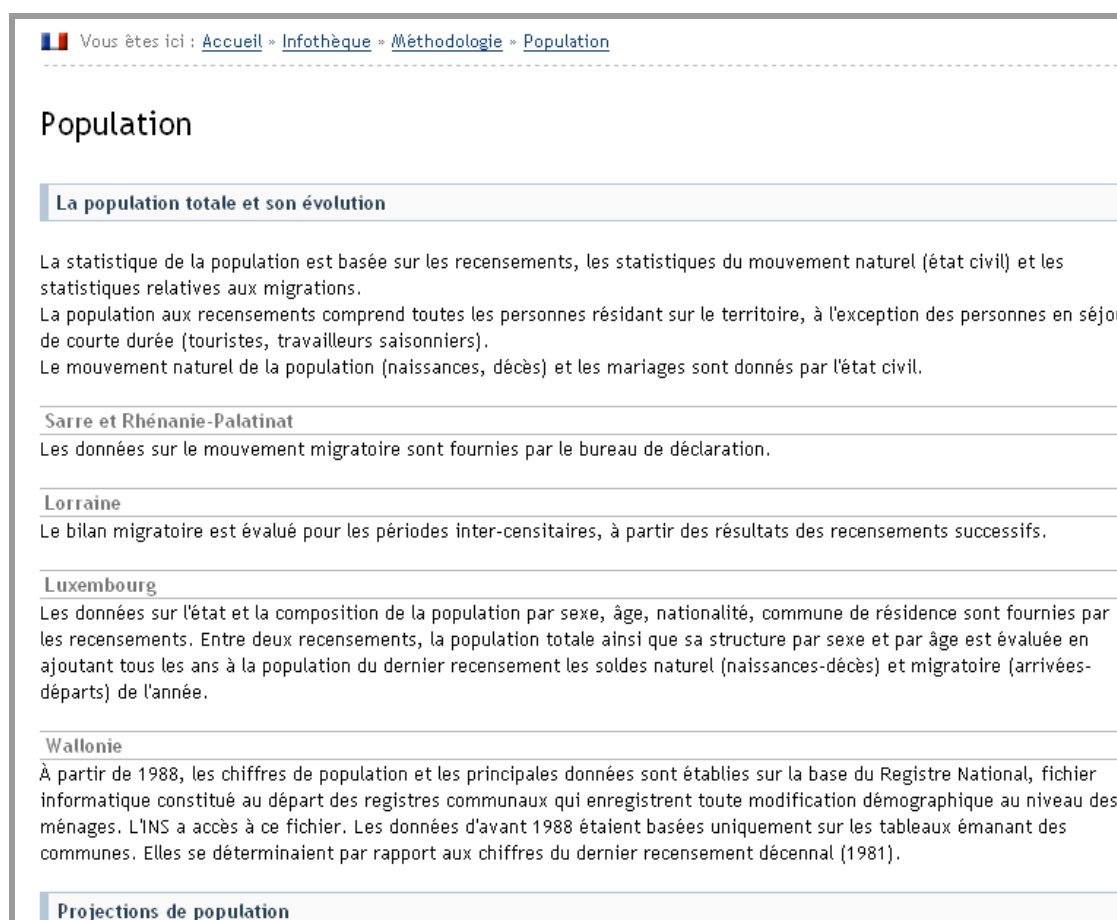


Figure 4 – methodological notes



- The results of tests and user feedback have shown that presenting metadata by directly linking it to tables and variables appears to be very user-friendly.