



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
RESTRICTED

CES/1996/R.4  
HBP/R.362  
30 October 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

---

STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE  
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE  
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

CES Forty-fourth plenary session  
(Paris, 11-13 June 1996)

**REPORT OF THE OCTOBER 1995 JOINT ECE/EUROSTAT  
WORK SESSION ON HOUSING CENSUSES**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The work session on housing censuses, convened jointly by the Conference of European Statisticians, the Committee on Human Settlements and Eurostat, was held in Geneva from 24-25 October 1995. It was attended by Albania, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom and United States. The following non-governmental organization in consultative status with ECOSOC also attended: International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP).

2. The provisional agenda (Working Paper No. 1) was adopted.

3. Mr. David Pearce (United Kingdom) was elected to chair the meeting.

4. The meeting noted the importance of the recommendations to the European Union, as they would form the base for the required output from EU member countries from the 2000 round of censuses. The outline programme and timetable for agreeing the recommendations, to be put to the 1997 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, were described. It was pointed out that participants would have a further opportunity to comment on the new draft recommendations before they were finalized.

## II. KEY AREAS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT REQUIRE UPDATING

5. Several key areas where the recommendations for the 1990 round of censuses needed to be modified in order to obtain an updated set of recommendations for the 2000 round of censuses were identified. These are outlined below.

### a) Introductory text to the housing census recommendations

6. The part of the census recommendations relating to housing censuses should be structurally separate from the part relating to population censuses. It should also have an introductory section that would go beyond paras. 158-165 of the 1990 recommendations to include other relevant topics such as methods of data collection and of enumeration, and particularly text describing problems involved in collecting information from households where the dwelling is not occupied at the time of enumeration. This additional new text should be drafted by the Working Group on Census Methods that the May 1995 ECE-Eurostat joint work session on population censuses had recommended to be established.

### b) Reaction of the meeting to concepts and classifications of living quarters being considered by the UN Statistical Division for use in the world level recommendations for the 2000 round of housing censuses

7. The participants reviewed the tentative proposals for the world level recommendations put forward by the UNSD in Working Paper No. 5. They considered that the proposals should not be considered for use in the ECE region. They noted that the notion of "permanence" of a dwelling would be difficult to operationalize in the field, particularly in cases where more traditional enumeration methods are no longer being used. They also noted that the UNSD's proposals would result in upgrading many topics to the "core" category which countries in this region viewed as being better to categorize as non-core. They also expressed strong reservations about the UNSD's proposal to make a distinction between "conventional" and "basic" dwellings on the basis of availability of "essential facilities". Participants were asked to send any further written comments to the ECE Statistical Division by 17 November. A consolidated reply would then be sent to UNSD.

### c) Placement of text dealing with "Core" and "Non-core" topics

8. The participants agreed with the conclusion reached by the participants at the May 1995 meeting on population censuses, concerning bringing together in the recommendations for the 2000 round of censuses material relating to the "core" topics and their associated "non-core" topics, so that they would be presented more closely together for readers in the new set of recommendations.

**Characteristics of private households****d) Tenure status (B.T. 14)**

9. This topic should be re-named "tenure status of households" to underline the fact that it refers to characteristics of households. It should also remain the last topic dealt with in the part of the recommendations dealing with population censuses so that it would serve as a "bridge" to the part dealing with housing censuses.

**e) Single or shared occupancy (A.T. 29)**

10. The text in the recommendations relating to non-core topic 29 should be expanded to include reference to semi-institutional types of households that fall between private and institutional households, such as those that live in sheltered housing. The text should read as follows:

There is an increasing amount of accommodation which is being provided for the elderly, the disabled, and other special groups which falls between an institutional and a private household, in that meals can be taken communally or by each household with its own cooking facilities. Such accommodation includes sheltered housing. It is recommended that if at least half the population living in such accommodation possess their own cooking facilities, they should be treated as private households and, if possible, identified separately in the output.

**f) Durable consumer goods possessed by household (A.T. 31)**

11. The meeting noted that the present Recommendations contain no descriptive text concerning this topic and agreed it would be useful to have such a text.

12. With the purpose of getting some qualitative indicators on the households' levels of living, a number of durable goods in the possession of the household might be surveyed. The recommended list of durable goods include:

- washing machine
- refrigerator
- deep-freeze
- television (specification colour or black and white).

**Number of cars available for the use of household (A.T. 32)**

13. It is recommended that this topic cover the number of cars and vans normally available for use by members of the household, including any car and van provided by an employer if available for use by the household but excluding vans used solely for carrying goods. The following classification is recommended:

- 1.0 No car
- 2.0 One car
- 3.0 Two or more cars

**Characteristics of housing units and other living quarters**

**g) Type of ownership (B.T. 15)**

14. Several participants recommended that in the classification of dwellings, at the optional two-digit level, there should be a category of dwellings owned by local or central government and/or by housing non-profit associations, as an important indicator of social housing policy.

**h) Occupancy status (B.T. 18)**

15. It was agreed that in this part of the recommendations the following new text should be added to cover non-occupied dwellings of a secondary or seasonal use:

Occupancy status provides a measure of whether dwellings are occupied by usual residents, used as a second home or for seasonal/holiday purposes and not on the housing market or vacant. A particular problem is to assess the status of a dwelling which is not occupied at census time. However to provide the above classification of occupancy status, every effort should be made to distinguish between those dwellings where the usual residents are absent (1.0), those dwellings which are vacant (new or old) (2.0) and those dwellings used for seasonal or secondary use (3.0). Where a household returns a form, but there are no usual residents, the dwelling should be classified to 3.0; a tenure of owner occupied would indicate a second home and any other tenure would indicate seasonal use.

**i) Number of rooms (B.T. 21)**

16. Despite the different approach taken by ECE countries in defining a "room" due to varying national requirements, it was agreed that for the purpose of international comparability countries should follow the recommendations for this topic shown in the ECE recommendations for the 1990 round of censuses.

**j) Useful and/or living floor space (A.T.34)**

17. It was agreed that the definition of these topics given in the 1993 Programme of Current Housing and Building Statistics for Countries in the ECE region should be used in the census recommendations, as follows:

Useful floor space is the floor space of dwellings measured inside the outer walls, excluding non-habitable cellars, attics and, in multi-dwelling houses, all common spaces.

Living floor space is the total floor space of rooms falling under the concept of "room" as defined in para. 176 of the ECE recommendations for the 1990 round of censuses.

**k) Toilet facilities (B.T. 24) and Type of sewage disposal system (A.T. 37)**

18. Attention of the meeting was called to the fact that the European Programme of Current Housing Statistics (EPCHS) has revised definitions and classifications concerning these (and other) topics. It was agreed that these revised definitions and classifications should also be used in the revision of the housing census recommendations.

19. Mr. Pieter Everaers of the Netherlands agreed to cross-check the 1993 EPCHS and the draft recommendations for housing censuses for consistency and comparability.

**l) Main type of energy for heating (A.T. 38)**

20. It was agreed that in the case of housing with central heating, residents would not usually have information on the type of energy used and this additional topic would not be relevant.

21. In order to cover new sources of energy now being used in some countries, it was agreed that the category "5.0 Other" be further subdivided into

- 5.1 Solar energy
- 5.2 Wind energy
- 5.3 Geothermal energy
- 5.4 Others

**m) Insulation (A.T. 39)**

22. The meeting agreed that since there was insufficient user interest in this topic, it should be deleted from the recommendations.

**n) Telephone (A.T. 42)**

23. The meeting agreed to move this topic and place it after A.T. 32 (Number of cars available for the use of the household) so that the information on the availability of a telephone is viewed in relation to the household rather than to the housing unit. In doing so, a new text would be needed for it. A suggestion was also made that some thought be given to including information on the availability of mobile telephones and fax machines in the households. The text could mention the need to collect information on the availability of telephones as a measure of a household's ability to communicate with the rest of society.

**o) Position of dwelling in the building (A.T. 43)**

24. The meeting noted that there was no descriptive text accompanying this topic and agreed that it would be useful to have one.

**p) Lift (A.T. 47)**

25. The meeting noted that more information on this topic was needed, for example, on whether the lift could be accessed from the same floor on which the housing unit was situated. This information was particularly important for the provision of facilities for the handicapped and for elderly persons. It was proposed that the end of para 258 should read "... significance unless information is available on whether or not the lift stops on the same floor as the dwelling. It could also be useful to collect information on the size of the lift (for use by handicapped persons and ambulance transport), and if the lift goes to the ground floor."

**Characteristics of buildings containing dwellings**

**q) Period of construction (B.T. 28)**

26. The meeting noted that age of building alone is not a good indicator of the condition of a building. For example, a building which is thought to be very old by the criterion of its year of construction might be in a very good condition because significant improvements or repair works have been made to it. It was therefore felt that a topic could be usefully included, if appropriate, along the lines of the topic 'State of repair' of the World Recommendations as a non-core topic.

27. It was also agreed that the periods of construction should be grouped in broader intervals and, of course, be brought up to date. The following classification of dwellings by the period in which the construction of the building containing them was completed is recommended:

- 1.0 Before 1946
  - 1.1 Before 1919
  - 1.2 1919-1945
- 2.0 1946-1960
- 3.0 1961-1970
- 4.0 1971-1980
- 5.0 1981-1990
- 6.0 1991-1995
  - 6.1 1991
  - 6.2 1992
  - 6.3 1993
  - 6.4 1994
  - 6.5 1995
- 7.0 1996 and later
  - 7.1 1996
  - 7.2 1997
  - 7.3 1998
  - 7.4 1999
  - 7.5 2000

This classification is basic at the one digit level. As a non-core topic, consideration could also be given to collecting information on it through an open-ended question. If no exact reply is obtained, the household should be asked to indicate the approximate years (or year) in brackets following a classification which could be aggregated into the above specified classification.

r) **Materials of which specific parts of the building are constructed (A.T. 48)**

28. A suggestion was made to introduce a new category to cover buildings which use a combination of building materials for its structure; that is to say, add "5.0 mixed materials" to para 260.

s) **Tabulations**

29. Countries were invited to send their comments on the tables in the recommendations relating to housing to the secretariat by 17 November 1995.

t) **Other**

30. It was suggested that to improve the presentation of the Recommendations, the list of topics on pages 5-7 of the Recommendations for the 1990 round of censuses should also indicate the paragraph numbers in which the relevant text can be found for each topic.

**III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

31. The report of the meeting was adopted by the participants at the meeting's closing session on 25 October 1995.