

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE TASK FORCE ON FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

Approved by the CES Bureau at its 19-20 October meeting (document ECE/CES/BUR/2006/OCT/6)

I. BACKGROUND

1. Families and households statistics was highlighted as one of the emerging topics in social statistics at the first joint UNECE-Eurostat-OECD Meeting of Directors of Social Statistics. Different forms of living arrangements such as same-sex couples, living apart together, commuters between households (people with multiple residences), persons living apart but within a network were discussed as family and household types that are becoming more and more relevant in modern societies and that need to be defined at international and regional levels. These areas were also identified as a field where common survey modules could be designed. During the discussion, it was also pointed out that understanding of family background and history is of increasing policy concern as it affects social outputs of individuals, such as education and employment.

2. The existing UNECE Task Force on families and households has worked in the past two years to update the section on families and households of the CES Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing. During this work, major problems were identified in measuring reconstituted families and in identifying a distinguishing line between private and institutional households. While reconstituted families have always existed caused by widowhood, the current challenge is to map those caused by union dissolution followed by repartnering.

II. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

3. Within the overall objective of improving the relevance of families and households statistics, the Task Force is expected to:

- define the concepts related to policy concerns that would include the new forms of families and households¹ to the issues related to family background;
- design common survey prototypes to measure new forms of families and households to test in selected ECE countries;
- assess the feasibility of implementing the concept for administrative data or survey use in the UNECE region after taking into account the results of the testing.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK-FORCE

4. The Task Force will carry out the following activities:

- i) prepare a work plan for delivering the outputs outlined above;

¹ Reconstituted families, same-sex couples, living apart together, people with multiple residences, persons living within a family or social network.

- ii) identify the families and households forms that are “emerging” and relevant for a better measurement of family background. This includes the review of research and analysis carried out in the region in the field of families and households and the definition of those forms of family engagements that are increasingly affecting the living arrangements of people in the ECE region;
- iii) analyze the existing international and regional standards and their relevance to measurement of the emerging forms of families and households;
- iv) analyze countries’ practices in measuring emerging forms of families and households. Survey modules used in national statistical offices to measure the emerging forms of families and households will be reviewed together with large scale studies undertaken by other relevant institutions such as Eurostat (EU SILC, EU LFS) and ECE PAU (GGP);
- v) design a survey prototype to measure the emerging forms of families and households in the UNECE region;
- vi) develop a testing protocol, organize and coordinate the testing of the survey prototype in different countries;
- vii) study the applicability of the module to data collected through administrative records
- viii) evaluate the testing of the survey prototype and finalize the survey module to be presented at the Meeting of ECE Directors of Social Statistics.

IV. TIME-TABLE FOR ACTIVITIES AND INTERMEDIATE OUTPUTS

September 2006	Work plan finalized and submitted to the Social Statistics Task Force
December 2006	Definition of emerging forms of families and households
April 2007	Analysis of countries’ experience and existing international standards finalized
July 2007	Draft survey prototype developed
September 2007	Draft survey prototype and testing protocol presented to the UNECE Meeting of Directors of Social Statistics
June 2008	Field testing in selected countries finalized
September 2008	Analysis of testing results presented at the UNECE Meeting of Directors of Social Statistics

V. MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE

5. Italy (chair), Armenia, Australia, Canada, Finland, Hungary, Norway, United States and UNECE.