



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

HBP/2001/5
21 June 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Sixty-second session

Geneva, 17-19 September 2001

(Item 4 (f) of the provisional agenda)

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS STATISTICS

Note prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau
and the delegation of the Netherlands

Background

1. At its sixtieth session in September 1999, the Committee invited the secretariat and the Bureau to consider possibilities for setting up a UNECE housing-policy-related database with information drawn from national housing and land administration authorities (ECE/HBP/114, para. 12 (e) (iii)). In September 2000, the Committee agreed to organize an informal consultation to consider possibilities for coordinating activities on housing statistics undertaken in UNECE (Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America) and the European Union (Housing Statistics in the European Union). In consultation with the Bureau, it was decided to consider this issue at the meetings of the Bureau in consultation with the delegation of the Netherlands. The present note was prepared as a result of the discussions at the Bureau's meetings in February and May 2001.

I. COMPARATIVE INFORMATION ON THE UNECE BULLETIN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION'S BOOKLET ON HOUSING STATISTICS

2. The UNECE Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America provides basic annual data on housing and building in Europe, Canada and the United States of America. It was started in 1956. It provides Statistical data on: population and households; dwelling stock; new dwellings; construction of non-residential buildings; value of construction; building firms; building materials; gross domestic product (GDP) and gross fixed capital formation; prices; costs; and rents.

3. These statistics are compiled by the secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe from replies to questionnaires supplied by 55 UNECE countries or from official national statistical publications. Data are given according to commonly agreed definitions which have been worked out under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians and the UNECE Committee on Human Settlements. Where individual series differ from the agreed definitions, this is indicated in footnotes. The Bulletin is intended to provide comparative data for the analysis of trends and policies in the field of human settlements, periodic surveys and special studies on UNECE countries.

4. Since 1992, six issues of the booklet on Housing Statistics in the European Union have been compiled by the Ministry for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands and published by the European Commission. The booklet is the result of an intensive cooperative effort of the housing ministries of all 15 member States of the European Union. The Ministry of the Environment of Finland has indicated its willingness to take over the lead in preparing the next edition of this publication, which is due in 2001.

5. The data in the booklet are drawn from different international and national statistical publications. Some data, particularly in the first five issues, could be considered more as indicators than as statistics. Now work has been done to prepare common definitions for this booklet. Chapter 1 presents some general demographic and economic data. Chapter 2 provides information on dwelling quality. Chapter 3 contains information on new construction activities. The final chapter 4 deals with some financial aspects of housing. Figures on rent indices and price indices of dwellings are provided, along with some data on mortgage lending.

6. A comparative analysis indicates that most data are available in both publications. The UNECE Bulletin contains the following data which are not published in the EU booklet: (a) new non-residential construction; (b) building materials (production, export, import); and (c) structure of the building industry (by output and firm size).

7. The EU booklet presents the following data which are not found in the UNECE Bulletin, but could be of interest to all UNECE countries: (a) financial and economic aspects of housing; (b) population forecast and age; (c) migration and asylum seekers; (d) GDP per capita; (e) dwelling stock-principal dwellings; vacant dwellings; one-family dwellings in the total housing stock. This type of these housing-related data would also be useful for other countries in the UNECE region.

II. PROPOSED UNECE ACTIVITY TO SUPPLEMENT ITS BULLETIN

8. In view of the ongoing socio-economic transition and European integration and the pressing need for national and international studies on the housing situation in the UNECE region, the UNECE Bulletin should be supplemented with some of the data presented in the EU booklet (as indicated in para. 7 above). Some of those data (for example, on economic and financial aspects of housing) might not be available in official statistics. In such cases the housing ministries could be invited to submit estimates. All delegations could propose other indicators which they think are useful.

9. The data from countries in transition will be collected by the UNECE secretariat. Then the UNECE secretariat, in cooperation with the delegation of Finland (which will add similar data on EU countries), will prepare and publish a consolidated paper with housing statistics and indicators for all UNECE countries for submission to the UNECE Committee on Human Settlements.

10. The Committee may wish to:

(a) Collect on a regular basis (annually, or every two or five years) a set of housing statistics/indicators (subject to regular revision and approval by the Committee) and publish it as a supplement to the UNECE Bulletin in the form of a working document for the Committee's sessions; the secretariat, with the assistance of consultants, may prepare regular analytical papers on the basis of these data for presentation to the Committee;

(b) Organize an informal consultation of interested delegations before the end of 2001.

11. To assist the Committee in this endeavour, a tentative set of data (in the form of a questionnaire) for compilation by the Committee in 2002 is presented in the annex below. All delegations from non-EU countries are invited to reply to this questionnaire before 1 September 2001 so that the secretariat can summarize the replies for the Committee. In their replies the delegations are invited to inform the secretariat if they could submit such data for publication.

Annex

QUESTIONNAIRE ON HOUSING STATISTICS AND INDICATORS
TO BE COLLECTED BY HOUSING MINISTRIES

National delegations are invited to indicate if it would be possible for them to provide statistical data (or estimates) on the following items

(if data from official sources are not available, estimates should be provided).

Replies to the questionnaire should be submitted to the

UNECE secretariat by 1 September 2001.

Type of data	Official statistical data	Source	Estimates (if statistical data not available)
1. Principal dwellings			
2. Vacant dwellings			
3. One-family houses as a percentage of the total dwelling stock			
4. Social rental dwellings as a percentage of newly completed dwellings			
5. Average housing expenditure			
6. Price index of social rental dwellings			
7. Price index of private rental dwellings			
8. Interest rate for several private mortgages			
9. Outstanding residential mortgage debt as a percentage of GDP			
10. Please suggest any other housing indicator(s) which could be useful to monitor housing development, particularly in countries in transition			