

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**  
**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses**  
(Geneva, 30 September – 2 October 2015)

**INFORMATION NOTE FOR PARTICIPANTS**

The Meeting will be held in room V at the Palais des Nations, Geneva.

It will start at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, 30 September 2015  
and finish on Friday, 2 October by 5:30 p.m.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Eurostat are jointly organizing a Meeting of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses from 30 September to 2 October 2015. The Meeting will be held in room V (1<sup>st</sup> floor, nearest entrance doors are A11 and C6) at the Palais des Nations, Avenue de la Paix 8, Geneva.

2. Immediately before the Meeting, on 28-29 September, UNECE will organize a Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

**II. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

3. The main purpose of the Meeting is to discuss about lessons learnt from the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, plans for the 2020 round of censuses, and issues related to the implementation of the new *Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*, that are expected to be adopted by the CES at its June 2015 Plenary Session (the draft Recommendations are available here: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38920#/>). The Meeting is organized under the CES work programme on population and housing censuses.

4. The target audience of the Meeting includes census managers and experts responsible for various aspects of census planning and management in national statistical offices and census agencies.

**III. AGENDA OF THE MEETING**

5. The programme of the Meeting will consist of the following substantive topics:

1. Efficient approaches for the census in a time of increasing financial constraints
2. Innovations planned for 2020 census round, and results of tests
3. Expected issues in complying with the new CES Recommendations (particularly by countries using registers or surveys) and results of work to address them
4. Experiences with census users: who they are, what they need, how they are involved
5. Grid statistics: opportunities and challenges

6. Detailed explanatory notes on the above topics are provided below.

### ***1. Efficient approaches for the census in a time of increasing financial constraints***

7. In most countries, also as a consequence of the continuing international financial crisis, NSOs and census agencies face increasing financial constraints, like other administrations. As a result, population and housing censuses, like other surveys, have often to be conducted with limited budget, and in certain cases with significant budget reductions compared to previous censuses. In some countries the census budget is approved only at a relatively late stage of the census preparations. In these cases, in planning the census some contingency plans have to be foreseen to deal with the case that the budget actually allocated is lower than the budget originally expected.

8. At the same time, when censuses include partial or full field data collection, this is often complicated by the increasing difficulty to enumerate specific population groups, the increasing reluctance of the population to participate in the enumeration, and in some countries by the voluntary character of the participation in the census. In order to address these issues, census planners need to take specific measures, which may require additional costs.

9. In this context, most countries have taken or are planning to take initiatives to reduce the census costs. They may include changing census methodology (for instance using available data from registers in order to reduce data collection costs), adopting alternative enumeration methods (for instance, using the mail instead of enumerators for delivery or collection of forms), or adopting innovative technology (internet response, paperless technology or handheld devices for field operations). They may also include transformational strategies where NSOs use the census to transform/share services (like data collection) across all parts of the organisation.

10. In this session countries are expected to share experiences on approaches and strategies developed with the objective of reducing the census budget, or limiting its increase. Technical aspects related to methodological or technological solutions would be covered under item 2, presented below.

### ***2. Innovations planned for 2020 census round, and results of tests***

11. Information on national practices in the 2010 census round shows clearly that a significant number of UNECE countries, particularly in Western Europe, have adopted an alternative methodology, often for the first time, in most cases making use of data from registers. Innovative census technologies, such as the internet response, have been implemented in a number of countries and have become the main enumeration method in some of them. It is expected that this trend will continue for the 2020 census round, with even more countries conducting a register-based or combined census, offering the internet response, or implementing other innovative methods or technologies.

12. In this session countries will discuss their plans for the 2020 census round with regard in particular to alternative census methodology, enumeration methods and innovative technology. The results of tests, when available, will be presented, so that the experiences of single countries will be evaluated, discussed and possibly compared with those from other countries.

### ***3. Expected issues in complying with the new CES Recommendations (particularly by countries using registers or surveys) and results of work to address them***

13. The new CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round are expected to be adopted by CES in June 2015. In this session, countries will discuss various issues that they expect to face in relation to planning and conducting the next census in compliance with the new CES Recommendations. It can be expected that a number of issues could be faced in particular by countries that plan to use data from registers or sample surveys, although the new Recommendations have been drafted taking into account the increasing variability of census methods and data sources used by countries. Other issues that can be expected to be discussed in this session may refer to specific changes in the Recommendations with regard to definitions, classifications or status (core or non-core) of selected census topics.

#### ***4. Experiences with census users: who they are, what they need, how they are involved***

14. An important dimension of quality in statistics is the relevance of statistical information, defined as the degree to which it meets the needs of users. One of the challenges for the census is to try to satisfy as much as possible user requirements, taking into account resource limitations and other constraints. It is therefore very important for census planners to know who the census users are, to communicate with them to understand what are their needs, and to involve them in the various stages of the census process, from the content development to the dissemination phase.

15. In this session, countries will exchange their experiences with census users, and present good practices that could be followed by other countries. For instance, knowing the benefits that users have derived from the census, and quantifying their financial value could be used as part of the business case for the census, especially in the context of tightening budgets.

16. Various categories of users will be considered as far as possible with their specific needs, including users of census data within the NSOs (for instance, those who produce population estimates and projections).

#### ***5. Grid statistics: opportunities and challenges***

17. One of the new topics introduced for the first time in the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round is the *population grid*, based on one square kilometre grid cells. Although this is a derived non-core topic, countries are urged to consider adopting the use of grid square data (for EU countries, grid referenced statistics is considered a priority for development in social statistics). Some countries have already accumulated experience in producing grid statistics as outputs of their censuses, while others still have limited experience. The session will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences, presents results, discuss opportunities and challenges.

### **IV. PARTICIPATION, ACCREDITATION AND REGISTRATION FOR THE MEETING**

18. The Meeting is open to representatives of all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Representatives of other Member States of the United Nations, specialized agencies of the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may also participate in a consultative capacity, according to the terms of reference of UNECE (E/ECE/778/Rev.3, paras. 11, 12 and 13). All delegates must be accredited by the competent authority of their country or international organization.

19. All participants should register online **by 1 September 2015** through this link: <http://bit.ly/1xu7lfs>. Please copy the link in the common browsers like Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome. The online meeting registration guideline is available at: <https://www2.unece.org/wiki/display/OMR/Online+Meeting+Registration+Guidelines>. Should you have any questions, please contact the UNECE secretariat, email [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org) or tel +41 22 917 4147.

20. All participants attending the Meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible at the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the participants reside, with reference to the UNECE/Eurostat Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses. If necessary, the UNECE secretariat can provide a letter to facilitate obtaining a visa.

21. To enter the Palais des Nations, all participants need to obtain a security pass (ID badge). For this purpose, please present yourself with your passport and the original registration form at the UN Security Identification Office at the Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations (Avenue de la Paix 14, 1210 Geneva; buses 8, F, V, Z and 28, stop Appia). The Security Identification Office is open

Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (non-stop). For identification and security reasons, delegates are requested to wear their security badges at all times at the Palais des Nations.

22. Maps of Geneva and information for visitors to the Palais des Nations are available on the following web page: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>. The same web page includes a map of the Palais des Nations (click on “UN Map”) with indication of the UN Security Identification Office at the Pregny Gate entrance.

## V. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND LANGUAGES

23. The working languages of the Meeting are English, French and Russian; simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the three languages.

24. All participants are welcome to submit a paper for any topic on the agenda. Papers can be submitted in English, French or Russian. Authors of papers submitted in French or Russian are encouraged to provide a short abstract in English (maximum one page), if possible. The papers will be disseminated in the language in which they will be submitted. If resources allow, papers will be translated and disseminated also in other languages.

25. **The following deadlines and requirements apply:**

- Interested national statistical offices and other government bodies should inform the UNECE secretariat (email to [paolo.valente@unece.org](mailto:paolo.valente@unece.org)) of their intention to contribute a paper (please indicate the topic of the paper and attach a short abstract) by **15 May 2015**.
- The full final versions of papers, not exceeding 15 pages including charts, annexes and references, should be sent to the UNECE secretariat in Word format by **22 June 2015**.
- Presenters are encouraged to use power point presentations, and to send them to the UNECE Secretariat by **15 September 2015**.
- Papers and presentations should be submitted electronically to Mr. Paolo Valente ([paolo.valente@unece.org](mailto:paolo.valente@unece.org))

26. All papers will be made available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following location: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37903#/>

27. Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website and bring their own copies to the Meeting. Documents posted on the web page before the Meeting will not be distributed in the conference room.

## VI. ACCOMMODATION

28. Participants are requested to make their own accommodation arrangements. The UNECE secretariat in Geneva is not in a position to provide such services to participants. Participants are advised to book hotel accommodation well in advance of the meeting since available rooms may be limited due to other meetings and events taking place in Geneva. The following information is also available:

- The closest hotel to Palais des Nations is the 5-Star Intercontinental.
- Cornavin, Suisse, Les Nations are four-star hotels and within 7-10 minutes to the Palais des Nations by buses 8, 5, 28, F, V, Z and tram 15.
- There are several three-star and four-star hotels near Cornavin, the main train station. These hotels are moderate in price and are 10 minutes by bus or tram and 25-30 minutes on foot from the Palais des Nations. Examples include: Eden, Manotel, Mon Repos, des Alpes, International and Terminus, Montana, Savoy, Suisse, and Windsor. Hotel Ibis Genève Centre Nations is in Grand Pre is in 5 minutes by bus.

## VII. FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN GENEVA

29. Geneva International Airport offers incoming passengers a free ticket for public transport. The free tickets are available from a machine in the airport's baggage collection area and allow you to use any public transport (train, tram, bus) in Geneva and surrounding areas for a period of 80 minutes. Look for the machine pictured below after collecting your luggage and before walking out through the customs area.



30. The Geneva Airport is approximately 4 kilometres from the city centre. The train is the most efficient way to get into the city. Follow the signs to the airport railway station from the arrivals area. All trains leaving from the airport stop at the central Geneva-Cornavin station. The journey takes six minutes. The buses 5 and 28 will bring you from the airport to the Place des Nations.

31. Taxis are readily available from the airport. They are metered, so costs will vary, the journey from the airport into the city centre will usually cost around CHF 30.

32. When checking-in at your hotel you should receive a free [Geneva Transport Card](#), enabling you to use the entire Geneva public transport system free of charge throughout your stay.

33. Tourist and public transport information is available at the Unireso information desk in the airport arrival hall after you go through customs. More information on Geneva's free public transport initiative is available from:

- Public transport from Geneva Airport: <http://www.gva.ch/en/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-62/>
- Free Geneva Transport Card: <http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/en/useful-information/how-to-get-around/geneva-transport-card/>

## VIII. CURRENCY

34. The exchange rate of the euro and the Swiss franc is now around 1.06 francs per 1 euro and is subject to daily market fluctuations. For conversion rate please consult <http://www.ubs.com/1/e/index/bcqv/calculator.html>. Currency exchange facilities are available in the city centre and at the UBS bank branch at Palais des Nations, located on the ground floor of C building (door C6). It is open from 8:30 to 16:30, with no lunch break, from Monday to Friday.

## IX. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

35. Should you have any questions regarding the information provided above, please contact:

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