



Generations &  
Gender Programme



## Report

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# **16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Generations and Gender Programme Council of Partners UNECE International Working Group**

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Paris, France

*23 October 2019*



**UNECE**

## Participation

There were GGP team representatives from 21 countries (Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland). Together with representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) and the Population Europe/Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR), the meeting had a total of 40 participants (see list of participants on: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52229>).

### 1. Opening

The Council of Partners (CoP) meeting took place on 23 October 2019 (afternoon), on the day preceding the Fifth GGP User Conference. The meeting was chaired by Zsolt Spéder (Hungarian Demographic Research Institute), the Chair of the Council of Partners. Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE, helped to moderate the discussion and procedural matters. Following the round of participants' introduction and the welcoming remarks by UNECE and the Chair of the Council of Partners, the meeting participants adopted the proposed agenda and the minutes of the last meeting.<sup>1</sup> Meeting participants were reminded that on the UNECE Population Unit website - <http://www.unece.org/population/ggp.html> - they can access the reports and presentations of all the GGP Council of Partners meetings (previously International Working Group) since its establishment in 2000.

### 2. Report from the GGP Coordination Team

The report from the GGP Coordination team was presented by Anne Gauthier, Director of the GGP Coordination Team (CT), Judith Koops, Researcher and Tom Emery, Deputy Director.

**Anne Gauthier** opened this item by referring briefly to the history of GGP and its now evolving status as a Research Infrastructure. She contrasted the long processing times of the survey data collected manually by “pen & paper” in early 2000s with the present-day technology used for GGS in Belarus and Kazakhstan that allowed for nearly immediate data access for verification and use.

She noted that as a research infrastructure, GGP is governed and financed by a Consortium of 15 leading institutes in demography and population studies from 11 countries and UNECE with a Steering Committee director and members leading the work. At the operational level, GGP is organized as distributive research infrastructure with the *NIDI hub* at the centre providing direction and management, fieldwork coordination, data harmonization, liaison and development, and three nodes: *INED* in charge of data documentation and dissemination, contextual database; *UNECE*, acting as secretariat to the Council of Partners; and *BiB* (German Federal Institute for Population Research) coordinating new questionnaire testing.

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<sup>1</sup> The report of the 2018 meeting (in Brussels) may be found at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=49343>

**Judith Koops** updated on the work done by Coordination team since the GGP Council of Partners meeting in June 2018.<sup>2</sup> She referred to a number of new data releases, including:

- Pre-Harmonized Wave 1 and Wave 2 Polish data on employment history, migration experience, importance of religion.
- Swedish Wave 2 data update with register-based information for all respondents in the Wave 1 - rich dataset also with retrospective information.
- Wave 3 data for the Netherlands, Hungary and France (to be released soon), available also via NESSTAR.
- Data from a new round of GGS – Belarus data released in 2018, Kazakhstan’s expected in 2020 and the team of the Republic of Moldova will start data collection in 2020.
- Harmonized Histories – collection of data from already existing surveys that combines them based on factors common to the survey (childbearing and partnership histories, education, etc.). Presently it covers 22 countries and includes 26 datasets with new additions from the Netherlands 2013 and Canada 2006. Datasets for Canada 2011 and Spain 2018 are to be released in 2020.

The Coordination Team also informed about the new release of contextual database (CDB) that focuses on core indicators at national level grouped under four blocks: demography, economy, gender, welfare and education. Data are mainly obtained from international databases and is expected to be updated annually. The previous CDB remains available via the new platform.

The members of the Council of Partners were reminded that GGP follows the four guiding principles that enhance the value of scientific data: findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable (FAIR). GGP is transparent by publishing meta data for all datasets, for instance; archives the data to increase findability inside and outside of Family Demography; and its datasets have now a unique identifier – Digital Object Identifier (DOI).

Activities in the area of communication and dissemination were reported by distinguishing two target groups:

- Communication with policy makers – CT collaboration with the Population Europe was the key in this area. Two discussion papers on gender inequality and migrant families were published and a policy paper outlining to policy makers the role of the three main infrastructures that follow people: Eurocohort, GGP, and SHARE was prepared jointly. In addition, two expert meetings, one in Berlin and another in London where organized with participation of policy makers.
- Communications with researchers – GGP fieldwork issues were discussed at the four regional GGP meetings (Croatia, Mexico, Norway, Shanghai). A webinar on ‘Joining GGS2020’ aiming to help countries to get involved in GGP is available on the GGP website. To familiarize researchers with the GGP advanced work and enhance its visibility, GGP was represented also at the 2019 European Survey Research Conference (ESRA) in Zagreb, Croatia and at the 2018 European Population Conference (EPC) in Brussels, Belgium and similar activities are planned for EPC 2020 in Padova, Italy.

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<sup>2</sup> For details see presentation on [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/ggp/iwg/Paris/CCTupdateCoPParis2019\\_v3.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/ggp/iwg/Paris/CCTupdateCoPParis2019_v3.pdf)

As regards dissemination, the number of titles in the bibliography was on the rise as was a number of unique data users (increased by 4 per cent), GGP social media presence increased by 71 per cent while number of Newsletter readers declined. The latter development might be due to the fact that Twitter is now extensively used to disseminate information and flag promotional material. CoP members were encouraged to update and enter information on their recent publications. NESSTAR – had a steady number of visits, the peaks of which usually coincide with the new data release. Further development of data animations for engagement of those not necessarily interested in GGP and those on Twitter was also described.

**Tom Emery** first briefly reported on some innovative aspects of current GGP work based on collaboration with other research infrastructures – ESS and SHARE, others. For instance, the translation management tool (TMT) that GGP now uses comes from SHARE. SSHOC grant survey innovations like audio recordings are done in collaboration with ESS and European Values Survey team. He then provided some updates and insights on the completed/ongoing fieldwork matters:

- *Completed or ongoing: Belarus:* fieldwork completed in 2017, data released in 2018; *Kazakhstan:* fieldwork completed in 2018, data release is planned for 2020. Used same questionnaire as Belarus, with a sample of over 15000; challenging environment and diverse fieldwork conditions; fielded in both Kazakh and Russian.
- *Pilot studies completed:* testing Push to Web and trying to evaluate if a Web-First approach could be used for GGS (in some or all countries). Study aimed to look at costs, modes and viable protocols in three countries: Germany – has high interview costs, low response rate (31.4%); Portugal - poor sampling frame, low internet penetration; Croatia - good sample but low internet penetration. Pilots also included some experiments – incentives (Germany), contact protocols and household respondent selection (Portugal and Croatia) with varying success. Works best where there are individual-level sampling frames; primary concern to see how this affects data quality and response rates.
- GGS fielding in Belarus and Kazakhstan as well as pilot findings fed into *evaluation of GGS questionnaire* by the Task Force. The final questionnaire is presently available online and will be uploaded on the Translation Management Tool (TMT) which is open to all countries. Coordination of translations is encouraged. Also, any deviation from the original version has to be marked and communicated to the GGP Coordination Team. Updated technical guidelines will be uploaded in December 2019.
- Wave 2 questionnaire is ready for consultation with the national teams, in particular as regards all the essential elements of longitudinal study and possible innovations.

In response to Sweden's question about consultation on questionnaire Anne Gauthier clarified that consultation is only about Wave 2 questionnaire which is a follow-up on the Wave 1 and therefore more condensed and subsequently could be opened for some innovation.

### 3. Country progress reports

Zsolt Spéder, Chair of the meeting, invited country teams to update the Council of Partners on the work done and preparations for running the GGS2020. He firstly gave the floor to

Tom Emery, CT, who presented a brief summary of the information received from countries prior to the meeting.<sup>3</sup>

The Coordination Team received updates from 21 countries, some information was also provided by Argentina, Latvia, Republic of Moldova and Romania. Altogether, 31 statements of intent to take part in GGP 2020 have been received by CT and about a third of countries indicated that the funding for the Wave 1 has been identified. Funding remains a significant issue but there are also other less important obstacles to GGS fieldwork such as low political interest or lack of information. Six country teams reported about the GGP being included (or have applied for inclusion) in their National Roadmaps for research infrastructures.

*National updates:*

### **Croatia**

Ivan Čipin confirmed that Statement of intent has been signed and the national GGP team established. The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy of Croatia demonstrates high political interest. The possibility to get funding from EU structural reforms support programme is explored, though the European Social Fund application seems more likely to be successful that would allow for 3 longitudinal rounds. Croatia's national roadmap for research infrastructures will be revised in 2020.

### **Czech Republic**

Martin Kreidl confirmed a continued interest in fielding GGS in particular by Masaryk University that supports the national GGP team. Fundraising campaign is ongoing but without positive results yet. Internationally coordinated fundraising, if possible, would be most useful. National Roadmap for research infrastructures will be reviewed in 2021. There is a strong local pressure to integrate social science infrastructures (SHARE, ESS), adding a new infrastructure to map is not considered wise. Integrating activities between infrastructures are difficult. On the other hand, there is political support for GGP's ESFRI inclusion as preliminary talks with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs indicate.

### **Estonia**

Leen Rahnu mentioned that four institutions are collaborating in the national GGP team: Estonian Institute for Population studies, Tallinn University, Tartu University and Statistical Committee of Estonia. Good relationship is established with the Ministry of Social Affairs. GGP has been included in the National Roadmap for research infrastructures in spring 2019. The national team applied for funding for fielding a GGS and plans for timing three waves in the following manner: 2021, 2024, 2027. Estonia approached to be part of the GGP Consortium Board and is trying to secure funding for this membership.

### **France**

Laurent Toulemon informed CoP that GGP is on the National Roadmap and France is ready to participate in ESFRI application. The team considers pilot survey in 2020, would like to have access to administrative data to get a good sample, and to include additional variables and passive follow-up. They are concerned by low response rate and hope with pilots to find ways to assure a better response rate. Still not sure about financing of the field work. French team is involved with GGP in Asia - Stuart Basten plans running GGS pilots in some Asian countries/ cities.

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<sup>3</sup> For more details see CT and country presentations on <http://www.unecp.org/index.php?id=52229>

## Germany

Robert Naderi informed about plans to have a bigger national GGP team in 2020 if funding is secured from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research as part of larger infrastructure called FREDA (family and demography). The team also partners with Pairfam and GESIS for methodological part. Applied for 3 GGP waves from FREDA, one wave every year with core questions, with room for innovations. Hope for lower attrition by collecting data every year. Working on questionnaire and translation. The fielding most likely to start in late spring 2020.

## Republic of Moldova

Aliona Cristel stressed that Moldova's preparations for GGS fielding is co-financed by UNFPA country office. The work is co-organised by National Bureau of Statistics and private company for data collection. The team will use a probabilistic sample. The GGS will be recognised by National Bureau of Statistics as an official survey. Listing exercise is conducted for the first time on tablet. Maps are integrated however it seems to be complicated for field operators due to lacking experience in collecting data online. In October 2019, 73 fieldwork operators were trained, first round of data collection planned for January 2020. Questionnaire is translated into two languages: Romanian and Russian. New variables were proposed and some active ageing indicators included as well as SDG 5.6.1 related indicators. A working group was created to validate questionnaire. Communications company will produce awareness campaign to increase participation rate: TV and radio spot and distribution of informational leaflets. The memorandum of collaboration with UNECE, NIDI, UNFPA, etc. was signed in January 2019.

## Netherlands

Aart Liefbroer informed about the Dutch national team preparations. The team is ready and willing to start work however funding is not yet secured. Will hear the results of the funding application in March 2020 (optimistic), if successful then embarking on GGS2020 in the country becomes feasible. GGS will be web-based and focus on younger age cohorts to get better division of labour between GGP and SHARE.

## Sweden

Johan Dahlberg reported that Swedish team is planning preparatory fieldwork for GGS2020. It is an accomplished national team, has good contact with Statistics Sweden who will do fieldwork, funding was secured and received for first GGS wave. If second funding application successful, Sweden would do a 'second' first wave and heavily oversample migrants. The team developed a module on uncertainty and trust to explore falling total fertility rate – could be shared with interested parties. A number of things still have to be done: adapt questionnaire to Swedish context, integrate registry data into survey. Fieldwork is planned with Statistics Sweden in the third quarter of 2020 and will last 3-4 months. After that longitudinal register data will be added. The secured financing covers register-based update in 2024. Team is not sure yet regarding application for additional funding for the next waves.

## Uruguay

Ignacio Pardo indicated that they are optimistic to conduct GGS in late 2020. National team that includes representatives of local offices of UFFPA and UNICEF is working since 2017 on this. The statement of intent was signed, and 100 tablets are available for fieldwork. There remains a funding issue: national team secured USD 75,000 out of USD 220,000 needed for the exercise. Will know about additional funding by December/January. If not successful,

then team will start with a pilot in the capital city (56 per cent of population): Montevideo. Other planned steps: finalise testing the questionnaire, fieldwork practicalities, pre-test in February 2020.

### **Poland**

Irena Kotowska reported that GGP team applied for Polish Roadmap for research infrastructures and is waiting for final decision probably by March 2020. Presently, not a very supportive atmosphere for the survey because of 'gender' aspect that is questioned by country's leadership. Ministry for Family Labour and Social Policy is not keen to cooperate. In turn, SHARE is seen as more established infrastructure in the country, so it is better financed.

### **Russian Federation**

Oxana Siniyvskaaya reported that Russian team could not get funds for GGS2020. Ministry of Finance is very restrictive, and there is competition with Rosstat that runs an official fertility survey. Until 2023/2024 it will be almost impossible to obtain funds for Russian GGS, the political interest and discourse are more concerned with older population needs, hence there is a bigger chance that Government would become more interested to join SHARE.

### **Canada**

Pascale Beaupré from Canadian team reaffirmed that Canada is going ahead with a pilot. Some difficulties are encountered regarding the on-line data recording as the National law dictates that survey cannot be conducted anywhere else outside of country. Hence, Canadian data can't be hosted on NIDI's server during fieldwork and needs to be hosted on a Canadian University server. Team is collaborating with two universities to conduct the survey data collection. Canada already has family survey, but the comparability with the GGS is limited.

### *Brief summary of comments, questions and answers*

Several countries in their reports raised similar issues and provided an opportunity to clarify some questions by the CT or share useful experience by other country teams.

CoP Chair Zsolt Spéder asked whether new GGS waves will start from scratch or include sample from previous waves, which he would prefer. No decision on that has been taken in Poland, may depend also on discussion with the central statistical office that provides sample. Anne Gauthier (CT) disagreed with using the same sample, and Gerda Neyer (Sweden) stressed that in Sweden it cannot be done since the respondents were not asked last time if they would be willing to be interviewed again. Italian team reported that their 2016 survey data are ready to be released but it is not clear if a longitudinal panel of 2016 could be kept.

As some countries indicated their intention to use additional modules /variables to the GGS2020, Tomas Emery (CT) explained that new question modules best to be developed in collaboration with GGP colleagues; the specific country modules will be made available on-line as and when completed by the respective country team.

## **4. Update on ESFRI application and national Roadmaps**

European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) takes lead in determining what a good infrastructure should be. ESS and SHARE are landmarks in the ESFRI roadmap. Roadmap is updated every 2-3 years, next will be in 2021. European and national roadmaps are not always synchronized that might be problematic for applicants. ESFRI prefers that research infrastructures get their own legal entity e.g. foundation or ERIC (European

Research Infrastructure Consortium) granted by the European parliament. GGP is applying to enter the ESFRI roadmap, following ESS and SHARE. Being on the ESFRI roadmap does not imply funding, it rather seals a status of being among best in Europe. This, in turn, allows research infrastructures to apply for specific funding reserved for those on the ESFRI roadmap.

GGP tried to enter ESFRI roadmap in 2016, was not accepted that year, but it was recognised as promising ‘emerging infrastructure’ and received a three-year funding (2017-2019). Hopes are high for 2021 application. For GGP this is important for long term sustainability. Transition from network to research infrastructure implies better organisation, set of rules and responsibilities, stricter structure, consortium agreement, and bylaws. Long-term perspective on cycle of data collection. Greater coordination across countries in terms of funding, translation, question modules. Also, the legal entity status.

The deadline for 2021 ESFRI roadmap application is the end of May 2020. The Dutch Government that leads GGP application imposed a mid-February 2020 deadline. GGP Central Coordination team will fulfil all scientific and implementation criteria. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Consortium Agreement are very important elements for proving that GGP is an infrastructure rather than network. MoU recognises the governance structure and bylaws. In addition, there is a need for at least one country providing financial support and at least two countries pledging political support (official letter from ministry/central statistical office). Ideally, GGP should have as many political support letters as there are country teams involved in the governing board of the research infrastructure.

Therefore, the CoP members were asked:

- try to secure a letter of political support recognising scientific importance of GGP, stating interest in participating in GGP, signed by ministry or statistical institute or national science foundation. ESFRI national delegate should be informed.
- try to get on national Roadmap for research infrastructure and establish a contact with ESFRI delegates what are their plans and what are the requirements.
- help GGP CT build case of scientific and socioeconomic impact – this is an important section in the application. Keep the GGP CT informed of any policy discussion that uses GGS data.
- work on making GGS2020 happen in the country. It is not limited to 2020, can start later as well, most important is to have as many countries as possible in.

### *Brief summary of comments, questions and answers*

*Estonia* remarked that GGP CT support is extremely important for all these processes. It would be valuable to have information about data users by country as this information is necessary for national roadmap applications. Also in communication materials making individual country examples more visible could be helpful. Estonian experience with national roadmap application might be telling: joint application with SHARE didn’t work, but in the recent round GGP solo application was successful but not SHARE. Securing political support letter for ESFRI application is not problematic as long as it does not have to go through the government council. This, for instance, will be the requirement for ERIC. Also, Estonia struggle to recognise that social science surveys can be an ‘infrastructure’ in a sense of natural sciences are seen.

*Poland* commented that rules at country level are also changing and what worked with a previous round of applications may not work anymore. In Poland, for instance, now it is not



sufficient to get a letter from one line ministry, this is handled only by a Committee at the Ministry of Science.

Croatia echoed the view of some earlier speakers that being on the national roadmap does not mean much, in particular as regards financing. In Croatia, SHARE is on the national roadmap but is raising funding from various ministries. National Science Foundation that manages Roadmap matters is not for funding social science infrastructures.

France stated that even though GGP is on the French national roadmap, it is a struggle to get the letter of political support for ESFRI. There is a competition between surveys, and if only one can be on roadmap, need to work out how to deal with the fact that ESS and SHARE are also there. Sweden also mentioned that it is very hard to obtain letter from any line ministry however Statistics Sweden may be helpful as they are involved in the fieldwork. In Italy, ISTAT provided letter of support the last time the GGP applied for ESFRI. For the current application timing is not the best since ISTAT is undergoing organizational restructuring and it is not yet clear who will be leading the sociodemographic sector there to initiate talks.

Anne Gauthier (CT) responded to most of the comments and provided some clarifications. She indicated that GGP CT will provide information about individual country data users and make socio-economic impact more visible on the GGP website including some formal indicators and country stories.

She also stressed that letters of political support for GGP ESFRI application should stress the importance of survey; they do not need to state any financial commitment. GGP hopes to get political support from 12 countries but commitment for financial support will probably come from a half of them. The buy-in to ERIC will be more difficult to gather as ESS and SHARE experience show (first ERIC ever in Europe was SHARE). The outcome of GGP ESFRI application will be announced in October 2021. If successful, there will be some better possibilities to apply for funding and start preparing ERIC in 2022. It will involve a lot of legal work and can take 3-5 years. It has to be done within coming 10 years.

Zsolt Spéder (Chair of CoP) pointed out that population issues are on the top of agenda in eastern Europe, but this might be to the advantage or disadvantage for getting letters of support. When issue is highly politicized, even the name “Generations and Gender” may become contentious in some circumstances. Country teams find the ways to use adapted titles in their national languages (Poland uses ‘family and generations’, Estonia remains with ‘family and fertility survey’ but states international collaboration ‘GGS2020’ to get around the issue).

To the request by some CoP members to provide estimates for GGS fieldwork cost, Tom Emery (CT) responded that GGP does not report on this like SHARE because every country has somewhat different design (sample size and mode/ mix of modes of data collection). The GGP 2020 survey estimated costs were calculated as part of ESFRI application and can be shared with caveat about particularities of each context. (for a web-based GGS, EUR 300,000 seems a good estimate).

### **Closing of the meeting**

The CoP agreed to hold the next meeting back-to-back with the European Population Conference in June 2020 in Padova, Italy. The meeting will take place in the afternoon of 24 June before the EPC 2020 opening.

In their closing remarks Zsolt Spéder (CoP Chair) and Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE, thanked the GGP Coordination team and the country teams for the work done in the last year.