

Second Meeting of the 2011/2012 Bureau
Geneva, Switzerland, 2-3 November 2011

For decision

Item 11(a) of the Provisional
Agenda

**FINAL REPORT OF UNECE/WHO/EUROSTAT TASK FORCE ON MEASURING
HEALTH STATUS (SO-CALLED "BUDAPEST INITIATIVE")**

Prepared by the UNECE secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Joint UNECE/WHO/Eurostat Task Force on Measuring Health Status was established by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in October 2004 with the main objective to develop a new common instrument to measure health status in its multiple dimensions, which would be included in population surveys as a recommended set of questions.
2. The Task Force has been working under guidance of the UNECE/WHO/Eurostat Steering Group on Measuring Health Status (also set up by the CES Bureau in October 2004), and in close coordination with other initiatives promoted in the same field by international groups, such as the Eurostat Group on the Health Interview Survey (EHIS) and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG).
3. During the Joint UNECE/WHO/Eurostat Meeting on Measurement of Health Status held in Budapest November 2005, it was recommended to label the current UNECE/WHO/Eurostat work on health as the Budapest Initiative (BI). From this meeting onward, the joint UNECE/WHO/Eurostat work of on measuring health status has been referred to as the Budapest Initiative (BI).
4. In 2007 the BI Task Force finalized the first version of a survey module to be used to produce internationally comparable estimates of the measurement of health status. The module, referred to as the Budapest Initiative Mark 1 (BI-M1) module, included the following domains: Vision, Hearing, Mobility, Affect, Pain and Cognition. The CES plenary session endorsed the module in June 2007. As previously agreed, the Task Force continued to work testing the BI-M1 module with the objective to refine the survey instrument, the so-called Budapest Initiative Mark 2 (BI-M2) module
5. In October 2009 the CES Bureau reviewed the work of the Task Force on the basis of a progress report (doc. ECE/CES/BUR/2009/OCT/11). On that occasion the CES Bureau noted the considerable progress made in developing and testing the question set on health status, and approved revised Terms of Reference for the BI Task Force and Steering Group. According to the new Terms of Reference, the Task Force was expected to finalize the BI-M2 question set by December 2010, and to submit it to the CES Bureau together with evidence from cognitive and field testing to justify changes between the BI-M1 and BI-M2 questionnaire versions. The Steering Group was mandated until 2013 to provide a focal

point to countries for sharing experiences on measuring health status and disseminating the results of the work of the BI.

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

6. After the October 2009 meeting of the CES Bureau, a work session of the Budapest Initiative was organised in Geneva on 20-22 January 2010. On that occasion, the BI Task Force reviewed domain by domain the results of the testing of the BI-M1 question set. The Task Force discussed about further work needed to develop the BI-M2 question set. It was agreed that this work would be conducted in conjunction with the work of the Washington Group which was broader in scope, covered more domains (including Communication, Learning, Upper Body, and Fatigue) and was targeted to all countries, while the BI work focused on countries in the European region.

7. In the course of 2010, various rounds of cognitive testing and field testing of the BI-M1 question set were conducted, also in conjunction with large-scale testing exercises promoted by the Washington Group.

8. The results of these testing exercises were discussed at the joint meeting of the Washington Group and Budapest Initiative hosted by Eurostat in Luxembourg on 3-5 November 2010. On that occasion the BI-M2 question set was finalised, including revised versions of the questions for the domains already included in BI-M1 plus two new domains to be considered by countries on optional basis: Upper Body and Communication.

9. In finalising the BI-M2 question set, the BI task force recommended the inclusion in the 2014 European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) of the BI-M2 complete set or sections of it. This would facilitate international comparability on the individual domains.

10. The final report of the Budapest Initiative Task Force, including the final version of the BI-M2 question set, is presented to the CES Bureau as document ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/7/Add.1. The document also includes the rationale for the questionnaire, the supporting justification and a comparison between the BI-M1, the BI-M2 and the EHIS questions.

III. FOLLOW-UP AND ACTION REQUESTED BY THE BUREAU

11. The Task Force has prepared the BI-M2 question set which is a product developed under the umbrella of the CES. The secretariat is seeking the advice of the Bureau how to proceed with the endorsement of the question set.

12. The CES approved in 2007 the "Procedure for adopting products and recommendations by the CES" (ECE/CES/2007/8). According to the Procedure, the documents developed under the auspices of the Conference fall into two main types: A. principles, classifications, standards, manuals, handbooks, recommendations, guidelines and frameworks, and B. best practices, surveys of country practices, glossaries, etc. The documents of type A should be endorsed by the Conference on the recommendation of the Bureau. The documents are sent for wide electronic consultation with all CES members before they are submitted to the Conference for adoption. The documents of type B should be endorsed by the relevant Teams of Specialists that have developed them.

13. A survey module does not clearly fall into either of the categories. **The CES Bureau is therefore invited to consider how to proceed with the final report of the Budapest Initiative including the BI-M2 question set. The different options are:**

- (a) The document is considered adopted by the Task Force on Measuring Health Status;**
- (b) The Bureau adopts the document on behalf of the Conference;**
- (c) The document will be sent for wide consultation to the CES members and submitted for adoption to the Conference.**

14. Subject to the endorsement of the final report, the BI Task Force will have completed its assignment and therefore will be dissolved. The Budapest Initiative Steering Group will continue until October 2013 to provide a focal point to countries for sharing experiences on measuring health status and disseminating the results of the work of the BI, in compliance with its Terms of Reference approved by the CES Bureau in 2009.

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