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Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses

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DISCUSSION ON ANY MEETING ISSUES AND OTHER BUSINESS

The GEOSTAT project - Representing census data in a European population grid

Note by the Statistical Office of the European Communities

1. The Regulation (EC) No. 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on population and housing censuses defines the term 'regional' in correspondence with the NUTS classification, and the term 'local' as the Local Administrative Units (level 2), i.e. along municipalities. The data the EU Member States shall transmit to the European Commission on the basis of this regulation will have these classifications as geographical reference. However, Eurostat has launched the GEOSTAT initiative in which Member States can participate on a voluntary basis. The following shall briefly outline the project and raise interest.
2. Current global concerns like climate change, threats to ecosystems or limited resources call for integrated policies for sustainable development. Statistical data is mostly reported for NUTS areas with all their inherent diversity in terms of size and population. But the causes of social and environmental phenomena do not follow the delineations of NUTS areas. A way to overcome the gap between spatial entities of reported information and spatial distribution of their causes are spatially referenced statistics. A stable and harmonised system of grids may serve as a foundation for spatial analysis across disciplines. The 2011 census round is a unique occasion to collect such data for demographic and socioeconomic descriptions of human societies and their habitat.

3. The GEOSTAT project aims at:
- (a) developing a set of methods, tools and guidelines such as on handling confidentiality issues of population statistics and disaggregation processes with the goal of creating harmonised datasets;
 - (b) creating a population grid using existing population data sources. The ambition is to plot the results of the 2011 year European censuses on km² grids;
 - (c) outlining a spatial data infrastructure which provides harmonised data (statistics and geography) on a common IT platform for spatial statistics;
 - (d) disseminating the results from the GEOSTAT project among NSI.
