

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

**Joint UNECE/Eurostat Meetings on Population and Housing Censuses**  
(Geneva, 22-25 May 2012)

**INFORMATION NOTICE FOR PARTICIPANTS**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The UNECE and Eurostat are jointly organising two meetings on population and housing censuses on the following dates:  
22-23 May: Expert Group Meeting on Censuses Using Registers  
24-25 May: Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses.
2. The meetings will be held in Room XI (third floor, nearest entrance Door 15) at the Palais des Nations, Avenue de la Paix 8, Geneva. Information on the purpose and agenda of the meetings is given in sections II and III below.

**II. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

3. The main purpose of the meetings is to discuss the first lessons learnt from the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. In particular, the Expert Group Meeting on Censuses Using Registers (22-23 May) will be dedicated to issues related to censuses conducted using data from registers and administrative sources, as unique data source or in combination with other data sources. The Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (24-25 May) will be dedicated to issues relevant for all countries regardless of the census methodology adopted (tentatively on the first day) and issues related to censuses conducted using the traditional method (tentatively on the second day).
4. The target audience of the meetings includes managers and experts responsible for census planning and management in national and international statistical offices.

**III. AGENDA OF THE MEETINGS**

5. The programme of the Expert Group Meeting on Censuses Using Registers (22-23 May) will consist of the following substantive topics:
  - Strategic issues:
    - 1.a Experiences with the use of registers in censuses
    - 1.b Should we use registers for our census?
  - Practical issues:
    - 1.c Methodology for assessing relevance of registers
    - 1.d Availability, completeness and quality of data from registers and other sources
    - 1.e Methodology for estimating information missing in registers.
6. Detailed explanatory notes on the above topics are provided below.

### ***1.a. Experiences with the use of registers in censuses***

7. The current census round shows a dynamic move towards producing output from registers or other administrative data sources. This data is used to compare, complement or replace some or even all data collected in the past by a questionnaire based enumeration. Some countries have register-based production systems which are well established, others have settled on new ground quite recently. What can they tell those who consider to follow suit? The list of keywords for this section is long, but any reported experience is valuable: conditions for and organisation of a (fully or partly) register based census; the role of statistical offices vis-à-vis the register owner; costs; linking different registers; creation of statistical databases; confidentiality; etc...

### ***1.b. Should we use registers for our census?***

8. Far from being an easy decision, considering a move towards using registers or other administrative data sources for census purposes raises many questions to the statistician: Are the registers available of sufficient quality? Is the register isolated or part of a larger network? Which identifying variables can be used? Is the coverage sufficient? Do the definitions of the variables correspond well enough to statistical requirements? Are there legal or cultural stumbling blocks? Can the register-based data really meet our users' needs? Will investments pay off? The session shall give examples how statistical offices have handled (or intend to handle) the decision process.

### ***1.c. Methodology for assessing relevance of registers***

9. For the purpose of the census, a number of registers can be used, that differ with regard to type, information content, coverage, accuracy, and other factors. An important aspect in setting up a register-based censuses is assessing the relevance of the various registers used, and identifying the most relevant registers that will be used as main sources of data. Procedures have to be developed in advance to deal with cases when there are discrepancies between data on the same individual derived from different registers. These procedures may include algorithms in which different levels of priority can be defined for the different registers, depending on their relevance, quality or other factors. In this session countries are expected to share their experiences in dealing with these issues, and what solutions were adopted that could be possibly of interest to other countries.

### ***1.d. Availability, completeness and quality of data from registers and other sources***

10. A growing number of countries makes use of registers for their censuses. The quality of the census output thus has become dependent of the quality of the registers used. Firstly, a decision has to be made which registers to use for the census. Important factors that play a role in this decision are the availability, completeness and quality of the registers. It is of interest to know how these decisions are made in different countries. Secondly, the quality of the registers used influences the quality of the census output. In this session it will be discussed how different countries assess the quality of census output based on registers and other sources.

### ***1.e. Methodology for estimating information missing in registers***

11. Some European countries conducted a so-called fully register-based census in 2011. This means that all census information comes from registers. The question is how the different registers are linked and how inconsistencies between registers are solved. Another important aspect is what is done when information is missing in the available registers. When information is missing on certain variables for relatively few cases, an option is to impute the missing values. However, if information is missing for many cases or if variables are completely missing this is not a good approach. In these cases, estimations derived from sample surveys could be used. In that situation

we have a partly register-based census. In this session, countries that used registers for the census will share their experiences on dealing with information missing in registers.

12. The programme of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (24-25 May) will consist of the following substantive topic:

Strategic issues:

2.a Full enumeration versus sample surveys

Practical issues:

2.b Comparative quality indicators

2.c Access to microdata

2.d Address/dwelling listing

2.e Internet data collection.

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

#### ***2.a. Full enumeration versus sample surveys***

14. When a country starts considering options to the traditional methodology for a population census, one of the first alternatives on the table is the use of sample surveys. This is indeed an alternative for which expertise is normally available within the Statistical Offices and may not require interactions with external authorities, as in the case of use of registers. At the same time, it may pave the way to lightening the "census backbone" in favour of (multi)annual survey updates, in case of future major revisions to the census exercise. However, it poses a number of methodological and technological challenges, not least the compliance with the essential features of a population census. The session will gather contributions from countries which have undertaken this methodological move and will share the lessons learnt, with first views about consequences/plans for the next round.

#### ***2.b. Comparative quality indicators***

15. Regardless of the census methodology adopted, census users should be provided - together with the census results - also with comprehensive information about the quality of the census data, and more in particular about the various dimensions of census quality. This information is particularly useful when users compare data from consecutive censuses in the same country (quality can change over time) or from censuses in different countries. There are established methods for measuring quality in traditional censuses, but most of them cannot be easily applied to censuses using registers. Given the trends towards the diversification of methodologies to conduct the census (including censuses using registers and surveys, or the rolling census) there is a need for comparative quality indicators that are applicable to the various types of censuses. In this session countries are expected to share experiences on census quality indicators. Particular attention will be given to indicators that are applicable to different types of census methods.

#### ***2.c. Access to microdata***

16. The census information needs of policy analysts and decision makers increasingly require access to microdata records to facilitate analyses. This presents special challenges in order to continue to respect requirements for confidentiality of census data. Public use microdata files, custom coding, custom retrieval services, secure data laboratories and remote access are some of the means developed to address these needs. In this session countries are expected to exchange experiences and current plans for enabling access to census microdata. This may include sampling records, procedures for ensuring confidentiality of the microdata, use of metadata, the role of the Internet, remote access practices and international cross-border access.

## ***2.d. Address/dwelling listing***

17. Address or dwelling listing operations are commonly conducted by enumerators prior to a traditional census or as questionnaires are dropped off at dwellings. For countries that mail out census questionnaires, the listing exercise is key to producing complete and reliable lists of postal addresses. High quality dwelling listings are also important to minimize both under-coverage and over-coverage of dwellings which has a direct influence on the quality of population counts and an indirect impact on the quality of all other data produced by the census. In this session countries are expected to exchange experiences from their recent census on listing activities. This may include the role of dwelling listings in the overall census collection design, measures to ensure the quality of the work of enumerators, quality control procedures to be applied as the dwelling listing is completed, and emerging technology in this field.

## ***2.e. Internet data collection***

18. In the current census round a significant number of countries that conducted a census with field data collection offered - in many cases for the first time - the option of completing the forms on the internet. The internet census may bring advantages in terms of coverage (particularly for areas and population groups with high non-response), data quality, and image of the statistical office. If the take up rate is significantly high, then cost savings could also be obtained in terms of form printing, field work, and data processing, at least in the long term. However, introducing the internet option requires significant changes in the census organization - due to multiple mode data collection - and important technological and financial investments. Moreover, there are potential risks that could affect seriously the success of the census, for instance if security breaches in the internet information systems lead to disclosure of confidential census information. In this session, countries that offered the internet census option will share their experiences with regard to technological aspects, take-up rates and response of the public, data quality and other issues.

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

19. The meetings are 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.

20. All participants should register for the meetings by completing the attached registration form and sending it to the UNECE secretariat (email: [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org) or fax: +41 22 917 0040) **by 25 April 2012.**

21. 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 joint UNECE-Eurostat Meetings on Population and Housing Censuses. . If necessary, the UNECE secretariat can provide a letter to facilitate obtaining a visa (fax: +41 22 917 0040 or e-mail: [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org)).

22. In order 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 while inside the Palais des Nations.

23. 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 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE MEETINGS**

24. For the Expert Group Meeting on Censuses Using Registers (22-23 May) the working languages are English and Russian, simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the two languages. For the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (24-25 May) the working languages are English, French and Russian, simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the three languages.

25. For each substantive item on the agenda of the two meetings, the organizers will invite a limited number of speakers to write and present an **invited paper**. All participants are welcome to submit a **supporting paper** for any topic on the agenda. The supporting papers will be distributed to the delegates via the Meeting’s website. Supporting papers normally are not presented by their authors at the meeting.

26. Both invited and supporting papers can be submitted in any of the working languages of the meetings (see above). Invited papers will be translated (subject to availability of resources by the Secretariat) provided that they will be submitted to UNECE **by 27 February 2012**. Supporting papers will not be translated and will be available only in the language in which they will be submitted. For papers not submitted in English, the authors are invited, if possible, to also submit a short abstract (maximum one page) in English.

27. Invited and supporting papers will be made available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following locations: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.05.census1.html> (for the Expert Group Meeting on Censuses Using Registers) and <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.05.census2.html> (for the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses).

28. During the two meetings, in particular in the discussions on strategic issues, consideration will be given also to papers that will be prepared for the June 2012 Plenary Session of the Conference of European Statisticians. These papers will be available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following location: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.06.ces.html>.

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

- Interested national statistical offices and other organizations that would like to contribute a supporting paper should send an e-mail message to [paolo.valente@unece.org](mailto:paolo.valente@unece.org) **by 6 February 2012**. The message should specify the title of the paper and the meeting and topic to which it refers. A short abstract of the paper (maximum one page) should be included, possibly in English.
- The full versions of papers, *not exceeding 8 pages in length (including tables, references, annexes, etc.)*, should be sent to the UNECE secretariat by the following deadlines:
  - Invited papers should be submitted **by 27 February 2012** at the latest;
  - Supporting papers should be submitted **by 15 April 2012** at the latest;

- Papers should be submitted in Word format to [paolo.valente@unece.org](mailto:paolo.valente@unece.org)
- Registration forms should be submitted **by 25 April 2012** at the latest (see above).

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

## VI. ACCOMMODATION

31. 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 are limited due to other meetings and events taking place in Geneva during the month of May. Maps of Geneva, list of hotels and information for visitors to the Palais des Nations are available on the following website: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>. The following information is also available:

- The closest hotel to Palais des Nations is the 5-Star Intercontinental.
- Grand Prè, Cornavin, Suisse 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.

## VII. FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN GENEVA

32. Geneva International Airport now 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.



33. 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.

## Getting from the Airport to Geneva

34. 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.

35. 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.

36. 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-67/>
- Free Geneva Transport Card: <http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/index.php?rubrique=0000000417>

## VIII. CURRENCY

37. The exchange rate of the euro and the Swiss franc is now around 1.20 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 08:30 to 16:30, with no lunch break, from Monday to Friday.

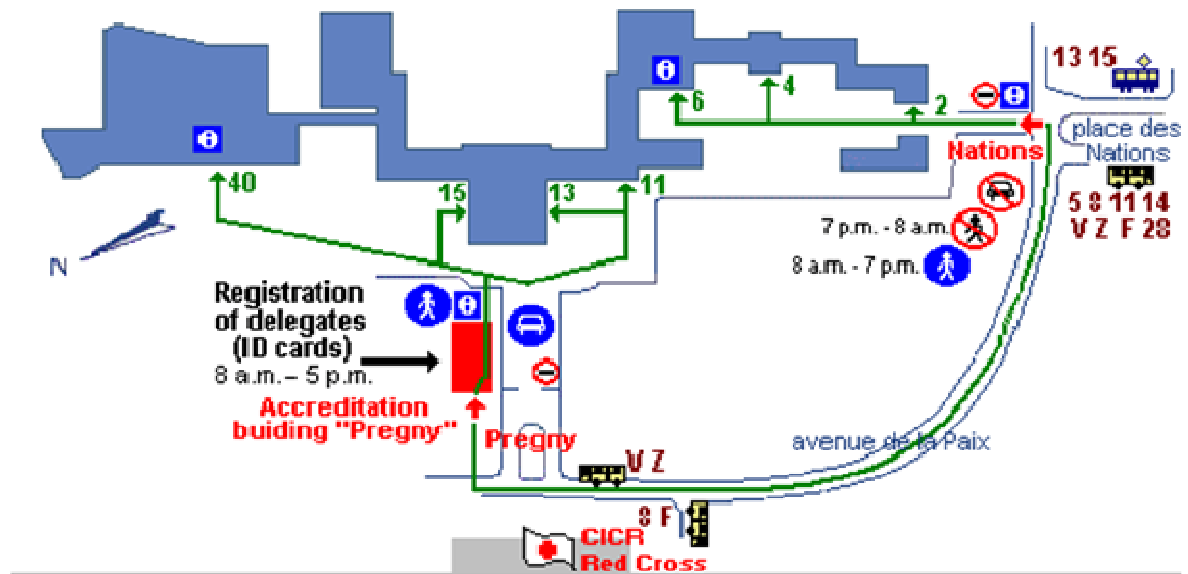
## IX. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

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## Map of the UN premises in Geneva



Note: The meetings will be held in Room XI (third floor, nearest entrance Door 15).