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Future censuses beyond 2020

Towards a single population base in the EU

Note by Eurostat*

Abstract

The choice of the population base is a feature of paramount importance in census exercises. Besides the national needs which may be met with specific population definitions, there is also an important demand for internationally comparable data which calls for a harmonized population base across countries. This paper looks at how the population definition has evolved over time in census international recommendations and what are the critical features of the currently favoured 'usually resident population'. Building upon this review, the paper reports the recent discussions in the European Statistical System about the identification of a single population base for EU purposes and the ongoing attempts of development of a new population definition.

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I. Introduction

1. The statistical definition of population is of paramount importance for any statistical system. The population is the direct target of many policies and an appropriate measurement of its size is often needed for better targeted measures in various domains, such as economy, urban planning and sustainable development. Population size is probably the oldest statistical measure and the very first produced in modern statistical systems. It is thus rather striking that there has been little discussion in the statistical community about the definition of population. As of today, it does not exist an international recommendations publication specifically dedicated to this topic.
2. The preparatory work for the post-2020 census round is an excellent occasion to put this issue at the centre of the debate. A fast-changing world as well as emerging technologies and methodological developments in the census domain call for a critical review of the definition of population. It is not often the case that the statistical community has the chance to discuss on such a fundamental element, and – admittedly – the definition of population has neither been cast in stone nor rapidly changing.
3. While the international recommendations on population censuses published by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) – also known as the ‘global’ recommendations – have been for several decades the primary reference for the statistical definition of population, Eurostat has been promoting the discussion on it in various fora, such as the UNECE Group of Group on Population and Housing Censuses (GEPHC), the Eurostat Working Group on Population Statistics, the Eurostat Working Group on Population Censuses, and the Eurostat Task Force on the “Future EU censuses of population and housing” (TFFC), the latter three with a special focus on the European Union (EU).
4. The current note aims to report on the discussions held in the last decade on the population definition in the European statistical community, with an emphasis on the work carried out so far on the population base which should be the fulcrum of the new architecture of population statistics in the European Statistical System (ESS) after the 2020 census round.

II. Population definitions in international census recommendations

A. Historical review from the Second World War onwards

5. The population census has indeed been central to the definition of population. The 'total population' has always been the foremost census topic since a list of recommended subjects was internationally agreed. In the first deliberations of the UN Population and Statistical Commissions, the population base to be favoured in censuses to be carried out about 1950 was the 'present population', and concerns about the adoption of a proper terminology were already perceptible (UNPD - SOUN 1949). Some recommendations, along the lines of what recommended by the UN Commissions, were issued for the censuses of the Americas, the only internationally coordinated census exercise by then.
6. The first “global” UN international recommendations on population census were delivered for the 1960 round (UNSD 1958). They did not prescribe any specific population concept for the national purposes (although basically only considering the '*de jure*' and the '*de facto*' definitions), but they did propose to compute a specific population count for international purposes (a sort of modified '*de facto*' population') which should have been called

'international conventional total'. The 'usual residence', although mentioned in these recommendations, was not defined.

7. For the following census round, UNSD delivered a new and more elaborated set of recommendations. The preference for the 'present population' fades out and no specific population definition is recommended; at the same time, these recommendations highlight the growing need for a population count based on usual residence, even though this latter is simplistically defined as the “*place where the enumerated person usually resides*” (UNSD 1969). It also appears for the first time the need to set a precise threshold to assess the 'usual residence'.
8. For the 1980 census round, there were no changes in the UNSD international recommendations as for the population base (see UNSD 1980 and the Annex). The 1980 UNSD recommendations were also applied to the 1990 census round and only supplementary material was issued, not dealing with population base matters (UNSD 1990). For this latter round, regional versions of the UNSD recommendations were also issued, namely one for the ECE region (UNECE 1987), but again the 'usual residence' was not defined and there was allowance for different population bases to be adopted.
9. With the 2000 census round, the UNSD recommendations on population bases did not change either (UNSD 1998), but its ECE regional version did introduce some specifications (UNECE-Eurostat 1998). For the first time, it appears the definition of 'usual residence' as place of daily rest, a threshold of one year is set for an absence to be considered temporary, and the 'working population' is proposed as additional population base. However, the precise definition of 'usual residence' was still left to the countries.
10. The Revision 2 of the UNSD recommendations (UNSD 2008), issued for the census round 2010, marked definitely a change from previous versions. UNSD introduced a definition of 'usual residence' as place where the person lives, adding a precise time dimension as well. The threshold of 12 months for the duration of stay could however be assessed in two different ways: based on the criterion of “most of the time” or looking at the entire period. Further, UNSD included the 'intention of stay', giving the possibility to include in the population count people with not yet 12 months of actual stay on the territory. However, despite of the extensive additions on the 'usual residence' concept, these UNSD recommendations did not explicitly favoured the 'usually resident population' definition and rather highlighted that different population bases may be needed, introducing also the concept of 'service population'.
11. The European version of the UN recommendations for the 2010 census round (UNECE - Eurostat 2006) had also significant changes as compared to their past versions. The 'usual residence' could be identified either as the place where the person was present, or their legal residence, or – mentioned for the first time – their residence for administrative purposes, that will later become known as 'registered residence'. However, unlike the UNSD paired recommendations, this regional version fully privileged the 'usually resident population' against other population bases. The 'usual residence' was to be assessed either on the 'actual' or on the 'intended' stay, but on a continuous period of twelve months (no six-months-plus-one-day rule applied).
12. The latest UN recommendations, issued for the 2020 census round, add further specifications to the population bases in both the global (UNSD 2017) and the ECE version (UNECE 2015). However, differences remain between the two versions: UNSD recommends a computation of the total population based on the 'usually resident population' (there labelled as well as *de jure* population) or on the present (*de facto*) population; the UNECE firmly

recommends the 'usually resident population', but with allowance for the 'registered residence'.

13. The above historical review shows how the favourite census population base has slowly evolved over time. At the beginning, the prominent population definition was the 'present (*de facto*) population', mostly due to its apparent simplicity of application. The 'usually resident population' has been seen for long as a definition more appropriate for national purposes, or for studying specific topics such as internal migration. Over time, the definition of 'usual residence' has been progressively refined, until reaching a maturity that has led to consider it as *the* recommended concept for regional applications (namely in the UNECE). In fact, whilst recognising the priority of national needs, the international comparability of census data has been a constant concern, and a common population definition for international purposes – even if additional to national population bases – has always been an ultimate target.

B. The discussions at European level in the last decade

14. During the preparation of the “Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing” (CESR2020), for the first time the discussion on the population definition to be used in the census gained a central place. One of the UNECE task forces set up to develop the new recommendations was in fact devoted to the population bases. At the GEPHC meeting in October 2013, the discussion started from a survey on current national practices as for the applied population definitions in the 2010 census round (Lanzieri 2013a). That study led to propose improvements in the theoretical framework and in the definition of the population base for the census 2020 (Lanzieri 2013b, 2014), later endorsed by the CES and published as chapter V of the CESR2020 (UNECE 2015).
15. The central concept for the population base in the CESR2020 remains the 'usual residence'. However, the 'usually resident population' has not been the only definition discussed there. Various other population bases such as the '*registered population*'¹, the '*legal population*'²,

¹ The proposed definition was as follows: “*The '**registered population**' of a country is composed of those persons who are listed on one or more registers owned by national authorities at the census reference time. Each registered person shall be counted only once. Persons belonging to the registered population of a country may not necessarily be living in the territory of the country at the time of the census.*” (Lanzieri 2013b)

² The proposed definition was as follows: “*The '**legal population**' of a country (also called '*de jure*' population) is composed of those persons who are entitled to be settled in the same country at the census reference time, either by holding the national citizenship or by any other authorization issued by national authorities. Persons belonging to the legal population of a country may not necessarily be living in the territory of the country at the time of the census.*” (Lanzieri 2013b)

the '*national population*'³, the '*working population*'⁴ and the '*day-time population*'⁵, have been proposed for discussion, even though not meant to replace the 'usually resident population' in the forthcoming census. The purpose was simply to shed light on the variety of population bases applied – or that could be applied – in population censuses. However, in order to focus all efforts towards the favourite population base, the GEPHC preferred not including those additional definitions in the final CESR2020.

16. In that context, Eurostat presented as well a first attempt of an alternative population definition (Lanzieri 2013c), labelled '*annual resident population*'⁶, with the aim of triggering a discussion and hopefully a process of convergence towards a single population definition. To the best of our knowledge, that was the first time ever that a reasoned definition alternative to the 'usually resident', '*de jure*' and '*de facto*' population bases, omnipresent concepts often not further defined, was elaborated and proposed for discussion in pertinent expert groups⁷. On that first proposal for discussion, Eurostat has built later on further developments of alternative population definitions, as described in the section III below.
17. For the next census round, the CESR2020 recommends as base the 'usually resident population' in a more stringent (and possibly clearer) way than in the past. However, the countries may still adopt a different population base (most likely based on registered addresses), for which there is no internationally agreed definition. The EU regulation on population census currently in force goes even further by explicitly allowing for the use of the 'legal' or 'registered' residence when the conditions for the 'usual residence' cannot be established, without prescribing what 'legal' or 'registered' actually means. As a matter of fact, the next census round may still be characterised by the adoption of different – even if 'less' different - population bases across countries or anyway, to put it less bindingly, by the lack of a (additional) common population base for international purposes.

³ The proposed definition was as follows: “The '**national population**' of a country is composed of those persons holding the national citizenship (national citizens) at the census reference time. Persons belonging to the national population of a country may not necessarily be living in the territory of the country at the time of the census.” (Lanzieri 2013b)

⁴ One of the proposed definitions (Option A) was as follows: “The '**working population**' of a country is composed of those persons who are present on the territory of the country for work reasons during the census reference period. Persons belonging to the working population of a country may not necessarily have the place of usual residence in the territory of the country at the time of the census.” (Lanzieri 2013b)

⁵ One of the proposed definitions (Option A) was as follows: “The '**day-time population**' of a country is composed of those persons who are present at diurnal hours in the territory of the country during the census reference period, whatever the reason (work, study, leisure, etc.). Persons belonging to the day-time population of a country may not have the place of usual residence in the territory of the country at the time of the census.” (Lanzieri 2013b)

⁶ The proposed definition was as follows: “An '**annual resident**' is a person who has been present in the territory: a) for most of the year of reference, thus for at least 6 months + 1 day / 183 days; and b) for at least/more than 3 months / 90 days, including at least one day of the year of reference, without interruptions.” (Lanzieri 2013c)

⁷ For works focussing on the national level, see for instance Baker (2004), Chris and Jefferies (2006) and Smallwood (2011) for the United Kingdom; and Pink (2008) for Australia. There are also references to a UN methodological study on “Total Population” (ST/STAT/P/L.3 of 11 May 1955), but it has not been possible to retrieve this 5-page document.

III. A critical review of the 'usually resident population' definition

18. The definition of 'usual residence' is declined in different ways in the three main references currently in force:

- UNSD (2017:40):

“2.48. In general, usual residence is defined for census purposes as the place at which the person lives at the time of the census, and has been there for some time or intends to stay there for some time.”

“2.50. It is recommended that countries apply a threshold of 12 months when considering place of usual residence according to one of the following two criteria: (a) The place at which the person has lived continuously for most of the last 12 months (that is, for at least six months and one day), not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least six months; (b) The place at which the person has lived continuously for at least the last 12 months, not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least 12 months.”

- UNECE (2017:78):

“392. The ‘place of usual residence’ is the geographic place where the enumerated person usually spends their daily rest, assessed over a defined period of time including the census reference time.

393. The population base to be used for international comparisons purposes is the ‘usually resident population’. The ‘usually resident population’ of a country is composed of those persons who have their place of usual residence in the country at the census reference time and have lived, or intend to live, there for a continuous period of time of at least 12 months. A ‘continuous period of time’ means that absences (from the country of usual residence) whose durations are shorter than 12 months do not affect the country of usual residence....”

- EU regulation on population censuses⁸ (2008, still in force for 2020 census round):

“For the purpose of this Regulation, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) ‘population’ shall mean the national, regional and local population at its usual residence at the reference date;

...

(d) ‘usual residence’ shall mean the place where a person normally spends the daily period of rest, regardless of temporary absences for purposes of recreation, holidays, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage.

The following persons alone shall be considered to be usual residents of the geographical area in question:

⁸ Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on population and housing censuses (Text with EEA relevance). OJ L 218, 13.8.2008, p. 14–20. See the Art.2.

- (i) *those who have lived in their place of usual residence for a continuous period of at least 12 months before the reference date; or*
- (ii) *those who arrived in their place of usual residence during the 12 months before the reference date with the intention of staying there for at least one year.*

Where the circumstances described in point (i) or (ii) cannot be established, 'usual residence' shall mean the place of legal or registered residence; ..."

19. Besides equally considering as valid population bases the 'usually resident population' and the 'present population', UNSD defines 'usual residence' as the place where the person is living; UNECE gives allowance for the use of the 'registered' residence as proxy of the 'usual' residence; and the EU regulation extends such allowance to the use of the 'legal' residence. Therefore, in practical implementations, the 'place of daily rest' could be as well another place where the person is found at the moment of the enumeration, or the day-time place, or the place declared to the national authorities for any administrative purpose ('registered' place), or the place which the person uses in legal matters such as the permission of stay ('legal' residence). It should be noted that the latter two alternatives do not even require the actual stay of the person in that place. The concept of 'place of usual residence' is therefore harmed by the application of proxies which not necessarily are close approximations. Additionally, the identification of the place of 'usual residence' may be cumbersome in some special cases or it is based on unchecked self-declarations by the enumerated persons.
20. Another difference across definitions is related to the reasons of absence. This feature is removed from the latest version of the UNECE recommendations, which only care about the duration of stay, but still present in the UNSD recommendations and the EU regulation. At least in the latter case, a reasonable speculation is that this is rather a heritage from past definitions of usual residence in international recommendations (and previous EU regulations) and those reasons are neglected in practice. Interesting to note, the UNSD does not consider absences for work assignments to be considered for exclusion from the usually resident population. Most probably, this is meant to refer to special cases of temporary absences for work (e.g., with weekly return to family home) or posted workers, whose assignment abroad can be considered of limited and relatively short duration; otherwise, the blind application of this criterion could lead to relevant changes in the population size, as work is one of main reasons of migration.
21. The duration of stay is *the* critical feature in the assessment of the 'usual residence'. The 'qualification period', i.e. the period of time necessary for a 'place of daily rest' to be considered as 'usual', is always one year. However, the way how the stay actually takes place is measured differently: the UNSD identifies the usual residence based on a temporal criteria of six months plus one day (criterion of '*most of the time*'); UNECE and EU look at the *continuity* of the period of twelve months. This implies that a person moving for a period between six months plus one day and just less than a year (e.g., for nine months) would be classified differently according to the UNSD and UNECE recommendations.
22. Another source of confusion is the 'time window of reference'. The qualification period of 12 months can range from being fully retrospective or fully prospective. In other words, the stay can be referred to the 12 months which are *preceding* the reference time (i.e., to the 'actual stay'), or to those *following* it (i.e., to the 'intention of stay'), or anything in between: this leads to a time window for the assessment of the usual residence of about 24 months. The application of different qualification periods within the same time window of reference is a potential source of inconsistency at international level.

23. To clarify the relation between the time window of reference and the qualification period q , it is useful to identify three relevant – from the statistical process point of view – moments: the time t_m of the move from place A to B, the reference time t_r to which the set of data of interest refers to, and the time t_s in which the statistical capture is carried out (census enumeration, survey interview, extraction from registers, etc.). For instance, t_m could be the 20 September of the year t , the reference date for the population stock is the end of the same year (midnight of 31 December) and the statistical data capture is on 31 October of the year $t + 1$. For exemplificative purposes, let us assume that there is a single move and that the following temporal relation applies: $t_m \leq t_r \leq t_s$, i.e. only the simple case of a single move before the reference time and the data collection is here considered.
24. The pivot around which the qualification period applies depends on the phenomenon of interest: for would-be migrations, it is the time of the move t_m ; for the estimation of the population size, it is the reference time of the population stock t_r . Therefore, in the censuses, the time window of reference should be $[t_r - q, t_r + q]$; in migration statistics it should be $[t_m, t_m + q]$. Here the focus is on the former case.
25. When the time of the move is out of the time window of reference (i.e., $t_m \notin [t_r - q, t_r + q]$ ⁹), there should be no confusion about the place of usual residence of the mover. In other words, when more than a year has passed from the time of the move, it is clear that the person has changed the place of usual residence from A to B and hence the move is a migration. Because $t_r \leq t_s$, from the point of view of the statistical production there is no problem either. In plain words, when the reference time – and thus the statistical capture – is at least one year after the time of migration, it is possible to define with confidence where the person is usually resident (provided that all other confounding factors do not apply).
26. When the reference time is closer to the time of the move (i.e., $t_m \in [t_r - q, t_r + q]$) but the statistical capture is still out of the time window of reference (i.e., $t_s > t_r + q$), the attribution of the mover to the place A or B can again be made consistently. This is because at t_s it is possible to assess the actual stay in B for at least one year, even though data refer to a reference time that is closer (less than one year) to the time of the move. For instance, if t_m is on 20 September of the year t , t_r is the end of the same year, and t_s is the end of the following year, the mover can be correctly classified as migrant if the stay in B lasts. This is the case of the annual demographic statistics collected by Eurostat.
27. However, a more subtle interpretation of the definition of 'usual residence' may lead to different outcomes. Place A may in fact claim that, at the reference time, not enough time has elapsed yet to consider that move as migration, and that it could actually be just a temporary absence. From this perspective, on t_r the person would still be usually resident in the place A. On the other side, the place B can claim that the person has moved in with the intention of staying away from A for at least a year, and therefore their usual residence should be the place B anyway. The problem here is that the definition of 'usually resident population' leaves it completely undefined the exact moment in which there is the switch of usual residence: it could be either t_m , or $t_m + q$, or anything in between.
28. As last (simple) example, let us consider the case in which both the time of the move t_m and the time of the statistical capture t_s fall within the time window of reference (i.e., $\{t_m, t_s\} \in [t_r - q, t_r + q]$); for instance, let t_m be the 20 September of the year t , t_r be the end of the

⁹ Because in our theoretical framework of interest the time of the move cannot follow the reference time, the temporal relation can be reformulated as $t_m < t_r - q$.

same year, and t_s the 31 March of the year $t + 1$. A new perspective enters here into play: the 'intention of stay'. Based on an assumption about the intended duration of stay, it is possible to classify the person as usually resident in the place A or B, depending on the overall duration. In this case, the allocation of the usual residence of the person is non-controversial only if the qualification period is the same for both places. In fact, assuming that the intended duration of stay in the place B (plus any observed actual stay) is at least one year, the person can be attributed to place B. However, if place A and place B implement differently the 'usually resident population' criteria, there could be a mismatch.

29. The following simple example shows the inherent complexity of the application of the 'usually resident population' definition in the latter case. Let t_m be the 20 September of the year t , t_r be the end of the same year, and t_s the 31 March of the year $t + 1$. Place A may apply the actual stay only, while place B accepts the 'intention of stay': the former may consider the person still usually resident, and the latter as well may include this person in its population¹⁰. More precisely, by the reference date the person would have passed only 102 days away from place A; by the time of the statistical capture, further 91 days would have elapsed, for a total of 193 days. Now, place A is still the usual residence of the person if: only the actual stay is applied, until the reference date; actual stay until the statistical capture but with the "continuity" (UNECE/EU) rule. Otherwise, place B is the new place of usual residence if: 'actual stay' is considered until the statistical capture but with the "most-of-the-time" (UNSD) rule; 'intention of stay' is also taken into account (whether indicating a stay in B).
30. The qualification period is thus the time window in which the allocation of the person is still uncertain. The use of the intention of stay has probably been developed to avoid the person to remain in a "statistical limbo" until the one-year period has elapsed. However, its usage is not always smooth and, being a speculation about future behaviour, it is always prone to measurement errors as well as changes of intention. Basically, the 'intention of stay' is a proxy of the 'actual stay' when this latter cannot be assessed. Further, statistical systems based on registers may have more difficulty than survey-based systems to apply this criterion.
31. In the first two simple cases discussed above, the main factor for a smooth application of the usual residence is the possibility to assess the actual stay for long enough. It is here visible the cost to be paid in terms of timeliness: for a correct (or at least non-controversial) application of the usually resident population definition, data must be collected at least one year after the time of the event ($t_s > t_m + q$). Given that events of interest may occur until the reference date ($t_m \leq t_r$), the statistical capture must occur at least one year after the reference date ($t_s > t_r + q$).
32. Beside the complexity of the implementation of the concept of usual residence, there are further difficulties. A correct application of that concept implies that all vital events occurred to usually resident persons should be reported by their country of usual residence, regardless of where those vital events occurred, in the country or abroad. However, a recent inquiry by Eurostat has found that in the EU the vital events occurred abroad are double counted (multiple counting), not counted at all (under-coverage), or counted in the 'wrong' country (misclassification) depending of the combination of EU Member States (Lanzieri 2018b), where there are different practices as for the reporting of those events.

¹⁰ By the reference date, the person would have passed only 102 days away from place A; by the time of the statistical capture, further 91 days would have elapsed, for a total of 193 days.

33. The usually resident population definition is beautifully neutral in that it only looks at the duration of stay on a territory to decide about the geographical allocation of the person. This means that, in principle, persons in illegal migratory position should be included in the population count. However, when it comes to reality, those persons are unlikely to be captured by regular surveys and, in case of uses of proxies of the usual residence such as the registered residence, that possibility is even littler. A positive image of the census as independent statistical operation not implying any legal consequence, or special provisions in the other cases (such as the possibility to access basic public services only if registered, even without a valid permit of stay) are among the solutions that are at disposal for a better coverage of this hard-to-reach population group.
34. For some controversial cases in deciding whether the person is part or not of the population of interest, there could be certainty about the correctness of the attribution only if the application of usually resident population definition would be homogeneously carried out at higher geographical level. This is usually the case within a country (deciding the sub-national area is usually done with the same rules across the country), but it is not the case at international level. Different census practices and reference times, as well as lack of data exchange, further hamper the correct application of the concept of usual residence.

A. Common alternatives to the 'usually resident population'

35. An alternative population definition often used in census exercises is the 'present population', also known as *de facto* population. While being a seducing concept thanks to its apparent simplicity, its application faces various practical issues, such as the length of the enumeration period (ideally the enumeration should be carried out on a single day, immediately following the reference time), classification of persons travelling, working at night, etc., and risks of multiple counting. On the other side, the 'present population' is the definition which better suits studies on human mobility and the use of new data sources, namely big / social media data (e.g., see Ricciato and Lanzieri 2019). However, the 'present population' includes categories of people who may not hold any particular connection with the reporting country apart being there on the reference date, whilst excluding others who do hold such connection but are absent at that moment.
36. Basically, both 'present population' and 'usually resident population' are criteria of geographic allocation of people. What it matters, it is to make sure that all people in the world are enumerated and attributed to a single country, regardless of the type of interaction with that specific country. This approach may not meet policy needs, especially those in which the country acts as 'representative' of a community of people.
37. The ultimate population in term of country representativeness is the population of national citizens¹¹, regardless of where they live. This is because of the citizenship, which is the "*particular legal bond between an individual and his or her State*", as stated in the EU regulations. Hence, Belgium would be representing Belgians (meaning persons with Belgian citizenship), Bulgaria the Bulgarians, and so forth. This is also the way the country representativeness is often understood by the layman. Although having the advantage of clarity and being meaningful from a policy perspective, the application of the 'national population' would neither meet the need of allocating the world population to single countries (due to holders of multiple citizenships and stateless persons), nor – possibly more

¹¹ For a tentative definition, see footnote 3.

important – reflecting the socio-economic interactions that non-national citizens may have with the country in which they live. Further, it breaks the bond between a population and its territory, because people may well be living out of their own country of citizenship.

38. To address the latter issue, another common alternative is the so-called '*de jure* population', a concept somehow in between the 'legal population'¹² and the 'usually resident population', and often confused with this latter¹³. Assuming that the '*de jure* population' differentiates from the 'legal population' by requiring the stay in the country, it would still be subject to the issues faced when applying criteria based on intervals of time, as described above for the 'usually resident population'.

B. Issues from the users' perspective

39. There are two common issues from the users' perspective: the first is the lack of data comparability due to the heterogeneity in the population definitions adopted across countries; the second is the timeliness of the data.
40. On the former, the users get data which do not necessarily comply (at least fully) with the definition of 'usual residence', which translates in an international comparability gap. While the extent of the differences in the population sizes measured in accordance with different concepts may be not large, such variety of approaches to the population definition may return inconsistencies at international level. For instance, a person who is considered included in the population of a country based on the 'usual residence' may as well be included in another country whose population definition is not based on the 'usual residence'; likewise, an immigrant to a country may not be considered emigrant in the sending country. All possible efforts should then be made by the international statistical community towards a single population definition for international purposes.
41. On the latter, in order to decide about the inclusion of the individuals in the population¹⁴, a country may opt for the assessment of the actual stay. Adding to this a (even short) period of time necessary for additional data validation, it means that the users can have access to data not earlier than one year after the reference time / end of the reference period. In a time when information circulates at very high speed, this is considered unconceivable by the users, especially if they are unfamiliar with the requirements of the 'usual residence' concept. Hence, tackling the timeliness issue implies dealing with the definition itself: this fundamental aspect is often overlooked and the solutions usually proposed for better timeliness are rather in alternative data sources that, in turn, face significant challenges in working under the conceptual framework of the 'usual residence'¹⁵.

¹² For a tentative definition, see footnote 2.

¹³ This distinction has been done already long ago (e.g., Körösi 1881:17-18), but often neglected over time.

¹⁴ For instance, in the EU, Member States have preferred to postpone the legal deadline for data transmission of demographic and migration statistics to Eurostat to the end of the year following the reference year. This translate in data availability about 14 months after the reference time.

¹⁵ There are examples of studies which propose a timely measure of the stock of "immigrants" whilst being actually unable to assess their duration of stay abroad, nor controlling for the statistical validity of the outcomes. These proposals of "census in real time", while appealing for users only interested to timeliness, risk to add confusion in a domain (migration) of sensitive debates. Further methodological work is there needed.

IV. The progress in the European Union

42. As reported above, the definition favoured in the current EU regulatory setting is the 'usually resident population'. This concept was first¹⁶ adopted in the EU Reg. 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection, and then coherently adopted also in the EU Reg. 763/2008 on population and housing censuses (valid for both census rounds 2011 and 2021), and in the EU Reg. 1260/2013 on European demographic statistics. However, countries are also allowed to use a population definition based on 'legal' or 'registered' residence, which are no further specified in the regulations. According to the self-classification declared by the national statistical institutes (NSIs), the current situation as for the applied population definition is reported in the following table¹⁷:

Usually resident population	BE, BG, CZ*, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK**, UK, RS
Legal residence population	CH, LI, FI
Registered residence population	AT, CZ, DE, DK, ES, IS, IT, LU, NL, NO, SE, TR

(*) For non-nationals. (**) Permanent residence.

43. At the end of 2013, the European Commission has issued a 'Guide on the Habitual Residence test' (ACCSSS 2013), a tool provided to the EU Member States to identify the place of '*habitual residence*', a particularly relevant concept from the perspective of the social security system. In fact, the 'residence' plays a major role as a conflict rule in case of possible overlapping of benefits, such as right to sickness or unemployment or family benefits in case of residence in a Member State other than the competent Member State. The EU Member State of "residence" within that meaning is "*the State in which the persons concerned habitually reside and where the habitual centre of their interests is to be found.*" Criteria for determining residence include: family situation (family status and family ties); duration and continuity of presence in the Member State concerned; employment situation; exercise of a non-remunerated activity; in the case of students, the source of their income; housing situation, in particular how permanent it is; the Member State in which the person is deemed to reside for taxation purposes; reasons for the move; the intention as it appears from all the circumstances.
44. At the time of the discussion on the EU regulation on European demographic statistics, several EU Member States expressed concerns about the feasibility of the full implementation of the concept of 'usual residence'. The agreement reached by then was the possibility of using alternative definitions of population ('legal' or 'registered') and "*..to carry out feasibility studies on the use of the definition of 'usual residence' for population and vital events...*"¹⁸. The reports were delivered by the EU Member States by the end of 2016 and a summary of their results was presented in 2017 at the meeting of the Eurostat Working Group on Population Statistics. The review of the feasibility studies identified several issues

¹⁶ Previous EU regulations on census matters only aimed to synchronize the census exercises and to agree on a set of tables for international comparison purposes.

¹⁷ Available in the Eurostat metadata at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/demo_pop_esms.htm.

¹⁸ Art. 8 of the EU Reg. 1260/2013.

(Corsini 2017), such as that “...different concepts of duration of stay are used. In some cases data can be 'adapted' to match the 12 months duration of stay but mainly with a global adjustment at aggregated level.”

45. Based on those conclusions, Eurostat has launched a discussion on the population base for future demographic and migration statistics (including population censuses). The issue has been on the agenda in various Eurostat meetings, including higher-level boards: in September 2017, the Director Generals of the NSIs members of the ESS have agreed “...to support and promote efforts to develop and implement common population and migration-related definitions, in order to further harmonize and standardise migration statistics across the ESS. This should take into account the need to establish concepts and definitions that are statistically sound, relevant and applicable in the face of new emerging types of migration and the growing use of administrative data sources.”¹⁹ They were followed by the Directors of Social Statistics (DSS) of the ESS NSIs, who have stressed the importance of having an appropriate population base in the future architecture of the EU population statistics²⁰.
46. The technical discussions have been looking first at possible general criteria that should be used in designing a new population definition (Lanzieri 2017). After this first round of consultations, in order to make tangible progresses, alternative definitions of population have been proposed as examples for discussion, namely the '*actually resident population*'²¹, the '*legally present population*'²² and the '*annual resident population*'²³ (Lanzieri 2018a). The latter two were considered most promising and suggestions for future work included the invitation to formulate a definition that was as simple as possible, to check coherence with migration and vital events, and the call to exploit fully the potential of mirror data. Based on all those inputs, a far more comprehensive proposal has been advanced for discussion at the Eurostat TFFC in April 2019, this time focussing on a single definition: the '*recognised population*'²⁴ (Lanzieri 2019a). In that occasion, the proposal was covering also related concepts and the possible implementation in a statistical system. The discussions have led to further refinements of that definition, presented at the following meeting of the Eurostat TFFC in June 2019.

V. The state of play

47. The latest version of the population definition under discussion with the NSIs of the ESS is as follows (Lanzieri 2019b):

¹⁹ Budapest Memorandum, as adopted by the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) on 22 September 2017.

²⁰ DSS meeting, held in Luxembourg on 1-2 March 2018.

²¹ The example was as follows: “The '*actually resident population*' at the reference time means all registered persons at the same reference time who have spent their daily rest in the geographic area of reference for most of the period of one year ending with the reference time.”

²² The example was as follows: “The '*legally present population*' at the reference time means all registered persons with legal right of stay who are supposedly present in the geographic area of reference at the same reference time. The presence is considered starting from the time of the declaration of presence.”

²³ The example was as follows: “The '*annual resident population*' in the reference calendar year means all registered persons who have been present in the geographic area of reference: a. for most of the calendar year of reference, thus for at least 6 months +1 day = 183 days; b. for at least 3 months / 90 days, including at least one day of the calendar year of reference, without formal interruptions.”

²⁴ The definition advanced for discussion by then was as follows: “The population on a given date is composed of the recognised persons whose declared main residence is in the geographic territory of interest at the same date.”

“The 'population' is composed of the recognised present persons whose declared main residence is in the geographic territory of interest, where:

- *'Recognised' means that the person is beneficiary of a formal or informal permission to stay on the national territory.*
- *'Present' means that the person is actually in the geographic territory of interest.*
- *'Residence' is the place of personal interests declared by an individual to the national authorities as the address to be used for administrative purposes. To be eligible for residence, a person must be entitled to spend over 90 days in the place of declared residence, starting from the date of the declaration to the national authorities.*
- *'Main' means that, at any moment in time, a person can have only one single residence within the European Union which is considered as the most relevant by the person concerned.*
- *'Declared' means that the individual has informed the national authorities of the hosting country of their main residence.”*

48. Besides many additional technical specifications, two items are of particular relevance: the so-called 'informal permission to stay' and the identification of the 'main declared residence'. They are currently explained as follows (Lanzieri 2019b):

- *“The 'informal permission to stay' means the possibility given to the individual to circulate freely on the national territory and to get access to public services such as health care or education, for them or their descendants, regardless of their legal status; on the other side, the national authorities must be informed of the presence of the individual on the national territory and not enforcing on the individual national immigration regulations leading to acts such as expulsion or detention. The previous list of cases is not exhaustive and it can be replaced or modified by any additional evidence which can be seen as an expression of tolerated stay.”*
- *“When the information on the 'main' residence is not available, the 'main declared residence' is the last declared residence in a Member State of the European Union.”*

49. The concept of 'recognised population' is respectful of the national laws and practices and flexible enough to deal with a variety of peculiar cases. These features may range from the inclusion or exclusion of asylum seekers to persons with irregular/illegal migratory status, and so forth. The common criterion to be applied for uncertain cases is to assess whether those persons are granted some rights or are beneficiary of services provided by national authorities, as evidence of their 'recognition'. Several controversial issues are dealt with in the documentation produced on this new tentative definition.

50. The concept of 'recognised population' is more inclusive of the 'usually resident population' in that a person is immediately part of the population of the country once the individual has declared his intention to consider the hosting country as main residence in the EU and – correspondingly – the national authorities have agreed, as expressed by granting legal or tolerated stay. When these conditions are met for short periods of residence in the country (e.g., 4 or 6 months), persons whom would not be captured by the statistical system based on 'usual residence' are included instead in the population count based on the 'recognised population'. Further, the country would correctly 'represent' those persons who have been

explicitly recognised and not (paradoxically) also those who have been denied even a tolerated stay²⁵.

51. In principle, the data timeliness can be drastically improved because, in an administrative system in which the declaration of residence and its acceptance are captured in almost real time, data could be extracted immediately after the event without the need to wait for assessing the duration of stay. Obviously there are many practical aspects which may delay such data production, but the temporal gain as compared to the 'usually resident population' could however be potentially significant.
52. The inclusion of the population is therefore depending on the matching between two conditions: one referring to the individual person, who declare their will to establish the main residence in the country; the other to the country, which must express its acceptance. Hence, these two fundamental features (the main residence and the country's acceptance) must be assessed in a way or another. On the former, in the worst scenario, the lack of information about the feature of main of the declared residence is solved in the hosting country by considering the last declared residence as the main one. Double or even multiple counting across countries can be avoided (or at least reduced) if data exchange take place, even if at aggregated level – an important feature in this approach. It should be kept in mind that the application of the 'usual residence' concept as well carries risk of double counting, and that risk is even higher when the enumeration does not occur simultaneously on the entire population of the hosting country and/or when the reference dates are different across countries and/or when different practices co-exists as for the application of actual or intended stay.
53. The definition of 'recognised population' is still subject of discussions. In particular, the NSIs have indicated the preference for being the entities in charge of identifying the main address in the national territory, rather than using the one declared by the person²⁶. Generally speaking, countries whose statistical system is still based on traditional surveys may continue to favour the 'usually resident population' definition, because it may be more difficult for them to identify a declaration of residence to the national authorities and they may as well have an established set of survey questions identifying the place of usual residence (possibly including the intention of stay); those instead who have moved or are in the process of moving to a register-based system may be more favourable to the new definition. Other points of further discussions refer to issues such as the concept of 'presence' included in the current version of the definition, the difficulty to identify the 'main' residence, the duration of the period to be eligible to residence (90 days vs 1 year), and the consistency with population definitions in other EU regulations.
54. The discussion within the ESS will continue in the context of the design of the new architecture of the EU population statistics, expected to become gradually operative from the mid-2020s, and anyway before the expiration of the EU regulation on demographic statistics in 2028. The efforts towards the identification of a single population base for international purposes (whatever that will be), a fundamental requisite for a better comparability of a large set of statistics, have still to come to an end.

²⁵ It should be noted that this does not imply at all neglecting those persons, who may well be enumerated for policy and assistance purposes.

²⁶ This approach would lead to a sentence like: "... 'residence' is the single address or living quarters identified by the national authorities as the place within the country where the individual resides."

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ANNEX

Excerpts on population bases from international recommendations

- UN Population Commission (1948, as from UNPD - SOUN 1949:6):
 - *"It is recommended that data for the total population in the country as a whole at the time of the census ... be obtained in addition to any data on a de jure or other basis which may be desired for national purposes..."*
- UN Statistical Commission (1948, as from UNPD - SOUN 1949:6):
 - *"...the concepts of de facto and de jure population should be clarified..."*
- Committee on the 1950 Census of the Americas (1949, as from UNPD - SOUN 1949:7):
 - *"The Committee recommended:' "(a), That data be obtained on the total population present in each country at the time of the census...in addition to any other statistical data considered necessary for national purposes."*
 - *"The definition of 'total population' recommended here is not, strictly speaking, either the de facto or the de jure. It is suggested that the term de facto and de jure not be used in relation to the topic of total population."*
- UNSD (1958:10):
 - *"402. Description of national total. The composition of the total population figure compiled by each country and used as the total for its census tabulations should be described in detail in the published report of the census. ... It is not sufficient to state that the figure is a de facto or de jure population count. ..."*
 - *"403. International conventional total. For international purposes, it is desirable that, where consonant with the type of census taken, and in addition to any other total computed for national purposes, each country compile the total number of persons present in the country at the time of the census, excluding foreign military, naval and diplomatic personnel and their families located in the country but including military, naval and diplomatic personnel of the country and their families located abroad and merchant seamen resident in the country but at sea at the time of the census. This is neither a de facto nor a de jure population, but provides the information needed for international comparisons and for regional and world totals. For convenience, this figure, which may also be the desirable total for national purposes, may be referred to as the "international conventional total"."*
 - *"404. Location at time of census and place of usual residence. The basis on which the count of the total population is made should not be confused with the basis of the geographic allocation of persons within the country. ...

*In compilation of the census results by geographic units, persons may be allocated to (a) their actual location at the time of the census or, (b) their usual place of residence within the country. The first method yields the actual distribution of the population on the day of the census (de facto), while the latter method yields a residence distribution (de jure). The type of distribution used should be determined by national needs and the enumeration plan which is to be followed."**
- UNSD (1969:14,24,26):

- *“153. With the growing interest in information on households and families and on internal migration, it is becoming increasingly desirable to prepare tabulations on the basis of usual residence rather than on the basis of place where found, since the latter is often temporary and so is not useful for the investigation of the abovementioned topics. Also, although it is comparatively simpler to enumerate each person where he is found on the day of the census and to use a present-in-area population distribution, a usual-residence distribution is likely to be more accurate than a present-in-area distribution, if the time required for enumeration is so long as to permit considerable movement of persons during the interval.”*
- *“258. Place of usual residence is the geographic place where the enumerated person usually resides. This may be the same as, or different from, the place where he was found at the time of the census or his legal residence.”*
- *“260. Problems may also arise with persons who have been at the place where they are enumerated for some time but do not consider themselves to be residents of this place because they intend to return to their previous residence at some future time, and also with persons who have left the country temporarily but are expected to return after some time. In such instances clearly stated time-limits of presence in, or absence from, a particular place must be set, in accordance with the prevailing circumstances in the country, to determine whether or not the person is usually resident there.”*
- *“283. The inclusion or exclusion from the population total of a country of certain specific groups of persons depends on national circumstances and needs. No recommendation is, therefore, made as to the composition of total population but it is recommended that each country describe in detail the figure accepted officially as the total. It is not sufficient to state that the figure is a de facto or a de jure population because the meanings of the two terms are not sufficiently precise.”*
- UNSD (1980:52,63,66):
 - *“1.239. With the growing interest in information on households and families and on internal migration, it is becoming increasingly desirable to prepare tabulations on the basis of usual residence rather than on the basis of place where present, since the latter is often temporary and so is not useful for the investigation of the above-mentioned topics. Also, although it is comparatively simpler to enumerate each person where present on the day of the census and to use a present-in-area population distribution, a usual-residence distribution is likely to be more accurate than a present-in-area distribution, if the time required for enumeration is so long as to permit considerable movement of persons during the interval.”*
 - *“2.21. The place of usual residence is the geographical place where the enumerated person usually resides. This may be the same as, or different from, the place where he or she was present at the time of the census or his or her legal residence.”*
 - *“2.23. Problems may also arise with persons who have been at the place where they are enumerated for some time but do not consider themselves to be residents of this place because they intend to return to their previous residence at some future time, and also with persons who have left the country temporarily but are expected to return after some time. In such instances, clearly stated time-limits of presence in, or absence from, a particular place must be set, in accordance with the prevailing circumstances in the country, to determine whether or not the person is usually resident there.”*
 - *“2.44. For census purposes, the total population of the country consists of all the persons falling within the scope of the census. In the broadest sense, the total may comprise either all usual residents of the country or all persons present in the country at the time of the*

census. The total of all usual residents is generally referred to as the de jure population and the total of all persons present as the de facto population."

- *"2.45. In practice, however, countries do not usually achieve either type of count, because one or another group of the population is included or excluded, depending on national circumstances, despite the fact that the general term used to describe the total might imply the opposite treatment. It is recommended therefore that each country describe in detail the figure accepted officially as the total, rather than simply to label it as de jure or de facto."*
- UNECE - CES (1987:8,10):
 - *"19. Place of usual residence is the geographic place where the enumerated person usually resides; this may be the same as, or different from, the place where he was found at the time of the census or his legal residence."*
 - *"25. Each country should compile a figure for the total usually-resident population on the basis of the national definition of this concept..."*
 - *"26. Some countries may wish to compile for national purposes one or more additional figures for the total population such as the total present-in-area population or the total legally-resident population."*
- UNSD (1998:61,63):
 - *"2.20. The place of usual residence is the geographical place where the enumerated person usually resides. This may be the same as, or different from, the place where he or she was present at the time of the census or his or her legal residence."*
 - *"2.22. Problems may also arise with persons who have been residing at the place where they are enumerated for some time but do not consider themselves to be residents of that place because they intend to return to their previous residence at some future time, and also with persons who have left the country temporarily but are expected to return after some time. In such instances, clearly stated time limits of presence in, or absence from, a particular place must be set, in accordance with the prevailing circumstances in the country, to determine whether or not the person is usually resident there."*
 - *"2.42. For census purposes, the total population of the country consists of all the persons falling within the scope of the census. In the broadest sense, the total may comprise either all usual residents of the country or all persons present in the country at the time of the census. The total of all usual residents is generally referred to as the de jure population and the total of all persons present as the de facto population."*
 - *"2.43. In practice, however, countries do not usually achieve either type of count, because one or another group of the population is included or excluded, depending on national circumstances, despite the fact that the general term used to describe the total might imply a treatment opposite to the one given any of these groups. It is recommended, therefore, that each country describe in detail the figure accepted officially as total, rather than simply to label it as de jure or de facto."*
- UNECE - Eurostat (1998:11,13):
 - *"30. Place of usual residence is the geographic place where the enumerated person usually resides; this may be the same as, or different from, the place where he/she actually is at the time of the Census; or it may be his/her legal residence. A person's usual residence should be that at which he/she spends most of his/her daily night-rest..."*

- *"35. In general, a person who is absent from his or her previous place/country of usual residence for one year or more should not be considered as temporarily absent."*
- *"42. Each country should compile a figure for the total usually resident population on the basis of the national definition of this concept..."*
- *"43. Some countries may wish to compile for national purposes one or more additional figures for the population such as the total present-in-area population, the total legally resident population or the population working in the country."*
- UNSD (2008:102,103,114,116,123):
 - *"1.461. In general, "usual residence" is defined for census purposes as the place at which the person lives at the time of the census, and has been there for some time or intends to stay there for some time."*
 - *"1.463. It is recommended that countries apply a threshold of 12 months when considering place of usual residence according to one of the following two criteria: (a) The place at which the person has lived continuously for most of the last 12 months (that is, for at least six months and one day), not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least six months; (b) The place at which the person has lived continuously for at least the last 12 months, not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least 12 months."*
 - *"1.465. Regardless of the criteria used to define the 12-month period, countries should ensure that each person should have one and only one place of usual residence. Furthermore, countries should document the definition of place of usual residence that they have adopted for their census..."*
 - *"1.467. In some situations, the concept of usual residence may be referred to as though it is synonymous with the concept of de jure residence. The term "de jure" carries with it a requirement that the person's residence at that place has a basis in the legal system applicable to that place. In turn this implies that people without such a legal basis should not be enumerated in that area. It is not recommended that censuses of population and housing enumerate only those people with a legal right to be in a place but rather ... should include either all those present at the place on census night or all those whose usual residence on census night was at the place."*
 - *"2.21. Population counts may be required on a population present, usual resident population, or service population basis. The choice of population count required will depend on national circumstances and some countries will require more than one. The information collected about each person by the census will need to enable the required population count(s)."*
 - *"2.38. A service population count may be required if a population present count or usual resident population count does not accurately represent the demand for, or provision of services in a country or part of a country. Service populations are relevant where a significant proportion of the population providing or using services in an area are not usual residents of that area. Types of service population counts include daytime populations, working populations and visitor populations. In some countries there may also be an interest in foreign service populations, consisting of foreign residents who cross the border regularly to provide or consume services. This is particularly important in the planning and provision of transport services."*
 - *"2.71. For census purposes, the total population of the country consists of all the persons falling within the scope of the census. In the broadest sense, the total may comprise either*

all usual residents of the country or all persons present in the country at the time of the census. The total of all usual residents is generally referred to as the de jure population and the total of all persons present as the de facto population."

- *"2.72. In practice, however, countries do not usually achieve either type of count, because one or another group of the population is included or excluded, depending on national circumstances, despite the fact that the general term used to describe the total might imply a treatment opposite to the one given any of these groups. It is recommended, therefore, that each country describe in detail the figure accepted officially as the total, rather than simply label it as de jure or de facto."*
- UNECE - Eurostat (2006:35,38,39):
 - *"158. Place of usual residence is the geographic place where the enumerated person usually resides. This may be:
a) The place where he/she actually is at the time of the Census; or
b) His/her legal residence; or
c) His/her residence for voting or other administrative purposes."*
 - *"159. Only those persons:
a) who have lived in their place of usual residence for a continuous period of at least twelve months before Census Day; or
b) who have arrived in their place of usual residence during the twelve months before Census Day with the intention of staying there for at least one year
should be considered as usual residents of the relevant geographic or administrative subdivision. ... Persons who have been temporarily absent for a short period from their place of usual residence over the previous twelve months for reasons such as work or holiday travel should be included."*
 - *"171. A total usually resident population count for each territorial division would normally be compiled by adding persons who are usually resident and present and persons who are usually resident but temporarily absent. ..."*
 - *"178. Each country should compile a figure for the total usually resident population, and the detailed tabulations should in general be provided on this basis. ..."*
 - *"179. Some countries may wish to compile figures for national purposes on one or more additional population bases such as the total present-in-area population, the legally resident population, the day time population or the population working in the area...."*
- UNSD (2017:40,176,178,186):
 - *"2.48. In general, usual residence is defined for census purposes as the place at which the person lives at the time of the census, and has been there for some time or intends to stay there for some time."*
 - *"2.50. It is recommended that countries apply a threshold of 12 months when considering place of usual residence according to one of the following two criteria:(a) The place at which the person has lived continuously for most of the last 12 months (that is, for at least six months and one day), not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least six months;(b) The place at which the person has lived continuously for at least the last 12 months, not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least 12 months."*

- *“2.52. Regardless of the criteria used to define the 12-month period, countries should ensure that each person should have one and only one place of usual residence.”*
- *“2.54. The concept of usual residence may be referred to as though it is synonymous with the concept of de jure residence. In certain circumstances, however, the term “de jure” may carry with it a requirement that the person’s residence at that place has a basis in the legal system applicable to that specific place. In turn this implies that people without such a legal basis should not be enumerated in that area. It is not recommended that censuses of population and housing enumerate only those people with a legal right to be in a place but rather...should include either all those present at the place on census night or all those whose usual residence on census night was at the place of enumeration.”*
- *“4.24. Countries are most interested in the count and distribution of usual residents because usual residence is generally the best indication of where people will demand and consume services, and a count of usual residents is therefore most relevant for planning and policy purposes.”*
- *“4.27. Population counts may be required on a population present basis, or for the usually resident population, or some other population base such as a service population. The choice of population count required will depend on national circumstances; some countries will require more than one. The information collected about each person by the census will need to enable the required population counts to be derived. In some cases, for regional comparison purposes, the population count based on the concept of usual residence might need to be produced.”*
- *“4.37. A usual resident population count is a count of all usual residents of a country at the time of the census. Although countries will determine the definition of a usual resident according to their own particular circumstances, it is recommended that in defining a usual resident and the place of usual residence, countries apply the definition contained in paragraph 2.50. ... Countries applying a different definition of a usual resident for national purposes should produce a usual resident population count using the recommended 12-month definition for the purposes of international comparability.”*
- *“4.82. For census purposes, the total population of the country consists of all the persons falling within the scope of the census. In the broadest sense, the total may comprise either all usual residents of the country or all persons present in the country at the time of the census. The total of all usual residents is generally referred to as the de jure population and the total of all persons present as the de facto population.”*
- UNECE (2015:78,79):
 - *“392. The ‘place of usual residence’ is the geographic place where the enumerated person usually spends their daily rest, assessed over a defined period of time including the census reference time.”*
 - *“393. The population base to be used for international comparisons purposes is the ‘usually resident population’. The ‘usually resident population’ of a country is composed of those persons who have their place of usual residence in the country at the census reference time and have lived, or intend to live, there for a continuous period of time of at least 12 months. A ‘continuous period of time’ means that absences (from the country of usual residence) whose durations are shorter than 12 months do not affect the country of usual residence. The same criteria apply for any relevant territorial division (being the place of usual residence) within the country.”*

- *“394. If a country cannot adopt as (one of) its population base(s) the usually resident population, it should put all possible efforts into producing estimates that are as close to it as possible using its own population base(s).”*
- *“395. As part of the estimation process in registers-based censuses, whenever reference is made to actual geographic places for the usually resident population base, it could be replaced by the registered place of residence, where the criterion of residence is similarly defined with reference to a qualification period of 12 months.”*
- *“399. Each country should compile a figure for the total usually resident population, and the detailed tabulations should in general be provided on this basis. ...”*