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OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
on population and housing censuses
(COM(2007)0069 – C6-0078/2007 – 2007/0032(COD))

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SHORT JUSTIFICATION

This opinion for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs concerns the Commission proposal for a European Parliament and Council regulation on population and housing censuses (COM(2007)0069), to be adopted under the codecision procedure (2007/0032(COD)).

The main aim of the draft regulation is to clarify and make comparable the data collected in censuses carried out in the individual Member States of the European Union, in particular with regard to housing.

The provision by the Member States of coherent, complete and reliable data is essential to the development of credible indicators giving an accurate assessment of the socio-economic situation at regional, national and European Union level.

The importance of reference dates for the collected data and Member States' punctuality in transmitting data to the Commission (Eurostat) should also be stressed in this regard, as only when data relating to the same period of time is available for each territorial unit simultaneously can we genuinely compare information and produce reliable overviews and analyses.

The rapporteur rightly stresses the need to harmonise the system for providing data based on common standards applicable to all Member States and mentions the technical and procedural difficulties encountered in the process.

It should also be borne in mind that these statistics and overviews on population structure and characteristics constitute a fundamental indicator in the planning and monitoring of cohesion policy and in assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of the Structural Fund. The classification of regions for the purpose of this very fund is based on data concerning the populations of those regions, meaning that there are direct financial consequences both for regions and for Member States

The proposal for a regulation under discussion in this opinion concerns issues that are fundamental to the development of regional and cohesion policy.

It should also be underlined that, while census data concerning people's place of usual residence is integral to assessing the housing situation, in the case of analyses of other aspects the focus should be on other data, for example country of citizenship, sex, age or number of children.

Some concepts are not clearly defined in the draft regulation, such as 'place of usual residence', which should refer to a specific period of time preceding the reference point, i.e. the date of the census. Attention should also be given to the accuracy of the translations of the text.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Amendment 1

Recital 2

(2) Periodic statistical data on the population and on the main family, social, economic and housing characteristics of individuals are necessary for the study and definition of regional **and** social policies affecting particular sectors of the community;

(2) Periodic statistical data on the population and on the main family, social, economic and housing characteristics of individuals are necessary for the study and definition of regional, social, **and environmental** policies affecting particular sectors of the community. ***It is necessary, in particular, to collect precise data on housing to support various Community activities such as promoting social inclusion and monitoring social cohesion at regional level or protecting the environment or promoting energy efficiency;***

Justification

The European Union has no competence in the field of housing policy. Data on the housing situation are needed, however, in connection with the formulation of Community policies on social integration and cohesion, environmental protection and energy efficiency.

Amendment 2

Recital 3

(3) In order ***for the most judicious use possible to be made of the data in drawing comparisons between Member States, such data*** should refer to ***a given year to be defined;***

(3) In order ***to ensure the comparability of the data provided by the Member States and for reliable overviews to be drawn up at Union level, the data used*** should refer to ***the same reference year;***

Justification

This rewording is intended to make clear the link between the need for data to be provided for the same reference year and the basic requirement for comparability with regard to the overviews produced at Community level.

Amendment 3

Recital 4

¹ Not yet published in OJ.

(4) In accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 of 17 February 1997 on Community Statistics which constitutes the reference framework for the provisions of this *regulation*, it is necessary that the collection of statistics conforms to standards of impartiality, reliability, objectivity, scientific independence, cost-effectiveness, and statistical confidentiality;

(4) In accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 of 17 February 1997 on Community Statistics, which constitutes the reference framework for the provisions of this *Regulation*, it is necessary that the collection of statistics conforms to standards of impartiality, **transparency**, reliability, objectivity, scientific independence, cost-effectiveness, and statistical confidentiality;

Justification

It is important to make the point that statistics should be collected in the Member States in a transparent way, bearing in mind that the procedures will not be harmonised.

Amendment 4

Article 2, paragraph 1, point (a)

(a) “population” means the national **and** regional population at its usual residence at the reference date referred to in Article 5(2);

(a) “population” means the national, regional, **and local** population at its usual residence at the reference date referred to in Article 5(2);

Justification

The local population as such, i.e. of a municipality or local authority area, must likewise be covered by statistics.

Amendment 5

Article 2, paragraph 1, point (b)

Does not apply to the English version.

Amendment 6

Article 2, paragraph 1, point (c)

(c) “usual residence” means the place at which a person normally spends the daily period of rest, regardless of temporary absences for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage; **or, if not available, the place of legal or registered residence;**

(c) “usual residence” means the place at which a person normally spends the daily period of rest, regardless of temporary absences for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage. **Only those persons:**

(i) who have lived in their place of usual residence for a continuous period of at least twelve months before the reference date; or

(ii) who arrived in their place of usual residence during the twelve months before the reference date with the intention of staying there for at least one year

should be considered as usual residents of the geographic area in question.

Where this cannot be established, "usual residence" means the place of legal or registered residence.

Justification

For reasons of further clarity in the definition of "usual residence", a reference to a specific timeframe needs to be included. It is suggested that a twelve-month reference represents the minimum period of time that one person would need in order to regard one place as "usual residence". Therefore, this addition can better contribute to the provision of more accurate information and data in the censuses in question.

Amendment 7

Article 2, paragraph 1, point (g)

Does not apply to the English version.

Amendment 8

Article 3

Member States shall submit to the Commission (Eurostat) data on the population and on housing covering determined demographic, social, economic and housing characteristics of individuals, families, households, housing units and buildings at the national **and** regional levels as set out in the Annex.

Member States shall submit to the Commission (Eurostat) data on the population and on housing covering determined demographic, social, economic and housing characteristics of individuals, families, households, housing units and buildings at the national, regional, **and local** levels as set out in the Annex, **making sure of the reliability and quality of the data they submit and ensuring that they are punctual in providing it.**

Justification

The basic criteria for the data collected should be explicitly mentioned at the outset.

Amendment 9

Article 4, paragraph 2

2. Member States shall ensure that the data

2. Member States shall ensure that the data

sources and the methodology used to comply with the requirements of this regulation meet the essential features of population and housing censuses as defined in Article 2 (1) to the highest possible extent.

sources and the methodology used to comply with the requirements of this regulation meet the essential features of population and housing censuses as defined in Article 2 (1) to the highest possible extent, ***enabling data to be produced that are as coherent, complete and reliable as possible.***

Justification

The basic quality criteria for the data provided should be stressed, as this is a precondition for the drawing-up of reliable overviews and comparisons of data at Community level.

Amendment 10 Article 4, paragraph 3

3. Member States shall take all measures necessary to ensure the quality of the data and metadata transmitted. The Commission (Eurostat), in cooperation with the competent authorities of the Member States and international organizations, shall provide methodological recommendations and requirements designed to ensure the quality of the data and metadata produced, in particular the Conference of European *Statisticians* Recommendations for the Censuses of Population and Housing.

3. Member States shall take all measures necessary to ensure the quality ***and accuracy*** of the data and metadata transmitted. The Commission (Eurostat), in cooperation with the competent authorities of the Member States and international organizations, shall provide methodological recommendations and requirements designed to ensure the quality ***and accuracy*** of the data and metadata produced, in particular the Conference of European *Statisticians*’ Recommendations for the Censuses of Population and Housing.

Justification

Accuracy is intrinsic to the quality required of the data produced in Member States.

Amendment 11 Article 5, paragraph 7

7. In cases of revisions or corrections according to Article 4 (5) of this regulation, the Member States shall transmit the modified data ***without delay*** to the Commission (Eurostat).

7. In cases of revisions or corrections according to Article 4 (5) of this regulation, the Member States shall transmit the modified data to the Commission (Eurostat) ***at the time of publishing the revised data at the latest.***

Amendment 12 Annex, section 1.3

1.3 Recommended topics for the geographical levels:

deleted

National level, NUTS 1, NUTS 2, NUTS 3, LAU 2

1.3.1 The Member States are recommended to report on all topics that are obligatory for the regional level NUTS 2 also on all deeper regional levels, down to the deepest regional level available.

1.3.2 Not derived topics

- **Location of school, college or university**
- **Mode of transport to work**
- **Mode of transport to school, college or university**
- **Distance travelled to work and time taken**
- **Distance travelled to school, college or university and time taken**
- **De facto marital status**
- **Total number of children born alive**
- **Date(s) of legal marriage(s) of ever married women: (i) first marriage and (ii) current marriage**
- **Date(s) of the beginning of the consensual union(s) of women having ever been in consensual union: (i) first consensual union and (ii) current consensual union**
- **Usual activity status**
- **Providers of unpaid services, volunteers**
- **Type of sector (institutional unit)**
- **Informal employment**
- **Type of place of work**
- **Time usually worked**
- **Time related underemployment**
- **Duration of unemployment**
- **Number of persons working in the local unit of the establishment**
- **Main source of livelihood**
- **Income**
- **Educational qualifications**
- **Field of study**
- **School attendance**
- **Literacy**
- **Computer literacy**
- **Country of previous usual residence abroad**
- **Total duration of residence in the country**

- *Place of usual residence five years prior to the census*
- *Reason for migration*
- *Country of birth of parents*
- *Citizenship acquisition*
- *Ethnicity*
- *Language*
- *Religion*
- *Disability status*
- *Single or shared occupancy*
- *Rent*
- *Durable consumer goods possessed by the household*
- *Number of cars available for the use of the household*
- *Availability of car parking*
- *Telephone and internet connection*
- *Own-account agricultural production (household level)*
- *Characteristics of all agricultural jobs during the last year (individual level)*

1.3.3 Derived Topics

- *Urban and rural areas*
- *Socio economic groups*
- *Persons with foreign/national background*
- *Population groups relevant to international migration*
- *Population with refugee background*
- *Internally Displaced Persons*
- *Same-sex partnerships*
- *Extended family status*
- *Type of reconstituted family*
- *Type of extended family*
- *Generational composition of private households*

Amendment 13
Annex, section 2.1.1, indent 7 a (new)

- *Size of garden belonging to dwelling*

Justification

If we collect all these extensive information, we could add the data about gardens, to have one more option of comparison and analysis.

Amendment 14
Annex, paragraph 2.1.1, indent 7 c (new)

- Environmental and energy classification

Justification

The place and the space available for each member of a household, and the quality of that space, are central to analysis of the quality of life that populations have. The extent to which environmental and energy standards match social requirements also serves to measure quality of life.

Amendment 15
Annex, paragraph 2.2.1, indent 8

- Water supply system

- Water supply **and sanitation** system

Justification

Access to basic sanitation networks as well as to water supply networks can entail patent differences in social situations.

Amendment 16
Annex, section 2.3

2.3 Recommended topics for the geographical levels: **deleted**
National level, NUTS 1, NUTS 2, NUTS 3, LAU 2

2.3.1 The Member States are recommended to report on all topics that are obligatory for the regional level NUTS 2 also on all deeper regional levels, down to the deepest regional level available.

2.3.2 Not derived topics
- Availability and characteristics of secondary, seasonal and vacant dwellings
- Occupancy by number of private households
- Type of rooms
- Hot water
- Sanitary water heating
- Type of sewage disposal system
- Kitchen

- *Cooking facilities*
- *Energy sources used for heating*
- *Thermal insulation of dwelling*
- *Availability of electricity*
- *Production of electricity*
- *Piped gas*
- *Air-conditioning*
- *Ventilation*
- *Position of dwelling in the building*
- *Accessibility to dwelling*
- *Lift*
- *Dwellings by number of floors in the building*
- *Dwellings by materials of which specified parts of the building containing the dwelling are constructed*
- *Dwellings by state of repair of the buildings*
- *Separation of waste in the household*

PROCEDURE

Title	Population and housing censuses
References	COM(2007)0069 - C6-0078/2007 - 2007/0032(COD)
Committee responsible	EMPL
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	REGI 13.3.2007
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Wojciech Roszkowski 7.6.2007
Discussed in committee	3.10.2007
Date adopted	20.11.2007
Result of final vote	+: 36 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Alfonso Andria, Emmanouil Angelakas, Elspeth Attwooll, Jean Marie Beaupuy, Jana Bobošíková, Wolfgang Bulfon, Antonio De Blasio, Gerardo Galeote, Iratxe García Pérez, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Ambroise Guellec, Marian Harkin, Jim Higgins, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Rumiana Jeleva, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Evgeni Kirilov, Jamila Madeira, James Nicholson, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Bernard Poinant, Pierre Pribetich, Wojciech Roszkowski, Elisabeth Schroedter, Grażyna Staniszevska, Catherine Stihler, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Lambert van Nistelrooij
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Bernadette Bourzai, Den Dover, Francesco Ferrari, Ovidiu Victor Ganț, Zita Pleštinská, Christa Prets, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Nikolaos Vakalis