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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

Accompanying the document

Proposal for a

**REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on
European statistics on population and housing, amending Regulation (EC) No 862/2007
and repealing Regulations (EC) No 763/2008 and (EU) No 1260/2013**

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Introduction and background

Under Article 9 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), every national of a Member State, in addition to the national citizenship, is also a citizen of the European Union. To design and implement policies and activities benefiting the EU population and citizens in the areas of EU competences, as established by Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), EU institutions need complete, timely, reliable, detailed, harmonised and comparable European statistics on population. These statistics are also the backbone of all social statistics and indispensable for any more detailed annual population estimates, sample surveys, regional analysis and for producing population projections.

This document summarises the results of the evaluation of: (i) the mandatory and voluntary elements of European decennial statistics from the censuses of population and housing; and (ii) the annual statistics on demography and international migration. The evaluation was undertaken back-to-back with an impact assessment in the context of a planned redevelopment of European statistics on population¹, which aims to introduce a single modernised legal framework with the flexibility to meet evolving user needs for statistics.

Although different voluntary collections of population data from Member States had taken place during several decades since 1960, these were characterised at Community level by poor timeliness, incompleteness and a lack of harmonisation. Since 2003, the Commission has worked towards improving these statistics, leading to Parliament and the Council adopting three legal acts to cover demographic and migration statistics, as well as the population and housing census:

- Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 on population and housing censuses;
- Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection, specifically Article 3 relating to statistics on international migration flows, migrant stocks and acquisitions of citizenship²;
- Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 on European demographic statistics.

The evaluation is intended to assess how far this intervention and its associated legal bases achieved their objectives with regard to European statistics on demography, international migration and population and housing censuses. Success in this respect is to be measured by looking at: (i) the initial needs for statistics at the time of the intervention (baseline situation around 2005); and (ii) the ongoing evolution of user needs.

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation assessed the current legal framework using the following six criteria:

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12958-Data-collection-European-statistics-on-population-ESOP-en>.

² Articles 4 to 7 of Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 cover statistics on asylum and managed migration of third-country nationals. These statistics are outside of the scope of this evaluation.

- relevance – both to the initial baseline situation and to the evolution of needs until today
- effectiveness
- efficiency
- coherence – internal and external
- EU added value
- statistical quality.

The evaluation addressed two broad issues: (i) how the statistics are produced from data source to publication; and (ii) how the published European statistics are received by users.

Information was gathered by desk research and by consultation activities. The desk research focused on analysis of legal, contextual, methodological and technical background documents relevant to the intervention. The consultation activities including an open public consultation targeted different stakeholder groups: statistics producers including national statistical institutes; statistics users within the Commission; and other statistics users. A single stakeholder consultation was carried out for this evaluation and back-to-back impact assessment.

There were limitations to the analytical model used to estimate costs and benefits. These were due to difficulties in quantifying incremental costs cleanly against the hypothetical baseline (2005 situation), and thus in quantitatively assessing the intervention's efficiency. Furthermore, it was not possible to quantify or monetise costs on data users or on individual persons, as well as benefits in general, due to the nature of these impacts. This led to a lack of data and ambiguity and variability across Member States and stakeholder groups.

Results of the evaluation

Successful outcomes of the intervention

The intervention and the current legal framework based on the three acts listed above have achieved significant overall improvements to European population statistics in relation to the 2005 baseline.

EU added value has been increased significantly. This has been achieved through considerable improvements at EU level in

- completeness and comparability;
- coherence and consistency;
- timeliness.

All EU policy/institutional topical needs for population statistics known prior to the intervention have been delivered on.

The intervention thus improved both the statistical framework's effectiveness and its efficiency and coherence. These positive results were confirmed by a majority of opinions collected across all stakeholder groups in the consultation activities.

Weaknesses of the intervention

The current legal framework...

... does not fully ensure sufficiently coherent, comparable and complete statistics.

Although common definitions are set for key statistical concepts, there is often flexibility in how Member States select and implement them. In particular, Member States currently apply three conceptually different definitions of the population base (usual residence, registered residence, legal residence) that are allowed, sometimes using different definitions for different datasets. This central issue to population statistics has caused a lack of comparability and coherence in the data from different Member States, reducing the data collections' EU added value. Moreover, the absence of provisions on time series revision reduces the comparability over time.

Certain data gaps where the mandatory statistics do not fully meet user needs can be filled with data supplied by Member States on a voluntary basis. However, the voluntary nature of these data results in incomplete EU-level statistics that may not be coherent with mandatory statistics. This reduces the cost-effectiveness of voluntary statistics in terms of their EU value added and thus indicates the importance of these statistics being mandatory in the future. Voluntary collections may be useful initially when new statistics are being developed, but a clear legal base is necessary for their full implementation as European official statistics.

... does not ensure sufficient availability of population data in terms of timeliness and frequencies of data publications.

Existing legislation covers only annual demographic and migration statistics, with most datasets to be provided only within 12 months from the reference period, and the decennial census statistics with EU datasets to be provided only within 27 months from the end of the census year. These frequencies and timeliness issues remain below user expectations and below national statistical publications and other international statistics transmissions across a majority of Member States. Under the current legislation, the legal deadlines and frequencies cannot be improved, e.g. to cover other multi-annual population and housing statistics, or infra-annual population statistics such as those recently developed for mortality.

... fails to capture characteristics and details of topics or groups that have become politically and societally relevant during the past decade.

The existing legislation focuses on data needs corresponding to policy priorities current at the time the intervention was developed. Over time, priorities have changed and the available population statistics no longer adequately cover policy-relevant characteristics, topics or population groups. Most notably, the gaps confirmed in the stakeholder consultation revolve around characteristics of politically relevant topics and groups. Examples include housing data for the Green Deal, migrants and EU mobility, urban/rural population, and vulnerable minority groups for non-discrimination and fundamental rights policies. There are also gaps relating to the statistics' insufficient geographic granularity, including most notably functional typologies and georeferenced data for urban/rural integration and cross-border analysis.

... is not flexible enough to adapt to evolving policy needs and to enable the use of new sources in the Member States and at EU level.

Compounding the weaknesses considered above, the existing legislation lacks the flexibility to enable it to adapt to meet new and emerging needs for statistics. New data sources in Member States and at EU level (in particular, administrative data including interoperability systems and privately held data) also offer potential improvements in terms of costs and timeliness, but the current legislation does not support the adoption of these developments.

Finally, the evaluation has identified REFIT³-relevant redundancies regarding compliance, enforcement and monitoring. These are due to the current legislation being scattered across three legal acts that were not developed together. Moreover, the current status quo of producing many voluntary datasets with high but not full completeness across Member States leads to significantly reduced efficiency at EU level.

Conclusions

Overall, the current intervention resulted in significant improvements over the baseline situation in 2005. However, there are weaknesses in the legal framework such as poor timeliness and excessively loose definitions of key concepts, resulting in a lack of harmonisation.

Other weaknesses have become apparent over time, through the lack of flexibility in the legal framework, which in turn results in the statistics losing relevance due to an inability to meet evolving user needs.

³ The Commission's Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme; [COM\(2012\) 746](#).