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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

**on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 of the European Parliament
and of the Council on European demographic statistics**

1. INTRODUCTION

Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 ⁽¹⁾ ('the Regulation') establishes a common legal framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics on population and vital events.

Member States had previously submitted such statistics voluntarily for a number of years. However, as these were based on varying demographic definitions, concepts and methods, the resulting statistics were of notably reduced comparability, consistency and timeliness. The common framework was intended to meet the need for high-quality demographic statistics at national and regional level that are fundamental for a wide range of institutional and policy needs. For instance, these statistics are needed to calculate population projections that inform the EU's long-term economic and budgetary projections and are used as a denominator for many 'per capita' policy indicators.

This is the second report required under Article 11 of the Regulation, and covers the period 2019-2023 ⁽²⁾. It is structured as follows:

- Section 2 gives an overview of the statistics covered by the Regulation;
- Section 3 describes how the quality criteria established for European statistics are monitored regularly;
- Section 4 summarises recent evaluation findings;
- Section 5 outlines the ongoing legislative initiative to modernise European statistics on population and housing, including statistics under the Regulation.

2. STATISTICS COVERED BY THE REGULATION

Under the Regulation, Member States transmit statistics to the Commission (Eurostat) on:

- the usually resident population ⁽³⁾ by age, sex and region of residence;
- live births by sex, month of occurrence, live birth order, mother's age, mother's year of birth, mother's country of birth, mother's country of citizenship and mother's region of residence;
- deaths by age, sex, year of birth, region of residence, country of birth, country of citizenship and month of occurrence; and
- total usually resident population for qualified majority voting in the Council.

Except for the last point, some flexibility is allowed on the implementation of the usual residence definition – Member States can provide statistics based on 'legal or registered residence' where the criteria for usual residence cannot be established.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on European demographic statistics (Text with EEA relevance) ([OJ L 330, 10.12.2013, p. 39](#)).

⁽²⁾ First report published as [COM \(2018\) 843](#).

⁽³⁾ 'Usual residence' is defined in Article 2(d) of the Regulation as the place where a person normally spends the daily period of rest over a continuous period of at least 12 months. Where the circumstances for usual residence cannot be established, it can be taken to mean the place of legal or registered residence, except for the purposes of qualified majority voting in the Council.

Pursuant to Article 3(4) of the Regulation, the Commission adopted Implementing Regulation (EU) No 205/2014 ⁽⁴⁾. It lays down uniform conditions for data breakdowns, transmission deadlines and revisions. As a result, Member States also transmit to the Commission (Eurostat):

- provisional annual statistics on total population, total live births and total deaths at national level within 6 months of the end of each reference year; and
- provisional monthly statistics on total live births and total deaths for at least the first 6 months of the reference year by 30 November of that year.

In addition to these mandatory statistics, Member States currently transmit various statistics voluntarily, e.g. on deaths by week of occurrence; on deaths by age, sex and educational attainment; on marriages and divorces by various characteristics. Some of these voluntary statistics are needed to calculate demographic indicators, e.g. life expectancy by educational attainment.

3. REGULAR MONITORING OF STATISTICAL QUALITY

This section describes the monitoring of the implementation of the Regulation based on standard quality criteria in line with Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics ⁽⁵⁾ and the European Statistics Code of Practice ⁽⁶⁾. Member States have to ensure the quality of the statistics and provide quality metadata and reports to the Commission (Eurostat). Eurostat reviews these quality assessments and publishes the statistics as well as analytical articles on its website. Eurostat and the Member States work together to follow up on outstanding issues. Specific points are discussed in annual meetings of the expert group on population statistics, where all EU and EFTA national statistical institutes are represented.

3.1. Relevance

The Commission has given great relevance to demography ⁽⁷⁾. Demographic statistics are used to prepare regular reports, policy proposals, implementation reports required under EU legislation, and policy analysis. For example, the Commission's reports on economic, social and territorial cohesion ⁽⁸⁾ and on the impact of demographic change in a changing

⁽⁴⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 205/2014 of 4 March 2014 laying down uniform conditions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council on European demographic statistics, as regards breakdowns of data, deadlines and data revisions (Text with EEA relevance) ([OJ L 65, 5.3.2014, p. 10](#)).

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European statistics and repealing Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1101/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transmission of data subject to statistical confidentiality to the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 on Community Statistics, and Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom establishing a Committee on the Statistical Programmes of the European Communities ([OJ L 87, 31.3.2009, p. 164](#)).

⁽⁶⁾ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/KS-32-11-955>

⁽⁷⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/impact-demographic-change-europe_en

⁽⁸⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/cohesion-report/ (available only in English).

environment⁽⁹⁾ use statistics produced under the Regulation. In 2021, Eurostat released the ‘Demography of Europe’ interactive publication, which has been updated yearly, showing the development, change and ageing of the EU population⁽¹⁰⁾. One direct application of the statistics produced under the Regulation is in the field of Eurostat’s 3-yearly demographic population projections⁽¹¹⁾. These show how population size and structure could change if certain assumptions on fertility, mortality and migration remained valid. These projections are also used for the Ageing report⁽¹²⁾ to assess the long-term economic and budgetary impact of population ageing. In addition to these long-term population projections, Eurostat published for the first time short-term updates of the projections in September 2022, complementing the data offer. Furthermore, the total usually resident population counts per Member State are used as weights for qualified majority voting in the Council.

Of all the statistics disseminated by Eurostat, statistics relating to population are among those consulted most. Since 2015⁽¹³⁾, yearly population stock⁽¹⁴⁾ and population changes⁽¹⁵⁾ at national level have been consistently among the most popular social statistics tables and in the top five most viewed Eurostat tables. Since mid-2016, the ‘Demography, population stock and balance’ section⁽¹⁶⁾ on Eurostat’s website has consistently been among the top five thematic sections in terms of user visits.

3.2. Accuracy

Compared with the previous report from 2018, no substantial improvements have been made to accuracy. Eurostat is aware that the same specific accuracy issues keep occurring on under-coverage (when people do not register their place of residence) and over-coverage (e.g. when people do not deregister, as there is often no obligation or incentive to do so)⁽¹⁷⁾. Moreover, metadata reported by Member States on the accuracy

(9) https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/Demography_report_2022_0.pdf (available only in English).

(10) Latest edition is available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/demography-2023> (available only in English).

(11) The latest EUROPOP2023 population projections were released by Eurostat on 30 March 2023: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_projections_in_the_EU (available only in English).

(12) https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2024-ageing-report-underlying-assumptions-and-projection-methodologies_en (available only in English).

(13) This covers all dissemination under the Regulation, as the data collected under Article 3 were first disseminated in the first quarter of 2015.

(14) ‘Population on 1 January’ – online data code [tps00001](#) (available only in English, French and German).

(15) ‘Population change – demographic balance and crude rates at national level’ – online data code [demo_gind](#) (available only in English, French and German).

(16) <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/demography-population-stock-balance> (available only in English, French and German).

(17) The most recent quality report reiterates persistent difficulties due to incomplete (de-)registrations and in covering people staying in the country irregularly, without estimating the quantitative impact on coverage accuracy.

of estimating the usually resident population for qualified majority voting are still insufficient for a detailed assessment.

In this context, Eurostat continues to promote the use of ‘mirror flows’ reported by partner Member States to resolve coverage errors due to failure to register and deregister. The exchange of aggregate mirror flow data takes place between national statistical institutes that find this a useful addition to their national statistical process. This helps them to improve and evaluate the quality of their data.

3.3. Timeliness and punctuality

The main deadline for supplying the bulk of the demographic statistics to the Commission (Eurostat) is 12 months after the end of the reference year; three small data sets are to be transmitted within 6, 8 and 11 months of the end of the reference year. Since the start of data collection under the Regulation, there have been no notable issues of delayed data transmissions by Member States. There has therefore been no change compared to the 2018 report ⁽¹⁸⁾.

3.4. Accessibility and clarity

Member States’ data and EU aggregates are freely available on Eurostat’s website ⁽¹⁹⁾. Users can access European demographic statistics ⁽²⁰⁾ under ‘Selected datasets’, ‘Detailed datasets’ and via regularly updated articles on a wide range of population-related subjects ⁽²¹⁾. During the year, data releases are accompanied by widely distributed news items and *Statistics Explained* articles with more information on statistics on demography, their trends and their interpretation ⁽²²⁾. However, a lack of sufficiently clear and comparable national metadata information, including quantitative quality indicators, makes it hard even for experienced users to assess and compare Member States’ data quality.

3.5. Comparability and coherence

The flexible, non-harmonised application of the concept of usual residence is still the most serious issue for comparability and coherence. For instance, some Member States do not include certain population groups (e.g. asylum seekers, irregular migrants or nomads) or do not apply the 12-month criterion to population stocks and vital events, often because the statistics are taken directly from administrative registers and are therefore dependent on national administrative criteria for registering people and vital

⁽¹⁸⁾ For instance, according to the most recent quality report, almost all Member States transmitted all their data sets on time (76 out of 81 transmissions on time, 2 within a 2-week delay and 3 within a 4-week delay).

⁽¹⁹⁾ Eurostat home page (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>) and database (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>) (both available only in English, French and German).

⁽²⁰⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/demography-population-stock-balance/database> (available only in English, French and German).

⁽²¹⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/demography-population-stock-balance/publications> (available only in English, French and German).

⁽²²⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Category:Population> (available only in English).

events⁽²³⁾. A recent evaluation identified this as one of the key issues of the status quo (see Section 4), while the Commission initiative to redevelop the legal basis emphasised the need for good estimation practices to improve the comparability of demographic statistics from administrative sources (see Section 5).

Apart from this key issue, demographic statistics are mostly comparable over time for each country. Some discontinuities arise typically when Member States improve or change their methodology, including using a new census round to assess and rebase their population estimations, or adjusting the territorial units used in statistics. These are indicated in the tables in Eurostat's database and documented for users through the metadata on the Eurostat website or in relevant publications.

3.6. Compliance monitoring

The Commission (Eurostat) continues to follow up sporadic cases of non-compliance with the Regulation where data were incomplete, of low quality or not delivered in accordance with the legal deadlines. It monitors and assesses these aspects of data provision on an ongoing basis and contacts the Member States concerned at technical and administrative level to resolve the issues.

4. EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT STATISTICAL FRAMEWORK

In 2021, the Commission conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the entire current legal framework and resulting European statistics on population and housing⁽²⁴⁾. It included statistics under Article 3 of this Regulation and all statistics under Regulations (EC) No 862/2007⁽²⁵⁾ and (EC) No 763/2008⁽²⁶⁾. The scope of the evaluation was much wider than the regular monitoring described in Section 3 as views from all relevant stakeholder groups – including institutional, policy and research users – were collected in a systematic stakeholder consultation⁽²⁷⁾. The goal was to assess whether the original objectives of the current framework were achieved and identify significant gaps.

The evaluation found significant overall improvements had been made in European population statistics thanks to the current framework, compared to the initial problems and needs faced by the statistical community before its entry into force. In particular, the

⁽²³⁾ According to the most recent quality reports, for demographic statistics (except total population counts for qualified majority voting in the Council), 18 Member States apply the narrow concept of usual residence consistently, while 9 apply other national or mixed concepts. For total population counts for qualified majority voting in the Council, where the narrow concept of usual residence is legally required, there are divergent practices between Member States on certain population groups, most notably asylum seekers (17 Member States include them, 10 do not), irregular migrants (13 vs 14), and nomads (19 vs 8).

⁽²⁴⁾ [SWD\(2023\) 13](#)

⁽²⁵⁾ Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 July 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 311/76 on the compilation of statistics on foreign workers (Text with EEA relevance) ([OJ L 199, 31.7.2007, p. 23](#)).

⁽²⁶⁾ 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](#)).

⁽²⁷⁾ [SWD\(2023\) 15](#)

current legal framework has significantly increased EU value added by improving – for the data sets that became mandatory – several statistical quality dimensions at EU level, including completeness, consistency and timeliness. Moreover, the current legislation has delivered on all relevant needs for policymaking and institutions at EU level that were known when it was developed (2005-2013). This has improved the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of statistical production compared to the previous situation, which relied solely on voluntary data collections. In the stakeholder consultation, most respondents across all key stakeholder groups confirmed these improvements and stressed the added value of the current legal framework at EU level. Nevertheless, the evaluation also identified four significant gaps in the current legislation.

4.1. Gap 1: Coherence, comparability, completeness

Although the Regulation sets common definitions for key statistical concepts, some flexibility remains in the population definition itself. Member States currently apply three different concepts (usual residence, registered residence, legal residence) allowed by the Regulation, sometimes using different concepts for different data sets. This central issue has caused a lack of comparability and coherence in the data from different Member States, reducing the EU added value of the data collections. Moreover, statistics that remain voluntary are often incomplete at EU level due to data missing from a few Member States. This reduces the overall cost-effectiveness significantly, as the majority of Member States spend resources on producing them, but a complete EU picture is not achieved.

4.2. Gap 2: Timeliness and frequency

The Regulation covers only annual demographic statistics, with most data sets to be provided 12 months after the end of the reference period. Even though overall timeliness has therefore improved mainly because excessive delays by very few Member States been resolved, it remains below user expectations. The data provided under the Regulation are less timely than comparable national statistical publications and other transmissions of international statistics across a majority of Member States. Under the Regulation, the legal deadlines and periodicities of statistics cannot be improved, e.g. to cover infra-annual population statistics such as those recently developed voluntarily for mortality.

4.3. Gap 3: Details of societally relevant topics and groups

The Regulation focuses on data needs that correspond to policy priorities at the time it was developed. Over time, priorities have changed, and the available demographic statistics no longer adequately cover policy-relevant characteristics, topics or population groups⁽²⁸⁾. Most notably, the gaps confirmed in the stakeholder consultation revolve around characteristics of relevant topics and groups. There are also gaps relating to insufficient geographic granularity, in particular functional typologies and georeferenced data for urban/rural integration and cross-border analysis.

⁽²⁸⁾ E.g. housing data for the Green Deal; data on migrants and EU mobility; data on the urban/rural population; and data on vulnerable minority groups for policies on non-discrimination and fundamental rights.

4.4. Gap 4: Lack of flexibility of the legal framework

Compounding the above-mentioned weaknesses, the existing legislation lacks the flexibility 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 allow these developments to be embraced. The legal framework has therefore not been able to adapt to any policy-relevant changes since it was adopted, and has therefore been losing relevance rather quickly.

5. MODERNISATION OF EUROPEAN DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS AS PART OF THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN STATISTICS ON POPULATION

For the significant gaps outlined in Section 4, the evaluation identified four legislative drivers that also apply to this Regulation:

- Only **mandatory data collections** with defined common rules can ensure completeness and timeliness of statistics at EU level. Regulating voluntary data collections that already have high completeness may significantly improve effectiveness and efficiency as considerable EU added value can be generated at limited incremental cost.
- **Voluntary data collections** are appropriate instruments to pilot the production of new topics or characteristics, and boost the incremental capability of national statistical systems to provide such new data. However, they tend to become inefficient over time because recurrent production costs eventually fail to generate EU value added in terms of completeness across Member States.
- **Loose legal definitions** of statistical topics lead to loss of control over conceptual harmonisation. This ultimately leads to a loss of coherence and comparability over time. The example of the definition of the population base has shown how a default clause originally introduced as an exception with limited scope has turned into a new factual standard ⁽²⁹⁾.
- A **legal framework that is too rigid** makes it difficult to maintain relevance over time. The current framework has been losing relevance rather quickly – this already started during the implementation period due to the lack of flexibility mechanisms to adapt data collections to evolving needs or profit from opportunities driven by new data sources becoming available.

Moreover, the evaluation pointed to administrative redundancies in compliance, enforcement and monitoring because the current legislation on population statistics is scattered across three legal acts that were not developed together. Based on the evaluation and an impact assessment ⁽³⁰⁾, the Commission therefore adopted a proposal for a new framework regulation on population and housing that addresses the legislative

⁽²⁹⁾ As noted in Section 4.1, the Regulation allows for three different population base concepts: usual residence or, in default, registered or legal residence (according to national rules) where the circumstances for usual residence described in the Regulation cannot be established. This default clause was originally introduced as an exception for a small number of Member States but has meanwhile turned into a new factual standard, as more and more Member States apply national population base definitions in the wake of embracing administrative data sources.

⁽³⁰⁾ [SWD\(2023\) 11](#)

drivers for significant gaps above, while aiming to integrate the legal basis into one single regulation ⁽³¹⁾.

The legislative proposal contains ambitious elements to strengthen general consistency and the links between all EU social statistics based on people and households, including under Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 ⁽³²⁾. The proposal contains provisions to support the implementation of a harmonised population definition based on sound statistical estimation concepts, and enable access to available data sources that will improve the production processes and general quality of social statistics. The proposal also contains provisions to align population and international migration statistics more with statistics on asylum and administrative and judicial procedures related to immigration legislation remaining under Articles 4 to 7 of Regulation (EC) No 862/2007. At the time of this report, the ordinary legislative procedure on the proposal was ongoing ⁽³³⁾.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Thanks to the continued joint efforts of the European Statistical System ⁽³⁴⁾, the Regulation is well implemented. This leads to the regular publication of overall high-quality European demographic statistics, needed by EU institutions and policymakers at all levels. Legal compliance and statistical quality are monitored regularly in line with the Regulation. As in the first report of 2018, there are no major compliance issues.

Nevertheless, a recent evaluation of the current legal framework for population statistics identified four significant gaps in the legislation currently in force and that are partly linked to the fact that population statistics are scattered across three regulations, including this one. These gaps are (i) lack of harmonisation of statistical concepts, in particular the population definition; (ii) insufficient timeliness and frequency of statistical publications; (iii) lack of detail on relevant groups and topics; and (iv) lack of flexibility to adapt to changing needs or new data sources. The Commission has therefore proposed a single new framework regulation on European statistics on population and housing that would consolidate the legal framework and address all four gaps.

Efforts continue to advance the ordinary legislative procedure on the new integrated legal framework for European population statistics that would incorporate and extend the demographic statistics under the Regulation.

⁽³¹⁾ [COM\(2023\) 31](#)

⁽³²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 October 2019 establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples, amending Regulations (EC) No 808/2004, (EC) No 452/2008 and (EC) No 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1177/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98 (Text with EEA relevance) ([OJ L 261I , 14.10.2019, p. 1](#)).

⁽³³⁾ [Procedure 2023/0008/COD](#)

⁽³⁴⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-statistical-system>