



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

European Blind Union response to the European Commission's public consultation on redeveloping European statistics on population

EBU Position Paper | December 2021

Aim of the consultation

This public consultation is to inform the Commission initiative Data collection – European statistics on population (ESOP). The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that European statistics on population remain relevant, coherent and comparable in the face of demographic, migratory, social and economic changes in society.

Feedback

Evaluation of current European statistics on population

Do you use the Eurostat website or database to consult statistics on the European population?

No, because it doesn't provide the information we need as organisation of persons with visual impairment.

Do European statistics on population provide sufficient information on the following elements of demographic and societal change?

- Population subgroups at risk of inequality or discrimination (e.g. by disability, gender, race, religion): Very insufficient

Explanation: Eurostat data on disabilities is currently disaggregated only by age and gender and not, for instance,

according to the nature of a person's disability as well. They therefore don't allow to understand how different types of disability have an impact on things such as rates of poverty, employment and educational attainment. All persons with disabilities are placed in a single category, or simply split between persons that have "severe" disabilities and those that have "some" activity limitation. This overlooks the hugely different barriers faced by persons with different types of disabilities, especially those with multiple disabilities.

Are you aware that some Member States do not report European statistics using harmonised population concepts, but rather national ones?

Yes.

Do you agree with the following statements on the use of population concepts and definitions for European statistics?

- I find it important that only harmonised concepts and definitions are used: Strongly agree
- It is important for me to know which exact population concepts and definitions are used and I consult the available metadata to verify this: Strongly agree
- I find sufficient information in the metadata on the various population concepts and definitions used: Strongly disagree

The COVID-19 pandemic created the need for reliable high frequency statistics on deaths and excess mortality. Have you or your organisation used European statistics on weekly deaths or monthly excess mortality since the start of the pandemic?

No.

Do you agree that European statistics on population lead to the following benefits for your organisation?

- Better decision making: Strongly agree
- Reduced costs and staff time: Somewhat agree. An organisation such as ours can spend of a lot of effort and time in touching base with our national member organisations to try and obtain some figures on a determined situation of blind and partially sighted persons, most often with scarce results, because themselves they rely on statistics that are lacking at national level.
- Enhanced quality of products or services: Strongly agree

- Comparability of data from my country with other Member States: Strongly agree

Do you agree with the following statements? European statistics on population provide added value compared to statistics available from

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- national statistical sources: Strongly agree
- other international statistical sources, e.g. the UN: Strongly agree

The legal framework currently in force on European statistics on population consists of Regulations (EC) No 862/2007, (EC) No 763/2008 and (EU) No 1260/2013. Are you familiar with the current legal framework?

No.

Options for modernising European statistics on population

Questions on which EBU has no opinion are skipped.

1. Statistical population frames or registers

Which of these measures do you consider a priority?

Selected: NSIs establish national statistical population registers with richer statistical information than frames; this would allow direct extraction of up-to-date statistics.

What would be the impact for your organisation of this change?

Very positive. Enhanced quality of product/service.

2. Harmonisation of the population definition

Which of these measures do you consider a priority?

- Publish European statistics on population based on a strictly harmonised population definition (based on usual residence concept) for all datasets: Medium priority
- Publish European statistics on population based on a harmonised population definition (based on a usual residence concept) for all datasets, with justified exceptions and limited impact on comparability of statistics across Member States: High priority

What would be the impact for your organisation of these changes?
Respectively somewhat positive and very positive. Enhanced quality of product/service

15. Statistics on equality and non-discrimination characteristics

The current legal framework does not include provisions for size and demographic characteristics of minority groups based on gender, ethnicity and race, religion and disability. Do you have an opinion on potential changes to this status quo?

Yes.

Which of these measures do you consider a priority?

Selected: Provide size and demographic characteristics of the groups referred to, and disaggregate other statistics by such group characteristics where relevant. High priority.

Which specific minority characteristics do you think should be covered by European statistics on population?

Selected: Disability

What would be the impact for your organisation of each of these changes?

- Provide size and demographic characteristics of the groups referred to: Somewhat positive
- Provide size and demographic characteristics of the groups referred to, and disaggregate other statistics by such group characteristics where relevant: Very positive

Please specify the main positive impacts:

Selected: Enhanced quality of product/service

Closing

Do you have any final comments or suggestions?

As required by Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Eurostat should start collecting data on disability disaggregated by type of disability from all Member States, to allow a well-informed EU policy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

To begin with, this could be done only in some priority areas, e.g. employment. The next review of the EU SDG indicator set should integrate the Washington Group Short Set of Questions into the surveys Eurostat and the national statistics offices use for SDG monitoring purposes.

We are aware that Eurostat bases its work on national statistics bodies, and that it cannot produce the type of EU-level statistics we want as long as the Member States don't agree on a common approach to disability. So, we call for the development of a common approach, that should be based, not on an assessment of health/degree of disability, but rather on what the needs are for inclusion, in line with the CRPD.

About EBU

The European Blind Union (EBU) – **Interest Representative Register number 42378755934-87** – is a non-governmental, non-profit making European organisation founded in 1984. It is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union, and it promotes the interests of blind and partially sighted people in Europe. It currently operates within a network of 41 national members including organisations from 25 European Union member states, candidate countries and other countries in geographical Europe.

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