



**MPHASIS**  
**Mutual Progress on Homelessness through**  
**Advancing and Strengthening Information Systems**

**FINAL PROJECT CONFERENCE**  
**NOVOTEL ATRIA CHARENTON PARIS**  
**17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

**WORKSHOP**  
**SESSION 1 CENSUS / SURVEYS**

Chair: Marri Lujanen (Ministry of Environment, Finland)

Presenter: University of Dundee - Bill Edgar

Reaction from: Jerome Accardo (INSEE, France)

*Focus: The workshop will consider specifically*

- 1. Counting Homeless on Census night*
- 2. Population Registers*

**BACKGROUND**

The EU Regulation on the 2011 Census provides a framework in which Census offices are required to count all citizens including homeless people.

Census Offices attended the Mphasis national meetings and stated that they would indeed comply with the Regulation although it was not always certain that clear methods had been developed for this purpose. The FEANTSA survey indicates three broad groups of countries in this respect. One output from the Mphasis project is a paper to be presented to the UNECE Conference in Geneva on 28<sup>th</sup> October – see attached copy (please do not circulate or quote).

Some countries continue to use traditional enumeration methods while others adopt a register-based approach or combination of these methods.

The research strand of the Mphasis project has attempted to examine the issues involved in getting a count of homeless people from register-based systems. This research identifies that this remains a problematic area and that this can not be relied on as a source of information on homelessness, at least in the short term.

We are aware that in some countries (e.g. France) pilot projects have been employed to test methods of counting street homeless people on census nights. But this remains an exception rather than the rule. It is uncertain therefore if all countries will adopt robust methods of counting.

## MPHASIS RECOMMENDATIONS / RESEARCH / OUTCOMES

The Measuring Homelessness Study concludes that the census and official surveys (e.g. housing market surveys) are important aspects of data collection and complement continuous recording and administrative data sources. It is also suggested that the census can provide a baseline figure against which to measure change in street homelessness for example.

The research in Germany and Slovenia has raised a number of issues which indicate barriers to counting homeless people using register based systems.

1. Definition of collective living situations: in both approaches the typology of collective living situations often does not distinguish homeless shelters from other forms of collective living accommodation and hence it is not possible to identify homeless people from other groups.

*“Special areas are community, institutional and emergency accommodation, hostels and similar accommodation” (Paragraph 2 subsection 5 of the 2011 census law, Germany)... So to start with there is the task of obtaining the full addresses of all special buildings. The example of Berlin illustrates how difficult this undertaking will be with regard to accommodation for the homeless.... Nevertheless, it would be possible to record homeless people in special buildings if it were possible to sufficiently differentiate them.*

2. Data Consolidation and Data Protection: the demographic data from the population registers are combined with the data on employment and also the household, housing and building data to create a combined ‘typical census’ data record. This method of data processing and data linking may lead to loss of information on specific groups such as the homeless.

*“For data protection reasons so-called input characteristics such as name and address may only be used to link the register data with one another. This information must be deleted after consolidation of the data. These strict requirements may lead to no data whatsoever being generated about homeless people in the 2011 census”.*

3. Coordination on Census Data in 2011: discussion of the procedures for counting homeless people (or other vulnerable groups) has not taken place in the context of the 2011 Census between relevant Ministries.

*The Federal Ministry for Work and Social Affairs, which is responsible for homeless people, was not involved in the 2011 census with regard to a possible quantification of homeless people. Neither the Federal Ministry for Work and Social Affairs nor the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V. have been officially involved until now. The possibility of quantifying homeless people within the framework of the 2011 census has not yet been discussed by either the Federal Ministry of the Interior or by the Census Commission.*

## KEY ISSUES / QUESTIONS

### CENSUS 2011

#### Enumeration Procedures for census night ( 2011)

- 1 Will enumeration approaches on census night be adequate to count the street homeless and those living in emergency accommodation?
- 2 Can homeless people living temporarily with family and friends on census night due to lack of housing be identified?

#### Register Based Systems – Procedures for Counting the Homeless

- 3 Can procedures for collating and evaluating register-based information into a population census record allow identification of homeless people and not breach data protection rules?

#### Cross-cutting Issue

- 4 Can a definition of collective living situations be determined to allow the homeless living in such situations to be separately identified and counted?

### PROPOSED ACTION POINTS

Action Point	Level	Responsibility	Comment
Ensure Census Offices have clearly specified plans to count categories 1 and 2	EU National	Eurostat Statistics Office	Consult with NGOs and Publish method on website during 2010
Specify Methods to aggregate Homeless in specified categories in Register Based Systems	EU	Eurostat DG Research	Commission research on good practice and guidance
Define Typology of Collective Living Situations	EU National	DG Employment etc Social Welfare	Aspect of Directive on Quality of Social Services