

## **Efficiency in Population Censuses - the situation of the European register-based 2011 Censuses**

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The last Census in the Netherlands based on a complete enumeration was held in 1971. Since the Dutch Census of 1971, the willingness of the population in the Netherlands to participate has decreased tremendously. Statistics Netherlands found an alternative in a Virtual Census, by using available registers and sample surveys as alternative data sources. Advantages of this alternative are that it is much cheaper and more socially acceptable. The combined use of registers and sample surveys for composing the Census however also leads to several methodological challenges. One of them is deciding on the method used to compensate for missing information. Another is the decision on the methods used to combine register and survey data. In this contribution we explore the options chosen by ten (partly) register-based European countries. Next to the Netherlands six fully register-based countries (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Austria, and Slovenia) and three partly register-based countries (Switzerland, Germany, and Poland) were asked a number of questions. We are thankful that all countries approached were willing to help us in this research project. This research has been beneficial to Statistics Netherlands for making final decisions in the approach of the Census of 2011. Hopefully, it is also useful for other countries that are working or planning to work with registers in their censuses.

**Key Words:** Europe, registers, sample surveys, Virtual Census