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**The 2005 population and housing census in Sweden
will be totally register-based***

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1. Normally, a population and housing census has been carried out in Sweden every fifth year since 1960, although the latest census took place in 1990. In 1995, the Parliament made a decision to change the method of taking the next census into a totally register-based method.

A. Preparations for the 2005 census

1. Data from administrative sources only

2. In earlier population and housing censuses the general public and property owners have had to provide information by filling in and sending in questionnaires. It has, however, in recent censuses been possible to use increasing amounts of information from administrative register-based sources.

3. Future censuses, the first of which is planned for 2005, will be based entirely on information from different administrative sources. This means that the general public will not be required to fill in questionnaires every five years, nor, from now on, will property owners have to provide information about the buildings and dwellings that they own.

4. In order to undertake the first population and housing census in Sweden based on administrative sources, a register of dwellings and a register of housing units are needed. All those who live in multi-dwelling buildings will be updated in the population register with a dwelling number. Data from this and other registers, such as Statistics Sweden's registers of employment, occupation, education, income and wealth, plus the geographical database and the census of 1990, will be presented in the form of current statistics on the population, households and dwellings. These statistics will be available in 2006. The Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) is to debate proposed legislation in this area during 2001.

2. Municipalities reviewing all addresses

5. The municipalities are participating in preparations for the registers by establishing the addresses of all residential buildings. This project has been under way for several years and according to plan will be completed by mid-2002. The objective is to ensure that each dwelling has a unique address. A large part of this process involves substituting addresses based on post office box addresses with village, street or road names. This will also make it easier for rescue services, the police, taxis, home-help services and others to quickly find the dwelling and the persons living in the dwelling.

3. All dwellings to be numbered

6. The National Land Survey^[1] is building a nationwide register of dwellings. Information will be collected from owners of residential buildings in 2003 and 2004. Property owners will provide notification of dwelling numbers and some other information about their dwelling. What is new is that each dwelling will have a unique number. The National Land Survey has drawn up a proposal for a possible form for dwelling numbers.

4. All residents will be registered by their dwelling number

7. The local tax authorities and the National Tax Board^[2], which are responsible for population registration in Sweden, are introducing registration by dwelling number. This project is proceeding concurrently with the construction of the register of dwellings. When the tax authority has received information about the identity of the person holding each residential contract, all those living in

multi-dwelling buildings will be registered by dwelling number. The address will be supplemented by the dwelling number to give the population a new registration address. Subsequently, the dwelling number must always be given when filling in a notification of change of address, for example.

5. Several authorities are cooperating

8. The project is being carried out by Statistics Sweden^[3], the National Land Survey, the National Tax Board and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities^[4], in cooperation with municipalities throughout the country and property owners.

B. Advantages and disadvantages of using administrative records for taking a census

1. Cheaper and faster

9. There is no doubt that it is much cheaper to take a census using administrative records. That assumes, of course, that the administrative registers are already introduced in the society and are of good quality. If those registers are kept and used for other purposes and financed for that purpose, then the cost of taking the census is less than 10 per cent of the cost of taking a traditional census. That is at least the experience of Statistics Sweden and Statistics Finland.

10. It is also much faster to produce the results from a census by using registers. Publication of the final results can normally start about two months after the census date and ends when the last administrative register is complete. That date depends on the time schedule for the administrative system that is delivering the register.

2. Quality of administrative records and identity on records

11. The most crucial factor in keeping an administrative register of good quality is to have a well-known and stable identity for each record. In Sweden and in all of Scandinavia there are the personal identification number and the real estate name, and soon the dwelling number as such identities. It is, of course, possible to create registers without these identities, but without them the problems will increase to keep the registers up to date.

12. Another important rule to have and maintain good quality is to establish and keep a register for administrative purposes, not for statistical purposes. The register will then be used and updated continuously and that will secure the quality.

3. Fixed and not full content

13. A problem when using administrative registers is that the content of the register is normally very stable. That means that it is very difficult to put new variables into the register. Statistics Sweden will therefore not be able to collect information on such items as heating and means of transport for the next census. The statistical institute must also rely on another authority for keeping and updating the register. That authority might have other interests for changing the register, which might cause problems for the institute.

4. Less burden for the respondents

14. Statistics Sweden is very actively trying to reduce the burden for the respondents. The use of administrative records will minimize the number of questions in a survey as well as completely replace the survey.

5. *It takes time to set up the system*

15. The last four censuses (1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990) in Sweden have slowly developed into using more and more administrative registers in combination with fewer and fewer questions in the questionnaire. So we can say that it has taken 30 years to gradually develop the totally register-based system that will be used in Census 2005 in Sweden

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[1] **The National Land Survey** is responsible for mapping out and classifying property in Sweden and for basic geographical and property information.

[2] **The National Tax Board** is the central public authority responsible for local tax authorities and enforcement services. Its activities include taxation, population registration and general elections.

[3] **Statistics Sweden** has the task of describing trends in Swedish society by means of statistics and produces the bulk of the official statistics.

[4] **The Swedish Association of Local Authorities** is an association of Sweden's [289 primary local authorities](#) with the aims to support and develop the system of local self-government and assist local authorities through service and expert advice.