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STEERING COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
(CDDH)

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**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ISSUES RELATING TO THE  
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES  
(DH-MIN)**

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**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE ETHNIC DATA COLLECTION**

The usefulness of data broken down by categories such as nationality, national or ethnic origin, language and religion (henceforth ethnic data) is often recognised, however many European countries are still reluctant to collect such data. This is sometimes due to a lack of understanding of the type of data to be collected, and of the usefulness of such data, to a lack of guarantees that should govern the collection of this type of data and, more generally, to fearing the risks of misuse.

However, the collection of ethnic data is important for successfully combating racism and discrimination, for ensuring equal opportunities as well as for protecting and promoting the culture, language and identity of persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities. The collection of these data is also essential for shaping sound policies in these areas and evaluating their implementation.

The principles governing ethnic data collection, as also reflected in ECRI's recommendations in this area, include:

1. the principle of legality (the collection of data must be authorised by national law);
2. the principle of voluntary self-identification;
3. the principle of confidentiality;
4. and the principle of informed consent.

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**In order to facilitate DH-MIN's further reflection on the topic Members are kindly asked to answer the questionnaire below and to return it to the Secretariat by 15 February 2008.**  
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***Different sources of ethnic data collection*****Censuses**

1. Is a census regularly held within your State? If so, does the recording of the population occur in the framework of a traditional, registration-based or combined system? Kindly describe the main features of the system.
2. Are questions concerning national, ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliation included in national censuses? Please include the relevant questions of the last census.
3. Were these questions compulsory to answer or were they optional?
4. What were the numerical results (please indicate not only the number of those who replied but also the number of those who refused to answer)
5. Have census forms been prepared also in regional or minority languages?

**Other methods to record persons belonging to a national or ethnic minority**

6. What other methods than census are used to record persons belonging to a national or ethnic minority within your country? Kindly describe the main features of the methods.
7. Do organs and institutions of public administration (e.g. school, police, health service, social assistance, the military service, labour administration, recruitment in the public service) keep administrative files related to ethnic, national, linguistic or religious data?
8. Are there ethnicity-based population registers for any purpose (e.g. in the registration of births, deaths and marriages, the registration of domicile and in elections)?
9. Are ethnic, national, linguistic or religious data collected in jurisdiction (e.g. court statistics, number of complaints, decisions rendered, etc.)?
10. Are records containing ethnic, national, linguistic or religious data kept by ombudspersons or specialised national bodies (bodies ensuring equal treatment, legal aid offices etc.)
11. Is it possible or obligatory to mention the fact that a person belongs to a national minority in identity documents (identity card, passport)?
12. Does the topic of ethnic data collection constitute a subject of research? Do scientific studies, surveys and investigations serve as a source of ethnic data?
13. Are different data collected on nationals and non-nationals?
14. Do minority communities themselves keep records on their size, composition, etc.?
15. What methods for collecting data are best perceived and accepted by minorities?

***Legal framework of ethnic data collection in the Member States***

16. What are the main legal basis for data collection and data protection?
17. Do the regulatory measures with regard to the protection of personal data consider data on the affiliation to a national or ethnic, national, linguistic or religious minority as a special category of data?
18. What is the content of the regulatory measures with regard to the registration and processing of data on the affiliation to a national, ethnic, linguistic or religious minority?

19. For which purposes are ethnic data collected? Are they used for other purposes than the purpose for which they have been originally collected? What is the legal situation concerning these questions?
20. Where and for how long may the data stored and analyzed?
21. Is there an independent authority responsible for the supervision of the collection of sensitive (ethnic, national, linguistic or religious data)/ for data protection?
22. Is there an outright prohibition on the collection of data broken down by nationality, national or ethnic origin, language and religion (check grounds one by one) in your national legislation?
23. If not, are there provisions which make the collection of ethnic, national, linguistic or religious data conditional on the existence of certain guarantees and if yes, please indicate what they are.
24. Are you aware of any cases where the collected data have been misused?

### ***Ethnic data collection in specific areas of policy***

25. Which methods and sources for collecting data in the field of employment are used in your country?
26. Which methods and sources for collecting data in the field of education are used in your country?
27. Which methods and sources for collecting data on racist incidents are used in your country?
28. Do police services make use of crime statistics compiled on an ethnic, national, linguistic or religious basis?
29. Are the data collected used for evaluating the implementation of legal provisions and other measures and programmes affecting people belonging to national and ethnic minorities? Who is involved in the development and the implementation of the monitoring schemes?
30. Please provide examples of good practice in relation to ethnic data collection and the use of these data.

### ***Self-determination of the individual concerned***

31. Is it at the discretion of the individual concerned to choose and mention the fact that he/she belongs to a national minority?
32. If not, which authority decides on the applicable information, and on the basis of which objective or subjective criteria? Are national minority associations involved in identifying whether a person belongs to a minority? Who decides on whether a minor belongs to a minority, specifically in cases of mixed marriages?
33. Can an individual change or delete information identifying him/her as belonging to a minority in the course of his/her life?
34. How does data collection approach the issue of multiple identity?