

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Survey on Land Administration Systems



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This publication is in English and Russian only.

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This report was prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA). The lead authors were James O'Boyle, the Working Party Bureau representative from Ireland, and Michael Milligan, of the UNECE secretariat, with assistance from interns Lucrecia Bertelli and Michele Castiglioni. Christina O'Shaughnessy edited the report. Maps were created by Margus Roll.

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Foreword

Sound land administration helps people to secure property rights for their homes. An efficient land market encourages investment and economic growth. Just like its houses, its social institutions and its industry, a country's unique land-administration institutions reflect its history and priorities.

This report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was developed by the Working Party on Land Administration. It is part of a series of in-depth studies by the Working Party, which has also produced publications on topics such as informal housing and fraud in electronic land-registration systems.

The study presented here is the result of a survey to gather comprehensive information on countries' land administration systems. This includes the efficiency of their services, the use of e-technology in their services, the security of their data and their ability to recover data and services in the event of a disaster, to name only a few of the aspects covered. Twenty-five countries from throughout our region participated, allowing us to present information on land administration systems in northern, western, eastern and southern Europe, Mediterranean island countries and Asia, including the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The study has three main objectives:

- To provide information for the use of government officials, researchers and other stakeholders.
- To allow member States to benchmark their own progress in developing land administration systems by comparing them with those of other countries.
- To provide a snapshot of progress in land administration and allow comparison with the information presented in UNECE's 2005 study, *Inventory of Land Administration Systems in Europe and North America*.

This study shows the great diversity of land administration systems in the UNECE region. It also shows commonalities. Perhaps most strikingly, since the 2005 study, more map and register data has become available freely and electronically, and more services are processed online. This means that public institutions can provide services more quickly and at less cost. It also stimulates land markets by increasing the information available to buyers and sellers of homes. The digitization of data has also increased the ability of land institutions to recover data in the event of a data loss.

I would like to thank the Working Party, who coordinated this study, as well as the Governments who provided resources for its development, in particular, Ireland, which led the study. I would also like to thank those Governments who have dedicated time and resources to answering our survey and thus contributing to this report.

It is my hope that this study will assist policymakers and authorities to improve security of tenure and the efficiency of land markets. The information in this study will serve as a guide and a reference point for the UNECE as we continue to work to help countries use their most valuable resource, which is land.



Michael Møller
Acting Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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List of abbreviations

EULIS	European Land Information Service
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ROD	Registry of Deeds system
ROT	Registry of Title system
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Introduction and background

Land registration, administration and mapping form the basis for the management of every country's most valuable resource – land. These functions straddle the public and private sectors to varying degrees in different jurisdictions. Authorities often operate through partnerships with the private sector, such as through public-private partnerships or outsourcing. Nevertheless, in the 56 countries of the region covered by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the control, regulation and operation of land management is generally a public-sector function.

This publication presents an analysis of land administration, land registration and mapping systems in UNECE member States. In the private sector, competition and the competitive marketplace are the engines for innovation and improvement. By comparing land administration systems worldwide, the publication aims to substitute for these forces by encouraging continued improvements in what are, primarily, public-sector agencies. This can help to stimulate economic performance and innovation, improve registration systems and promote universal standards of good land administration.

Other studies and reports have been undertaken to define and compare various aspects of land registration and administration. These include the *Multilingual Thesaurus on Land Tenure*, produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 2003), and the *Glossary of Terms for the European Land Information Service* (EULIS 2013).

This is the second comprehensive survey of land administration organizations conducted in the last decade by the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration. To prepare the *Inventory of Land Administration Systems in Europe and North America* (UNECE 2005a), a questionnaire had been sent to member States to gather information in four fields: the organization of institutions and government responsibilities; land and title registration; cadastral and topographical mapping systems; and land use recording systems.

For the present study, a questionnaire was sent to UNECE member States to gather updated and additional information on these topics. This questionnaire emphasized, in particular: data availability to the public; ease of use of land administration systems; the efficiency of land administration organizations; fees and charges; and the security of data. The data collected are for the year 2011.

The remainder of this publication provides an analysis of key data from the questionnaire. The questionnaire itself and the country responses are included in an annex. The data presented are based on the countries' responses to the questionnaire. Results should be interpreted with the understanding that different countries may have interpreted some questions in different ways. Also, changes may have taken place since 2011.

Many of the comments that countries made are reflected in either the text or the appendix. These comments help to illustrate the difficulty in comparing the systems of different countries when definitions, laws and

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