

## GROS Spring 2007 Census Consultation

### Supplementary response from the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities following the final report of the Commission on Integration & Cohesion

Although the work and recommendations of the Commission on Integration & Cohesion<sup>1</sup> relate only to England and Wales, it is probable that many similar initiatives will be taken in Scotland to improve community relations. We therefore, urge GROS to note of the Commission's recommendations about the collection of data relating to migration.

In our response to Consultation Point 12, question 9 of the GROS Spring Census consultation we stated that, whilst the 2006 Census Test ethnicity question is undoubtedly a great improvement on the 2001 Census question, our preferred option is that *"The "multiple ethnic groups" category should be replaced by an instruction to "tick as many boxes as relevant" (as proposed in the 2005 Scottish Executive consultation document)."*

This view has been reinforced by the Commission's findings on the subject of multiple identity.

*2.50 increasingly, people are moving away from single identities to multiple identities not just based on race or ethnicity, but differences in values, differences in life-style, consumption, social class, differences across generations, gender etc. People now have multiple identities and adjust these to the situation they are in – and this seems particularly true for the children or grandchildren of migrants ...*

Furthermore, the Commission's report goes on to state that recognising individuals' multiple identities can have a beneficial effect on community relations:

*... multiple identification can be positive in that it can prevent any one part of a person's identity becoming prioritised as a source of conflict.*

We therefore believe that this strengthens the case for our recommendation that GROS should reconsider adopting the format proposed by the Scottish Executive in its *Review of Census Ethnicity Classifications Consultation* (p22 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/54357/0013557.pdf> )

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<sup>1</sup> "Our Shared Future": final report of the Commission on Integration & Cohesion [http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/our\\_shared\\_future.pdf](http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/our_shared_future.pdf)

The importance of an appropriate and intelligible ethnicity classification becomes all the more important given the significance that the Commission attributes to the collection of data about migration by both the ONS and Local Authorities. In order to “*identify tensions and opportunities*” and to “[*target*] *interventions aimed at mediating between groups and individuals, and resolving conflicts*” the Commission recommends:

4.24 *that every local area should: map their communities – spending time understanding who lives in each ward, the make up of local schools, the different religious groups worshipping in their area;*

7.37 *[that the Department of] Communities and Local Government and ONS urgently provide support to Local Authorities in developing tailored systems for calculating population change between censuses, using data most appropriate for meeting their local needs.*

and:

7.34 *[that the] Office for National Statistics (ONS) urgently reinvigorate their work on co-ordinating migration statistics at a national level*

We particularly note the Commission’s view that progress will only be made “*once national data is updated and trusted*” (7.34) and we do not believe it will be trusted until all ethnic and faith communities believe that the process of enumeration is designed to include rather than exclude, so as to produce accurate and meaningful data.

In the light of these recommendations, the requirement for a fine-brushed approach that enables people to self-define their identity either by means of a write-in answer or else by ticking as many boxes as apply to them, becomes increasingly urgent. Furthermore, the requirement for a consistent and effective strategy mandates that the interim statistics should use the same classifications as the 2011 Census in order to facilitate intelligible longitudinal comparisons and to monitor progress. (Although this would not permit of direct comparison between interim and 2001 Census data, the perpetuation of unintelligible data will not support a better understanding of the make-up of communities, and will not, therefore, contribute to an improvement in community relations.)