



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
General

ECE/CES/2006/34
3 April 2006

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-fourth plenary session
Paris, 13-15 June 2006
Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**SEMINAR ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING
SESSION III**

The European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP)¹

Submitted by Eurostat

I. BACKGROUND

1. Until 2004 the European Statistical System (ESS) had of a common statistical training programme addressed to statisticians at European national statistical institutes, Eurostat and other countries and international organizations working with Eurostat. The coordination and realisation of the programme was entrusted to an external service provider contracted by the Commission. Participants had to pay fees.
2. After the Commission decision in 2003 to terminate contractual relations in this case, an (interim) strategy based on a dual approach was chosen. A number of European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) courses were organised by Eurostat, while others were offered by member countries of the European Statistical System (ESS) at their national training sites and co-financed by ESTAT. EU Member States offering training courses received grants to cover part of their costs while EFTA – on the basis of the Gentlemen's Agreement – contributed with at least two courses to the annual programme.

¹ This paper has been prepared at the invitation of the secretariat.

3. The Working Group "Human Resource Management", established in 2005, received through its mandate a strong involvement in the preparation and implementation of the ESTP. The group, mainly composed of Human Resources (HR) heads of national statistical administrations and of Eurostat, favoured the creation of a network of national training managers (ESTP network). The members of this network were contact persons in technical or horizontal departments of national statistical institutes being in charge of training and career development. In close collaboration with Eurostat the network members aim at ensuring the necessary exchange of information to conceive, promote and efficiently support all ESTP related activities within the ESS.

4. During the ESTP implementation phase in 2004 the time schedule and limited internal resources in terms of staff and equipment only allowed for the organization of four in-house courses and for the preparatory work related to the award of grants to Member States interested in offering courses. At the same time discussions with the EFTA secretariat led to an agreement that also EFTA would contribute to the ESTP with additional courses.

II. ESTP COURSES ORGANISED BY EUROSTAT IN 2004/2005

5. The ESTP in-house courses held in 2004 and 2005 met with a strong interest from almost all ESS countries. Given the large number of applications received for certain courses in 2004 and 2005 some of them, i.e. National Accounts, European Trade Statistics and Seasonal Adjustment, have become standard elements of the internal programme. 260 statisticians from more than 30 countries participated in the 10 courses organised by Eurostat in 2004/2005 (see table 1 below).

6. With the internalisation, the lack of resources available to the project (formerly 6 full time equivalents, now 1,25) necessarily led to a slow-down of activities during the first years.

7. Nevertheless the courses were immediately organised by Eurostat's training section in collaboration with the technical Eurostat units. From the beginning the administrative part of the ESTP has been managed entirely with Eurostat's training section. The training contents, the course description and the detailed course programme were agreed upon with trainers and staff responsible for the course development. For each course a course description as well as an application form was sent electronically to the heads of national statistical administrations and copied to the ESTP network for information and further dissemination.

8. The majority of lecturers and trainers involved in the provision of the courses were staff members of Eurostat's technical units. There were, however, a number of courses in which colleagues from other Directorates General of the Commission and from National Competent Administrations participated as lecturers, as well as experts from International Organizations (see Table 1). Their contributions completed the training on European concepts and definitions with presentations of application at national level or with international practices of common interest.

Table 1: ESTP in-house courses 2004 and 2005

Course title	Date	Trainers/ Lecturers	Number of participants	Countries represented
2004				
Economic accounts for agriculture	11.-13.10.2004	Eurostat/ DG AGRI	22	18
ESA95	18.-20.10.2004	Eurostat	33	19
Seasonal adjustment	15.-18.11.2004	Eurostat/ FR, ES, SI	18	14
External trade statistics	07.-10.12.2004	Eurostat/ BE, SK, SI	25	22
2005				
Educational statistics – hands on	20.-22.06.2005	Eurostat/ UNESCO	35	22
ESA95 – Goods and services	27.-29.09.2005	Eurostat	30	25
EU trade statistics	11.-14.10.2005	Eurostat NL, AT, SK	27	23
Dissemination: European Statistical Data Support (ESDS)	12.-13.10.2005	Eurostat/	42	26
Seasonal adjustment	12.-16.12.2005	Eurostat/ FR, ES, UN	28	24

III. ESTP COURSES HELD IN MEMBER STATES AND EFTA COUNTRIES IN 2004/05

9. Part of the ESTP courses are organised by National Statistical Institutes forming part of the ESS. These courses are either covered by grant agreements or provided as an EFTA contribution to the ESTP.

10. The first set of external courses offered through grants was delivered in 2005 by four Member States (Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy). EFTA organised 2 additional courses provided by the statistical offices of Norway and Switzerland. A total of 150 people from 30 countries participated in these 6 courses.

11. As for the choice of the proposed courses in 2005, most of them were based on standard courses already delivered in a similar way under the preceding (outsourced) programme. However, in order to re-assess training needs and priorities for 2006 a user survey was submitted to both ESS countries and Eurostat experts. The results of the survey were used for the drafting of technical specifications determining the reference framework for following course proposals.

12. The call for proposals launched in 2005 met with more response than the previous one. While in 2004 only four countries had replied offering four courses, the number of proposals increased to eleven courses in 2005 (from seven countries). However, due to legal and administrative restrictions some offers had to be withdrawn. Thus the external part of the 2006

ESTP programme finally comprises seven courses organised by five Member States (AT, NL, FI, IT and SE) and four by EFTA countries (NO, CH) (see table 2).

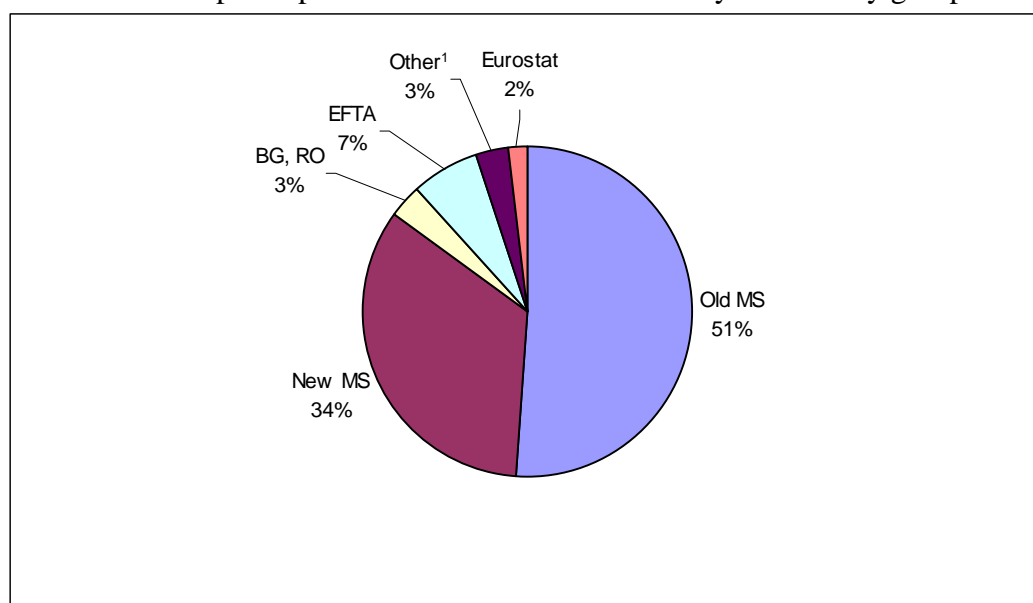
Table 2 : External ESTP courses offered in 2006

	Course	Days	Course date
AT	Nomenclatures, Classifications and their Harmonisation	3	29-31 March 06
AT	Quality Management in Statistics	3.5	10-13 April 06
FI	National accounts in practice	5	24-28 April 06
IT	Quality Measurement in Statistics	4.5	08-12 May 06
NL	Non-response in Household surveys	3	12-14 June 06
SE	Quality Management in Statistical Agencies	3	26-28 June 06
NL	National accounts in practice	10	30 Oct -10 Nov 06
CH	Data analysis and data modelling	5	To be specified
CH	To be specified		
NO	Use of administrative sources		To be specified
NO	Dissemination		To be specified

IV. ESTP 2004-2007: OVERVIEW AND OUTLOOK

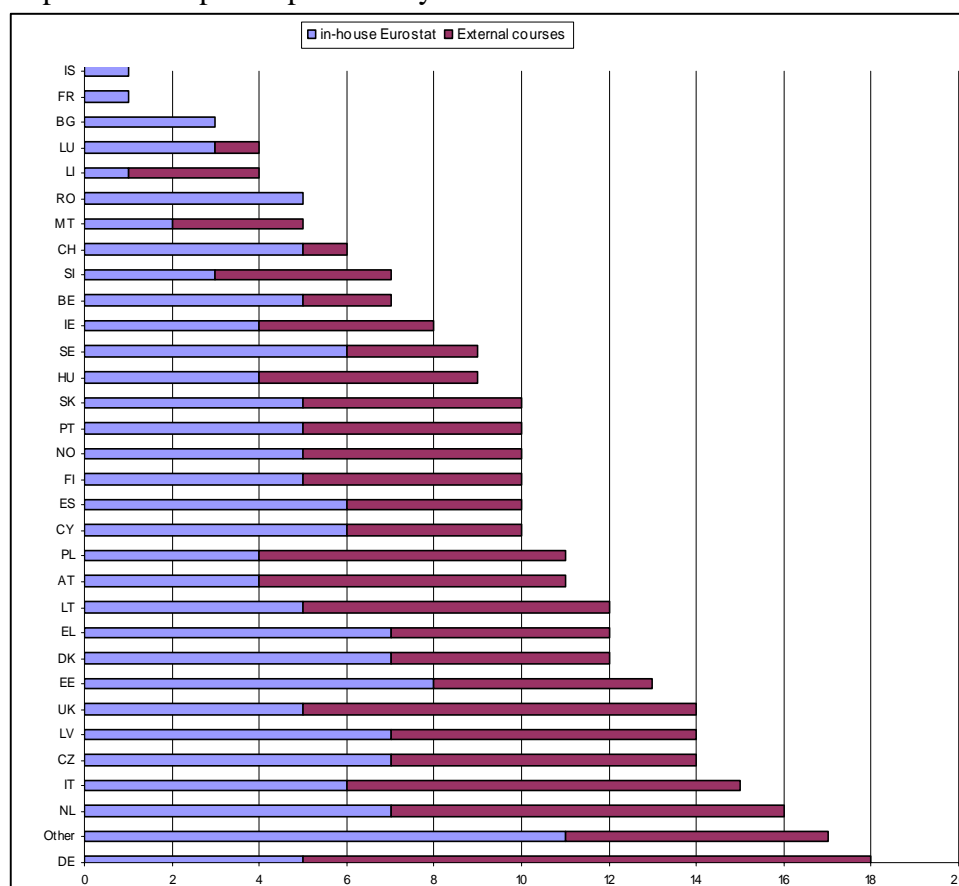
13. In 2005 a total of 309 statisticians participated in the European Statistical Training Programme, 150 of which attended courses organised by countries and 159 Eurostat courses. Among ESTP beneficiary countries EU Member States accounted for 85% of the participants, while 7% came from EFTA countries and 3% from the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania. The remaining 5% were made up of by statisticians from Turkey, Croatia, the Ukraine, international organizations and Eurostat (see graph 2 below). Graph 1 describes the share of participants by beneficiary group while graph 2 shows their distribution in ESTP courses broken down by countries.

Graph1: Distribution of participants in ESTP courses in 2005 by beneficiary groups



¹ Turkey, Croatia, Ukraine, UNESCO, ECB, Eurostat.

Graph 2: Participation per country in ESTP courses in 2005



14. Over the past two years the exchange of information, best practice and experiences between the members of the ESTP network has increased considerably. The good collaboration with the ESS in the field of ESTP has certainly contributed to the fact that in only 3 years time the number of courses offered as part of the European Statistical Training programme has considerably improved. Whilst in 2004, only four in-house courses were organised, there were twelve courses organised in 2005 and twenty in 2006, an overall level of courses being offered comparable to that of 2003 (see table 3). However, these twenty courses include a few courses covering the same subject (e.g. National Accounts).

Table 3: ESTP course programme evolution since internalisation

Year	In-house	External	Total
2003			28
2004	4	-	4
2005	5	6 4 (2004 grants) 2 (EFTA)	11
2006	9	11 7 (2005 grants) 4 (EFTA)	20

15. Another reason for the increase of courses was the fact that the reimbursement of travel costs to participants, originally foreseen as an incentive to support the internalised programme, was made optional in the second year for external course organisers. The corresponding reduction of the administrative burden, but also financial implications had a positive impact on the number of courses offered by countries. EFTA, e.g., will be in a position to offer four courses in 2006 instead of two by not offering reimbursement.

16. In various aspects grants proved to be an inadequate instrument for an efficient organization of a European Statistical Training Programme. The variety of the courses being offered also suffered from the administrative requirements of the grant procedure. The fact that certain courses offered by grant applicants were of similar content, displays the strong dependency on proposals made by applicants and is impeding a more demand driven approach.

17. In order to promote a more demand-driven offer and thus to meet better the training needs Eurostat decided in 2006 to turn to a public procurement procedure. As from 2007 courses will be tendered as individual lots in a framework contract. It is expected that the possibilities for co-operation offered by a tender procedure will encourage a broader public of beneficiaries to apply for ESTP training services.

18. In parallel Eurostat will continue to offer in-house training courses that proved to be an invaluable element of the programme.

19. Eurostat will also continue looking at complementary ways of providing training in the ESS and investigate further the national proposals. In addition, Eurostat will explore the possibilities of cooperation with other international organizations in the area of training.

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