

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

First meeting of the 2004/2005 Bureau
Washington, D.C., 18-19 October 2004

FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE BUREAU AND THE CONFERENCE

Note prepared by the ECE secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. The note on follow-up to decisions taken by the Bureau and the Conference has been prepared systematically since the October 2002 meeting. It permits the identification of possible delays and facilitates taking decisions for further action. The note is updated for each Bureau meeting and for the CES plenary session.
2. The present note follows up on the main decisions taken by the Bureau since its February 2002 meeting and by the Conference in 2002, 2003 and 2004, as reflected in the respective reports. Actions undertaken before the 2003 June plenary session are summarized in a short form under *History*, decisions and follow-up from 2003 and 2004 are given in more detail. Under each decision, the action to be taken or that was taken is indicated.
3. The decisions are grouped in two sections:
 - I. Decisions related to the work of the Conference and its Bureau; and
 - II. Decisions related to the Integrated Presentation and specific Programme Elements.

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS BUREAU

Progress of work and strategies of international organizations

4. History: In the June 2002 plenary session, it was agreed that, periodically, discussion should be devoted to the progress of work of international organizations and their strategies.
October 2003 Bureau meeting: The IMF presented its statistical activities to the Bureau.
October 2004 Bureau meeting: The World Bank is invited to make a presentation.

CES Seminars and their follow-up

Globalisation (June 2003)

5. June 2003 plenary session: As a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Globalisation, the Conference agreed that an experiment on measuring the activities of multinational enterprises would be carried out.
October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau approved the terms of reference for the creation of a Steering Group for the MNE Project based on a note submitted by Statistics Canada. The CES Bureau serves as its Steering Committee.
February 2004 Bureau meeting: Statistics Canada reported to the Bureau on the MNE Project. The Bureau agreed to discuss at its October 2004 meeting the details of the contents of a report on the project to be presented to the 2005 Conference.

June 2004 plenary session: A progress report on the project was presented. The Conference encouraged the continuation of the project.

Action: The October 2004 Bureau meeting is expected to discuss the work progress and the details of the contents of a report on the project to be presented to the 2005 Conference.

Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata (June 2003)

6. June 2003 plenary session: As a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata, the Conference agreed that a Task Force be created to develop a set of guidelines for confidentiality protection.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau approved the Terms of Reference for the Task Force on Confidentiality and Microdata.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: Mr. Trewin reported to the Bureau on the work of the Task Force.

June 2004 plenary session: The progress report on the project was presented, including draft principles on the provision of access to microdata. Countries and international organizations were invited to comment on the paper by 30 June 2004.

Action: The ECE secretariat collected and summarized the comments and submitted them to the Chairman. The draft principles will be revised and submitted to the October 2004 Bureau meeting for comments. The draft is expected to be finalised by the beginning of 2005 and endorsed by the Conference in 2005. The October 2004 Bureau meeting is expected to comment on the revised draft paper, including the principles on the provision of access to microdata.

Improved data reporting (June 2005)

7. June 2004 plenary session: The Conference selected improved data reporting to be the topic for the seminar on foundational issues of statistical systems at the 2005 plenary session. The session organiser is United States.

Action: The October 2004 Bureau is expected to review the outline of the seminar.

Measurement of Sustainable Development (June 2005)

8. June 2004 plenary session: The Conference selected Measurement of Sustainable Development to be the topic for the seminar on emerging issues at the 2005 plenary session. The Session organiser is Sweden.

Action: The October 2004 Bureau is expected to review the outline of the seminar.

Work of the Bureau

9. February 2004 Bureau meeting: With regard to the documents circulated before the meetings of the Bureau, it was suggested that Bureau members provide written comments where appropriate in order to facilitate the discussion. The ECE secretariat was asked to investigate the possibility for collecting and sharing electronically written comments in advance.

Action: The ECE secretariat will report to the Bureau in February 2005

Definition of Steering Group, Task Force, etc.

10. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to prepare a document which defines the nature of the various expert groups that could be created.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The ECE secretariat presented a draft on the ECE guidelines for the establishment of teams of specialists and on the functions of Steering Groups, Task Forces and Organising Committees. The Bureau endorsed the guidelines for submission to the Conference.

June 2004 plenary session: The Conference adopted the guidelines for establishing the various teams or groups of experts that could work within the Conference of European Statisticians (CES/2004/8).

Action: the ECE secretariat will review the categories of existing groups and, if necessary, modify them to be in compliance with the guidelines and will report regularly to the Bureau as of October 2004. The secretariat will monitor the setting up of future groups under the Conference to ensure that they follow the guidelines.

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE INTEGRATED PRESENTATION AND SPECIFIC PROGRAMME ELEMENTS**Purpose, structure and compilation of the Integrated Presentation**

11. February 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau agreed that the structure of the Integrated Presentation should be reviewed in order to reduce duplication and to eliminate those programme elements that are no longer significant.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau agreed with the proposals for review of the Integrated Presentation (CES/BUR.2004/3). The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to produce a paper to inform the users of IP about its purpose and to draft a note on the rationale for revision of the overall classification of statistical activities.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The ECE secretariat presented a note on the purpose of the IP, including various proposals for changes.

a) The Bureau agreed that a Task Force should be created to revise the IP classification, which would recommend amendments to the classification to the October 2004 Bureau meeting.

b) The Bureau discussed the selection of Programme Elements for an in-depth review, the designation of rapporteurs and their reporting regime. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to develop a proposal on how the procedure could be made more effective, and to report back to the 2004 October Bureau. The ECE secretariat agreed to recommend to the October 2004 Bureau meeting the next set of PEs to be reviewed at the February meeting in 2005.

June 2004 plenary session: the Conference approved the issues as spelled out in document CES/2004/3 on the purpose and plans for future developments of the Integrated Presentation.

Action: In October 2004 the Bureau will:

i) discuss the revision of the IP classification;

ii) select the Programme Elements to be reviewed in February 2005;

iii) discuss the proposal by ECE how to improve the selection of Rapporteurs and their reporting regime.

PE 1.2 Managerial and policy issues of direct concern to presidents of National Statistical Offices:

12. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau endorsed the draft ECE statistical programme for 2004. Some reservations were expressed in relation to the work on updating the Handbook of Official Statistics. The Bureau agreed that it would come back to this item in February 2004.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the procedure for updating the Handbook of Official Statistics, and agreed that the aim should be to make sure the Handbook is as up-to-date as possible but with a minimum burden to countries. The Bureau agreed to establish a Task Force to consider the future content of the Handbook and how it might be updated effectively.

Action: The Task Force on the updating of the Handbook of Official Statistics will be created in Autumn 2004.

P.E. 2.1 Management of information technology

13. History: In October 2002, the Bureau asked the Steering Group on Information Technology to collect information from NSOs on the development of IT technologies and to produce a paper for the Bureau. The paper should be less technical and focus more on political issues.

February 2003 Bureau meeting: The ECE secretariat informed the Bureau that a decision on the possible paper would be taken at the 2003 February joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems. The meeting decided to carry out a pilot survey on the Role of National Statistical Offices in e-Services and the development of IT in NSOs. The May 2004 joint UNECE-Eurostat-OECD Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems reviewed a draft questionnaire prepared by Statistics Canada for this purpose. The participants committed to transmit the completed questionnaires and their comments on the questionnaire to the ECE secretariat by the end of July 2004.

Action: The Pilot Survey took place in 2004, and the following countries completed the questionnaires: Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and United Kingdom. A note will be presented to the October 2004 Bureau.

PE 2.3 Dissemination and interchange of statistical information:

14. February 2004 Bureau meeting: Based on the recommendation of the Joint ECE-Eurostat-OECD Work Session on Statistical Metadata (9-11 February 2004, Geneva), the Terms of Reference for the creation of a Task Force on statistical metadata were submitted to the Bureau for approval. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to prepare, in cooperation with experts from national statistical offices, Eurostat and OECD, a more detailed proposal defining the objectives of the Task Force.

June 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau approved the Terms of reference with the condition that, after the completion of phase 1, the Bureau will be consulted about the results of the work before continuing with Phase 2. Phase 1 is expected to be completed in October-November 2004.

Action: The Task Force will inform the Bureau about the outcome of Phase 1 in February 2005.

15. June 2004 Bureau meeting: The ECE secretariat proposed to the Bureau the establishment of a Steering Group on statistical dissemination and communication. The purpose is to merge the various activities under the CES work programme related to this topic. The Bureau agreed that the Terms of Reference of the group would be circulated to the Bureau for electronic consultation with the aim of being finalized by the end of August.

Action: The Terms of Reference of the group were circulated to the Bureau asking for comments by the end of August. A final draft will be presented to the Bureau in October 2004.

16. June 2004 plenary session: The desirability of common structural elements in the NSO websites was pointed out. It was recommended that this topic be dealt with at the UNECE work sessions on statistical dissemination.

Action: The ECE secretariat will inform the Steering Group on statistical dissemination and communication about this request, so that the topic can be included in the agenda of one of the future meetings.

PE 2.8 Sustainable development:

17. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau agreed to establish a temporary Steering Group on sustainable development to advise the Bureau on the need for coordination and to determine if there is a clear objective to be met.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed a revised note on the Steering Group on Sustainable Development, including new Terms of Reference for the group, which could prepare a possible seminar in 2005 for Heads of NSOs to discuss the role of official statistics in the measurement of sustainable development.

June 2004 plenary session: The plenary session selected sustainable development to be the topic for the seminar on emerging issues in 2005 (see also para 8).

PE 3.9 Price statistics, including purchasing power parities:

18. February 2004 Bureau meeting: It was noted that the global ICP round is not largely mentioned in the Rapporteur's report reviewed by the Bureau. It was suggested that there should be explicit reference made to it in an additional note to the CES in June 2004. The Bureau agreed that a presentation on the state of the ICP at the CES is necessary.

Action: The state of the current round of ICP was not on the agenda of the 2004 Conference. The Bureau may come back to the issue at its October 2004 or 2005 meetings.

PA 4. Social statistics

19. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau was informed of the outcome of the expert meeting in New York in April 2003 setting the scope of social statistics. There was general agreement that the proposed programme of work for social statistics, 2004-2014, provides a strong basis for future action. However, the work programme was considered too ambitious.

June 2004 Bureau meeting: The issue was shortly discussed at the Bureau meeting in June 2004. Some concern was expressed that not enough is being done to improve international cooperation in social statistics and the area is not sufficiently covered by international standards and definitions. The Bureau decided to discuss the topic of social statistics at its next meeting to consider how the work programmes of international organizations should address these concerns.

Action: The Bureau will consider the topic at its October 2004 meeting.

PE 4.1 Families and Households:

20. June 2003 plenary session: Statistics Norway presented a proposal for a joint ECE-Eurostat project on households and families. The Conference asked the Bureau to follow developments in the project to ensure that the outputs become available in a timely manner.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau approved the terms of reference of the Task Force.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the progress report on the work of the Task Force on Families and Households. The Bureau approved the proposals contained in the note.

Action: Progress reports will be presented to the Bureau and the Conference in future.

PE 4.2a Population and housing censuses:

21. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau approved the terms of reference for a Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses and reviewed the work plan for preparing the new set of recommendations for the 2010 round of censuses. It was proposed that the new recommendations be formally adopted by the Conference in 2006.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the progress report on the work of the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, that met for the first time in January 2004, including a detailed timetable for the programme. The Bureau approved the proposals contained in the note, and agreed to invite France (which is developing a very innovative approach to the census) and a Nordic country (to cover the case of register-based censuses) to join the group.

Action: The work of the Steering Group will be reviewed by the Bureau at its October 2004 meeting.

PE 4.3 Human settlements and housing statistics:

22. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau reviewed the issue of coordination in housing statistics in the ECE region. The Bureau asked the author, Mr. Lujanen, to prepare a short follow-up paper for the February 2004 meeting of the Bureau.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed a note on Coordination of International Housing Statistics and approved the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group. The Bureau requested the Steering group to prepare, at its first meeting, a programme of work and related timetable and report them to the Bureaux of the CES and the Committee on Human Settlements (CHS). It also requested the Steering Group to present progress reports to both Bureaux.

Action: The Steering Group will present to the Bureaux of the CES and CHS a progress report at the beginning of 2005.

PE 4.4 Labour statistics:

23. February 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau noted that it would be useful to invite ILO to the Bureau meeting in 2004 to discuss some critical issues identified by ILO in the rapporteur's report and to receive advice on possible action to address these issues

Action: To be discussed by the Bureau at the next in-depth review of PE 4.4 on Labour statistics.

PE 4.6 Culture statistics:

24. February 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau approved the proposal for the organization of a joint ECE/UIS-UNESCO/Eurostat meeting in 2004-2005 to establish a joint work plan for the coming years. The ECE secretariat explained that a Steering Group should be formed to prepare this meeting, and OECD expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group, given its involvement in the area of adult education.

Action: The meeting was not included in the ECE Statistical Programme for 2004 because of lack of resources. It is also not included in the draft programme for 2005 for the same reason.

PE 4.8 Crime and criminal justice statistics:

25. February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the planned activities on crime statistics, including the organization of a meeting in late 2004, to be organized by a Steering Group.

Action: In February 2005, the Bureau will review the progress of work on crime statistics.

PE 5.1 Sectoral concepts, definitions, classifications and environmental databases:

26. History: The Bureau noted the growing network of national and international organizations dealing with environmental issues and a need for better coordination of the data collection in its February 2002 and October 2002 meetings. Preparation of a paper on this topic was discussed at the February and October 2003 meetings.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: Statistics Norway drafted the rapporteur's report on PE 5.1. "Sectoral concepts, definitions, classifications and environmental databases". The Bureau agreed that, in future, one rapporteur should review PE 5.1 and PE 5.2 "Environmental accounting". The Bureau also selected PE 5.1 for discussion at the 2004 plenary session.

June 2004 plenary session: Programme Element 5.1. "Sectoral concepts, definitions, classifications and environmental databases" was reviewed on the basis of a paper prepared by Statistics Norway (CES/2004/7)

Action: The Conference decided that the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics (ISWGES) should review the issues related to overlaps in data collection and identify the actions to be taken to improve coordination. It should also detect areas that are not sufficiently covered and

look at mechanisms to take into account user requirements. The Conference requested the ISWGES to prepare a document for its next session in 2005 to reflect the issues mentioned above.

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