

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Second meeting of the 2004/2005 Bureau
Geneva, 10-11 February 2005

Item 7(b) Progress reports
on the ECE Steering Groups

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CES WORK ON CRIME STATISTICS
(including Draft Terms of Reference for the Steering Group on Crime Statistics
and the Task Force on Victim Surveys)**

Note prepared by the ECE secretariat

BACKGROUND

1. The joint UNECE-UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics that took place on 3-5 November 2004 in Geneva agreed on the need for improvement in the quality, comparability and content of crime data at international level. The meeting agreed that it is necessary to combine data from various sources (administrative sources and victimization surveys) to obtain a complete picture of crimes and victimization. Although recognizing the importance of improving the comparability of administrative data (prison, court, police, prosecutor records), the meeting agreed to focus on improving the comparability of victimization surveys, since this seemed a more achievable task in the short term.
2. It was agreed that training in basic user skills will be required. Sharing experience on how to collect and disseminate crime and criminal justice statistics and implement victimization surveys is also important.
3. The important role of the International Crime Victim Survey, ICVS, in providing international comparable data was emphasized, and the increasing number of National Statistical Offices that have implemented or are in the process of initiating victim surveys was highlighted. There was general consensus on the importance of victim surveys in the collection and dissemination of crime statistics.
4. At the meeting, it was proposed that the future CES work on crime statistics be focused initially on studying methodological issues that can affect victimization surveys (for example, through a literature review), in view of promoting consistency and improving implementation of victimization surveys.

FUTURE WORK

5. Following the recommendations of the November 2004 Meeting on Crime Statistics, it is proposed that the Organising Committee that prepared the meeting be converted into a Steering Group on Crime Statistics, and be responsible for coordinating the future CES work in this field. The European Union asked to be excluded from the Group for lack of resources. The Draft Terms of Reference for the Steering Group on Crime Statistics are presented in Annex I.
6. The meeting also proposed that a Task Force on Victim Surveys be established to review victimization surveys carried out or planned by countries, to analyse methodologies used in countries and the ICVS, to identify areas where it would be useful to develop common recommendations, and possibly to develop methodological guidelines. The Draft Terms of Reference for the Task Force on Victim Surveys are presented in Annex II.
7. It is proposed that the next joint UNECE-UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics be organised in late 2005 (tentatively in November 2005 in Vienna).

ANNEX I

Draft Terms of Reference for the Steering Group on Crime Statistics

BACKGROUND

1. In November 2004, the ECE and UNODC organised a joint meeting on crime statistics to discuss availability, quality and comparability of crime statistics and to identify priorities to advance work in this field. The main outcomes of the meeting and the proposed agenda for future work in this area are available in the report of the meeting at <http://www.unecce.org/stats/documents/2004.11.crime.htm>
2. The November 2004 meeting on crime statistics proposed that the Organising Committee that had prepared the meeting be converted into a Steering Group on Crime Statistics, and be responsible for coordinating the future CES work on crime statistics.

ROLE OF THE STEERING GROUP

3. The role of the Steering Group on Crime Statistics is:
 - i) to plan and coordinate the CES work on crime statistics;
 - ii) to coordinate the work of the Task Force on Victim Surveys and provide advice as necessary;
 - iii) to plan future ECE-UNODC meetings and workshops in the field of crime statistics, possibly in cooperation with other organizations;
 - iv) to provide advice to the CES Bureau in this field of crime statistics as necessary.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

4. The main outputs of the Steering Group will be:
 - i) an agenda for the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for November 2005 in Vienna;
 - ii) a work programme on crime statistics for 2006;
 - iii) regional guidelines to improve international comparability of crime and justice statistics (ultimate output).

MEMBERSHIP OF THE STEERING GROUP

5. The Steering Group includes representatives from Albania, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, United States, UNECE and UNODC.

SYSTEM OF WORK AND POSSIBLE MEETINGS

6. The members of the Steering Group are expected to agree on division of labour and to work mainly via e-mail. No meetings of the Steering Group are planned.

ANNEX II

Draft Terms of Reference for the Task Force on Victim Surveys

BACKGROUND

1. The creation of a Task Force on Victim Surveys was proposed at the joint UNECE-UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics (Geneva, 3-5 November 2004), to carry out a review of victimization surveys, promote methodological studies and possibly develop methodological guidelines in this field.

OBJECTIVES OF THE TASK FORCE

2. The main objectives of the task force are:

- i) to survey the countries that have undertaken victimization surveys or are planning such surveys and to collect the methods used;
- ii) to analyse the communalities and differences of methods used in countries and the ICVS and to identify areas where it would be useful to recommend standards and common definitions;
- iii) to share experiences in the testing of methodologies and, if necessary, to launch the testing of new methods;
- iv) to develop methodological guidelines to address questions such as: What are the minimum requirements for a victim survey? How frequently should victim surveys be repeated? How to organize a survey? What types of crime should be included? What period of time should be covered? What is the best sampling design? Are interviewing methods affecting the comparability of the results? How to select and train the interviewers? How to monitor and report on quality and survey limitations?

3. In carrying out its activities, the Task Force should follow the recommendations and suggestions contained in the report of the November 2004 meeting on crime statistics, and possibly further recommendations and suggestions formulated by the Steering Group on Crime Statistics.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

4. The main output of the Task Force will be:

- i) a comprehensive data inventory of victim surveys undertaken in countries and an analysis of methods used;
- ii) a proposal for methodological guidelines on producing victim surveys.

TIME FRAME

5. The work of the Task Force should be completed by October 2005 and presented at the next joint UNECE-UNODC meeting tentatively scheduled for November 2005 in Vienna.

COMPOSITION OF THE TASK FORCE

6. The initial composition of the Task Force includes representatives of Australia, Canada, Hungary, Italy, Poland, the United Kingdom, United States, HEUNI, UNECE and UNODC.

SYSTEM OF WORK AND POSSIBLE MEETINGS

7. The members of the Task Force are expected to agree on division of labour and to work mainly via e-mail. No meetings of the Task Force are planned.

* * * * *