

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

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

Item 9: Issues related to
social statistics

PROPOSAL FOR SOCIAL STATISTICS

Note prepared by Eurostat and the ECE secretariat

PROPOSAL

1. Eurostat and UNECE were asked to investigate further the possibility for a regular meeting of social statistics directors of European Union Member States with interested Social Statistics Directors of other regions. Following a series of discussions, the idea has proved to be feasible.

2. *It is proposed that UN ECE and Eurostat organise, back to back with the Yearly Directors of Social Statistics meeting (DSS), a meeting that will be open for Social Statistics Directors from outside the EU. The first meeting is scheduled to be held on 27 and 28 of September at the premises of Eurostat. The theme for the meeting will focus on the comparability (or comparable information, or a methodology that would allow comparisons) of Social Statistics between EU Member States and ECE countries outside the EU as well as countries outside the ECE region such as Australia. It is expected that these regular ECE-Eurostat meetings on social statistics focus on the needs of the more statistically advanced countries to develop new methods and approaches to address emerging social issues and that the outputs will be the development of common methodologies that the participating countries will be willing to adopt.*

3. If the proposal is accepted by the CES Bureau, a Eurostat- UNECE group can be invited to work out in more detail a programme to be discussed by the Bureau of the CES through written consultations and presented for information at the Plenary Conference in June.

BACKGROUND

4. The Bureau of the Siena group met on 29 September 2004 in Luxembourg. The Bureau agreed to propose to the participants of the forthcoming meeting of the Siena group 9-11 February in Helsinki, to disband the Siena group as a UN City Group as it was seen to have achieved its mandate.

5. In this bureau meeting, based on the good experiences with exchanging, in an informal setting, views on the development of Social Statistics, several alternatives for such meetings were mentioned and shortly discussed. One of the alternatives was the organisation of a meeting back to back to a Eurostat seminar. The most appropriate for such a back to back meeting being the yearly meeting of Directors of Social Statistics (Sector Group Meeting) of the Members States of the European Union. This regular formal meeting gathers the directors of the 25 EU Member States, the accession countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia, the countries of EFTA (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein).

6. In the meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in October in Washington, Social Statistics were discussed based on a state of the art paper by Dennis Trewin. In this context the forthcoming proposal of the Bureau of the Siena Group to the participants of the Siena group was mentioned. This proposal was welcomed by the CES Bureau and seen as a good decision. However, it was also concluded that for the further development of Social Statistics a forum others than the current Siena group was needed to strengthen the discussion on common methodology and comparable social statistics.

7. The proposal described above is the result of investigation by Eurostat and UNECE on the feasibility and viability of a regular international seminar of Directors of Social Statistics back to back with the Eurostat Directors of Social Statistics meeting.

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