

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

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Item 10 Follow-up to
decisions taken by the
Bureau and the
Conference

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 2004 June plenary session are summarized in a short form under *History*; decisions and follow-up from 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.
October 2004 Bureau meeting: the World Bank presented its statistical activities.

Action: Eurostat is invited to make a presentation at the October 2005 Bureau meeting.

CES Seminars and their follow-up

Globalisation (June 2003)

5. History: as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Globalisation in June 2003, the Conference agreed that an experiment on measuring the activities of multinational enterprises would be carried out. In October 2003, the Bureau approved the terms of reference for the creation of a Steering Group for the MNE Project (chaired by Statistics Canada). The CES Bureau serves as its Steering Committee.
June 2004 plenary session: a progress report on the MNE project was presented. The Conference encouraged the continuation of the project.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: a progress report on the project was presented.

Action: a report on the project is to be presented to the 2005 Conference.

Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata (June 2003)

6. History: as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata in June 2003, the Conference agreed that a Task Force be created to develop a set of guidelines for confidentiality protection. The Bureau approved the Terms of Reference for the Task Force on Confidentiality and Microdata in October 2003. A Progress report was considered in February 2004.

June 2004 plenary session: the progress report on the project was presented, including draft principles on the provision of access to microdata.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the guidelines and draft principles were revised based on the comments received from countries.

Action: the 2005 February Bureau will discuss a new version of the paper on confidentiality and microdata. The paper is planned to be presented to the Conference for endorsement in 2005.

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 the United States.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau commented on the outline of the seminar.

Action: the Bureau will discuss in February 2005 the progress in the preparation of the Seminar based on a paper by the United States.

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.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau commented on the outline of the seminar.

Action: the Bureau will discuss in February 2005 the progress in preparation of the Seminar based on a paper by Sweden.

Work of the Bureau

9. February 2004 Bureau meeting: it was suggested that Bureau members provide written comments on documents for the Bureau meetings in order to facilitate the discussion. The ECE secretariat was asked to investigate the possibility for collecting and sharing electronically written comments in advance.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau did not consider setting up an electronic discussion group necessary. It was agreed that the papers should be disseminated to Bureau members two weeks in advance of the meeting to allow them to consult with staff and react on a detailed level. Electronic discussion via e-mail (comments sent to all Bureau members) was considered sufficient. The secretariat should keep a record of all comments received.

Action: the ECE secretariat will disseminate papers two weeks in advance and keep a record of comments received.

Definition of Steering Group, Task Force, etc.

10. History: in October 2003, the Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to define the nature of the various expert groups that could be created.

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).

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the ECE secretariat presented an overview of the existing teams of specialists. Some groups were reclassified to be in accordance with the approved Guidelines.

Action: the ECE secretariat will monitor the setting up of future groups under the Conference to ensure that they follow the guidelines. An updated list of all groups is maintained on Internet (<http://www.unecce.org/stats/ToS.html>).

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

11. History: the Bureau decided at its February 2003 meeting to review the structure of the Integrated Presentation to reduce duplication and to eliminate those programme elements that are no longer significant. In October 2003, the Bureau agreed with the proposals for review of the Integrated Presentation (CES/BUR.2004/3).

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 asked the ECE secretariat to develop a proposal on how to make the Rapporteur reporting more effective, and to report back to the 2004 October Bureau.

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

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau approved the new IP classification with some minor amendments. 5 topics were selected to be reviewed in-depth during the 2005 February meeting. Rapporteurs for the selected topics were appointed.

Action:

- i) the new IP classification will be tested on the 2005 IP; the Bureau will be informed about the progress in February 2005;*
- ii) the in-depth review of the 5 selected programme elements will be undertaken in February 2005 based on the Rapporteur reports;*
- iii) the Bureau will consider how to discuss the Human Resources Development and Training in a future Bureau meeting;*
- iv) a small survey will be carried out among the heads of statistical offices at the time of the CES plenary session in order to obtain their preferences for the topics to be reviewed in-depth in February 2006. Based on the replies, the UNECE secretariat will make a proposal to the 2005 October Bureau.*

P.E. 2.1 Management of information technology

12. History: in October 2002, the Bureau asked the Steering Group on Information Technology to make a survey of the use of ICTs in NSOs. The survey should not be too technical and focus more on policy issues.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: considered the results of a pilot survey carried out in 2004 on the Role of National Statistical Offices in e-Services and the Development of IT in NSOs. The Bureau was in favour of organising a full-scale survey but asked to review the proposed questionnaire before launching a full-scale operation.

Action: to make a new proposal for the questionnaire, after considering it at the April 2005 expert meeting, and consult with the Bureau before carrying out a full-scale survey.

PE 2.3 Dissemination and interchange of statistical information

13. History: the Terms of Reference for the creation of a Task Force on statistical metadata were submitted to the Bureau. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to prepare 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.

14. 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 expert meetings.

PE 2.9 Millennium Development Goals and Human Development

15. October 2004 Bureau: the Bureau discussed the situation with country reporting on indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). It was considered important to use the Secretary General's report as an opportunity to highlight the problems with MDG and to include a statement by a representative group of chief statisticians and concrete recommendations on improving the data on MDG indicators. An ECE survey of the situation in the ECE region (similar to the ESCAP survey) was considered timely. It was also decided to discuss the SG report and its statistical annex at the 2005 February or October Bureau meeting.

Action:

(i) UNECE will carry out a survey of the ability of ECE member countries to report on the MDG indicators;

(ii) the February 2005 Bureau will discuss the possible further actions related to the UN MDG reports.

PA 4. Social statistics

16. History: the Bureau discussed the situation on social statistics at its October 2003 and June 2004 meetings. 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.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau agreed that progress should be made in a practical way with a modest and realistic program, e.g. a small number of countries working together on a voluntary basis, developing common modules for surveys. It was recommended to use the opportunity of the Eurostat meeting of the Directors of social statistics and to organise a joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on social statistics to identify potential areas of cooperation.

Action: ECE and Eurostat will organise a joint meeting on social statistics back-to-back with the Eurostat meeting for Directors of social statistics. At its 2005 February meeting, the Bureau will review a note on the organization of the joint meeting by ECE and Eurostat.

PE 4.2a Population and housing censuses:

17. History: in October 2003, 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. In February 2004, the Bureau discussed the progress report on the work of the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau reviewed the progress report.

Action: progress report to be discussed in February 2005

PE 4.3 Human settlements and housing statistics:

18. History: in October 2003, 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. In February 2004, the Bureau approved the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group on human settlements and housing. The Bureau requested the Steering group to prepare 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 to present to the Bureaux of the CES and CHS a progress report in 2005.

PE 4.4 Labour statistics:

19. 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 in the 2003 rapporteur's report on labour statistics and to receive advice on possible action to address these issues.

Action: ILO will be invited to attend the 2005 February Bureau meeting.

PE 4.6 Culture statistics:

20. History: in February 2003, 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. OECD expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group on culture statistics (if it is set up), 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 not included in the draft programme for 2005 for the same reason.

PE 4.8 Crime and criminal justice statistics:

21. February 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau discussed the planned activities on crime statistics, including the organization of a meeting in late 2004.

Action: in February 2005, the Bureau will discuss the Terms of Reference of a Steering Group on crime statistics.

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

22. History: the Bureau noted the growing network of national and international organizations dealing with environmental issues and also noted 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. In February 2004, the Bureau also selected environment statistics for in-depth 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:

- i) 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. In October 2004, the Bureau was informed that the ISWGES did not discuss the topic at its October 2004 meeting.*
- ii) 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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