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**SOME ASPECTS OF HARMONISATION OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS  
IN ESTONIA – CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

Paper submitted by the Statistical Office of Estonia<sup>1</sup>

1. Crucial for the harmonization of agricultural statistics of Estonia with the *Acquis Communautaire* has been the possibility to get relevant information in time. The most important ways for achieving this are to attend international meetings (organized by Eurostat, OECD, FAO and ECE) and exchange information and experiences directly with statisticians of international statistical organizations, EU Member States (MS) and other Candidate Countries (CC).
2. Attending meetings of the Working Groups of Eurostat as an observer and participating in the workshops organized by Eurostat for CC has been the main source of information to introduce new statistical surveys and develop further the old ones. In addition, appointing an officer for each CC from the staff of Eurostat has contributed to deepening co-operation with Eurostat. The pilot projects of Eurostat covering different topics of the agri-monetary statistics of CC have been launched in 2000.
3. Needed and useful information is received at international meetings organized jointly by international organizations (IWG-AGRI, ECE and others).
4. The Working Group of Statistical Offices and Ministries of Agriculture of the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and representatives of statistical organizations of the Nordic Countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark) was established in 1996. All topics of agricultural statistics are thoroughly discussed at the seminars of the Working Group held in the capitals of the Baltic States each year. To

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each Baltic State a permanent supervisor – one Nordic Country – has been appointed (Finland for Estonia). The possibility of exchanging knowledge with statisticians of the other Baltic States about solving similar problems of restructuring statistics is of particular value. It is for this purpose that the stay in the statistical offices of Poland and Slovenia was organized.

5. The stay in the statistical organizations of Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Austria has also been very useful.

*Issue for discussion: How to guarantee the provision the CC with relevant information for the harmonization of agricultural statistics in time? The direct contacts between statisticians of CC and the experts of international statistical organizations, MS and other CC are extremely important part for the restructuration of the system of agricultural statistics.*

6. As a result of discussions of the Working Groups of Eurostat, the methodologies of agricultural statistics and EU legal acts regulating agricultural statistics are undergoing continuous changes. The manuals are incomplete or are missing in some areas (balance sheets, etc); and several fields of agricultural statistics (labor input, forestry, etc.) have not yet been regulated by legal acts or official methodologies.

7. Some methodologies (Economic Accounts for Agriculture, etc) of international statistical organizations (FAO, OECD, Eurostat) differ between themselves. It is cumbersome for a CC to provide data for all these international statistical organizations.

*Issue for discussion: The "moving target" makes the restructuration of the agricultural statistics of CC rather difficult; international statistical organizations should strengthen the co-operation with each other in the field of the methodology of agricultural statistics, harmonizing existing methodologies and elaborating new ones, covering uncovered at present areas. They should strengthen the mutual co-operation in the updating their databases.*

8. In some cases Statistical Divisions of international organizations accept the data from different sources of a CC (for example, from the Statistical Office and the Ministry of Agriculture). As usual, the quality of data from different sources differs, depending on the representativeness of databases and the methodology used. This may lead to misunderstandings.

*Issue for discussion: Should the Statistical Divisions of international organizations accept only the official statistical data, released by the legal producer of official statistics?*

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