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STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-first plenary session  
(Geneva, 10-12 June 2003)

**PROGRAMMES OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL  
WORK IN THE ECE REGION, 2003/2004 AND 2004/2005:  
AN INTEGRATED PRESENTATION**

(Pre-plenary session version)

**OUTCOMES OF THE WORK UNDERTAKEN SINCE 13 FEBRUARY 2003,  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RELEVANT DECISIONS BY THE CONFERENCE**

Note by the ECE secretariat

1. This note provides information on the outcome of meetings convened in the Conference's work programme since the February 2003 meeting of the Bureau (i.e. meetings convened between 13 February 2003 and the 2003 plenary session), and particularly recommendations that were made at those meetings for future work by the Conference. If applicable, it also contains updated information on the programme of work of the Conference that became available since the issuance of the Integrated Presentation (CES/2003/3 and Adda. 1-6) in May, and on developments in fields of statistics that have occurred since the February 2003 meeting of the Bureau that could affect the programme of work of the Conference in 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. Consequently, the information presented in this addendum supplements the information presented in the Integrated Presentation for the following programme elements:

- 2.1 Management of information technology infrastructure
- 3.9 Price statistics, including purchasing power parities
- 4.1 Demographic statistics (including projections, migration, fertility and families and households)
- 4.2a Population and housing censuses

## **2.1 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE**

2. The Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems was held in Geneva from 17 to 19 February 2003. The report of the meeting is available in CES/AC.71/2003/2.

3. The participants considered it useful for national and international statistical offices to continue the exchange of experiences in the field of management of statistical information systems. Therefore, they recommended that the follow-up future work be included in the programme of work of the Conference of European Statisticians, subject to the approval of the Conference and its Bureau:

- a) Joint UNECE-Eurostat-OECD Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems (to be held in 2004) to consider the following: (i) Web technology in statistical information systems; (ii) Development of IT strategies in statistical offices; (iii) Open source in statistics; (iv) Review and follow-up to the activities of the Conference.
- b) Pilot survey on the impact of e-Government on statistical agencies (e-Statistics) among national statistical offices (about 10 offices covering various parts of the UNECE region) on the development of IT. The summary of the pilot survey will be presented to the Bureau of the Conference at its October 2003 meeting. On the basis of the summary paper, the Bureau will decide whether the work will be further developed for the seminar part of the 2004 plenary session of the Conference.

4. The meeting recommended that the sponsoring international organizations try to find a venue easily accessible by the participants from transition economies, in order to encourage and facilitate their broader participation.

### **Recommended decisions by the Conference at the 2003 plenary session:**

- To include the joint UNECE-Eurostat-OECD Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems in the Conference's work programme 2003/2004.
- To agree that the ECE secretariat in consultation with other international organizations would undertake the pilot survey on the impact of e-Government on statistical agencies (e-Statistics).

5. The Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality was held in Luxembourg, from 7 to 9 April 2003. The report of the meeting is available in CES/2003/26. Eurostat offered to publish the proceedings of the work session within its publications series. This publication will comprise the edited versions of the working papers as well as summaries prepared by the discussants.

6. The participants considered it useful for national and international statistical offices to continue the exchange of experiences in the field of statistical data confidentiality. Therefore, they recommended that the work be continued under the joint auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians and Eurostat. Participants recommended that a Steering Group be established to develop a proposal to the Bureau of the Conference to consider future activities in this area. It was recommended that the topics for the following meeting be selected from the following list:

- Web/online remote access questions (techniques and organizational issues);
- Safety aspects of analysis results, disclosure assurance of analytical outputs;
- Glossary of terms for statistical data confidentiality;
- Links coordination with the "Comité du Secret";
- Disclosure risk, information loss and usability of data,
- Statistical data confidentiality aspects of population and housing censuses taking into account classical, register-based and continuous censuses;
- Confidentiality aspects of tabular data, frequency tables, etc.

7. The meeting recommended that for future work sessions on statistical data confidentiality, the sponsoring international organizations should try to find a venue easily accessible by participants from the countries in transition, in order to encourage and facilitate their broader participation.

**Recommended decisions by the Conference at the 2003 plenary session:**

- To include the joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on statistical data confidentiality in the Conference's work programme 2005-2006.

**3.9 PRICE STATISTICS, INCLUDING PURCHASING POWER PARITIES**

8. The Consultation on European Comparison Programme was held in Geneva on 31 March - 2 April 2003. The report of the meeting is available in CES/2003/25.

*Publication of 2000 ECP results*

9. The meeting agreed that the ECE Secretariat should assume the responsibility for the publication of the overall 2000 ECP results covering the countries in the ECE region, in coordination with the other international organisations.

10. The ECE Secretariat should try to speed up the publication of the 2000 report and prepare it by the end of June 2003. The publication will be posted on ECE Internet website. It is important that the 2000 results for the ECE region are disseminated before Eurostat publishes its revised 2000 figures in October 2003.

11. The ECE report will cover the 31 countries participating in the 2000 Eurostat comparison programme and the 12 countries participating in the CIS 2000 comparison (11 CIS and Mongolia). The results will be presented at the breakdown of 21 analytical categories. The publication will also include the updated results for 11 countries that participated in the 1999 OECD comparison (seven non-European OECD countries, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Israel and Ukraine). These countries will be included in the report only at the level of GDP.

*Future consultations*

12. The meeting agreed that future Consultations are necessary as they provide a forum for discussion of the overall results for the ECE region. It is preferable that such consultations are conducted every 3 years when new results become available. It is proposed that a future Consultation be organised in 2006 to discuss the results of the 2004 round and their publication, provided that the results for the CIS countries are available and that financial provision is made so that they will be able to attend the Consultation.

*Future work*

13. The meeting recommended that the following future work be included in the programme of work of the Conference of European Statisticians, subject to the approval of the Conference and its Bureau:

- (a) ECE should assume responsibility for the publication of the overall 2000 ECP results and publish them by the end of June 2003 before Eurostat disseminates its revised data for 2000 in October 2003.
- (b) A joint Consultation with all the international and national statistical offices involved in the calculation of the 2004 results be organised in 2006, provided that the results for the CIS countries are available and that financial provision is made so that they will be able to attend the Consultation.

**Recommended decisions by the Conference at the 2003 plenary session:**

- To agree that the ECE secretariat assume responsibility for the publication of the overall 2000 ECP results by the end of June 2003.
- To agree that a joint Consultation with all the international and national statistical offices involved in the calculation of the 2004 results be organised in 2006, provided that the results for the CIS countries are available and that financial provision is made so that they will be able to attend the Consultation.

**4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS (INCLUDING PROJECTIONS, MIGRATION, FERTILITY AND FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS)**

**a) Migration statistics**

14. The Joint ECE-EUROSTAT Work Session on Migration Statistics was held in Geneva from 28 to 30 April 2003. The report of the meeting is available in CES/2003/27.

15. The meeting agreed that future joint work by ECE and Eurostat in this field should be planned and coordinated with work carried out by Eurostat in its Working party on Migration Statistics. It also agreed that the joint work to be carried out by ECE and Eurostat under the Conference's work programme should be focused on concrete outputs, and particularly on lessons to be learned from the past with reference to difficulties countries have experienced in complying with the UN recommendations on international migration statistics and in improving the international comparability of their national immigration and emigration statistics.

16. The meeting agreed that a Steering Group should be established to help to plan and prepare the next joint meeting. The following countries and organizations volunteered to serve on the Steering Committee: Czech Republic, Norway, United Kingdom, United States, Eurostat and the ECE. The meeting asked the Steering Group to develop a draft proposal for the next ECE-Eurostat joint work session, and to submit it to the CES Bureau meeting that will be held in October 2003. It asked the Steering Group to base its proposals primarily on the following two topics that the meeting considered the next joint meeting should focus on, as well as other suggestions made during the work session:

- a) The carrying out of cross-country comparisons by Eurostat and the ECE on international migration flows (these would be an extension of the study Statistics Norway presented at the May 2003 work session).
- b) Identification of a small number of countries (4-5) that would be willing to carry out in-depth studies on their experience in the implementation of the current set of UN recommendations on international migration statistics in censuses and other data sources, and presentation of the results at the next joint meeting.

17. The meeting recommended that the next ECE-Eurostat work session take place in the Spring of 2005. It asked the Steering Group, in developing the proposed agenda for the meeting, to focus on the above two topics, and to consider whether other agenda items should be added dealing with progress made in various initiatives of work that is currently in progress that is expected to advance over the course of the next two years, such as the "three-card method" being developed in the USA and outputs from Eurostat's MED-Migr project. The participants also agreed that the next work session could also provide useful feedback to UNSD in its work on the preparation of a manual on the implementation of the UN recommendations on international migration statistics.

18. The meeting also asked the Steering Group to plan the next joint meeting in such a way so that national statistical offices and other national ministries and bodies with interests in international migration, as well as users and policy makers, will be interested in actively participating in the next work session.

**Recommended decisions by the Conference at the 2003 plenary session:**

- To include the Joint ECE-EUROSTAT Work Session on Migration Statistics in the Conference's work programme (2004-2005) (subject to the CES Bureau's endorsement of the proposed terms of reference for the joint meeting to be prepared by the Steering Group).

**b) Demographic projections**

19. The programme of work of the Conference makes provision for an ECE-Eurostat joint work session on demographic projections to be held in Vienna in 2003/04. The meeting was originally planned to be held in October 2003. However, at the request of the host country, and in agreement with Eurostat and the ECE secretariat, the meeting has been rescheduled to take place in the first week of May, 2004.

**4.2a POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES**

20. The Joint ECE-EUROSTAT Work Session on Population and Housing Censuses was held in Ohrid (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) from 21 to 23 May 2003. The report of the meeting is available in CES/2003/28.

21. The meeting agreed on the need for joint work by the UNECE and Eurostat over the course of the next four years aimed at drawing up a revised set of UNECE – Eurostat Recommendations for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in the ECE Region. It also agreed that the ECE secretariat, who has played a leading role over the course of the last five decades in developing the ECE regional variants of the UN world recommendations, should continue to play a very active role, together with Eurostat, in drawing up the new set of recommendations for the 2010 round of censuses in this region. The meeting also considered that the ECE-Eurostat set of recommendations for the next round of censuses will likely be of even greater importance for achieving international comparability of the census results, because of the growing divergence among countries in the region in the methods and data sources they plan to use in collecting and producing census and census-like data in the next round of censuses.

22. The participants agreed that the ECE secretariat and Eurostat should follow the same general timetable and steps that were used for developing the regional variants of the 2000 and earlier rounds of censuses, so as to ensure that the required new set of recommendations will be available in time to have it approved by the Conference at its 2007 plenary session, and by DGINS at its 2007-2008 meeting. (This timing would be in accordance with the timing that has generally been called for in the Resolutions that ECOSOC and the UN Statistical Commission have followed in the past when dealing with earlier upcoming rounds of censuses). They also agreed that this planned joint work at the regional level should be coordinated with the work on the census recommendations at the world level that UNSD will be engaged in developing for countries in other regions.

23. The meeting agreed that the joint work on drawing up the new set of recommendations should consist of the following steps, and that it should generally follow the tentative timetable as indicated below:

- a) Step 1 - Autumn of 2003 (by ECE, in consultation with Eurostat): Distribution of a detailed questionnaire to all ECE countries to obtain detailed information from them on the extent to which they complied with the ECE-Eurostat Recommendations for the 2000 round of censuses in their last censuses, as well as feedback from them on which parts of the 2000 recommendations they think should be revised and improved.
- b) Step 2 - January to October, 2004 (by ECE and Eurostat): Preparation of synoptic papers, one dealing with population census topics and the other with housing census topics, summarizing the extent to which ECE countries complied with the recommendations for the 2000 round of censuses.

- c) Step 3 - January 2004 to December 2006: If and when necessary, setting up of Task Forces composed of a small number of interested countries, and conduction of work by the Task Forces on designated parts of the 2000 recommendations which are considered as being in need of significant revision (e.g., possibly the parts of the recommendations dealing with families and households).
- d) Step 4 - Spring 2005: Joint ECE–Eurostat work session on population censuses, to conduct an in–depth review of the synoptic paper on the 2000 population censuses, and to recommend specific types of modifications to be made to the recommendations for purposes of obtaining an improved set of population census recommendations for the 2010 round of censuses.
- e) Step 5 - Autumn 2005: Joint ECE–Eurostat work session on housing censuses, to conduct an in–depth review of the synoptic paper on the 2000 housing censuses, and to recommend specific types of modifications to be made to the recommendations for purposes of obtaining an improved set of housing census recommendations for the 2010 round of censuses.
- f) Step 6 - Preparation (by ECE and Eurostat) of the draft new set of recommendations for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in the ECE Region, for review at an ECE–Eurostat Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses to be organized in Geneva in the spring of 2007.
- g) Step 7 – Amending the draft set of recommendations on the basis of the outcome of the Spring 2007 meeting, and submission of the amended draft new set of recommendations to the June 2007 CES plenary session for approval.

24. The meeting also agreed that even though most of the preparatory work would be carried out by ECE and Eurostat, a Steering Group composed primarily of interested countries should be established to oversee and guide the work and to report to the CES Bureau when required. The following countries and organizations offered to serve on the Steering Group: Canada, Ireland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Eurostat and the ECE secretariat.

**Recommended decisions by the Conference at the 2003 plenary session:**

- To include in the Conference’s work programme the work referred to above, to be carried out jointly by ECE and Eurostat, culminating in a revised new set of ECE-Eurostat recommendations for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, to be submitted to the 2007 plenary session of the Conference and to the 2007-2008 DGINS meeting for approval.

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