



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

CES/2004/WP.5
2 June 2004

ENGLISH ONLY

STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-second plenary session

(Paris, 8-10 June 2004)

**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 was prepared for the first time by the ECE secretariat for the October 2002 meeting of the Bureau, in order to assist the work of the Bureau, and later on for the subsequent meetings of the Bureau. The note permits the identification of possible delays and facilitates taking decisions for further action. It also facilitates the work of the ECE secretariat in both planning and executing its tasks.

2. The present note summarises the main decisions taken by the Bureau since its February 2002 meeting and by the Conference in 2002 and 2003, as reflected in the respective reports. A similar note was presented at the 2003 Conference. Under each decision, the action to be taken or that was taken is indicated. 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

3. 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 to the Bureau its statistical activities. It was decided to continue the practice of other organizations making presentations on their statistical activities.

Action: The World Bank is invited to make a presentation at the October 2004 Bureau meeting.

Follow-up to CES Seminars

4. June 2003 plenary session: As a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Globalisation, the Conference agreed that an experiment on measuring the activities of multinational enterprises would be carried out. A Steering Committee composed of a few countries and organizations would prepare the terms of reference and objectives.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau reviewed the terms of reference for the creation of a Steering Committee for the MNE Project based on a note submitted by Statistics Canada. It was proposed that the CES Bureau serve as its Steering Committee. The Bureau agreed that a detailed plan for the project be reviewed in February 2004.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: Statistics Canada reported to the Bureau on the MNE Project. The Bureau agreed to discuss at its October 2004 meeting the details of the contents of a report on the project to be presented to the 2005 Conference.

Action: A progress report on the project will be presented to the Conference in June 2004.

5. June 2003 plenary session: As a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata, the Conference agreed that a Steering Group be created to develop a set of guidelines for confidentiality protection, and that the Terms of Reference for the Group would be submitted to the Bureau for review in October 2003.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: Mr. Dennis Trewin, Chair of the Task Force on Confidentiality and Microdata, presented to the Bureau, via teleconference, the Terms of Reference for the Group. The Bureau agreed with the overall proposal, and decided to review this activity in February 2004.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: Mr. Trewin reported to the Bureau on the work of the Task Force on Confidentiality and Microdata.

Action: A progress report on the project will be presented to the Conference in June 2004.

Communication among members of the Bureau

6. October 2003 Bureau meeting: With regard to the documents circulated before the meetings of the Bureau, it was suggested that Bureau members provide written comments where appropriate in order to facilitate the discussion. The ECE secretariat was asked to investigate the possibility for collecting and sharing electronically written comments on the Statistical Programme in advance.

Action: The ECE Secretariat will investigate this issue for the future meetings of the Bureau

Definition of Steering Group, Task Force, etc.

7. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the definition of “Steering Group”, and asked the ECE secretariat to prepare a document which defines the nature of the various expert groups that could be created.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The ECE secretariat presented a note (CES/BUR.2004/22) on the ECE guidelines for the establishment of teams of specialists and on the functions of Steering Groups, Task Forces and Organising Committees. It was agreed that, on the basis of the definitions proposed in document CES/BUR.2004/22, the “category” of the various groups (that is, Steering Groups, Task Forces or Organising Committees) could be reviewed and, if necessary, modified. The Bureau agreed that a note on the guidelines be presented to the Conference in June 2004 for endorsement.

Action: In June 2004, the ECE secretariat will present for endorsement by the Conference guidelines for establishing the various teams or groups of experts that could work within the Conference of European Statisticians (CES/2004/8).

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE INTEGRATED PRESENTATION AND SPECIFIC PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

Purpose, structure and compilation of the Integrated Presentation

8. February 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau agreed that the structure of the Integrated Presentation should be reviewed in order to reduce duplication as far as possible and to eliminate those programme elements that are no longer significant and that contain very limited information. The ECE secretariat was asked to formulate a proposal to be presented at the October 2003 meeting.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the note “Integrated Presentation: Some proposals for its review” prepared by the ECE Secretariat and agreed with the overall proposal. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to produce a short paper to inform the users of IP about its purpose. The possibility of a review of the overall classification of statistical activities was discussed, and the Bureau asked the ECE Secretariat to draft a note on the rationale for revision of the classification.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The ECE Secretariat presented a note on the purpose of the IP, including various proposals for changes. The Bureau agreed that the IP classification should be revised through the creation of a Task Force, which would recommend amendments to the classification to the October 2004 Bureau meeting. The Bureau also discussed the procedure for reviewing the IP, including the selection of Programme Elements to be reviewed and the designation of rapporteurs.

Action: 1) The ECE Secretariat will present to the Conference in June 2004 a paper on the purpose and plans for future developments of the Integrated Presentation (CES/2004/3).

2) A Task Force to review the classification of statistical activities of the IP has been created.

3) In October 2004 the Bureau will discuss the revision of the IP classification and will select the Programme Elements to be reviewed in February 2005.

Comments on the Integrated Presentation

9. February 2004 Bureau meeting: Considering that less and less time is being spent on the review of the Integrated Presentation at the annual sessions of the CES, the Bureau agreed that

delegates should be invited to comment on the IP via e-mail before the meeting and that the ECE should prepare a room document which collates these comments. The Bureau also suggested that electronic discussion on the Integrated Presentation (that is, via e-mail) could take place in future.

Action: Comments on the IP were collected by the ECE Secretariat in April 2004 and summarised in a note for the Bureau (CES/2004/3/Add.1).

PE 1.2 Managerial and policy issues of direct concern to presidents of National Statistical Offices:

10. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau endorsed the draft ECE statistical programme for 2004. Some reservations were expressed in relation to the work on updating the Handbook of Official Statistics. The Bureau agreed that it would come back to this item in February 2004.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the procedure for updating the Handbook of Official Statistics, and agreed that the aim should be to make sure the Handbook is as up-to-date as possible but with a minimum burden to countries. The Bureau agreed to establish a Task Force to consider the future content of the Handbook and how it might be updated effectively.

Action: In October 2004 the Bureau will discuss the progress on the updating of the Handbook of Official Statistics.

P.E. 2.1 Management of information technology

11. October 2002 Bureau meeting: OECD noted that it is important to involve top managers in the national offices to contribute to the website on the Best IT Practices in Statistical Offices. The Bureau agreed that a joint letter on behalf of the three secretariats be sent to Heads of Offices.

February 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau asked the ECE Secretariat to draft a joint letter on behalf of ECE, Eurostat and OECD to be sent to Heads of Offices to request contributions to the website on Best IT Practices in Statistical Offices.

Action: The participants at the May 2004 joint UNECE-Eurostat-OECD meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems reviewed the website which was hosted by the OECD -- its usage, content and maintenance. As a result of this review, and following the recommendations made by the participants, the website was moved from the OECD server to the UNECE (<http://www.unece.org/stats/sis/>), and is currently being indexed and integrated with the papers from relevant UNECE and joint meetings.

12. October 2002 Bureau meeting: The Bureau asked the Steering Group on Information Technology to approach the NSOs, collect information on the development of IT technologies and produce a paper for the Bureau. The paper should be less technical and should focus more on political issues.

February 2003 Bureau meeting: The ECE secretariat informed the Bureau that a decision on the possible paper would be taken at the joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (Geneva, 17-19 February 2003). A paper would be presented at the October 2003 Bureau meeting if a survey among countries was launched on this subject.

Action: The participants at the May 2004 joint UNECE-Eurostat-OECD meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems reviewed a draft questionnaire prepared

by Statistics Canada. The participants made a commitment to send completed questionnaires, and comments on its structure and contents to the UNECE Secretariat by the End of July 2004. A summary of this exercise will be presented to the Bureau at the October 2004 meeting.

PE 2.3 Dissemination and interchange of statistical information:

13. February 2004 Bureau meeting: The ECE Secretariat informed the Bureau of the outcome of the Joint ECE-Eurostat-OECD Work Session on Statistical Metadata (METIS) held in Geneva on 9-11 February 2004 and submitted a note to the Bureau proposing the creation of a Task Force. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to prepare, in cooperation with experts from national statistical offices, Eurostat and OECD, a more detailed proposal defining the objectives of the Task Force and circulate it by e-mail to the Bureau members, so that it can be discussed at its June 2004 meeting.

Action: Draft terms of reference, including a tentative timetable were circulated to the Bureau Members in May 2004 (CES/BUR.2004/44).

PE 2.8 Sustainable development:

14. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the proposal of creating a Steering Group on Sustainable Development, presented by the OECD and the ECE secretariat. The Bureau agreed to establish a temporary Steering Group to advise the Bureau on the need for coordination and to determine if there is a clear objective to be met. The Bureau also discussed the possibility for organizing a seminar for Heads of NSOs, possibly in 2005.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed a revised note on the Steering Group on Sustainable Development, including new Terms of Reference for the group, which could prepare a possible seminar in 2005 for Heads of NSOs to discuss the role of official statistics in the measurement of sustainable development. The Bureau considered the proposal to devote one of the 2005 CES seminars to the measurement of sustainable development.

Action: The topics for the CES seminars in 2005 will be selected in June 2004, on the basis of the results of the survey carried out by the ECE Secretariat in April 2004.

PE 3.1 Implementation of the SNA:

15. February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the way countries have to be involved in the process of updating the SNA and the role of the different working groups. The OECD and ECE agreed that they would use their groups on national accounts for that purpose. The ECE secretariat would consult ECE countries, possibly using the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD meeting on National Accounts.

Action: The joint meeting on national accounts held in Geneva, 28-30 April 2004, discussed the issues considered for review in the current update of the 1993 SNA. Further joint OECD/ECE meetings are planned for October 2004 and 2005.

PE 3.9 Price statistics, including purchasing power parities:

16. February 2004 Bureau meeting: It was noted that the global ICP round is not largely mentioned in the Rapporteur's report reviewed by the Bureau. It was suggested that there should be explicit reference made to it in an additional note to the CES in June 2004. The Bureau agreed that a presentation on the state of the ICP at the CES is necessary.

Action: The state of the current round of ICP is not on the agenda of the 2004 Conference. The current round of ICP and the ECE involvement in it will be reviewed by the Bureau at its October 2004 meeting.

PE 4.1 Families and Households:

17. June 2003 plenary session: Statistics Norway presented a proposal for a joint ECE-Eurostat project on households and families. The Conference asked the Bureau to follow developments in the work that would be undertaken in the project so as to ensure that the outputs become available in a timely manner.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the proposal for a joint ECE/Eurostat project on families and households, including the draft terms of reference of the Task Force, on the basis of a note prepared by the ECE secretariat. The Bureau agreed to look further into the work of the Task Force in February 2004 and review a progress report of the Task Force.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the progress report on the work of the Task Force on Families and Households, that met for the first time in January 2004. The report included a proposal on the enlargement of the Task Force and a work plan for the future activities of the group. The Bureau approved the proposals contained in the note.

Action: Progress reports will be presented to the Bureau and the Conference in future.

PE 4.2a Population and housing censuses:

18. June 2003 plenary session: The Conference took note of the proposed work programme to be carried out jointly by ECE and Eurostat on a revised new set of ECE-Eurostat recommendations for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau reviewed the work plan for preparing the new set of recommendations on the basis of a note submitted by the ECE secretariat, which also contained a proposal for the creation of a Steering Group. The Bureau agreed with the terms of reference for the Group. It was proposed that the new recommendations be called "CES recommendations", and that they should be formally adopted by the Conference in 2006. It was also agreed that the work of the Steering Group will be reviewed in February 2004, including the timetable and whether the Group should report to the Conference in June 2004.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the progress report on the work of the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, that met for the first time in January 2004, including a detailed timetable for the programme. The Bureau approved the proposals contained in the note, and agreed to invite France (which is developing a very innovative approach to the census) and a Nordic country (to cover the case of register-based censuses) to join the group.

Action: France and Finland were invited to join the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses. The work of the Steering Group will be reviewed by the Bureau at its October 2004 meeting.

PE 4.3 Human settlements and housing statistics:

19. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau reviewed the issue of coordination in housing statistics in the ECE region on the basis of a note submitted by Martti Lujanen, Director General, Ministry of the Environment, Finland and member of the UNECE Committee on Human Settlements. The Bureau asked Mr. Lujanen to prepare a short follow-up paper for the February 2004 meeting of the Bureau.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed a note on Coordination of International

Housing Statistics including the draft Terms of Reference of the Steering Group, prepared by the ECE Secretariat. The Bureau agreed to set up a Steering Group to work towards the objectives as stated in the ToR, and requested the Steering group to prepare, at its first meeting, a programme of work and related timetable and report them to the Bureaux of the CES and the Committee on Human Settlements. It also requested the Steering Group to present progress reports to both Bureaux.

Action: The Steering Group will prepare a progress report after its first meeting, planned for the middle of the year.

PE 4.4 Labour statistics:

20. 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 by ILO in the rapporteur's report and to receive advice on possible action to address these issues

Action: To be discussed by the Bureau at the next in-depth review of PE 4.4 on Labour statistics.

PE 4.6 Culture statistics:

21. February 2003 Bureau meeting: 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. The ECE secretariat explained that a Steering Group should be formed to prepare this meeting, and OECD expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group, 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 could be considered for 2005.

PE 4.8 Crime and criminal justice statistics:

22. October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau endorsed the draft ECE statistical programme for 2004. Some reservations were expressed on activity 3.20: Crime statistics. The Bureau agreed that it would come back to this item in February 2004 (e.g. to further explore the work on crime statistics).

February 2004 Bureau meeting: The Bureau discussed the planned activities on crime statistics, including the organization of a meeting in late 2004, to be organized by a Steering Group.

Action: In October 2004 the Bureau will discuss the progress on the organization of the meeting on crime statistics.

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

23. February 2002 Bureau meeting: The Bureau noted that there is a growing network of national and international organizations dealing with environmental issues. In this context, OECD and Eurostat were asked to consider the possibility of preparing a document to identify the various institutions collecting environment data in order to control the requests for environment data to countries. It was suggested that a paper be considered at a future plenary session.

October 2002 Bureau meeting: OECD and Eurostat informed the Bureau that no work had been undertaken by the two organizations. The UNSD informed that a paper dealing with environment statistics was under preparation for the Statistical Commission. It was suggested that Eurostat and OECD use the paper as a starting point for further work. The Bureau agreed

to come back to the issue at a future meeting, and asked Statistics Norway to prepare a note on its national experience in dealing with requests coming from various IOs for future discussions by the Bureau.

February 2003 Bureau meeting: With reference to the note to be prepared by Statistics Norway on its national experience in dealing with requests coming from various IOs, Statistics Norway informed the Bureau that it will report at the next meeting of the Bureau.

October 2003 Bureau meeting: The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to ask Statistics Norway to prepare a note on its national experience in dealing with requests coming from various international organizations.

February 2004 Bureau meeting: Statistics Norway drafted the rapporteur's report on PE 5.1. "Sectoral concepts, definitions, classifications and environmental databases". The Bureau agreed that in future one rapporteur should review PE 5.1 and PE 5.2 "Environmental accounting". The Bureau also selected PE 5.1 for discussion at the 2004 plenary session, and asked the ECE secretariat to invite Statistics Norway to prepare a more in-depth and structured paper on which to base the discussion.

Action: Programme Element 5.1. "Sectoral concepts, definitions, classifications and environmental databases" will be reviewed by the Conference in June 2004, on the basis of a paper prepared by Statistics Norway (CES/2004/7).

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