

**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

Second Meeting of the 2002/2003 Bureau  
Geneva, 13-14 February 2003

**INTEGRATED PRESENTATION DATABASE – STATUS REPORT**

Note by the UNECE Secretariat

**Purpose**

1. In October 2002, the Bureau reviewed the progress made in converting the IP into a database based on a paper prepared by the UNECE secretariat. The Bureau agreed that the third phase - remote updating of the IP - should be speeded up. Eurostat suggested helping with the work. The Bureau agreed that Eurostat and OECD send a joint mission to UNECE to review the needs for the work on the database and report to the Bureau in February 2003.

2. In the first phase, an external company developed for USD 8000,- a “light” version of the database for internal use by the ECE secretariat. The current work, which is the second phase of the project, aims at implementing a Web-based browsing interface. It is executed by an external company for USD 10'000,-. The original deadline for end of 2002 could not be met due to lack of funds. However, it is expected to make the IP public on the web in April 2003.

**Consultation with Eurostat and OECD**

3. So far, only telephone consultations of technical experts from Eurostat, OECD and UNECE have taken place and are expected to continue. The Joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Expert Group could discuss the technical aspects of cooperation and exchange of information, but could not commit resources needed for the proposed technical solutions.

4. Both OECD and Eurostat have their programmatic information stored in databases. As these databases are primarily used for internal purposes, their structure and content are different from those of the Integrated Presentation Database.

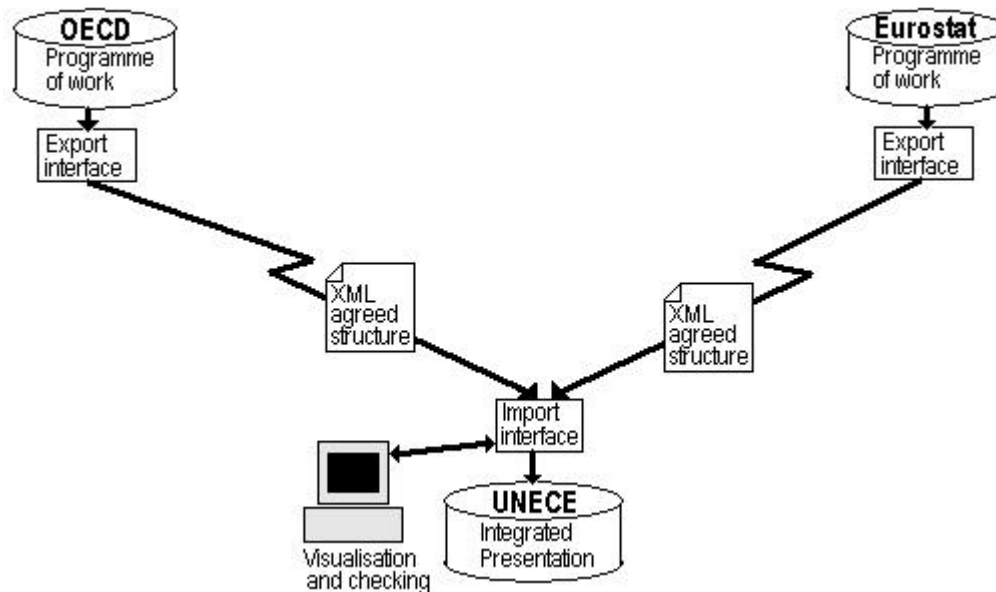
5. The experts from UNECE, Eurostat and OECD study the detailed requirement, focusing on the following immediate questions:

- (i) Comparing the subject-matter structure of the information (classifications of statistical activities) and looking into a possibility for developing a “correspondence table”;
- (ii) Comparing the structure of the database, study the possibility of transforming data into the format required the Integrated Presentation.

6. The advantages and constraints for a possible remote updating of the Integrated Presentation have been discussed in detail. While there may be some structural and technical similarities among the three databases, the differences will not allow direct links between them. Moreover, the security measures implemented by the IT services in UNECE do not allow direct remote updating of the database by external parties (these are standard security procedures with respect to possible Internet

attacks). The Integrated Presentation is not updated continuously, but only according to certain deadlines. Therefore, the Joint Expert Group would like to suggest the following approach:

- Implement batch updating using e-mail instead of direct remote updating. This would overcome, in a safe way, the security obstacles;
- Develop a common document structure for the exchange of information needed for the Integrated Presentation. We shall bear in mind that, in future, organisations other than Eurostat and OECD may also wish to use the same document structure. We consider XML to be the most appropriate, because it has proved its efficiency in various electronic data interchange applications (see the diagram below).



## Conclusions

7. At the technical level, the Joint Expert Group agreed to use e-mail batch updating. The data will be interchanged using standardised XML files.

8. The implementation of the recommended updating procedure will require a certain amount of programming work for each of the three organisations, because each organisation will need the appropriate export and/or import interface.

9. UNECE will complete the present phase of the project (web interface) by April 2003. In the meantime, the Joint Expert Group will work on the interchange document structure (XML) and related procedures for e-mail updating with a possible deadline of autumn 2003.

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