

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2018/2019 Bureau
Washington, D.C. (United States of America),
28 February-1 March 2019

Item 3 (f) of the Provisional
Agenda

CONCEPT NOTE ON EXPERT MEETING
ON MODERNIZING STATISTICAL LEGISLATION

Note by the Secretariat

The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) endorsed the “Guidance on modernizing statistical legislation” in June 2018, including the proposals for further work. At the October 2018 meeting, the Bureau approved the proposal for follow-up work including regular expert meetings on statistical legislation, and requested the Secretariat to develop a concept note for such a meeting.

*This document is a concept note for the first expert meeting related to modernizing statistical legislation, to take place in 2020. **The Bureau reviewed and approved the concept note.***

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Improving the governance of statistical production and the legal framework is a priority for many countries and fundamental to producing high-quality statistics. Therefore, after endorsing the Generic Law on Official Statistics as a recommendation for the countries of the sub-region of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia that took part of a capacity development project on this topic, the Conference strongly supported an initiative to extend the guidance to all CES countries and beyond.

2. In April 2016, the CES Bureau set up a Task Force (chaired by the United Kingdom and Latvia) to identify common elements of national statistical legislation to support countries in reinforcing their legal frameworks with the aim to guarantee independence, integrity and accountability of national statistical systems and high quality of official statistics. In June 2018, the Conference endorsed the *Guidance on modernising statistical legislation* developed by the Task Force.

3. Recognizing that the assessment and development of the legal and institutional framework should be a continuous process, the Conference supported the proposals for further work that were developed by the task Force and came through the electronic consultation of the Guidance with CES members. These included reviewing the Guidance in five years and organizing regular meetings of legal and managerial experts. At the October 2018 meeting, the Bureau approved the proposal to hold regular expert meetings on statistical legislation and asked the Secretariat to develop a concept note for such a meeting.

4. This note presents a proposal a first expert meeting related to modernizing statistical legislation to take place in 2020. The organization of possible subsequent meetings will be decided based on the outcome of the first meeting.

II. OBJECTIVE

5. The objective of the expert meeting is to:

- a) Collect experience and best practices in the modernization of legal and institutional frameworks of official statistics;
- b) Discuss emerging issues posing challenges to statistical legislation, including those identified by the CES teams of specialists in their respective working areas;
- c) Ensure continued collaboration of experts on statistical legal frameworks, and collaboration between UNECE and other international organizations in this area;
- d) Promote the use of *CES Guidance on Modernizing Statistical Legislation* in reviewing the national statistical law and other related legislation, and gather information about emerging issues and good practices for future revisions;
- e) Identify what other supporting materials and practical guidance is needed to strengthen statistical legislation and implement it effectively.

III. TARGET AUDIENCE

6. The target audience of the meeting are legal and managerial experts of statistical offices. Depending on the topics discussed, the meeting should include other relevant experts, such as data security professionals or experts in the relevant emerging area.

7. The meeting will be open to all UN member countries and international organizations.

IV. ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

8. The meeting will be organized by an organizing committee established for this purpose, supported by the UNECE Secretariat. Members of the Task Force on common elements of statistical legislation, led by Latvia and United Kingdom, will be invited to become members of the Organising Committee.

9. The responsibilities of the Organizing Committee are to organize the expert meeting, identify priority topics in consultation with other CES teams of specialists and consider the need for future guidance in the area of modernizing statistical legislation.

V. TIMELINE

10. The expert meeting will take place in 2020 and will last for 2 days. The concrete date will be decided after the Organizing Committee is established.

VI. THEMES

11. The meeting will include a session dedicated to collecting experience and best practices in the process of modernization of legal and institutional frameworks of official statistics as

well as sessions discussing emerging issues posing challenges to statistical legislation. Themes will be selected by the Organizing Committee in consultation with other CES teams of specialists.

12. In particular, legal issues related to the following themes can be considered:

- Exchange of economic data – further developments in introducing and reinforcing legal provisions allowing for international data exchange.
- Data stewardship – legal aspects of undertaking the role of data steward, clearing house for government data, providing advisory services to the government which can possibly go beyond the production of official statistics.
- Hazardous events and disasters – protecting data confidentiality while providing data for disaster management and response.
- Exchange of data for migration statistics –introducing and reinforcing legal provisions allowing for international exchange of individual data for improving migration statistics.
- Access to new data sources – developments in introducing and reinforcing legal provisions allowing for access to new public and private data sources.
- Data protection issues – including protection of individual data obtained from new sources, such as mobile phone operators, and effects of data protection regulation.

VII. PROPOSAL TO THE BUREAU

13. The Bureau is invited to comment on and approve the concept note for an expert meeting on modernizing statistical legislation.

14. The Bureau will be invited to decide on the organization of subsequent meetings after the first meeting has taken place, based on the outcome of the first meeting.