



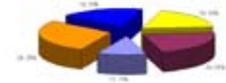
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Chief Statisticians join forces to measure globalization, migration and sustainable development



These three topics were the highlights of the 56th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians held on 10-12 June in Paris. Due to its leadership role in international official statistics, the Conference attracts participation also from countries outside the UNECE region, such as Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and South Africa.

Economic globalization

The last decade or so has been characterized by an unprecedented increase in the cross-border movement of goods, services, income and financial flows. Economic globalization has been driven by lower trade barriers, cheaper travel and new communication technologies that enable quicker conduct of business abroad and the increased ability of companies and people to operate across borders.

All this makes it more difficult to measure economic transactions from a national viewpoint and has an impact on the reliability of the macroeconomic aggregates. National boundaries are of limited importance to multinational enterprises which deal with affiliates across countries and continents. This presents a challenge for official statisticians to obtain information on the transactions between the branches located in different countries, and to measure the Gross Domestic Product and all the related economic transactions from a country viewpoint. Without sufficient data it is very difficult to assess the vulnerability of individual countries from financial market developments, global resurgence of inflation and possible recession.

The Conference discussed how to find solutions to the measurement problems and concluded with some concrete topics where further work is needed, such as the use of indirect estimates, collaboration with international accounting experts, reconciliation of macro data exchanges, etc. It considered it important to move forward on standardizing the methods in the related areas. A newly-created Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Working Group on Impact of Globalization on National Accounts will work towards identifying the main distortions that globalization causes to economic statistics.

Measurement of population movement in a globalized world

An equally important issue for the UNECE region is the increased mobility of people in recent years which could substantially affect the composition of the population that lives in a country. Migration is a phenomenon of ever-growing importance and has a significant influence on the demographic, economic and social situation in both the countries of destination and origin. Thus, for example, from 1990 to 2000, international migration accounted for 56% of the population growth in the developed world and 89% in Europe. From 1995 to 2000, Europe's population would have declined by 4.4 million without immigration.

It is politically highly relevant to analyse the effects of migration on the labour market, income situation, population ageing, pension schemes and subregional wealth. A related and policy relevant issue is the social and cultural integration of migrants. Statistics on measuring population movement are crucial for informed policy decisions. However, with the free movement of people this has become a challenging task. Analysis of these phenomena often calls for a new kind of information.

The second seminar considered how official statistics can better provide the information that is needed to measure migration and to analyse its demographic and social impact. A lot of work is going on internationally to improve the standards to provide better information on these phenomena. However, migration comes in different types and forms and the different definitions often originate from a legal basis in countries. Statisticians are therefore still far

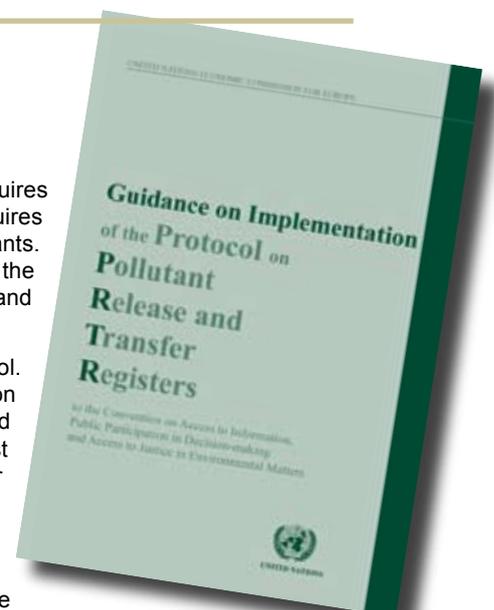


Pollutant release and transfer registers

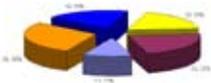
The UNECE Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) requires governments to establish publicly accessible national pollutant registers and requires companies to produce annual reports on their releases and transfers of specified pollutants. By making pollutant releases and transfers visible to decision-makers and the public, the Protocol on PRTRs is expected to exert a downward pressure on levels of pollution and thereby contribute to sustainable development.

This month saw the launch of a comprehensive guidance document on the Protocol. Extensively negotiated by the prospective Parties to the Protocol, the Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers is designed to help Parties to the Protocol interpret and fulfil their obligations. It also aims to assist officials in countries considering accession to the Protocol to evaluate and prepare for these obligations, as well as to aid potential users in understanding and taking advantage of PRTR systems.

Part One of the Guidance provides an introduction to PRTRs and presents the key issues that Parties should address in the institutional and legislative implementation of the



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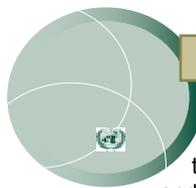
from defining a universal standardized and harmonized terminology for international migration statistics.

International and inter-institutional collaboration is needed to obtain the best results. For example, a clearing house could be established to help clarify the discrepancies in mirror statistics (emigration from country of origin should ideally be equal to immigration in country of destination). More data are needed on diasporas. The statistical development work will require a strong collaboration between users, producers, and experts and will thus have to include politicians, statisticians, and researchers. The discussion concluded by outlining a multi-stage development effort with the final aim to agree on a harmonized international indicator set of migration statistics.

Measurement of sustainable development

The Conference and its Bureau have initiated pioneering and challenging work to develop a framework for measuring sustainable development. This framework is based on the "capital approach", which in recent years has been assessed by economists and other experts as the theoretical fundament for measuring sustainability. A Report resulting from two years of intensive work by the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development was presented to the Conference. The Report, considered to be a valuable contribution that can provide an impetus for the work on sustainable development statistics in national statistical offices, has a good balance between realism and theory and provides an insight into the state of the art of indicators for sustainable development. Work in this area will further pursue the conceptual development of the capital approach and identify indicators to present the long-term dimension of sustainability.

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Protocol. Part Two reviews the scope of the Protocol, focusing on the specific types of activities and substances covered, including the different methods for determining facility and waste thresholds. It also reviews the types of data covered, and describes the systems needed to handle data flows.

Part Three reviews the Protocol's data dissemination requirements and addresses capacity-building and public awareness, including areas for international cooperation.

The annexes provide background information, including a glossary, a table of analytical methods, indicative lists of pollutants and the references used in preparing the document.

The Guidance is richly illustrated with 10 figures, 17 tables and 57 boxes and side bars providing checklists and reference material for officers responsible for implementation.

For more information or to obtain copies of the Guidance, contact Michael Stanley-Jones (public.participation@unece.org).

Potential users of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

The Protocol is the first legally binding international instrument on PRTRs. Its objectives are to enhance public access to information on the environment through the establishment of registers of pollutants, thereby facilitating public participation and contributing to pollution prevention and reduction.

PRTRs can also assist governments in tracking pollution trends, setting priorities, and monitoring compliance with international commitments, and they can benefit industry through improved environmental management.

Indeed, there are many potential users of PRTRs. These include, first of all, the general public and citizens' organizations interested in obtaining information on local, regional or national pollution. Health professionals can use the information in public health decisions. PRTRs can be a valuable tool for environmental education. Environmental authorities can use PRTRs to review both the permit compliance of local facilities as well as national progress towards international commitments. For polluting facilities, both the exercise of estimating pollution levels as well as their publication can encourage efforts to improve efficiency and reduce pollution levels.

Facts and Figures

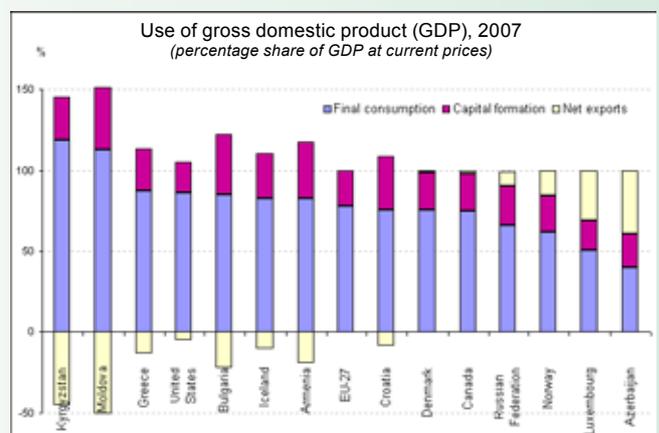
The recently published preliminary estimates for 2007 confirm the structural differences in the use of GDP between UNECE economies.

The major part of GDP is used for final consumption of goods and services, both individual and collective, but its importance varies across countries. The composition of consumption is also different due to higher household expenditure contribution in emerging economies and substantial public spending in other countries, such as Denmark and Iceland, for example.

Capital formation – investments and changes in inventories – retains its growing importance to GDP in 2007. This mainly reflects expanding private investments in the CIS region and other East European countries, where its share reached levels around 35% and above – in Moldova, Bulgaria and Armenia. At the same time, it remains moderate in many developed economies. In the United States, for example, capital formation contributed less to GDP in 2007 mainly due to a dropdown in residential fixed investments.

Net exports (exports minus imports of goods and services) vary significantly across countries, also influenced by increasing prices of energy sources. In 2007, the biggest net importers were Moldova and Kyrgyzstan where the external trade deficit accounts for more than 45% of their GDP.

Large variation in use of GDP across UNECE economies



Source: UNECE Statistical database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data>), Eurostat and national statistics

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