



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/CES/2009/12  
30 March 2009

Original: ENGLISH

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**STATISTICAL COMMISSION**

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-seventh plenary session  
Geneva, 8-10 June 2009  
Item 8 of the provisional agenda

MANUAL ON VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE-UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE ON DRUG AND CRIME MANUAL ON VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS**

Note by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe - United Nations Office on Drugs  
and Crime Task Force on Victim Surveys

*Summary*

The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians, acting on behalf of the Conference, set up the Task Force on victim surveys in February 2005 to carry out a review of victimization surveys, promote methodological studies and develop methodological guidelines in this field (the terms of reference for the Task Force are available at <http://www.unece.org/stats/ToS.html>).

The Bureau of the Conference reviewed at its February 2009 meeting (ECE/CES/2009/2) the *Manual on Victimization Surveys* developed by the Task Force. The Bureau requested the Manual to be sent to all members of the Conference for electronic consultation and to be submitted to the CES 2009 plenary session for eventual endorsement. The note gives an overview of the process of preparation of the Manual. The full text of the Manual is provided in Addendum 1 to the present document.

## **I. BACKGROUND AND MANDATE**

1. In November 2004 the first joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)-United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Meeting on Crime Statistics was held in Geneva. The meeting proposed the creation of a Task Force on Victim Surveys with the main objectives to: survey the countries that have undertaken or plan to undertake victimization surveys; analyse the commonalities and differences of methods used; identify areas where it would be useful to recommend standards and common definitions; and develop methodological guidelines. The ultimate outcome of the work of the Task Force was to provide countries with basic information for developing national victimization surveys, and to improve comparability of victim survey results.
2. In February 2005 the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Bureau approved the proposal (informal document CES/BUR/2004/39) and the Task Force was created (the Terms of Reference are available in informal document CES/BUR/2005/30 on the website [www.unece.org/stats/ToS.html](http://www.unece.org/stats/ToS.html)).
3. The work by the Task Force on the preparation of the Manual was included in the Statistical Programme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for 2006 (informal document ECE/CES/BUR/2005/3) and in the subsequent statistical programmes for 2007 and 2008.

## **II. PRELIMINARY WORK OF THE TASK FORCE AND PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE MANUAL**

4. In the course of 2005 the Task Force collected from CES countries detailed information on victim surveys conducted in the past or planned in the near future. The information collected was processed and used to create an inventory of victim surveys. Using this inventory, the Task Force prepared a number of technical reports analyzing commonalities and differences in the practices adopted by countries with regard to content and methodological aspects of victim surveys.
5. The reports were discussed at the second joint UNECE-UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics, held in Vienna in January 2006. At that meeting, it was agreed to start the work on the preparation of a UNECE-UNODC Manual on Victimization Surveys with the main objective of helping countries to design their own national victimization surveys.
6. In the first half of 2006 the Task Force started to work on the Manual. It prepared a draft detailed outline, which was submitted to countries for comments and contributions in the second half of 2006.
7. Between the end of 2006 and spring 2007, the Task Force prepared a first draft of the Manual. The first draft was discussed at a meeting in Luxembourg on 26-27 June 2007, organised back-to-back to the first meeting of the Eurostat Task Force on Victimization surveys (see section A. below).
8. A new draft of the manual was reviewed by the Task Force on 29 September 2007 in Bologna, where a meeting was organised in connection with the Annual Conference of the

European Society of Criminology. On that occasion, the Task Force considered that some substantive revision and editing work was needed to improve the overall consistency of the text.

9. With the contribution of a consultant, the Task Force addressed the points raised at the meeting and prepared a new revised draft which was discussed at the joint UNECE-UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics held in Vienna on 21-23 October 2008. The meeting agreed that the draft Manual was comprehensive and very informative and that it represented a useful tool to assist countries in designing national victimization surveys.

10. A new draft of the manual was prepared in January 2009, taking into account the results of the discussion at the October 2008 meeting, and submitted to the CES Bureau for review in February 2009. The CES Bureau recognised that the Manual is a result of four years of work by qualified experts and has been broadly consulted by countries, and took note that Eurostat would be willing to help with the final English editing of the Manual. The Bureau decided that the Manual would be sent to all members of the Conference for electronic consultation, and then would be submitted to the CES 2009 plenary session for endorsement.

#### **A. Relation with the work of the Eurostat Task Force on Victimization surveys**

11. The Eurostat Task Force on Victimization surveys was created in 2007 and has among its objectives the development of a European survey module on victimization. Since then, the Eurostat and CES Task Forces have been working in close collaboration, to avoid duplication and improve the overall efficiency of the two processes.

12. There has been also reciprocal support between the two Task Forces by exchanging material and expertise. For example, the Eurostat Task Force benefited from the information collected by the UNECE-UNODC Task Force in the inventory of victimization surveys, and shared with the UNECE-UNODC Task Force some additional information that was collected from European countries.

13. The UNODC-UNECE Manual on victimisation surveys will represent an important instrument to support Eurostat's on-going programme on victimization surveys. It will be a guiding tool for the European Union (EU) countries involved in testing the draft EU module on victimisation, particularly the ones that are involved in victimization surveys for the first time.

#### **B. Plans for the finalisation of the manual**

14. The current draft of the manual is being sent to all CES members for consultation in April 2009. It should be noted that the current version of the manual still needs final English editing. The comments received will be summarised and presented in a note at the June 2009 plenary session of the CES.

15. After the electronic consultation, the Manual will be finalised taking into account as much as possible the comments received. Formal English editing will be then carried out as soon as possible (within the limits of the available resources).

16. Subject to the positive outcome of the consultation, the Conference will be invited to endorse the Manual. It is planned to publish the Manual as soon as possible after its endorsement by the Conference. UNECE and UNODC will try to identify resources for the translation of the manual in Russian, once it will be endorsed by the CES.

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