

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

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Item 1(d) In-depth review of  
selected statistical areas and  
review of the 2005 version of  
the Integrated Presentation of  
International Statistical Work  
Programmes

RAPPORTEUR REPORT ON LABOUR STATISTICS

Note prepared by the ILO

1. Although price statistics are not the subject of this report, they do form part of labour statistics for the purposes of the ILO. The Rapporteur would therefore like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the Bureau and the Conference of European Statisticians to an example of good coordination of statistical work among international and regional organizations. During a period of more than five years, the ILO, IMF, OECD, Eurostat, UNECE and the World Bank worked closely on the revision of the 1989 ILO manual on consumer price indices. This collaboration culminated in July 2004 in the publication of the new manual, Consumer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice (ILO, Geneva, 2004), and will continue with the production of manual on other areas of prices statistics.

**PROGRESS IN LABOUR STATISTICS BEING MADE COLLECTIVELY BY ORGANIZATIONS**

2. **Labour force:** Labour force surveys represent a major source of internationally comparable statistics on employment, unemployment and underemployment. With a few exceptions, all countries of the ECE region now conduct annual, quarterly, monthly or continuous labour force surveys. As a result, labour force statistics based on international recommendations and current best practices are now available on a regular basis at the national, regional and international levels for the vast majority of countries of the ECE region. ECE is extending its data collection from national statistical offices on paid and unpaid work to cover also employment in public and private sector by sex.

3. **Unemployment:** with the continuous labour force survey being introduced in all EU member States, the calculation of the EU monthly unemployment rate is being revised. Especially promising is the possibility of the Member States to provide Eurostat with monthly moving averages, which would enable Eurostat to dispense with using auxiliary monthly data, such as registered unemployment.

4. **Working time:** Variables on atypical working times and overtime hours, both paid and unpaid, are being added to the EU labour force survey in 2006, and a distinction will be made between core and structural variables. An ad hoc module on work organization and working time arrangements was conducted in 2004. A module on reconciliation of work and family life is being conducted in 2005, and one on the transition from work into retirement in 2006. Future modules will cover occupational safety and health (2007), the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants (2008, subject to a feasibility study) and entry of young people into the labour market (2009).

5. **Employment and hours in NA:** Eurostat and OECD are currently reviewing the sources and methods of individual Member States in arriving at statistics for national accounts employment and hours worked.

6. **Job vacancies:** The EU Job Vacancy Survey (JVS) started in 2002 on a voluntary basis with six Member States, expanding to twelve Member States in 2003 and 2004. In order to provide a legal basis for the national applications of the survey, as well as for the harmonization of concepts and definitions, an EU regulation for the JVS is planned in the near future.

7. **Reducing demands on national statistical offices:** Continued efforts are being made by organizations such as OECD, Eurostat, ECE and ILO to cooperate on the collection of labour force statistics in order to reduce the response burden of national statistical offices. The ILO and Eurostat are examining the possibility of jointly collecting data on employment and unemployment from EU member states. Joint ILO-Eurostat data collection on strikes and lockouts is also being tested. Wherever possible, ECE is using data collected by the ILO and Eurostat for its Gender Statistics database.

8. **Gender mainstreaming:** Efforts are being made to encourage countries to ensure gender mainstreaming in all types of labour statistics, as recommended by the 17th ICLS (2003). In 2004, a Work Session on Gender Statistics was organized by ECE in cooperation with UNDP, UNFPA and WHO.

#### **ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN LABOUR STATISTICS (KEY NEW ISSUES, GAPS, PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPMENTS)**

9. **Quality of work and decent work:** Developmental work continues at the European and global level to measure the quality of work with statistical indicators and to monitor progress towards decent work. A seminar on this topic will be organised in May 2005 jointly by the ECE Statistical Division, Eurostat and the ILO. This will be follow-up to two earlier joint seminars on the topic held in May 2000 and May 2002, and will focus on better and more comprehensive measures of the qualitative content of work. With a view to developing measures of decent work, the ILO is testing the collection of data on different aspects through regular labour force surveys or other household surveys in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as Guatemala, Mali and the Philippines.

10. **Child labour:** Surveys on child labour continue to be conducted in some countries of the ECE region with technical and financial support by the ILO Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). Manuals have been published on (i) methodologies for data collection on child labour through surveys, (ii) child labour survey data processing and storage of electronic files, and (iii) child labour data analysis and statistical reports. Following a recommendation by the 17th ICLS (2003), a draft resolution on child labour statistics will be prepared for submission to the 18th ICLS for consideration. A tripartite Meeting of Experts to discuss the draft proposals is planned for 2006-07.

11. **ISCO:** Work supported by national statistical offices is being undertaken by the ILO to update the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88). This work must be finished by the end of 2007, in parallel with work carried out by the UN Statistics Division to revise the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC, Rev. 4). A Workshop on occupational classifications was held in 2004, and a number of technical consultations are planned for 2005. In 2004, all countries were consulted regarding the updating of ISCO-88 in 2004, by means of a special questionnaire, and an ISCO Web site and electronic discussion forum were set up.

12. **Working time:** The measurement of actual hours of work is an issue concerning more than one aspect of labour and employment statistics, and the absence of comparable statistics is a major impediment to the development of internationally comparable measures, for example labour productivity. Following the recommendation by the 17th ICLS in 2003, the ILO has started developmental work in cooperation with the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation Statistics, in which OECD plays a leading role. This work aims at revising the international standards on statistics of working time, the current standards having been adopted by the Tenth ICLS in 1962 and cover paid employment jobs only. The 2004 meeting identified the need to ensure appropriate coordination between the work of the

Paris Group and the SNA revision process. An initial proposal for this to occur was submitted to the ISWGNA in November 2004. A draft revised Resolution on working time measurement will be prepared in 2005 for discussion by the 2005 Paris Group meeting, to which national accounts experts and relevant experts from the "Big 6" countries will be invited. Eurostat is also committed to collaboration on the development of standards on working time on the international arena and internally. In 2005 it will form an internal group, bringing together experts from labour statistics, business statistics and national accounts. OECD is preparing a report on working time measurement for the March 2005 Statistical Commission for comment, particularly by development countries. In 2005, it is also preparing a detailed report outlining proposals for clarification of Chapter XVII of the SNA on labour input and of issues in other parts of the SNA that touch on working time measurement for submission to the ISWGNA.

13. **Labour market:** In 2005, OECD will carry out research into the possible incorporation of additional series in the Annual Labour Force Survey data that touch on key labour market issues such as the aging labour force.

14. **Unpaid family workers:** The treatment of unpaid family workers that are absent from work in the reference week diverges in the EU labour force survey from the ILO recommendations. In the EU labour force survey, these workers are considered employed if there is a commitment by the employer to accept the return to work and the total absence is no longer than three months. There is some concern in the Candidate Countries (especially in Turkey), where this type of employment relationship is widespread, that using the Eurostat method will seriously affect the national usefulness of the employment statistics.

15. **Informal economy:** Recognizing the gaps in statistics on the informal economy, the International Labour Conference 2002 requested the ILO to assist countries in the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistics on employment in the informal economy. The 17th ICLS (2003) adopted guidelines concerning a statistical definition of informal employment, which complement the 15th ICLS resolution concerning statistics of employment in the informal sector. A programme of ILO technical cooperation on statistics of the informal economy (including the preparation of a methodological manual on the topic) has been formulated, for which donor funding is being sought.

16. **Economic characteristics in censuses:** As part of the preparation of the Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing in the ECE Region, the 2000 recommendations on economic characteristics of persons will be reviewed by a task force led by the ILO and changes to the recommendations will be proposed as necessary.

17. **Undeclared work:** The European Employment Strategy includes guidelines relating to the transformation of undeclared work into formal employment (Employment Guideline 9). The Commission is now considering a feasibility study concerning the collection of information on undeclared work from EU Member States and Eurostat will provide advice on the statistical indicators required.

18. **Labour underutilization:** In cooperation with interested national statistical offices, the ILO has started work on the development of statistics on labour underutilization with a view to preparing a set of draft guidelines for consideration by the 18th ICLS. The aim is to complement current measures of unemployment, time-related underemployment and inadequate employment situations with measures reflecting other aspects of labour underutilization.

19. **Labour migration:** In 2005, recommendations are being prepared by CIS-STAT on the organization of information exchanges between CIS countries on the number of foreign workers and on the improvement of methods to estimate the scale of labour migration, including illegal migration.

20. **Differences in estimates:** OECD is revising the explanatory text to incorporate (initial) summary reasons for differences between labour force estimates and estimates compiled by national accountants for labour input measures to national accounts.

21. **Social dialogue:** Statistics on social dialogue, including trade union membership and collective bargaining coverage, as well as strikes and lockouts, play an important role in measuring the social dimensions of globalization and in developing social and economic policies, and in viewing one aspect of the decent work objective set by the ILO. The area of social dialogue is often neglected in national statistical systems, for a number of reasons, including low priority in the face of limited resources and the lack of statistical guidelines. To remedy the situation, the ILO is establishing a database on statistics of social dialogue, covering trade union membership and collective bargaining coverage, as well as developing guidelines on best practices for sources and methodologies, to aid countries wishing to compile these types of data and to enhance comparability. A compendium of national statistics and methodologies is planned for 2005.

22. **Data gathering:** Certain countries tend to be slow at responding to the annual and ad hoc requests for data from regional and international organizations. These organizations are making efforts to reduce the reporting burden on national statistical offices and ministries of labour (see above), but there are still delays in sending data, or even responding at all. This may be due to communications problems, in which case it is important for countries to indicate the person/organization/unit to whom requests should be addressed, including in particular the e-mail address and fax and telephone numbers. This would facilitate the use of use electronic questionnaires. Web site addresses are also important, so that where possible data may be obtained directly without recourse to questionnaires.

#### **IMPORTANT ISSUES IN LABOUR STATISTICS THAT SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE BUREAU AND/OR THE CONFERENCE**

23. As indicated in previous reports, the CES and/or its Bureau may wish to consider broadening its definition of labour statistics, in order to align it to the definition specified in Article 1 of the ILO Labour Statistics Convention (No. 160), which is more relevant to the measurement of the quality of work.

24. The CES and/or its Bureau may also wish to consider simplifying and shortening the Integrated Presentation, in order to reduce the considerable annual response burden of reporting agencies. It is noted that none of the other Regional Commissions uses a similar reporting system.

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