

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For information

Second Meeting of the 2005/2006 Bureau
Washington, D.C. (United States), 24-25 October 2005

Item 11 of the Provisional Agenda

FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE BUREAU AND THE CONFERENCE

Note prepared by the ECE secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. The note on follow-up to decisions taken by the Bureau and the Conference has been prepared systematically since the October 2002 meeting. It permits the identification of possible delays and facilitates taking decisions for further action. The note is updated for each Bureau meeting and for the CES plenary session.
2. The present note follows up on the main decisions taken by the Bureau and Conference since their 2002 meetings, as reflected in the respective reports. Actions undertaken before 2005 are summarized in a short form under History; decisions and follow-up from 2005 are given in more detail. Under each decision, the action to be taken or that was taken is indicated.
3. The decisions are grouped in two sections: I. Decisions related to the work of the Conference and its Bureau; and II. Decisions related to the Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA/IP) and specific Statistical Activities (SAs). The SAs are presented according to the new DISA/IP classification, the number of the programme element in the old classification is given in brackets.

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS BUREAU

Progress of work and strategies of international organizations

4. History: at the June 2002 plenary session, it was agreed that, periodically, discussion should be devoted to the progress of work of international organizations and their strategies. The IMF presented its statistical activities to the Bureau in October 2003 and the World Bank in October 2004.

Action: Eurostat will make a presentation at the October 2005 Bureau meeting.

CES Seminars

Population Censuses

5. June 2005 plenary session: the Conference selected population and housing censuses as the topic for the CES seminar in 2006. The Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses will organize the seminar.

Action: the Bureau will review an outline of the seminar at its October 2005 meeting.

Human resources and training

6. June 2005 plenary session: the Conference selected human resources and training as the topic for the second CES seminar in 2006. Czech Republic will organize the seminar. Canada, Finland, Eurostat and IMF volunteered to contribute to the seminar.

Action: the Bureau will review an outline of the seminar at its October 2005 meeting.

Steering Groups, Task Forces, etc.

7. History: the Conference adopted the guidelines for establishing various teams or groups of experts that could work within the Conference of European Statisticians (CES/2004/8) in June 2004.

Action: the UNECE secretariat maintains on Internet an up-to-date list of all groups working under the auspices of the CES (<http://www.unece.org/stats/ToS.html>). It includes links to the Terms of Reference and information about the previous and future meetings of the groups.

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE DATABASE OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES (INTEGRATED PRESENTATION) AND SPECIFIC STATISTICAL AREAS

Purpose, structure and compilation of the Database of International Statistical Activities (Integrated Presentation)

8. History: the Bureau decided at its February 2003 meeting to review the structure of the Integrated Presentation (IP). In February 2004, it was decided to develop a new DISA/IP classification and to make Rapporteur reporting more effective. In June 2004, the Conference approved the document CES/2004/3 on the purpose and plans for future development of the IP. In October 2004, the Bureau approved the new IP classification. In February 2005, the Bureau discussed and changed the procedure of Rapporteur reporting. The new classification is being tested on the 2005 IP which is now called the Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA/IP Database).

Action: i) the Bureau will be informed about the results of testing the new DISA/IP classification in October 2005;

ii) in October each year, the Bureau will select the topics to be reviewed in-depth in February next year based on the replies to a survey carried out among the Heads of statistical offices at the time of the CES plenary session; the Bureau will also identify the countries/IOs who will be asked to prepare the Rapporteur Reports;

iii) the UNECE secretariat will identify the issues and problems for those statistical areas from the DISA/IP for which the required expertise is available in the UNECE and seek advice and contributions from the Bureau members for the remaining areas;

iv) the issues and problems will be discussed at the February meetings of the Bureau; the Bureau will select the issues that should be brought to the attention of the Conference (prepared as a separate document for the plenary session);

v) from 2006 on, the UNECE secretariat will include hyperlinks to the statistical programmes or other relevant documents of the member countries on the UNECE website.

Statistical Domain 1. Social statistics

9. History: the Bureau discussed social statistics at its October 2003 and June 2004 meetings. Concern was expressed about international standards and definitions and international cooperation in social statistics. In October 2004, the Bureau recommended to develop common modules for social surveys by a small number of countries to serve as the basis for better harmonisation in this area. February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau supported the proposal for a joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on social statistics, back-to-back with the EU Directors of Social Statistics meeting. June 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau decided to have the first meeting of UNECE directors of social statistics on 29-30 September 2005. The Bureau stressed the need to focus the work on the development of common survey questions/modules and recognized the forum as an opportunity to address issues related to definitions and measurement of emerging social issues. The Bureau agreed to

focus the first meeting on the measurement of new forms of households and family formations. The meeting is expected to produce concrete outcomes.

Action: Eurostat and the United States will report to the Bureau in October 2005 about the outcome of the September 2005 meeting.

SA 1.1 Population and Migration (PE 4.1 Demographic statistics)

Migration statistics

10. February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau recommended that the joint UNECE/Eurostat seminar on migration statistics (21-23 March 2005, Geneva) create a Steering Group to prepare a programme of work on migration for coming years. The Bureau also recommended setting up a clearinghouse to maintain information on international projects in migration statistics.

June 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau decided to set up a Friends of the Chair group to develop the Terms of Reference (ToR) for further work on migration statistics. Australia, Canada, Italy, Russia, United States, Eurostat, OECD, IMF and the World Bank volunteered to be members of the group. The invitation is open for other countries/organizations to join in. Canada agreed to chair the group. United States offered to develop the first proposal for the ToR.

Action: i) the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group on Migration Statistics will be submitted to the October 2005 Bureau meeting for approval;

ii) OECD to report on the improvements of its work on migration statistics at the October 2005 Bureau.

SA 1.2 Labour statistics (PE 4.4 Labour statistics)

11. June 2005 plenary session: the countries' written comments to the Rapporteur Report on this issue indicated general support for priority to be given to measurement of working hours. Australia and Canada expressed interest in contributing to the work on developing supplementary questions that could be added to the Labour Force Survey to measure the actual hours worked.

Action: to be discussed by the Bureau in February 2006 or at another future meeting.

SA 1.7 Human settlements and housing (PE 4.3 Human settlements and housing statistics)

12. History: in February 2004, the Bureau approved the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group on Human Settlements and Housing. The Bureau requested the Steering Group to prepare a programme of work and related timetable and to present progress reports to the Bureaux of the CES and the Committee on Human Settlements (CHS).

Action: the work has been delayed; the Steering Group had plans to present to the Bureaux of the CES and CHS a progress report in 2006. However, the future of this work depends on the implementation of the UNECE reform (the UNECE External Evaluation Report recommended to discontinue this activity).

SA 1.9 Culture statistics (PE 4.6 Culture statistics)

13. History: in February 2003, the Bureau approved the proposal for the organization of a joint UNECE/UIS-UNESCO/Eurostat meeting in 2004-2005 to establish a joint work plan for the coming years. OECD expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group (if it is set up). The meeting was not included in the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2004, 2005 and 2006 because of lack of resources.

February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau asked Eurostat to consider taking over the organization of this meeting.

Action: Eurostat still to consider organizing the meeting on culture statistics?

SA 3.1 Environment statistics (PE 5.1 Sectoral concepts, definitions, classifications and environmental databases)

14. History: at the February 2002 and October 2002 meetings, the Bureau noted the growing network of national and international organizations dealing with environmental issues and a need for better coordination of the data collection in this area. This topic was briefly considered at the February and October 2003 meetings and discussed in depth at the CES 2004 plenary session. The Conference asked the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics (ISWGES) to review the issues related to overlaps in data collection, identify the actions to be taken to improve coordination, detect areas that are not sufficiently covered and look at mechanisms to take into account user requirements. In October 2004, the Bureau was informed that the ISWGES did not discuss the topic at its October 2004 meeting.

February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau decided to discuss environment statistics at a future meeting.

Action: the topic was not included in the agenda of the 2005 October Bureau meeting.

SA 3.3.1 Living conditions, poverty and cross-cutting social issues (PE 4.7.1 Statistics on household income and expenditures, on the welfare of the population, and of poverty and income inequality)

15. June 2005 plenary session: in countries' written comments to the Rapporteur Report on this issue, it was proposed that a workshop be organized to develop an agenda for future action. It was pointed out that it is important to clarify which organization or country will take a lead in this work.

Action: to be discussed by the Bureau in February 2006 or at another future meeting.

SA 3.3.4 Globalization (follow-up activity to the CES seminar in June 2003)

16. History: as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Globalization in June 2003, it was decided to carry out an experiment on measuring the activities of multinational enterprises (MNE). The Bureau approved the terms of reference for the MNE Project (chaired by Statistics Canada) in October 2003. Progress reports were presented at the June 2004 plenary session and at the October 2004 Bureau meeting.

June 2005 plenary session: the Conference took note of the Report prepared by Statistics Canada on the outcomes of the Multinational Enterprise (MNE) project. The Conference agreed with the proposal made by Statistics Canada that the study in its current configuration be terminated and asked the Bureau to decide on the best approach to work continuing in other fora where non-EU members of the UNECE are included, and to find the means to keep the non-EU members fully informed about the work under the auspices of the Eurostat project on the European register of enterprise groups.

Action: the Bureau to consider the best approach to continuing this work in other fora and to find the means to keep the non-EU members fully informed about the work.

SA 3.3.5 Indicators related to Millenium Development Goals (PE 2.9 Millennium Development Goals and Human Development)

17. October 2004 Bureau: the Bureau discussed the situation with country reporting on indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). A UNECE survey of the situation in the UNECE region was considered necessary.

February 2005 Bureau: the Bureau discussed how to bring to the attention of the policy people the concerns with data on MDG indicators and to achieve the political recognition of the role of official statistics in the MDG process. The CIS Statistical Committee raised some questions concerning the information provided by the UNECE secretariat in its report on UNECE work on MDG monitoring in South-East European and CIS countries (CES/BUR.2005/38).

Action: i) the UNECE secretariat will carry out a survey of the ability of UNECE member countries to report on the MDG indicators, the Bureau will be informed about progress in October 2005; ii) the UNECE secretariat clarified the sources of data in the document CES/BUR.2005/38 and sent the revised paper to the CIS Statistical Committee.

SA3.3.6 Sustainable development (follow-up action to the CES seminar in 2005) (PE 2.8 Sustainable development)

18. June 2005 plenary session: the Conference agreed that further work is needed in the area of measuring sustainable development and asked the Bureau to decide on how the work should be organized in the future. It was agreed that a group of countries should develop terms of reference to be discussed by the CES Bureau at a future meeting.

Action: the TOR for work on sustainable development statistics to be discussed at the October 2005 meeting of the Bureau.

SA 4.3.1 Population and housing censuses (PE 4.2a Population and housing censuses)

19. History: in October 2003, the Bureau approved the terms of reference for a Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses and reviewed the work plan for preparing the new set of recommendations for the 2010 round of censuses. The new recommendations are planned to be formally adopted by the Conference in 2006. The Bureau reviewed progress reports in February and October 2004 and February 2005.

June 2005 plenary session: the Conference selected Population Censuses to be the topic for one of the seminars at the 2006 CES plenary session.

Action: i) the first draft of the new recommendations was reviewed by the Steering Group at a meeting on 20-22 June 2005;

ii) the new recommendations will be discussed at a joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on 12-16 December 2005;

iii) the Conference is expected to adopt the new recommendations at its 2006 plenary session. (See also: para 5 on the CES seminar on population and housing censuses.)

SA 4.6 Statistical confidentiality and disclosure protection (a follow-up activity to the CES seminar in June 2003) (PE 2.1 Management of information technology infrastructure)

20. History: as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata in June 2003, a Task Force was created to develop a set of guidelines for confidentiality protection (the Terms of Reference approved in October 2003). Progress reports were presented to the Bureau in February and October 2004, February 2005 and to the Conference in June 2004.

June 2005 plenary session: an updated draft of the Guidelines was presented. The Conference encouraged countries to provide additional case studies. The Conference asked the Task Force on Confidentiality and Microdata to prepare an updated document for the October 2005 Bureau meeting.

Action: i) it is planned that the Bureau approve the “Core Principles and Good Practice Guidelines on Managing Confidentiality and Microdata Access” as interim Guidelines at its October 2005 meeting;

ii) UNECE will publish the Guidelines when finalised and will link the Guidelines to Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;

iii) UNSD to include the Guidelines in their database of good practices in official statistics.

SA 5.5 Management and development of technological resources (follow-up action to the CES seminar in 2005) (PE 2.2 Statistical data collection and processing)

21. June 2005 plenary session: the Conference considered it useful to establish a working group to further explore the issues surrounding EDR. The Chair of the seminar, Katherine Wallman, requested the assistance of Heli Jeskanen-Sundström (Finland), Ivan Fellegi (Canada) and Brian Pink (New Zealand) to help in drafting terms of reference for this group and invited others to join this effort.

Action: the Terms of Reference for the work will be submitted to the October 2005 Bureau for approval.

SA 5.7 Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building (PE 1.3 and 1.4 Technical cooperation)

22. February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau requested UNECE, Eurostat and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS to prepare a proposal on how to improve the coordination of technical assistance in the UNECE region.

Action: a proposal for improving the coordination of technical assistance in the UNECE region will be considered at the October 2005 meeting of the Bureau.

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