CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Meeting of the 2017/2018 Bureau
Helsinki (Finland), 14-15 February 2018

For discussion and
recommendations

Item VII (a) of the Provisional
Agenda

UPDATED OUTLINE FOR THE 2018 CES SEMINAR "MEASURING WHAT MATTERS – BROADENING OFFICIAL STATISTICS"

Prepared by Poland and the Secretariat

*This note presents an updated outline for the seminar on "Measuring what matters – broadening official statistics" to be held during the 2018 CES plenary session. **The Bureau is invited to discuss and provide recommendations on the organization of the seminar.***

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   At its June 2017 plenary session, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) selected the topic "Measuring what matters – broadening official statistics" for one of the CES seminars to be held in 2018. The organization of the seminar will be coordinated by Poland in collaboration with Israel, New Zealand, Slovakia and the UNECE Secretariat. The seminar will be chaired by Mr. Dominik Rozkrut (President of Statistics Poland).

2.   Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in measuring areas that are new to official statistics and/or are difficult to measure. Broadening the scope of official statistics towards areas that have traditionally been considered outside its competence can be a risk. At the same time, if what matters is not measured, official statistics may become marginalized or even irrelevant. Official statistics must find its way ahead. The purpose of the seminar is to discuss these challenges.

3.   The following countries and organisations offered to contribute papers to the seminar at the CES plenary session: France (*tbc*), Israel, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden *(tbc)*, United States, Eurostat and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (*tbc*). Additionally Albania contacted the seminar organizer to contribute with a paper, and, at the recommendation of the CES Bureau, Statistics Denmark has been contacted to ask if they can provide a paper.

II.   THE SEMINAR: STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

4.   The seminar will be opened with a keynote presentation delivered by Prof. Anthony Arundel (UNU-MERIT, University of Tasmania).

5.   The seminar will comprise two sessions discussing challenges that official statistics face, regarding two issues: 1) what are the examples of specific emerging topics discussed at the moment, what are the proposed solutions, tools, challenges, and what matters to whom; 2) best general practices on how to react swiftly, i.e. identifying emerging topics, audiences,

stakeholders, evaluating relevance, customizing measurement tools, and innovative ways of dealing with emerging topics.

6.   Each of the sessions will start with one presentation (keynote) that provides an overview of the topic and would be deliberately provocative to make the audience responsive. Presentations of what one or two countries have done might also be used, as long as the ideas are easily applicable in other countries. A proposed timetable is included in Annex 1.

7.   In order to make the seminar more interactive, inclusive and thus attractive to all participants:

- discussions and questions from the audience will play an important role;

- panel discussions are also possible, if the panelists leave time for the audience to speak;

- at the start of the interpreters' lunch break (for 45 minutes) a small group discussion will be arranged, allowing a panel of rapporteurs from each group just after lunch, partly to report back, but also to address other issues, relevant for participants.

8.   The seminar could easily become too wide-ranging to deliver concrete outcomes. Thus the seminar will focus on the general idea of reacting to new topics that can be included in the scope of official statistics.

9.   In order to deliver a concrete outcome from the seminar, it is proposed to ask the CES Bureau to set up an expert group. This group would be tasked to prepare interactive electronic guidelines on measuring what matters. The guidelines would explain suggested approaches to new emerging topics, how to foresee, react and survey new topics/areas of interest in line with changing stakeholders' needs, as well as how to integrate new statistics within the regular statistical production of NSOs. The guidelines would be presented to a future CES plenary session.

A. Session 1 "Emerging topics"

10.   The session will be organized by Israel. It will be opened with a keynote presentation delivered by Mr. Konrad Pesendorfer, Director General of Statistics Austria.

11.   The discussion will focus on examples of new topics to measure.

12.   A survey will be organized during the seminar on emerging topics. The CES member countries would vote on the list of topics identified by Poland, Israel, New Zealand, Slovakia and UNECE. An 'Other' answer will be included on the list.

B. Session 2 "How to react swiftly?"

13.   The session will be organized by New Zealand. It will be opened with a keynote presentation delivered by Mr. John Pullinger, National Statistician for the United Kingdom.

The discussion will focus on the following aspects:

- How to identify new needs: analysing trends in society / media / social media? Dialogue with policy makers, international exchanges of information (emerging issues in one country may soon become interesting for others);

- An attempt to work out a mechanism for quick reaction to new statistical needs, including the creation of internal systems to identify and survey new topics to be covered by statistics. Innovative ways of dealing with emerging topics;

- How pro-active should we be – should we identify areas where we think we can start a debate / raise awareness, or should we wait for users to ask us for new types of data?

- Official statistics vs experimental statistics: Is the label "experimental statistics" a useful way to explore new areas with less commitment and less risk to the NSO? Is experimental statistics really outside 'official statistics'? Trade-off between adhering to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics vs. possibilities to produce wider range of statistics at the expense of quality;

- Old topics to be measured differently: economic progress (GDP – Irish case), migration (particularly short-term and illegal), wealth, etc.

III. NEXT STEPS

14. The seminar and session organizers, respecting the CES Bureau recommendations, will finalize the plans for the seminar.

ANNEX 1.   PROPOSED TIMETABLE

09.40	Introduction by seminar chair	Poland
	Session 1: Emerging topics	
09.50	Introduction by session chair	Israel
09.55	Keynote presentation	Austria
10.15	Summary of contributed papers	Israel
10.35	Plenary discussion	
11.10	Coffee Break	
11.30	Voting on "hottest" emerging topics	Slovakia
	Session 2: How to react swiftly	
11.40	Introduction by session chair	New Zealand
11.45	Keynote presentation	United Kingdom
12.05	Summary of contributed papers	New Zealand
12.25	Introduction to small group discussions	New Zealand
12.30	Small group discussions (no interpretation)	
13.15	Lunch Break	
14.30	Panel of rapporteurs from small group discussions	
14.50	Plenary discussion	
	Summary and future work	
15.15	Next steps – ideas for future collaborative work	Poland
15.25	Chair's conclusions and key outcomes of the seminar	Poland
15.30	End of the seminar	

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