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**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION
STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)**

Joint ECE/Eurostat work session on statistical data confidentiality
(Luxembourg, 7-9 April 2003)

INFORMATION NOTICE No. 1

The meeting will be held in the Eurostat, from 7 to 9 April 2003,
starting 7 April 2003 at 9:30 a.m., Room M5, Jean-Monnet Building
(on 8 and 9 April 2003 from 9:20, Room Ampère, Bech Building)

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. The main objectives of the meeting are to facilitate the exchange of experience and identify the best practices in dealing with technical issues related to statistical data confidentiality in national statistical offices. The meeting is primarily intended for experts from national and international statistical offices dealing with statistical disclosure limitation.
2. Statistical disclosure limitation (SDL) is an important issue influencing public perception of official statistics. Statistical confidentiality and protection of respondents' privacy is included in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe adopted at its 1992 annual session.

II. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

3. The work programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive topics:
 - (i) New theories and emerging methods;
 - (ii) New data release techniques;
 - (iii) Emerging legal/regulatory issues;
 - (iv) Confidentiality issues for small areas;
 - (v) Risk assessment;
 - (vi) Software tools for SDL.
5. Detailed explanatory notes on the nature and expected outcomes of topics (i) – (vi) are provided in Section IV of this Information Notice.

III. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

6. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and of interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the meeting. Participants representing non-governmental organizations in a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council may also attend. All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization. All participants attending the meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Luxembourg in the country in which the participants reside, with a reference to the joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on statistical data confidentiality.

7. Representatives from national statistical offices and international organizations who wish to participate should complete the registration form and return it to both the UNECE secretariat and Eurostat.

IV. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

8. The only working language of the work session is English. The documents may be submitted in any of the official languages of the UNECE (English, French, Russian), but no translation and interpretation facilities will be available. The following deadlines and requirements apply:

- The extended abstracts (maximum 2 pages) should be sent electronically to the UNECE Secretariat by **1 March 2003 at the latest**.
- The full versions of papers, not exceeding 10 pages, should be sent by **20 March at the latest**.
- The UNECE Secretariat is able to process documents submitted in MS Word (preferably) and Word Perfect.

9. For each substantive item on the agenda the discussants will invite 2-3 speakers to write an **invited paper** and to present them at the Meeting. All other participants are welcome to submit a **supporting paper** to any topic of the agenda. The supporting papers will be distributed to the delegates. They will be summarized by the discussants and the issues raised in them will also be discussed.

10. Invited and supporting papers along with their summaries will be made available on the website of the UNECE Secretariat at the following location:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2003.04.confidentiality.htm>

Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website and bring their own copies to the meeting. Documents posted on the website before the meeting will not be distributed in the conference room.

V. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE AGENDA

Topic (i): New theories and emerging methods

Session organiser: Lawrence Cox, United States (lcox@cdc.gov)

11. Important contributions to the theory and practice of statistical disclosure limitation, to the assessment of the effectiveness and computational efficiency of disclosure limitation methods, and to preserving the analytical utility of disclosure limited data have emerged from several scientific fields - mathematics, statistics and computer science - over the past decade. Several of these methods have resulted in sophisticated software solutions. The state-of-the-art was last summarized at the 1998 Conference on Statistical Data Protection sponsored by Eurostat. The purpose of this session is to examine new contributions to disclosure limitation in statistical tabulations, microdata and databases and their assessment since that time.

Topic (ii): New data release techniques

Session organiser: Josep Domingo Ferrer, Spain (jdomingo@etse.urv.es)

12. This session concerns the implications of networking on data release techniques.

- (i) There are applications and users for whom public-use data files are not accurate enough. The traditional solution to meet those special requirements is non-disclosure agreements and on-site access to data. Remote access via telecommunications networks (Internet) is a natural solution to implement in our increasingly networked society.
- (ii) Another aspect of networking is the huge amount of data available to intruders trying to compromise data confidentiality. Data mining techniques are already being used to link that information available on the web with the information being released by NSIs. Such techniques should become known to the SDC community.

Topic (iii): Emerging legal/regulatory issues

Session organiser: John King, Eurostat (johnrking@waitrose.com)

13. New tools are being developed to meet the increasing demand for access to data from researchers and policymakers. Technological developments also have implications for statistical disclosure control and access to confidential data. Together these are encouraging statistics offices to review organisational aspects and practices. In addition, recent European Union regulations are prompting statistics offices to review their regulatory and legal frameworks for statistical confidentiality. This session provides an opportunity for some of the common problems and issues to be discussed. Papers will describe recent developments and experience and will show how these issues are being tackled.

Topic (iv): Confidentiality issues for small areas

Session organiser: David Brown, United Kingdom (david.brown@ons.gov.uk)

14. The purpose of this session is to discuss disclosure control problems specifically associated with geography and small areas. These problems are becoming more important as statistical releases are increasingly required for tables constructed for areas with low populations, or using alternative boundary definitions (for example, aggregations of postal areas and other administrative boundaries). Different approaches to finding solutions will be presented.

Topic (v): Risk assessment

Session organiser: Luisa Franconi, Italy (franconi@istat.it)

15. The classical paradigm of a Statistical Disclosure Limitation method concerns the definition of a measure of risk and the development and application of protection methods. Once the correctness of the framework has been accepted, the assessment of the whole process should consider two aspects. The first concerns the level of protection achieved according to the type of access — restricted, i.e. Microdata For Research (MFR) or free, i.e. Public Use File (PUF). The second is the amount of information loss for the user. In this session we focus on the first aspect. Contributions that define methodological frameworks for measuring disclosure risk in the release of microdata files and assessing it, possibly via real life applications, are requested.

Topic (vi): Software tools for SDL

Session organizer: Ramesh A. Dandekar (Ramesh.Dandekar@eia.doe.gov)

16. Recently national statistical offices have spent a considerable amount of resources to develop, enhance and test software tools for statistical disclosure control. The primary focus of technical papers in this session is on the description of logic, mathematical principles and working experience of software tools currently being developed by statistical agencies to ensure protection from disclosure of tabular and micro data. This includes software tools development for qualitative and quantitative assessment of risk control measures for micro data and tabular data.

VI. FURTHER INFORMATION

18. For further information, please contact the following organisers:

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Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality
(Luxembourg, 7 – 9 April 2003)

REGISTRATION FORM

This form should be completed in duplicate by each participant
and returned **by 1 March 2003**

1 copy to: Mr. Juraj Riecan
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| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Surname (Family name): Mr. ? Ms. ? | 2. First name: |
| 3. Representing (country or organization): | |
| 4. Official title (in home country): | |
| 5. Mailing address: | |
| 6. Tel. No.: | 7. Fax No.: |
| 8. E-mail address: | |
| 9. Name of your hotel in Luxembourg: | |
| 10. Date and time of arrival in Luxembourg: | 11. Date and time of departure from Luxembourg: |
| 12. Special requirements: | |

Date _____

Signature _____