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**SESSION 2: REGIONS, STATES AND FEDERATIONS: PROBLEMS  
OF VARIABLE GEOGRAPHY**

**REGIONAL STATISTICS AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE - TERRITORIAL SUBDIVISION IN LITHUANIA**

Report submitted by the Department of Statistics of Lithuania \*/

1. My country - Lithuania, five years ago restored its independence. Among the first problems it faced was regional statistics.
2. During the soviet period inquiries of business entities engaged in economic activities were taken frequently (monthly, quarterly, yearly) and were based on complete coverage. There were over 8 thousand of these in 1985-90 in Lithuania.
3. Soviet legal acts did not forbid the use of individual data. Statistical bodies were requested to provide individual statistical information to Party Committees and government institutions. Statistical offices of the soviet republics could, according to the fixed system of indicators compare data on each region (city) in detail and agricultural and demographic data on the smallest territorial unit - "apylinke".

\*/ Prepared by Mr. Kestusis Zaborskas, Director General.

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4. Nevertheless, the Statistical office of the Soviet Union, did not allow certain statistical data on units smaller than the republic to be

disseminated for public use. Such restrictions concerned even aggregated data on household surveys.

5. After the restoration of independence, new laws permitting private business activities were passed. Natural persons could get involved into economic activities and establish businesses for private initiative. The set up of such units started to grow spontaneously. The numbers of such units by the end of 1994 amounted to 119.1 thousand units.

6. By the end of 1993 the Lithuanian Parliament passed a law on Statistics, which virtually complies with the EU standards and confidentiality of individual data became a law.

7. Although the law on Statistics contains a clause which allows sanctions for non-response, it is clear that the method of complete enumeration - monthly, quarterly or yearly - is practically impossible due to the following reasons:

- (1) conducting of such surveys is very expensive;
- (2) data processing of statistical questionnaires is quite time-consuming.

8. Currently, sampling methods are used for most statistical forms.

9. Application of sampling methods, using modern principles of mathematical statistics enable statisticians over a comparatively short period to conduct surveys and to receive reliable information on various phenomena.

10. Specialists and experts from the Institute of Mathematics and Cybernetics provide qualified support in adjusting such sampling methods. For the moment, several specialists are being trained in the USA, at the seminar organised by the Census Bureau.

11. Nonetheless, despite this positive trend and the type of modern sampling methods applied, if these are used to receive information on the scale of the country we will never be able to obtain a complete view by region. Unfortunately, the economic potential of our country is not allowing us to conduct sample surveys oriented to get information on - province - region - apylinke level.

12. My small country, having only 3.7 million inhabitants, is divided into 10 provinces (apskritis) containing on the average 3 - 5 smaller administrative units - the so called regions. The reform of such administrative subdivision was started in the end of 1995. Regions, in their turn are subdivided into even smaller units - the so called local offices (seniunijos).

13. In order to receive information on, let's say, wages and salaries and population income, the sample framework would have to be extended as much as 10 times in surveys such as household or labour force surveys. It is a pity, that the current financial situation in Lithuania does not allow to make such changes. We consider, that this situation will not change significantly in the near future. Therefore, we will have to continue to determine such social indicators as wages and salaries or population income once a year at the level of the ten provinces.

14. Speaking about regional statistics in general, we should not forget that quite comprehensive and detailed information on demography is currently available for provinces (the biggest administrative units) and regions. We hope, that the 1999 Population Census will enable us to update the Population Register more fully as the Lithuanian Department of Statistics is responsible for running this Register. On the basis of this Register it will be possible to present even more detailed information on the level of provinces - regions - local offices. Unfortunately, this situation is only within the area of demographic statistics. As I have already mentioned, so far there is no possibility to provide monthly, quarterly or yearly statistical information at the level of provinces - regions from the data obtained from the household, living conditions and some other surveys.

15. For the moment the employment rate, at the province and regional level, is determined on the bases of data received from Labour Exchanges, which, in fact, is an underestimation, as the major part of the population does not register with the Labour Exchange offices.

16. For the time being, Lithuania faces a rather complicated task - to become a member of the EU. That means Lithuanian statistics should be harmonised according to the EU statistical standards. The priority should be given to National Accounts, prices, employment, balance of payments and, of course, - regional statistics. The delegation from the EU has started its work in Lithuania and the greatest importance is attached to regional statistics.

17. We consider, that a partial solution to the problem concerning regional statistics might be a special structural survey of enterprises. Romania and Poland assisted by the INSEE have already achieved significant progress in this field.

18. In close cooperation with these countries we study this experience and hope to start a structural survey of enterprises from 1997.

19. Nevertheless, we are aware of the fact that compilation of National Accounts by 10 provinces will not be entirely sufficient for the work we are preparing to embark on. Therefore, we will look for financial

possibilities to expand the sample frame for the social surveys with the aim to receive information at the level of provinces.

20. For the moment a Farm register is under preparation in Lithuania, which will meet regional requirements for agricultural statistics. Although the survey of farming activities is conducted using sampling on the scale of Lithuania, agricultural output indicators by region are calculated on the bases of the Farm register and survey results, representing the general status in the country. Such method might not be so reliable, but there is no other way for the time being.

21. Recently, changes in the methodology of calculating price levels have been under way, the aim of which has been to represent the 10 provinces. This is not an easy task. In the future we hope to reach more tangible results.

22. I hope this seminar will contribute to forming regional statistics as it is required by the EU standards.

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