

NATIONS UNIES

ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫЕ НАЦИИ

UNITED NATIONS

COMMISSION ECONOMIQUE  
POUR L'EUROPE

ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ  
ДЛЯ ЕВРОПЫ

ECONOMIC COMMISSION  
FOR EUROPE

---

SEMINAIRE

СЕМИНАР

SEMINAR

---

STATISTICAL COMMISSION and  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE



CES/SEM.36/R.6  
24 March 1997

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN  
STATISTICIANS

Original: ENGLISH

**SEMINAR ON STATISTICAL NOMENCLATURES**

(Geneva, Switzerland, 28-29 April 1997)

Note on the items for discussion

**Tentative program for Working Group I**

The objectives of the working group are: to exchange practical experiences of implementing new classification systems; to assist those countries in transition; to agree actions to improve harmonisation; and to encourage the use of standard classification systems in the development of business registers. Conclusions will be presented to the plenary session.

**1. Review of existing work on business registers**

- The joint ECE/ Eurostat work session on business registers (23-24 May 1996) covered: the treatment of complex businesses; the use of business registers; and developments in countries in transition to market economies. The outcome was proposals for future work on developing an "identity card" of key register data for each country and on investigating computing technologies relevant to business registers.
- Developments within the European Union have included: implementation of the Regulation on harmonisation of business registers; a survey of business registers in transition countries (the "Panel PECO" project); and investigation of automatic classification coding systems.

- The 10th international round table meeting on business survey frames discussed wide-ranging issues, including the impact of globalization on the business register.

## **2. Practical issues in setting up and developing business registers**

Use of administrative data, coverage and confidentiality of data are important issues. Two documents are available to provide an input to this topic: the EC Regulation on harmonisation of business registers; and a paper on developing business registers. There will be issues of specific interest to transition countries, because of rapid changes in their economies.

## **3. Statistical units**

The UN international standard industrial classification and the Eurostat NACE (Rev 1) both define statistical units that form the basis of the business register and associated statistical systems. The EC Regulation on statistical units is a key document but it does not deal with the treatment of complex businesses.

Classifying a unit depends on determining the relative importance of the activities that it carries out. While value added provides the theoretical basis for classification, this information is not generally available. Where there are multiple activities within a unit, rules are required for choosing the most important. Classification of statistical units is often on the basis of a business description but values of sales of products may also be available.

## **4. Effects of changes to classification systems**

As economies develop, classification systems change. Exchange of experiences on how such changes have been handled on the business registers may help in producing guidelines.

## **5. Coding businesses**

Standardisation of methods of generating industrial classification codes on the basis of business descriptions is essential for international comparisons. Self-coding by the business may not produce consistency. Whether clerical staff coding from business descriptions using precise rules, automatic coding systems or computer assisted clerical coding provide consistent high quality coding depends on a proper understanding of the principles of coding.

## **6. Sector classification**

There is a need to code statistical units to the appropriate public or private sector grouping. The rules for sector coding and the relationship with industrial coding need to be consistent. There are also issues surrounding industrial coding of central and local government bodies.