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Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Business Registers

Twelfth session

Paris, 14-15 September 2011

Annotated provisional agenda for the twelfth session

The meeting will be held at the Conference Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, starting at 9:30 on Wednesday, 14 September 2011.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Information items:
 - (a) Information by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE);
 - (b) Information by the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD);
 - (c) Information by Eurostat;
 - (d) Report of the Wiesbaden City Group.
3. Linking statistical business registers across agencies, statistical domains and among countries.
4. Defining statistical units in statistical business registers.
5. Reducing respondent burden – the role of business registers.
6. The role of business registers in industrializing the production of statistics.
7. Future work.
8. Other business.

II. Annotations

The Group of Experts on Business Registers is convened pursuant the provisions made in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Statistical programme of

work for 2011 (Activity 5.3: Business registers) as approved by the UNECE Executive Committee on 4 March 2011 (ECE/EX/2011/L.4) and endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians on 16 June 2011 (ECE/CES/81). It is organised in cooperation with the Commission of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

1. Item 1 – Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

Every two years UNECE, in cooperation with Eurostat and OECD, organizes a session for the Group of Experts on Business Registers. The last session, held in Luxembourg in 2009, while addressing existing gaps between western and eastern countries in the statistical Business Register (BR) development, identified a number of areas that would benefit from methodological discussion and exchange of views and experiences of national experts. The list, among others, included issues of covering enterprise groups, public sector units, use and dissemination of business registers data. The purpose of the 2011 session is to explore the above-mentioned issues by examining certain aspects of comparability of methods and approaches used for improving quality of BRs and their statistical outputs. The session will provide also a platform for sharing information on new international initiatives and projects, research results or related advancements.

The proposed provisional agenda is agreed upon by the Organizing Committee consisting of representatives from UNECE, Eurostat and OECD and experts from national statistical offices. The provisional agenda will be presented for the approval by the participants of the session.

2. Item 2 – Information items

The representatives of the Organizing Committee from UNECE, Eurostat and OECD will inform the session's participants on major events and work undertaken by respective international organizations in the area of statistical business registers since the 2009 meeting. The Steering Group of the Wiesbaden City group will also present its report on the meeting in Tallinn in September 2010 and on ongoing activities.

3. Item 3 - Linking statistical business registers across agencies, statistical domains and among countries

Session Chair: Denmark

The core issue to be discussed in this item is the position of linking statistical output to among other harmonies operational definitions. This item will raise the following issues:

- (a) Examples of where statistical businesses registers have been linked to improve coherence in statistical outputs, and /or improvements in quality and estimation.
- (b) New analyses based on linked registers.
- (c) Issues related to profiling to facilitate linking, for example, where the objective is to harmonise operational definitions of units between registers.
- (d) How the register fits into data warehousing projects.

4. Item 4 - Defining statistical units in statistical business registers

Session Chair: Italy

The observation units play a fundamental role in the production of economic statistics and their importance is underlined by their integration as obligatory units into the national statistical business registers in the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries. The defined statistical units are no longer fully applicable as

a basis for data collection and data processing into comparable statistical figures. The item will raise the following issues:

- (a) Issues related to statistical units in the context of globalization – are the current units adequate?
- (b) Are there issues between Europe and the rest of the world on consistency of statistical units?
- (c) The relationship between legal units and statistical units, as this is of practical importance in many countries.

5. Item 5 - Reducing respondent burden – the role of statistical business registers

Session Chair: United States of America

Statistical business registers as an infrastructural, conceptual and methodological backbone for the production of business statistics to reduce the response burden is a core issue. Business registers have the possibility to make use of multiple sources and thereby reducing the respondent burden which, moreover, would also strengthen the quality and insure coherence. This item includes issues such as:

- (a) The use of administrative data to substitute for direct reporting.
- (b) Combining administrative and survey data to create new products.
- (c) The use of BRs to manage respondent burden across surveys (for example, is the BR used to control how many surveys can include the same respondent?).
- (d) How to design the register to reduce the survey burden on smaller businesses.
- (e) Sharing of data between registers to reduce the need to collect information more than once.
- (f) The role of BRs in managing improved methods of survey collection such as consolidated reporting and electronic reporting.

How to deal with legal or organisational obstacles to sharing data?

6. Item 6 - The role of business registers in industrializing the production of statistics

Session Chair: Netherlands.

There is an exponential growth in the volume of available data. This item will consider the industrialization of statistical production, in particular shifting the role of statistical business registers from providing sampling frames to being tools for data integration from a wide variety of sources, providing the basis for the direct production of statistical outputs. The item will raise the issue of national experiences in adapting business registers to meet the requirements of an industrialised, process-based statistical system.

7. Item 7 - Future work: Session future needs and priorities

The conveners will identify major items for in-depth discussion in the next session.

8. Item 8 - Other business and adoption of the report