

## Introduction

The purpose of this annual publication is to provide internationally comparative data on tax levels and tax structures in member countries of the OECD. The taxes imposed in each country are presented in a standardised framework based upon the OECD classification of taxes and its Interpretative Guide as contained in Annex A to this Report.

Starting in 2004, the data for recent years in this publication are mainly reported on an accrual basis, rather than the cash basis that has been used in previous editions. The reasons for this change were discussed in Special Feature S.2 of the 2003 edition. Details of the practical implementation of this change were given in Special Feature S.1 of the 2004 edition.

The criteria followed for the grouping of taxes are not affected by this change to accrual reporting and are primarily the basis on which a tax is charged and secondly whether households or other entities pay the tax. Borderline classification cases, where definitional issues and other difficulties arise, are noted in the Interpretative Guide. Footnotes which accompany the country tables in Part III record where countries deviate from the guidelines.

The data for the Report has, for the most part, been provided by delegates to Working Party No. 2 on Tax Policy Analysis and Tax Statistics of the Committee on Fiscal Affairs. The OECD acknowledges the co-operation of the International Monetary Fund, whose classification of tax revenues – although in a number of respects less detailed – is almost identical to that of the OECD.<sup>1</sup> The most important of the other classifications currently in use is the *System of National Accounts* (henceforth referred to as SNA) and the *European System of Integrated Economic Accounts* of EU member States (henceforth referred to as ESA), which is primarily an elaboration of SNA, though differing from it in certain respects. Subject to a few minor exceptions, SNA/ESA figures can be reconciled with the figures in the present Report, since SNA criteria and definitions have been adopted unless the contrary is specifically indicated.

Non-tax revenues, which are of varying importance in government financing, are presented separately from tax statistics in Part V of this publication. The borderline between tax and non-tax revenues is explored in §9-13 of the Interpretative Guide.

The material is organised in five parts. Part I summarises tax trends of the past 40 years focusing in turn on tax levels (Section I.A), tax structures (Section I.B) and taxes by level of government (Section I.D). Section I.C discusses the treatment of non-wastable tax credits, while Section I.E discusses the impact of GDP revisions. This year's issue also carries a special feature on the changes to the guidelines for attributing revenue to levels of government. Part II contains a set of comparative statistical tables for years 1965-2007 (Section II.A) and a series of comparative graphs which show the differences between countries as regards tax levels and tax structures (Section II.B). Estimates of 2008 tax

revenues are presented in Section II.C for all countries for which such data are available. Part III provides statistical tables with a detailed breakdown of tax revenues by country for years between 1965 and 2007 (Section III.A).<sup>2</sup> A second series of tables shows how countries finance their social benefits (Section III.B), followed by a series of tables detailing taxes and social security contributions paid by general government (Section III.C). Part IV attributes tax revenues to general government by the following sub-sectors: central, state; local and social security funds. Part V provides data on non-tax revenues and grants on the basis of data taken from the IMF *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook*.

**Notes**

1. See IMF, *Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001* (Washington DC, 2001).
2. Because of space limitations data are shown at five-year intervals, starting in 1965, and for the year 2007. Data for years not shown are available on CD-ROM.