

The Statistics Newsletter

for the extended OECD Statistical Network

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Second Meeting of the High Level Group on Statistics

By Enrico Giovannini, Chief Statistician of the OECD

The second meeting of the OECD High Level Group (HLG) on Statistics was held on Friday, 13 June 2003, at the UN Economic Commission for Europe headquarters in Geneva, back-to-back with the 51st session of the Conference of European Statisticians. The meeting was attended by 24 OECD Member countries, two invited non-Member countries and 12 international organisations.

The agenda of the meeting covered the following five topics: the 2003 OECD Statistical Programme of Work; the new OECD Statistical Information System; the first implementation of the Quality Framework for OECD statistics; the improvement of international comparability for economic statistics; and comparability issues for labour cost and prices statistics.

The 2003 OECD Statistical Programme of Work

The presentation given by the Secretariat focused on an update on activities undertaken since June 2002 to implement the OECD Statistics Strategy, with a review of the implementation of recommendations agreed by the HLG during the 2002 meeting.

The HLG congratulated the OECD Secretariat for the quality and the clarity of the OECD Statistical Programme of Work (OSWP). In particular, several delegations mentioned the usefulness of the information provided in the OSWP for planning their activities and commended the OECD for the impressive effort in implementing recommendations made in 2002. In addition, the Group confirmed the importance of organising (in co-operation with PARIS21) a workshop on the effectiveness of international co-operation in statistics with developing countries. Some delegates also underlined the need for revamping the task-force on dissemination policies for statistics.

The New OECD Statistical Information System

The Secretariat presented the main features of the new OECD statistical information system, which includes tools for data collection, manipulation, storage, dissemination and user tools for data search and retrieval, maintaining the independence of data producers while making their data and metadata part of a coherent and seamless corporate system. The driving forces which make it possible to realise the vision are new advances in technology, managerial changes in the Statistics Directorate and the establishment of the OECD Quality Framework. The Secretariat stressed that, to maximise the benefits of this huge investment, it is important that the OECD and other partners share both a "vision" of their relationships and work together to implement necessary changes in technical infrastructures.

The Group expressed strong support for the development of the new OECD statistical information system, underlining how important these new developments can be both for reducing the burden on data providers and for improving the quality and the effectiveness of OECD statistical activities. In particular, the strategy of shifting from a data collection system based on electronic questionnaires to new approaches based on "web queries" and "data sharing" was endorsed by the Group. In addition, Eurostat and the IMF expressed their support to the concrete implementation of the "data sharing" model in the areas of national accounts and short-term economic indicators. Finally, the HLG expressed support for the idea of organising an OECD Working Group on IT for statistics, open to other international organisations and co-ordinated with a similar

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Eurostat initiative, to foster dialogue and the design of future solutions to be presented to future HLG meetings.

A first Implementation of the Quality Framework for OECD Statistics

The OECD Secretariat developed a "Quality Framework for OECD statistics", which was previously distributed to HLG members for comment. As requested during the 2002 meeting of the HLG, the Secretariat presented the preliminary results of the first two "Quality Reviews" on Annual Labour Force Statistics (ALFS) and the database for Structural Analysis (STAN), where strengths and weaknesses were presented, as well as proposals for improving current procedures and products.

The HLG welcomed both the OECD Quality Framework and the results of self-assessments, recognising the usefulness of the approach adopted by the Secretariat. Taking into account the comments provided by the HLG, the OECD Secretariat will revise the template for preparing self-assessments, using the structure adopted in the case of STAN and adding an explicit evaluation of strengths and weaknesses for each quality dimension. In addition, the Secretariat will implement recommendations expressed by the Group on specific issues concerning the two activities reviewed.

The Improvement of International Comparability for Economic Statistics

The Secretariat presented several initiatives recently undertaken by the Statistics Directorate (STD), whose aim is the improvement of the quality and comparability of OECD economic statistics. In particular, the following topics were discussed:

Quality Checks on Data and Metadata collected by STD. The HLG was asked to discuss the following four proposals: commitment from NSOs top managers to attribute high priority to OECD requests; the production of regular reports to NSOs top managers on quality problems in data and metadata transmission; OECD commitment to provide NSOs with technical support to solve the most problematic cases; reinforced co-operation between NSOs, the OECD and other international organisations to minimise the burden on

countries, using the "data sharing" model.

Main conclusions from Working Parties dealing with economic statistics. The HLG was informed about the programmes of work of five working groups (national accounts, international trade in goods and in services, short-term economic statistics, business statistics) and their main

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recommendations, and was asked to provide its comments and suggestions for future work.

The role of the OECD in the SNA revision process. During its latest meeting in New York in March 2003, the UN Statistical Commission decided to produce a Revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA), targeted for publication in 2008 and the OECD has been asked to play a key role in analysing measurement issues that are to be discussed in the coming two years and which could result in revisions to the SNA. The HLG was asked to support the participation of their own national accountants at the upcoming consultations and meetings, and take part in written consultations organised by the OECD.

The new OECD project on general government accounts. Several OECD Directorates have permanent programs covering the policy of general governments. With a view to coordinating these efforts at the OECD level STD recently proposed to launch a common ambitious project to improve

the comparability, relevance and availability of general government accounts data for all users. The project would be organized along four directions of work, to:

- help international standards on this issue to converge;
- propose explicitly changes needed in the SNA in order to achieve maximum convergence in the 2008 edition of the SNA;
- monitor data available in the national accounts framework and their comparability with other sources, such as Revenue Statistics in the OECD and IMF databases;
- promote on-going comparability of definitions and statistical treatment in the general government accounts. In practice, it would start with a specific sub-project focused on the comparability of the perimeter of the general government between European and non-European countries, based on the active participation of OECD countries. In addition, the project would discuss new or newly known specific transactions of general government that are not fully covered by existing manuals and discuss these issues, with a view of exchanging best practices and implementing full international comparability.

The development of an OECD integrated database on productivity. The Statistics Directorate, in co-operation with other Directorates, launched a joint research effort on the measurement of productivity growth at OECD by examining the main data sources that are available at the OECD. Technical issues need to be resolved, especially in the areas of employment, hours worked and capital input. In addition, because only half of the OECD countries are currently covered by the database, a careful analysis has to be carried out to extend the geographical coverage of the latter.

On the first issue, the HLG agreed on the proposals presented by the Secretariat. In particular, the idea of establishing regular reporting to Heads of NSOs was strongly supported by several delegations, who asked to receive a synthesis of reports for each domain (national accounts, business statistics, etc.). The HLG also noted the conclusions of various working groups, commending the Secretariat for its work, and proposed to establish an

electronic network with the Heads of NSOs for sharing documents and fostering the discussion on technical and strategic issues before the meeting of the HLG.

The HLG supported the strong involvement of the OECD in the revision of the SNA and welcomed the use of written consultations, although a final discussion of the recommendations in the specific Working Group is seen as a necessary step for achieving a wider consensus. The project on general government accounts was considered a very important step forward for improving the comparability of key information for policy makers. The IMF and ECB expressed a request to be involved in the project.

Finally, the HLG expressed interest in the project on productivity. Some countries mentioned their intention to launch similar projects and welcomed the possibility of sharing experiences with other OECD countries, under the auspices of the Secretariat.

Comparability Issues for Labour Costs and Prices

The OECD Secretariat presented a brief outline of current work on labour cost and price statistics being undertaken (jointly with the Korean National Statistical Office) in the broader context of wage related statistics which in addition to labour costs and prices includes wages and earnings, minimum wages, unit labour costs and household income. This work identified a number of areas of difference between countries with respect to comparability. Key areas for future work included the need to standardise terminology, guidelines for emerging forms of payment and enhancement of transparency of national practice through the availability of additional and accessible metadata.

The HLG supported the current work of the OECD in the area of frameworks for wage related statistics and Member countries will provide further comment on conceptual issues and frameworks, etc, following the release of the OECD publication in the near future. Additional work by the OECD beyond this however would need to be considered in the light of other work priorities with regard to the formulation of international guidelines and recommendations. Finally, the Group did not support the idea of creating a new expert group on this issue, but

encouraged the OECD to work with other international organisations within existing groups (Paris Group or ILO).

The Measurement of Social Capital

By Simon Field, OECD

Social capital – sometimes described as the glue that holds societies together – has received increasing attention both by academics and policymakers in recent years. In 2001 the OECD published a report entitled *The Well-Being of Nations* summarising some of the major research findings regarding the benefits of social (alongside human) capital – in terms of outcomes such as well-being and health. This report defined social capital as:

Networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups.

From the outset, work on social capital has used statistical indicators based on survey questions enquiring about levels of trust, informal social contacts, and community and political participation. Recent OECD work in this area, based in the Directorate for Education, has been designed to share good practice internationally, both improving these measurement efforts, and enhancing international comparability. Two OECD meetings have been held – one in London co-hosted with the UK Office for National Statistics, and one in Budapest co-hosted with the Hungarian Ministry of Education. 22 countries have taken part in these discussions, alongside representatives from the World Bank UNESCO, Eurostat and the European Commission and specially invited experts.

Measurement needs to be supported by good conceptualisation, and in the case of social capital, this has been controversial. For the purposes of measurement the concept of social capital was broken into a set of measurable “dimensions”, as follows:

- a) social participation, (covering involvement in community groups);

- b) networks and support, (covering friendship networks and the giving and receiving of help);
- c) trust;
- d) civic participation (covering political and civic activities).

Critics of the idea of social capital tended to argue that these dimensions are separate, rather than elements of a common whole. To some extent, this argument is to be resolved empirically, in the light of better data about these dimensions and the degree of inter-correlation.

There was debate at the two meetings over different approaches to international harmonization – in particular over whether it should involve a short set of agreed questions which could be applied in different countries, or through the agreement of

New Look OECD Web Site

The OECD launched its new web site in July 2003 including the new Statistics Portal

The increased speed, simplified navigation and better browser compatibility should help you.

In the meantime you will need to correct any links made to our site since all our pages have new URL addresses.

Please contact the OECD Statistics Directorate at stat.contact@oecd.org if you have any questions.

looser ‘guidelines’ and agreed definitions. Guidelines could be applied flexibly, and definitions of concepts like ‘volunteering’ could be applied widely (not just in questionnaire surveys). Conversely, a short question set would provide a clearer and therefore more effective vehicle for harmonisation. Issues of cultural and linguistic translatability would be relevant to both approaches. In the end it was agreed to tackle this issue on a case by case basis, the principle of a short list of questions or indicators on social capital being agreed. This short list would be relatively simple to implement, and used by countries when seeking international comparability for national data collection exercises.

The first draft of the short list was as follows:

Social participation

- Involvement in organisations, associations and/or organised groups measured by how frequently an individual takes part in any group activity;
- Volunteering through organised groups, associations and/or organised groups measured by how frequently an individual volunteers.

Networks and support

- Whether help received from someone outside the immediate household during the past month;
- Whether help provided to someone outside the immediate household during the past month;
- How often the respondent meets up with or talks on the phone with friends or relatives (from outside the immediate household).

Civic participation

- Voter turnout in national election;
- Other civic participation - making contact with government, signing petitions, demonstrating, or donating money to a political group.

Some technical refinements to this list will clearly be necessary, in particular a standard classification of different types of organised groups will be needed, as will a standard frequency response classification – eg once a month etc. (the long term potential of time-use surveys as a method of measurement was also noted).

Any short list of this nature, used in isolation, would provide only a partial measure of social capital. In particular, while work, family and school play a fundamental part in the creation of social capital, assessing the quality of social interaction in these domains through a short questionnaire is difficult. On grounds of practicality therefore, the short list would concentrate initial attention on social interactions outside the immediate household and work. While a measure of trust (as one of the chosen dimensions of social capital) is desirable in principle, the group identified difficulties with some of the

most commonly used measures. Finally, the growing significance of electronic networks based on the Internet or email was noted.

In looking to future work, the group agreed to pursue the medium-term objective of developing a ‘toolbox’ of social capital measurement covering further areas and dimensions of social capital, alongside the immediate short list, and to explore the large potential of existing international surveys, including the European Social Survey (ESS) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). In taking the work forward, the group agreed to consult with countries not currently involved in the process, and explore the scope for working with established statistical networks, particularly the Siena group on social statistics.

For further information see http://www.oecd.org/document/24/0,2340,en_2649_34543_2380248_1_1_1_1_00.html Or contact Simon Field on simon.field@oecd.org

Key Development Issues for Short-Term Economic Statistics By Denis Ward, OECD

The second meeting of the OECD Short-term Economic Statistics Expert Group (STESEG) held in Paris on 26-27 June 2003 discussed the extensive preliminary outputs of the three task forces created following the June 2002 STESEG. The task forces dealt with three key issues for the future evolution of short-term economic statistics, namely:

- continued development of indicators for the services sector;
- the development of international standards for the presentation of data and metadata;
- development of new methods to improve the timeliness of short-term economic statistics.

Indices of Services Production

The need to provide national and international users with a broader array of short-term indicators for the service sector has been recognised for some time and whilst there has been progress in some countries, overall, the actual availability of such indicators across the

entire OECD membership is limited. Work on the development of international guidelines and recommendations and the identification of best practice is currently underway on several fronts including trade in services, price indices and services production indicators. Discussion at the United Nations Statistical Commission recognised the need to ensure that such development work was co-ordinated and to this end, the Commission requested the OECD to play an active role in providing leadership and direction in the development of services statistics. STESEG work, which will initially focus on the development of standards for infra-annual (particularly monthly) indices of service production, is a key element of this co-ordinated activity.

Standardisation of Data Presentation Practices

The major sources of difference in the comparability of data, both between countries and over time, stem from conceptual, classification and definitional differences, and operational differences flowing out of differences in data collection and processing practices. However, even where such differences are minimal, data disseminated by different countries, etc. may actually look different because of the use of different data presentation practices. Similarly, data for identical subjects disseminated by various international organisations, although coming from the same national source, may also appear different due to differing presentation practices and data transformation processes used at the international level. STESEG work on data presentation focuses on the articulation of recommendation and guidelines for different types of data (absolute figures, indices, growth rates) and forms of data (original, seasonally adjusted and trend-cycle) as well as on a small number of key data presentation practices that impact on data consistency both over time and between countries. Such practices include data revision, presentation of series breaks, provision of information on sampling and non-sampling errors, presentation of metadata, etc..

Timeliness of Short Term Economic Statistics

In recent years there has been increased user demand for improvements in the timeliness of short-term economic indicators. In response to this demand,

national statistical agencies have been at the forefront in implementing new practices and processes that have resulted in considerable reductions in the delay between the end of the data reference period and the availability of data to users. Future STESEG work on timeliness will focus on the development a framework of current best practice that will allow national agencies to more readily identify the relevance and suitability of existing approaches and possible tradeoffs between further improvements and data accuracy. Task force work over the next few months will finalise the desired content of the framework and identification of material that should be referenced in the framework.

Further background information on these three activities are available on the STESEG website at <http://www.oecd.org/std/meeting-papers>, or contact Denis Ward at denis.ward@oecd.org

Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata

By Lidia Bratanova, UNECE Statistical Division

How to find a balance between providing an increased access to very detailed data (microdata) without producing a negative effect on the protection of privacy and confidentiality of individuals? – this was the main topic for discussion at the Seminar Session on “Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata” organised by Statistics Sweden within the fifty-first plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians held in June 2003 in Geneva, Palais the Nations. Various aspects of statistical data confidentiality – legal, organizational, methodological and technical – were considered.

Confidentiality is one of the fundamental principles of official statistics. It is a priority issue on the policy agenda of statistical offices and an indispensable element to maintain the trust of respondents and thus ensure the quality of data. The main challenge for statistical offices is to strike a balance between the confidentiality protection and the increased use of microdata. An optimal solution can be found only by combining the different measures and actions of confidentiality

protection (legal, organizational, methodological and technical). However, large differences between countries can be seen in the use of these measures.

There are clear benefits from increased access to microdata. *For policy makers:* developing evidence-based policies and monitoring their impact requires timely analysis of data on a more detailed level than presently published by statistical agencies. *For researchers:* modern research requires microdata for analysis and model-building, new possibilities are opened up for data mining and linking of different microdata sets and registers. *For Statistical Offices:* bringing in the needs of research can help to improve surveys, academic use of data can act as a quality assessment, and it can also increase the prestige of statistical work and attract more highly qualified staff.

However, there are high costs and risks associated with microdata access. Setting up the necessary conditions and contracts, keeping up-to-date the technical tools, monitoring the conformance to confidentiality principles, etc. is a demanding exercise. These costs have to be fully borne by the statistical offices while most of the benefit accrues from the analysis outside statistical agencies. Therefore, statistical offices often allow research access to microdata only on the condition that it provides a benefit to the statistical agency’s programs.

In order to preserve the principle of equal access, one of the fundamental principles of official statistics, the

procedure to select the institutes and researchers that can have access to microdata has to be transparent and follow clear rules. Informing the respondents is also important in this respect - they have the right to know by whom and for what purposes their information will be used. More research is needed to better understand respondent’s perception of confidentiality.

The Seminar discussed differences in protecting the confidentiality of data on legal and physical persons. It is often found easier to protect the confidentiality of social than economic data. Also, the incentive to disclose individual economic data (e.g. to gain a competitive advantage in business) can be higher than in the case of individual persons.

A survey carried out by the UNECE in January 2003 helped to identify the confidentiality protection issues of concern to the transition economies. EU accession countries have mostly brought their legal framework on confidentiality protection in line with the EU requirements. Some of the South-East European and CIS countries are in the process of establishing the required legal basis. In some CIS countries, problems still arise because of the pressure from other government bodies to gain access to microdata. Emerging from a past where official statistics followed a completely different paradigm, its role is often not fully understood by other government agencies. Unresolved technical aspects, lack of special software and the low level of technological equipment in local statistical offices sometimes make it difficult to ensure data protection at the required level. However, the statistical offices of these countries are committed to resolve the problems of confidentiality protection.

So far confidentiality protection has been mainly a national issue. However, in the context of EU and the increasing data dissemination over Internet, it is becoming also an international issue. There is a lot of international collaboration among the research community, and the researchers can be very critical towards different access rules in different countries. Often researchers are not allowed to

7th International Forum on Tourism Statistics

This forum, to be held in Stockholm from 9-11 June 2004, will highlight usability, comparability and sustainability of tourism statistics and the link to decision and policy makers. The five main themes for discussion will focus on Tourism Satellite Account, New statistical methods, Consumer Surveys, Sustainable development in tourism and Information Society in connection with tourism statistics.

The first announcement of this conference and call for papers was made recently, and more information can be found at <http://www.tourismforum.se>

access other countries microdata because of the fear that confidentiality protection cannot be guaranteed. This raises the need to unify approaches internationally, and to agree on some core principles for dissemination of microdata.

Participants in the Conference agreed that generic guidelines on confidentiality would be valuable for countries that are in the process of setting up legal background and procedures for access of microdata, and would help in discussions with the user community. The principles should be general enough to be applicable in different countries and it is desirable to involve countries with different confidentiality practices and different level of development in their preparation.

As a follow up to the Seminar a Steering Group will be created to develop a set of guidelines for confidentiality protection. It will consist of 4-5 Heads of Statistical Offices and will be chaired by Mr. Dennis Trewin, Head of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The Group will work under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau.

The proceedings of the seminar session will be published jointly by Statistics Sweden and the UNECE secretariat towards the end of 2003.

All papers from the Seminar session are available at the website at the UNECE Statistical Division:
<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2003.06.ces.htm>

ACCESS ON LINE DEVELOPMENTS

New and Improved Version of www.oecd.org

By Cynthia Coutu and Sonia Primot, OECD

In September 2001 the OECD launched its second-generation web site. A great stride was made towards improving the way OECD information was structured and presented to external users. Shortly after the launch however, the web site –

of 21 000 visitors per month). A new short and simple homepage was therefore designed, and among other improvements, a more prominent position was given to Statistics.

- Most users came to the web site looking for specific information and often preferred using the search engine straight away, rather than browsing through the various levels of information on the site. The list of search engine results, however, was often overwhelming. It was decided to integrate an



whose development was contracted out to a reputable company – became plagued with increasingly serious performance problems: pages became extremely slow to load (e.g. the homepage took an average of 17s to display) and the site architecture became so fragile that each successive attempt to correct the development work caused further damage to the web site.

While the performance problems were being analysed during 2002, several “usability” studies were undertaken. The results were used to establish a list of navigation improvements to be implemented as soon as the performance problems were dealt with. Some of the main findings of our surveys were that:

- Most users found that the homepage was too cluttered. The Statistics Portal, for example, was lost in a very long list of 33 OECD research topics featured on the homepage. Traffic analysis of our site also revealed that after the OECD home page, the Statistics Portal was consistently the most visited page on our site (an average

alternate leading search engine technology (Autonomy) and to feature the search engine more prominently on the web site.

- Internal users found that our pages were poorly referenced in Google and other external search engines; and feedback from external users also indicated that there was a need for better browser compatibility (Opera, Netscape, etc.). An analysis of these two problems revealed that they were both due to our site’s extensive use of Java and that both could be solved by using HTML whenever possible.

In early 2003, as soon as funds were secured, work began – in house this time – to migrate information to a stable environment and to implement the changes described above. The OECD launched the third-generation of its public web site on 09 July. Was the project a success? The homepage now displays in less than one second; when the expression “OECD statistics” is typed in Google, the Statistics Portal appears as the first result, and the

Statistics Directorate as the second; and many users have spontaneously written to praise the new layout. These are just a few indicators that demonstrate that many of our objectives were met. Now that technical problems are finally behind us, we are looking forward to devoting more time and energy to editorial improvements.

The Statistics Portal

The needs of our external users were analysed, but what about the needs of our internal web editors? During the existence of the second-generation web site, managing the Statistics Portal was a very time-consuming task under the responsibility of the Statistics Directorate (STD). The web editor from STD had to hunt down statistics produced by other directorates, manually link to them from the Statistics Portal, with no possibility of making direct editorial improvements to the documents (which often only made sense when found in the context of a Directorate's research activities or publications or idiosyncratic classification). As an incidental consequence, these statistics were therefore not indexed as Portal documents, and could therefore not be found through the search engine when the latter's use was limited to the Portal section of the web site. The layout of the Statistics Portal was also far from ideal. For technical reasons, it had to respect the same rigid layout as every other homepage on our site.

When the migration project began in 2003, the specific needs of the Statistics Portal were analysed and a special workflow was devised for all OECD statistical information. Each time a web editor from Directorate X, Y or Z uploads a statistical document onto his/her part of the web site, the web editor from STD is automatically alerted of its existence, and can then dispatch the document onto the Statistical Portal, decide under which classification heading it will appear, and in what order. A more flexible layout for the Portal homepage was also provided. This workflow is a very important step towards keeping STD informed of the dissemination of statistical information through other parts of the Organisation. Further developments in 2003/2004 will allow for additional editorial improvements, such as providing the STD web editor with the possibility of modifying titles, adding abstracts or meta-information.

For general questions or comments about <http://www.oecd.org>, please contact Cynthia.Coutu@oecd.org and for specific questions regarding the Statistics Portal, please contact Sonia.Primot@oecd.org

UNECE launches Gender Statistics Database for Monitoring Change By Sabine Gagel, UNECE Statistical Division

The Statistical Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has launched the UNECE Gender Statistics Database

The **Gender Statistics Database** - that is accessible free of charge at the address <http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/web/database.htm> - helps monitor the situation of women and men and the main social trends in the UNECE region, by providing official data on women and men in Europe, North America, the CIS and Israel. Currently there is no other website that profiles Gender Statistics for the countries of the UNECE region.

The Gender Statistics Database forms an integral part of the UNECE/UNDP Gender Statistics Website for Europe and North America this website aims to bring together both gender statistics and policies. The main focus is on the production, dissemination and use of gender related data. In addition to statistics, the site elaborates on some of

the main gender issues relevant to the UNECE region, and provides examples of policies and other initiatives within that context.

The website was developed by UNECE in collaboration with National Statistical Offices in the ECE region, in the context of an on-going UNDP/UNECE project on human development statistics and social trends reporting which is funded by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC)

The work on gender statistics builds on the important work already done in most of the countries in the region for the development of gender statistics. It aims to improve the production, quality and use of gender statistics in countries of the ECE region (with focus on countries in transition) through strengthening of national statistical capacity.

What is the Gender Statistics Database about?

Data is collected and presented for seven policy areas in order to reflect gender issues of the ECE region. An advisory UNECE/UNDP Task Force recommended the set of Common Gender Indicators relevant for the ECE region, and it is these indicators that are available through the UNECE Gender Statistics Database. Detailed data series used to calculate these indicators are also available. For each policy area there are several indicators, and the table on the following page illustrates some of them.

Data are presented by country, year and by social and demographic breakdowns. Data are available for the years 1980, 1990, 1995, and from 2000 onwards on an annual basis. The latest year for which data are currently available is in most cases 2001. To ensure comparability of the data, data were collected in line with international standard definitions. However, for data not in line with international standards, additional information about the data (metadata) is provided in order to indicate when data between countries are not fully comparable.

Most of the data available in the UNECE Gender Statistics Database have been supplied by National Statistical Offices, through ECE's network of Gender Statistics Focal Points. Without these focal points, the

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setting up and maintenance of the Gender Statistics Database would not have been possible.

UNECE Statistical Division is currently developing an update and completion strategy for the Database, aiming to have a regular update without overburdening National Statistical Offices.

It must be pointed out that the number of countries for which data are available can vary among different data series; the following analysis refers therefore to different sets of countries, depending on the subject. Comments have been adjusted accordingly, to avoid any misleading generalisation. For additional information on data availability please refer to the website.

Some examples of what the UNECE Gender Statistics Database can provide you with

Political decision making: While women's representation in political decision-making has increased in Western Europe over the last 20 years or so, it has decreased in many of the transition countries since 1980. Women are a minority among members of national parliaments (MPs) in all countries of the region for which data is available, and in only five of those countries women comprise 30% or more of MPs. The number of women ministers and municipal council members is also much smaller than that of men in the few countries for which data is available, with the remarkable exception of the Republic of Moldova

European Conference on Quality and Methodology in Official Statistics

This conference, to take place in Mainz, Germany, on **24-26 May 2004**, will cover current thinking and new developments in the field of quality and methodology in Europe and the world. It builds on the successful experience of the International Conference On Quality and Official Statistics in Stockholm 2001.

A first call for papers and registrations was made recently, and more information on the conference content and important dates can be found at <http://q2004.destatis.de>

POLICY AREA	MAIN DATA AND INDICATORS BY SEX
Work & the Economy	Employment by sector and by occupation, unemployment, activity rates, time use
Public life & Decision making	Judges, members of national parliaments, journalist, heads of universities
Health	Abortions, child mortality rate, life expectancy, number of smokers
Education	Teachers, educational attainment of the population, tertiary students
Population	Population by age, urban/rural population, refugees
Crime & Violence	Convictions by type of crime, victims of selected crimes, men convicted for rape
Families & Households	Fertility rate, households by type, population by marital status

where 55% of the members of municipal councils are women.

Judiciary: The judiciary is an area where women are comparatively well represented in decision making in some of the UNECE countries, and in Central and Southeast Europe (CSEE) in particular. There is a considerable difference between countries, as shown in the graph below.

Percentage of Women and Men among Judges, by Country, around 2001

Education: While women are the majority of teachers in European and CIS countries for which data is available (more than 60%), and the majority of tertiary graduates, they are still underrepresented in decision making in the education sector. The number of female heads of universities varies from 0 to 25% in countries from which data is available, with Croatia at a high 25%, followed by Slovenia (22%), Finland (20%), Georgia (15%), Estonia and Iceland (13%).

Employment: More men than women are employed in most UNECE countries, with the exception of Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova, where employment among women and men is more or less equal, and Belarus (53% women, 47% men). In Central and Southeast Europe

(CSEE) women are on average 45 of every 100 persons employed, and in North America the ratio is 47 women to 53 men. Based on data from six CIS countries - Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Russia - women's employment ranges from 44 to 53% of all persons employed. Compared to the aforementioned regions, women form the smallest share of employed people in ten EU countries (less than 45%).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Joint EU/OECD Workshop on International Development of Business and Consumer Tendency Surveys – 20-21 November 2003

The OECD and the European Commission (EC) are jointly organizing a workshop for statistical and research institutions in OECD Member countries, European Union (EU) Members, Candidate countries and selected non-Member countries (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russia and South Africa). The workshop will be held on 20-21 November 2003 in Brussels, Belgium. This meeting will be held back-to-back with a one day meeting organised by the EC for EU and Candidate countries.

This meeting of contact persons from participating institutions will discuss the content of the OECD global database on business and consumer tendency surveys, the need for harmonization of variables, presentation and dissemination issues, methodological transparency and use of business and consumer tendency surveys results in cyclical analysis, etc. From an OECD perspective, the enlargement of OECD databases on business and consumer tendency surveys is a key objective, in particular the expansion of the range of business tendency survey data to include sectors outside manufacturing, i.e. construction, retail trade and other services sectors, and selected non-Member countries.

In line with these issues, the main objective of the workshop is to strengthen co-operation between participating institutions, develop appropriate guidelines and recommendations and encourage the development of internationally comparable business and consumer survey data. Participants will also be able to share experiences on progress with harmonization of their surveys, the analytical use and interpretation of survey results for short-term monitoring and the construction of confidence or sentiment indicators, etc. For more information on this workshop, please contact Ronny Nilsson, at: ronny.nilsson@oecd.org.

24th CEIES Seminar "The Size of the Government Sector – How to measure?"

The above-mentioned seminar, organised by CEIES, the European Advisory Committee on Statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres and Eurostat, in collaboration with Statistics Austria, is to be held on Thursday 23 and Friday 24 October 2003 in Vienna. The seminar has an open invitation, for further information see <http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/ceies/library>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

OECD Statistics on International Trade in Services: Detailed tables by Partner Country 1999-2001 – 2003 Edition

This is the first paper edition of a publication on statistics of international trade in services broken down by partner country,

which updates and considerably expands the detail that was available in the experimental 2002 (internet only) edition. It provides multilateral partner country breakdowns for trade in services as a whole, transport services, travel, other commercial services, and government services. Data are provided for 1999, 2000 and 2001. A summary analysis of world and OECD trade patterns for services is also available.

Measuring Knowledge Management in the Business Sector: First Steps

Knowledge management involves any activity related to the capture, use and sharing of knowledge by an organisation. Evidence shows that these practices are being used more and more frequently and that their impact on innovation and other aspects of corporate performance is far from negligible. Today, there is a recognition of the need to understand and to measure the activity of knowledge management so that organisations can be more efficient and governments can develop policies to promote these benefits.

This book offers a synthetic view of the results of the first systematic international survey on knowledge management carried out by national statistical offices in Canada, Denmark, France and Germany. Co-published with Statistics Canada.

Agriculture and Biodiversity: Developing Indicators for Policy Analysis

This publication on the Conference proceedings from the OECD expert meeting on agri-biodiversity indicators, Zurich, Switzerland November 2001. For the background information to the meeting and publication see the OECD Website at: <http://www.oecd.org/agr/env/indicators.htm> (see under OECD Expert Meeting on Agri-biodiversity Indicators)

Agricultural Impacts on landscapes: Developing indicators for policy analysis

Norwegian Institute of Land Inventory (NIJOS) in cooperation with OECD, Norway, June 2003

This publication is the Conference proceedings from the NIJOS/OECD expert meeting on agricultural landscape indicators, Oslo, October, 2002. For the background information to the meeting and publication see the OECD website at: <http://www.oecd.org/agr/env/indicators.htm> (see under OECD Expert Meeting on Agricultural Landscape, Username: **landscape** Password: **norway**). This website will soon be made public.

NEWS RELEASES

OECD Standardised Unemployment Rate falls to 7.2% in July 2003

The standardised unemployment rate for the OECD area fell to 7.2% in July 2003, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month but 0.2 percentage point higher than a year earlier.

In the Euro area, the standardised unemployment rate remained at 8.9% in July 2003, 0.5 percentage point higher than a year earlier. For the United States, the standardised unemployment rate was 6.2% in July 2003, 0.2 percentage point lower than the previous month but 0.4 percentage point higher than a year earlier. For Japan, the standardised unemployment rate remained at 5.3% in July 2003, 0.1 percentage point lower than a year earlier.

Over the twelve months to July 2003, the standardised unemployment rate rose in France from 8.8% to 9.4%, in Germany from 8.6% to 9.4% and in Canada from 7.6% to 7.8%. In May 2003, the standardised unemployment rate in the United Kingdom was 4.9%, 0.2 percentage point lower than a year earlier. In April 2003, the standardised unemployment rate in Italy was 8.7%, 0.3 percentage point lower than a year earlier.

The standardised unemployment rates for the other OECD countries are available at <http://www.oecd.org/statistics/data> (Frequently Asked Statistical Tables).

	2002						2003						
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
OECD-Total	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.2
EU15	7.7	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.1
Euro area	8.4	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.7	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.9	8.9
Major seven	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.7
Canada	7.6	7.5	7.7	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.5	7.8	7.7	7.8
Germany	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.8	8.9	8.9	9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4
France	8.8	8.9	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.1	9.1	9.2	9.2	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.4
Italy	9.0	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.7			
Japan	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3
United Kingdom	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.0	5.0	4.9		
United States	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.0	5.7	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.4	6.2

The OECD Composite Leading Indicator shows strong increase in July 2003

Moderate to strong recovery lies ahead in the OECD area and the United States according to the latest composite leading indicators (CLIs). July data signal accelerating performance in the United States and Japanese economies, whereas data for the Euro area signal slightly improved performance ahead.

The CLI for the OECD area rose by 1.3 point in July 2003 to 123.4 from 122.1 in June. Its six-month rate of change has also risen significantly since April 2003, following a decline that began in June 2002.

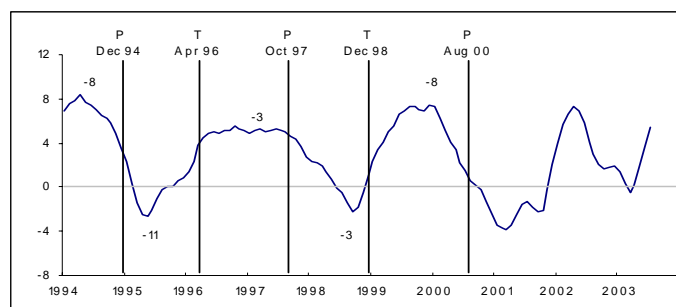
The CLI for the United States increased by a strong 1.7 point in July. Its six-month rate of change was also up substantially

for the fourth consecutive month. The Euro area's CLI rose by 0.3 of a point in July and its six-month rate of change was up for the third consecutive month, following 11 straight months of declines. In July, the CLI for Japan was up by a strong 2.1 points and its six-month rate of change was also up for the third consecutive month, after having shown a downward trend from June 2002.

The CLI for the United Kingdom rose by 0.5 of a point in July and its six-month rate of change improved for the fourth consecutive month after showing a strong downward trend since July 2002. The CLI for Canada increased by 1.3 point in July. Its six-month rate of change was also up for the fourth consecutive month, following a downward trend registered since June 2002. The CLI for France increased in July and its six-month rate of change has improved over the last four months after four consecutive months of declines. The CLI for Germany rose by a strong 1.5 point in July and its six-month rate of change increased for the third consecutive month after 11 consecutive months of declines. Finally, the CLI for Italy decreased in July, as did its six-month rate of change.

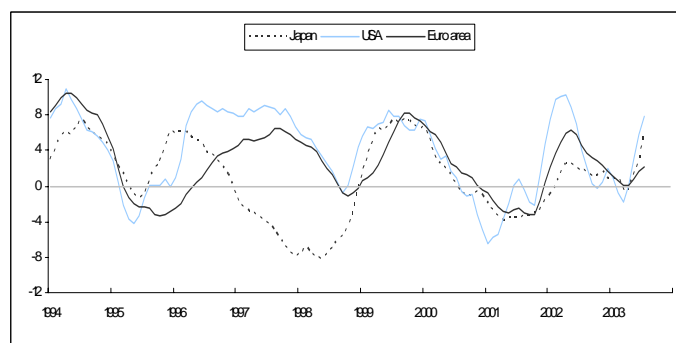
CLI data for all the countries and detailed information on the OECD methodology for CLIs can be found on the OECD website at <http://www.oecd.org/std/cli>

Trend restored CLI (annualised 6-month rate of change) Percentage change: Total OECD



Early signals of the CLI for turning points (P: peak, T: trough) in the reference series, e.g. a peak for December 1994 was predicted by the CLI, 8 months in advance (i.e. -8).

Percentage change: Japan, USA and Euro area



Forthcoming OECD Statistics Meetings

N.B. Unless otherwise indicated attendance at OECD meetings and Working Parties is by invitation only

September

- 16-17** The Bologna Process: OECD Workshop on Improving Statistics on SMEs and Entrepreneurship, *Statistics Directorate* (STD), OECD Paris
- 18-19** Innovation in Tourism and Growth, conference organised jointly by the *Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry* (STI/Tourism Committee) and the Swiss Authorities. Lugano, Switzerland.
- 29-30** Towards More and Better Jobs, employment and labour Ministerial meeting, *Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs* (ELS) and chaired by the French Minister, Francois Fillon, from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour and Solidarity

October

- 6-7** 2003 OECD Working Party on Financial Statistics Meeting, *Statistics Directorate* (STD), OECD Paris
- 7-10** OECD National Accounts Expert Meeting, *Statistics Directorate* (STD), OECD Paris
- 14-15** The Economics of Waste, workshop, *Environment Directorate* (ENV), OECD Paris
- 20** Consultation between civil society organisations and the OECD Trade Committee
- 20-24** Taxation of Electronic Commerce, seminar, *Directorate for Financial, Fiscal, And Enterprise Affairs* (DAFFE), Vienna, Austria.

Other non-OECD Statistical Upcoming Meetings and Events

October

- 2-3** 23rd CEIES Seminar "Social Protection Statistics"
This seminar, organised by the CEIES subcommittee on Social Statistics, in collaboration with the *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (INE), is to be held in Lisbon.
- 14-17** World Knowledge Forum: Creating a New World Order and Economy. Seoul, Korea.
- 23-24** 24th CEIES Seminar, Vienna, Austria (see News in Brief)

May 2004

- 24-26** European Conference on Quality and Methodology in Official Statistics, Mainz, Germany (see box on page 8)

June 2004

- 9-11** 7th International Forum on Tourism Statistics, Stockholm, Sweden (see box on page 5)

Latest Statistics Working papers Now Available On Line!

[Statistics Working Paper 2003/4 - Measurement of Output, Value Added, GDP in Canada and the United States: Similarities and Differences](#) 5-sep-2003

[Statistics Directorate and Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members Working Paper 2003/3 - Short-Term Economic Statistics in China: Sources and Methods](#) 14-Aug-2003

[Statistics Working Paper 2003/3 - Statistical Developments and Strategies in the Context of E-Government](#) 17-Apr-2003

[Statistics Working Paper 2003/2 - Household Wealth in the National Accounts of Europe, The United States and Japan](#) 06-Mar-2003

[Statistics Working Paper 2003/1 - Report of the OECD Task Force on Software Measurement in the National Accounts](#) 05-Mar-2003

[Statistics Working Paper Series - 2002/1: Overview of Sustainable Development Indicators Used by National and International Agencies](#) 18-Sep-2003

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