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STATISTICS DIRECTORATE

National Accounts and Economic Statistics - International Trade Statistics

Item 2: Report of the 6th ITS Meeting 12-14 September 2005

7TH OECD INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS EXPERT MEETING ITS and OECD-EUROSTAT MEETING OF EXPERTS IN TRADE-IN-SERVICES STATISTICS (TIS)

Tour Europe - Paris La Défense, Salle des Nations, 11 - 14 September 2006

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SUMMARY RECORD 6^{TH} OECD INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS EXPERT MEETING (ITS)

Held at OECD. Paris La Defense 2, Tour Europe, Salle des Nations

12-15 September 2005

Monday, 12 September, morning

6th International Trade Statistics Expert Meeting

1.	Welcome and adoption of the agenda	
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The Secretariat (Mr. Andreas Lindner) welcomed the participants.

The Draft Agenda was adopted.

2.	Report of the 5 th ITS Meeting 12-14 April 2004	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)1
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The Report of the 5th ITS Meeting 12-14 April 2004 was adopted.

Recent developments at OECD	
a) Towards more timely and high quality data: progress report on OECD's ITS databases - OECD	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)2
b) The OECD ITCS database in the UNSD-OECD Joint System: work at the OECD on - Trade data issues - OECD/STD	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)3
	 a) Towards more timely and high quality data: progress report on OECD's ITS databases - OECD b) The OECD ITCS database in the UNSD-OECD Joint System: work at the OECD on

OECD reported on its efforts to improve both the timeliness and quality of ITS statistics. Member countries did a remarkable job in helping OECD to meet the ever-growing demand for timely and high – quality statistics. The fact was stressed that the dispatch to OECD of ITCS data feeds automatically into the UN system thanks to the joint UN-OECD System in place. UNSD confirmed the excellent co-operation with OECD which lessened burden on UNSD staff. Both organisations are now in the process of finalising practical aspects of the joint system and also methodological aspects.

The new features of the joint system at OECD were presented and very well received. The International Trade Centre (ITC) pointed out that it was a very heavy user of COMTRADE/ ITCS and thanked both UNSD and OECD for the willingness to supply detailed tariff line trade data. The optimisation of data availability is judged crucial for the indicators work ITC carries out.

4.	Recent developments in OECD Member Countries	
	 a) OECD summary on country reports received from member countries - OECD b) Delegates will be invited (tour de table) to report in more detail on significant developments during the past 12 months in their country's 	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)4
	trade statistics management and operation and key challenges	

Instead of a "tour de table", OECD had issued a development framework questionnaire to countries well in advance of the meeting. The aim was twofold: first, to further speed up data updating cycles and, second, to exchange information on recent developments in member countries regarding trade statistics and possibilities for fostering closer or new co-operation with OECD in selected areas. The Secretariat analysed and presented the results in paper STD/NAES/TASS/ITS(2005)4.

The response rate and quality of responses was very high. Participants underlined the importance of fresh data and a very positive result of this meeting was that countries agreed to a broad data transmission calendar stating that 2005 ITCS data could be supplied to OECD as follows:

- Provisional data by March 2006 with the exception of three countries;
- Provisional data for all countries by June 2006;
- Final data by September 2006 with the exception of 2 countries.

Concerning Monthly Trade Data (MSIT):

- Total values should become available before 50 days for all but six countries;
- Totals by partner and by SITC Section after 10 weeks;
- No firm deadline or delivery pattern seems possible for volume data and value indices; abilities range from 4 weeks to 90 days (including 90 days after the last quarter!).

In the discussion which followed, the following country developments and developments at OECD allow concrete co-operation to the mutual benefit:

- 1. Compare best practice. Virtually all countries reported managerial and organisational improvements. At OECD, the implementation of SIS (Statistical Information System) with the related Data Warehouse and integrated MetaStore go into the same direction.
- 2. A significant number of countries reported <u>register linking exercises</u>, which is of considerable interest to OECD (see agenda item 8).
- 3. Specific issues/topics.

Reconciliation exercises to increase the quality of trade (and BoP) statistics:

• Bilateral reconciliation exercises with neighbouring countries (e.g. the Netherlands and Belgium);

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- FTS <-> BOP reconciliation (in particular Eurostat);
- Impact of the Rotterdam Effect on asymmetries (UK and Germany);
- VAT fraud (UK);
- Switzerland: finding the balance between EU and UN/OECD trade concepts and definitions.
 Turkey reported on plans to publish trade statistics according to the general and special trade system;
- New developments in Trade Registers: Canada has completed for the first time an Importer Register. Similarly, the United States have developed an Automated Export System wit unique Ids for exporters;
- Austria could co-operate on Macro Trade Indicators.

Delegates stated how useful this sharing of information was and that – as last year-there was considerable interest and value added for individual countries by "looking over the fence" to other countries. They asked OECD, which had replaced the "tour de table" by a questionnaire with OECD summarising the results, to maintain the "tour de table" tradition at the 2006 ITS meeting in addition to the questionnaire. The Secretariat agreed.

5.	Inter – Agency Co-operation and coordination	
	a) Report on the 36 th UN Statistical Commission - UNSD	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)5
	b) Outcome of the Inter Agency Merchandise Trade Task Force meeting,	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)6
	Bangkok, March 2005 - WTO	
	c) Towards one consistent world trade database : OECD and UNSD data	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)7
	sharing strategy - OECD and UNSD	
	d) The Inter-Agency Common Data Set in Trade – WTO	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)8

UNSD reported briefly on the 36th UNSC meeting in March 2005, highlighting that the UNSC meeting in 2006 would contain reports on merchandise trade coordination and co-operation (notably the work of the Merchandise Trade Task Force and the joint UNSD/OECD trade system) as well as services co-ordination.

The WTO reported on progress made in Inter-agency co-operation. The WTO sees this co-operation as a necessary tool to foster integration of statistical systems, where the case of merchandise trade can be taken as an example. The joint venture UNSD/OECD responds well to WTO's data needs. The WTO, as convenor of the Task Force, announced the launching of a joint Trade Task Force Website in 2006 with databases and links to participating organisations

An update of the UNSD/OECD interim MoU amendment was presented for information. This interim agreement deals with the issues of naming of and referencing to UNSD/OECD cooperative activities in collection and processing the international merchandise trade statistics from the OECD member states. It will be in force until superseded by new UNSD/OECD MoU reflecting new developments.

In accordance with the UNSD/OECD MoU of 15 January 2001and further extensions (e.g. joint note of 13 February 2004), UNSD and OECD jointly developed (i) an agreement on data collection and data sharing, (ii) common trade data processing standards, and (iii) computer applications for use in processing of trade data. This set of agreements, standards and applications is to be referenced by both organizations as

UN/OECD Joint Trade Data Collection and Processing System (Joint System)

The above name is to be used by both organizations in any documents describing their cooperative activities. It is also to be used when referring to the respective databases. The Joint System is the foundation of the trade databases maintained by both organizations. Both organizations will continue to keep separate (institutionally and legally) trade databases to ensure rights and ability of each organization to pursue their own policies with regard to (i) storing various data in addition to those agreed in Joint System [e.g., historical data, memorandum items, derived data etc], (ii) developing additional analytical and presentational functionalities and controlling user access to them, and (iii) dissemination practices including pricing of user access to the database services, entering into contracts with users, etc. Each organization will maintain its own brand name for use in data dissemination activities. The current names of those databases are:

UN Comtrade

OECD ITC S Database

To ensure user awareness of the joint efforts of both organizations in the area of international merchandise trade statistics, the UN Comtrade disclaimer will contain the following statement:

Beginning [2005] trade data of OECD member states are compiled by OECD in accordance with UN/OECD Common Trade Data Processing Standards and are available in UN Comtrade in accordance with UN/OECD Data Sharing Agreement. Any deviation from this practice is reflected in the country/period metadata.

The OECD trade database disclaimer will contain the following statement:

The trade data for the selected non OECD member states are compiled by UNSD in accordance with UN/OECD Common Trade Data Processing Standards and are available in [OECD ITSDB] in accordance with UN/OECD Data Sharing Agreement. Any deviation from this practice is reflected in the country/period metadata.

WTO reported on a significant addition to world-wide trade data: the "Common Data Set (CDS)". Coordinated and managed by the WTO, this dataset is the only world-wide, consistent and validated trade data set with aggregate imports and exports by country. The novelty character of CDS lies in the fact that all IO's represented in the Task Force have worked out a joint data ownership and shared responsibilities pattern and distinguish three data categories; official, adjusted, estimated. These data are feed after checking/adjustment or estimates on a quarterly basis into the CDS maintained by WTO. In 2006 the data should become available on the Web for world-wide access and use. Another important step to come to grips with different numbers published by different organisations!

6.	Classification issues affecting trade statistics	
	a) Revision of activity and product classifications - implications for trade	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)9
	statistics	
	- SITC revision update – UNSD	
	- CPC revision update – UNSD	
	b) Progress report on Harmonized System HS 2007 amendments – World	
	Customs Organization (WCO)	

UNSD presented the main changes of SITC revision 4. The main driving force of change was:

- when HS 88 subheadings were deleted from HS07, the basic heading of SITC Rev 4 was deleted,
- When several new HS subheadings can be grouped together in an economically meaningful way
 and shown separately to better reflect changes in commodity structure, new SITC Rev4 basic
 headings were introduced.

The net result is that SITC Rev4 contains 2971 basic headings (see for details paper STD/PASS/ITS(2005)9).

Tuesday, 13th September morning 9.30 a.m.

7.	Methodological research issues	
	a) Reconciling merchandise trade data and balance of payments trade in goods - Eurostat	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)10
	b) Reasons for discrepancies in China's merchandise trade with major	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)11
	partners: the particular role of processed goods - China	
	c) International trade versus international transport - Netherlands	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)21

Eurostat gave an update on the reconciliation exercise, already presented at the last Expert meeting. The main change consisted of the inclusion of the 10 new EU countries in this study plus some candidate countries. One of the main conclusions was that there were still too many different national adjustment practices and Eurostat will calculate and publish harmonised adjustment ratios using mirror information. Eurostat signalled that EU Extra trade statistics will be aligned more with UN recommendations to ensure better consistency in international reporting. There was general recognition that BOP and FTS Compilers should co-operate more closely to reduce scope of discrepancies which still is too large. UN stated that problems would be reduced if the EU would adhere to UN standards. OECD agreed to work together with the EU on the revision of the BOP Manual.

China presented an analysis of discrepancies in China's trade data as reported by China or its main trading partners. This very interesting comparison of widely different figures published by China, the US and the EU confirmed the role of Hong Kong imports and re-exports as the explanatory factor. Over half of Chinese trade with the US and EU is re-exports through Hong Kong. Both inward and outward processing in China are the driving force of China's spectacular growth in trade. Foreign-owned Enterprises represent some 80% of processing trade.

The analysis was very well received and some participants stressed the need for further study. Processing trade is reflecting new economic realities which need to be better captured and measured by trade statisticians, be them foreign trade or BoP experts. The massive outsourcing of labour-intensive production/processing to China and the subsequent (re-)exports from China deserve further analysis and study. The ITS Experts asked the Secretariat to maintain this topic on the meeting agenda of the ITS 2006 meeting.

Another aspect of globalisation on increasingly liberalised trade flows was analysed by the Dutch delegate, who presented taxonomy of trade flows. (transit, quasi-transit, re-exports and exports). The main argument was that established trade theory increasingly mismatches economic reality requiring an overhaul of the statistical measurement of trade to stay relevant. It should be noted, however, that the Netherlands have a particular tradition of entry-/transit country ("Rotterdam effect"). This issue gave raise to

considerable discussion and it was decided that the issue of coverage and forms of trade flows will be included in the agenda of the 7th ITS meeting in September 2006 for further analysis.

8.	Linkages of Structural Business Statistics and Trade Statistics	
	a) Eurostat's experiences, first results and next steps – Eurostat	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)13
	b) Analysis of answers to OECD's Pilot questionnaire to Non –EU countries on linking business and trade statistics - OECD	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)14
	Country experiences:	
	c) Statistical analysis through linking trade registers and enterprise registers – Germany	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)15
	d) Linking general business statistics and foreign trade statistics in Goods: the Finnish perspective – Finland	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)16
9.	Future Programme of work and conclusions. Date of the 7th ITS	
	meeting.	

Eurostat reported on progress made by the working group working on this issue. After generally successful pilot studies, Eurostat concentrates on standardising the country data to facilitate international comparisons. A legal basis for these statistics is under discussion. The SBS – trade linkages are a new and important part of globalisation indicators. Besides the need to address the role of MNEs (Multi-National Enterprises), in general more information is needed about the characteristics of traders.

Encouraged by the rather positive experience made by Eurostat, OECD had launched a questionnaire to the Non-EU countries of OECD asking at this stage if similar information could be obtained from countries. Eight out of eleven countries responded yes to various degrees. As a general observation, almost all countries can link the basic statistical unit to customs forms /trade registers. OECD proposed to set up a small steering group to provide guidance for the further development of SBS-Trade Indicators. Canada, the United States and Norway supported this idea and were ready to participate. Canada proposed to host the first meeting of the Steering Group. Other Non-EU countries, such as Australia, Turkey and Iceland showed considerable interest in following progress made by this group.

In the discussion which followed, the Netherlands raised the confidentiality problems which may arise by such an exercise. Stricter rules may be necessary to avoid accidental disclosure. The International Trade Centre ITC was extremely interested by this issue and pointed to its relevance for export investment promotion. According to ITC, countries have no confidentiality problem. Italy reported on linking at regional level in Italy which is possible through matching the VAT code and location code. Canada voiced the need for a statistical unit below enterprise level.

Germany presented the results of linking the General Business Register (GBR) to the IntraStat Register. The main problem encountered was that the GBR does not capture the history of VAT number changes leading to lower hit rates and trade coverage. A new central GBR is planned for 2007 and should remedy to this shortcoming and allow longitudinal sectoral trade analysis.

The Finnish presentation described how the linkage is performed involving the National Board of Customs (trade data) and Statistics Finland (Structural Enterprise Data). This development work has been a priority during the past years and led to concrete and encouraging results. However, a pilot study on enterprise groups to determine the impact of international groups of enterprises on trade statistics had

encountered methodological problems relating to the limitations of the registers, non-response and different perceptions from enterprises. More methodological guideline work needs to be done.

Tuesday, 13th September afternoon 2:30 p.m.: Joint session ITS-TIS Experts

10.	Opening of the common session regarding measuring merchandise	
	trade and trade in services	
	Welcome and opening by the Chief Statistician of OECD and Director of	
	the Statistics Directorate	

The Head of the Prices and Structural Economic Statistics division Paul Schreyer opened the session on behalf of the Director and OECD Chief Statistician, Enrico Giovannini. After welcoming the Delegates, he highlighted the important role played by the OECD Committee for Statistics (CSTAT) for international coordination, the fairly unique track record of OECD trade statistics with regards to International Cooperation and the general orientation of OECD statistics, namely on use and analysis. Concerning the latter, he mentioned three particularly important areas:

- The linkage of SBS and trade data which is the right way forward;
- Globalisation analysis and indicators;
- Volume and price measurement.

11.	International trade and globalisation indicators	
	a) Economic globalisation indicators – OECD/STI	
	 b) International trade indicators: a Web-based tool for researchers – OECD/STD - Progress report - Presentation of the Web-based beta version - Links to other data sources 	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)17
	c) New analytical products of the International Trade Centre (ITC) and co-operation with OECD, UNSD and WTO – ITC	

The Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry reported on recent achievements regarding Globalisation Indicators. After the "Handbook on Economic Globalisation Indicators (HEGI)" OECD had published in June 2005 "Economic Globalisation Indicators (EGI)", which – for the first time – pulled together across EOCD Directorates key economic globalisation indicators in a Factbook style, that is combining analysis, definitions, tables and graphs. STD's Trade Statistics Section TASS contributed the chapter of trade-related globalisation indicators.

Three areas for intensified efforts were identified: choice of appropriate exchange rates, lack of data for multinationals, and lack of services trade data.

OECD presented progress made on "International Indicators of Trade and Economic Linkages". This "Trade Indicators" work had reached maturity after years of development work, both within OECD and outside OECD. A first web-based trade indicators site was presented which included advanced graphical tools to better visualise complex trends. Almost 30 indicators have been selected in line with HEGI and EGI, but also other Taxonomies, and a methodologically consistent database has been created.

Further development planned which will be presented at the ITS-TIS Meeting in September 2006 includes extending the macro database with micro indicators that is 2-digit breakdowns, in different classifications. The micro dataset will allow accessing a considerable number of consistent indicators such as RCA, OECD Market shares, Trade Balances and Export Performance. Delegates welcomed the presentation and expressed interest in the further development of the OECD Trade Indicators as a webbased research tool. OECD indicated that the pilot version shown should be accessible from outside by next September.

The ITC thanked WTO, UNSD and OECD for the excellent cooperation and presented its new analytical products. Oriented in particular towards the needs of developing countries and the business communities, ITC has developed a range of web-based query and analysis tools. ITC stressed the "tremendous demand" for trade data (in particular at the most detailed level) and invited OECD to share its trade data with ITS. Identified key challenges are the inclusion of services, the day in obtaining data and to obtain tariff-line level data. The presentation was well received by delegates.

12.	SNA/BPM5 revision: unresolved balance of payments issues concerning trade in goods and services statistics	
	a) Goods for processing	
	- Position paper by the Merchandise Trade Task Force – WTO	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)18
	- Issue paper by the IMF – UNSD – SNA Editor - Outcome of SNA AEG	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)19
	b) Merchanting IMF issue paper and progress report from IMF merchanting working group - for discussion	STD/PASS/ITS(2005)20

Three papers (one as room document) were presented on the Goods for processing issue where foreshadowed revisions may pose a considerable problem to trade statisticians. The WTO presented the official position of the Inter-agency Task force on Merchandise Trade Statistics, in which caution was expressed to change the current practice on practical grounds (data availability, new data needs, and treatment of countries with large processing zones such as Mexico). An AEG and BOPTEG position paper outlining data and analytical implications of different scenarios and providing very explicit data examples of the effect of different options was presented by OECD. The IMF presented a short note on the outcome of the IMF Committee on BoP Statistics meeting on service statistics, where a case was made for a more consistent treatment of the change of ownership concerning goods in processing, while leaving room for different imputations and making a plea for additional information to be collected.

There was considerable discussion on this controversial issue with a majority of delegates for keeping processing of goods under "goods" and not transferring this item to "services". There was a strong expression of favoring pragmatism against theory and to test feasibility before proposing any new treatment which may turn out to be impossible to achieve or be even counter-productive in creating new asymmetries. There was also the general impression that the trade statistics community as a legitimate stakeholder has not been sufficiently involved in the discussions of this cross-cutting issue.

The OECD Secretariat was asked to communicate the considerable concern expressed by this group to the ISWGNA and BOPCOM. $^{\rm 1}$

¹ OECD has written to the members of ISWGNA and BOPCOM on 18 November 2005, expressing the views of the group (Reference STD/TASS(2005)1811). This note was copied to the Task Force IMTS, the Task Force

The IMF presented a paper on the current treatment of merchanting in BPM5 and SNA93, outlining concerns and shortcomings (such as holding gains/losses which may distort the measurement of merchanting services and the asymmetry caused by recording only by exporting country, the effects of different accounting periods, valuation principles etc.).

In the discussion which followed, different country practices were highlighted and no clear outcome was reached. The need for supplementary surveys on enterprise practice was stressed, in particular the problem of how to identify separately "faux négoce".

Wednesday, 14th September morning: joint session ITS-TIS - continued (9.30 a.m.)

13.	a) Foreign Affiliates Trade in Services Statistics	
	Metadata - OECD report	
	 Compilation Guidance for the EU Foreign Affiliates Regulation - Eurostat report 	
	 National developments: FATS Statistics: Producing Statistics for Broadly Defined Trade in Services – Bank of Japan FATS Statistics in Australia - ABS 	(room document -internet only)
	b) OECD balance of payments data OECD quality review report on OECD balance of payments data for information	(room document – internet only)

OECD gave a presentation of developments in FATS statistics and the user need to strengthen these. It highlighted the need for countries to provide more metadata on their compilation methods and on significant divergences from standards. This in turn would assist interpretation of the data and help the development of compilation guidance.

Eurostat reported on the progress of the proposed Foreign Affiliates Statistics Regulation. The methodology was designed to allow compilation of EU totals. Outward FATS collection would not be compulsory, but pilot studies on outward FATS were proposed. It was proposed to develop a "Recommendations manual" with supplementary guidance concerning the EU statistics produced. The Netherlands delegate commented on the concern about the additional administrative burden on firms of collecting outward FATS data.

Two presentations from the Bank of Japan and Australian Bureau of Statistics summarised the development of FATS statistics in these countries. ABS looked at foreign ownership of exporters and importers. The initial surveys were expensive and resource intensive. A strategy to further study trade in the balance of payments and trade according to ownership was mentioned.

OECD presented the result of a quality review of its work on balance of payments statistics. The focus was on producing a timely OECD-wide core dataset of balance of payments variables for economic analysis and forecasting. The main customers were the OECD Economics Department. The review had concluded that there was a need for further improvements to data collection and processing; to add more

SITS, and the participants of the 6th OECD ITS and TIS meeting. Annexed to the note were: 1. Illustrative examples of changes to country trade data in BoP, 2. A note from UNSDs Trade Statistics Branch highlighting the treatment of goods for/after processing in the IMTS context, 3. The communication on Goods for Processing from the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics.

value to the dataset through development of OECD zone totals; and to raise its profile through separate publication in the new Statistical Information System and OECD.stat.

Wednesday 14^{th} September afternoon 2:30 p.m:

OECD-Eurostat Expert Meeting on Trade-in-services Statistics

14.	a) Report of 2004 Trade-in-services Meeting	PASS/SERV/M1
	b) Interagency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services Report for information	SERV/1
	c) Eurostat activities in trade in services and related balance of payments areas for information	
15.	 BPM5 Revision continued – for discussion a) Classification of services in the balance of payments – OECD/IMF b) Revision of CPC and links to EBOPS – UNSD/OECD c) Report of Financial Services Task Force – OECD d) Update on Canberra II work on non-financial assets 	2 (room document – internet) 3
16.	Data quality a) Trade in services Methodological Soundness Questionnaire- OECD-Eurostat first draft report for discussion b) OECD paper on implementing MSITS and data quality c) User view of trade in services data - France	4 5 6

Thursday 29 April 9.30 a.m.

17.	Analytical issues	
	i) Measuring offshoring of services	
	a) Progress in accounting for data discrepancies between US and India – US BEA,	
	b) OECD work on measuring offshoring – OECD/DSTI	
	ii) South-south trade in services project OECD/ECH report	(ECH OLIS room document)
18.	Updating the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services - Scope, overview and timetable – OECD report	7
	- Revision of EBOPS	(room document)
	- Proposed Chapter on Mode 4	
	- Draft Questionnaire for Countries - OECD to present for discussion	

Lunch break

Thursday 2.30 p.m.

19.	TSA and Remittances a) Revising the Tourism Satellite Account – Note by World Tourism Organisation/IMF b) Proposed changes to remittances measurement – Report by UNSD/IMF	(room document – internet)
20.	Data collection and dissemination a) Metadata, data production and publication - presentation by Eurostat b) Publication of Trade in Services Statistics - Progress reports - UN-OECD-Eurostat	
21.	Future Programme of Work and Conclusions	
22.	Other business and date of next meeting Close	

N.B: The report of the OECD-Eurostat Expert Meeting on Trade-in-services Statistics is presented separately in document STD/NAES/TASS/SERV(2006)M1