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**SUBSTANTIVE TOPICS CONSIDERED AT THE CONFERENCE OF
EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

This note was prepared by the secretariat at the request of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas to inform the members of the Conference about the substantive topics considered by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and its Bureau.

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I. SUBSTANTIVE SEMINARS

The organization of substantive seminars during the CES plenary sessions started formally in 2003. Each year, a seminar is devoted to two aspects:

- (i) Foundational issues of statistical systems
- (ii) New and emerging issues

The topics of the four seminars held under this arrangement are the following:

1. Foundational issues

2003: Statistical confidentiality and microdata

- Overview and use of microdata
- Data confidentiality
- Legal aspects of microdata
- Access to microdata-issues, organization and approaches

2004: National statistical systems

- Coordination within national statistical systems
- Independence, integrity and credibility of official statistics (including all producers)
- Issues generating demand for statistics
- Official statistics as a brand

2. Emerging issues

2003: Globalization

- Gauging the globalization phenomenon
- Impact of globalization on traditional statistical systems
- Globalization questions to which users of statistics want answers
- International statistical cooperation

2004: Measuring prices and volume in the services sector

- Current international practices for measuring prices and volume in the services sector: overview
- Current international practice for measuring prices and volume in the services sector: non-market services
- Output measures of services volumes
- The use of service-sector statistics by external users

All papers that document and support the substantive discussion are available at the web site of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE):
<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2003.06.ces.htm> - CES 2003 plenary session
<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2004.06.ces.htm> - CES 2004 plenary session

The ECE secretariat has prepared a draft list of possible topics to be reviewed by the Bureau in 2005. These tentative topics are:

- Relations with countries in South-East Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
- Relations with countries outside the ECE region
- Management of information technology infrastructure
- Human resource development
- Indicators for measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and human development indicators
- Transport statistics
- Tourism statistics
- Science and technology statistics, including information and communications technology (ICT)
- Labour statistics
- Education statistics
- Statistics on household income and expenditures, welfare of population, poverty and income inequality.

II. OTHER SUBSTANTIVE REVIEWS

Before 2003, there were also substantive items to be discussed; however, the discussion was organized in a different format. A number of 1-day seminars on different topics selected by the CES Bureau were held as indicated below:

- 2002: Fiftieth anniversary of the Conference of European Statisticians
- 2001: Small-area statistics and statistics for small countries
- 2000: How international comparability is affected by developments with users and with administrative sources
- 1999: Performance indicators for statistical offices
- 1998: Relations between statistical offices and the Governments
- 1997: Impact of information technology developments on statistical operations: managerial considerations
- 1996: Labour market dynamics: new statistical and analytical approaches
- 1995: Ways of describing statistically the effects of ongoing integration processes in the ECE region

Some additional topics were presented and/or discussed based on papers submitted by countries or selected by the Bureau to address a specific issue.

In addition, substantive issues were also considered in the context of the periodic review of the Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work Programmes (IP). In June 2004 the Conference decided that, starting from 2005, the rapporteur's reports on the IP should focus on sections headed "Issues and problems" and "Attention of the Conference is drawn to".

It should be noted that the main purpose of the CES rapporteur reports on the IP is to make a critical assessment of international coordination and cooperation in a particular programme element. The analysis should draw attention to pertinent issues or problems and provide concrete proposals for improvement. These issues should be brought to the attention of the Bureau and the Conference, i.e., to the attention of the management of national and international statistical agencies. The CES should then review the measures put in place to address any problem identified by the rapporteurs.

For an overview of these issues, please refer to the agendas of the CES plenary sessions on the UNECE web site: <http://www.unece.org/stats/archive/01.02.e.htm>.