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E DITORIAL

After more than a year's absence, *Eurostat News* has returned in the new guise of *SIGMA*. The publication has a new layout and seeks to provide up-to-date information on the progress of measures taken in the run up towards European integration.

The demand for statistical information has been increasing at a considerable rate recently and owes its rise to a number of factors: the gathering pace towards the creation of a single Europe and the widening of the Commission's field of competence; the debate on 'European economic space', German unification and upheavals in central and eastern Europe. This demand has not only been isolated to traditional areas of work for Eurostat, but also spans new fields of statistical research.

In joining forces with the Member States and affiliated countries, we are obliged to employ different working methods and practices to meet this demand for facts and figures. Eurostat's widening coverage of statistics is therefore helping to speed up the process of establishing a statistical system for the whole Community.

Users of Eurostat information – the Commission and European institutions, our partners in the Member States, affiliated countries and international Statistical Offices, the various authorities who request data from us, enterprises, etc; – should be kept up to date on these developments. It is with this perspective in mind that we invite them to join us in our initiative.

Yves Franchet

Director General

S

TATISTICS AND INFORMATION

Information will play a very important role in European society in the future. As the 21st century draws near, almost everyone in business will be faced with the challenge of how to manage this information. With these facts in mind, it is clear to see that statistics are an indispensable tool for decision makers. *Sigma* is aimed at such people.

The 21st century will be the century of information. At any given moment, businessmen will have to have correct information at their fingertips and know how to utilise best such information.

This is where statistics come in. Statistical information is well structured, objective, and of a recognised scientific nature. Statistics are an authoritative source of information and it is imperative that potential users are aware of their existence, how they are produced, and how they may be used.

It is for these reasons that Eurostat has decided to publish *Sigma* as a way of communicating such ideas to end-users. As the statistical symbol for sum, *Sigma* will aim to show, in its own area of expertise in economic and social statistics, how the sum of 12 countries will make up one community.

The bulletin will be published every two months and will focus on news of European statistics.

Statistics and communication

Statistics are only a viable form of communication to the extent in which they are used. Statistics are not created to be stored away in archives, they should be used for decision making and forecasting.

Statistics can be compared to a network of roads or motorways, a basic infrastructure essentially created to circulate information. Such an infrastructure has to be extremely efficient, and must exploit fully the possibilities of high technology such as telecommunications, teledetection, automatic transmission of data and satellites.

Eurostat must constantly provide end-users with products to help them in their work, help them form pertinent questions, and then to make decisions or take action.

The recent removal of barriers in the east has shown us just how important statistics can be in providing objective information, accessible to all and open to public opinion. The fact that a statistical institute can produce figures in an independent and autonomous manner illustrates the existence and quality of democracy in our society.

Directions and indicators

The vast increase in demand, registered by Eurostat over the last few years, illustrates the important role of statistics in the European Community. Many people, including those in business circles, are unsure of what will happen in the European Community of the future. They require sound statistics to help them recognise and take advantage of situations. They need reliable information in order to reinvest profits wisely. Eurostat has never before been in such demand to supply the information that will help people in their choices.

End-users, however, do not often realise in which areas and to what extent Eurostat can help them; and alternatively in which areas Eurostat does not intervene and why.

There is an important message to be put across, informing people of Eurostat's role in the past, the present and the future: how best to serve end-users, and to learn what end-users expect from us. The answer to these questions leads us in two

directions; to look at Eurostat from an external, as well as an internal viewpoint.

In 'directions and indicators' we will concentrate on such questions. Outside of Eurostat's day-to-day tasks, for example, there is the arduous yet enjoyable task of working with other organisations, which is elemental in working procedures at European level. When returning to work at a day-to-day level, however, such collaboration is invaluable as it helps Eurostat to form a clear view of the needs and requirements of end-users. End-users are increasingly interested in Eurostat projects. By 'end-users' we mean the Commission, European institutions, Member States, trading partners, the National Statistical Institutes as well as administrations and business who come to us for advice and whose decisions are increasingly aided by our products.

Europe and statistics

Readers will thus have a clearer view of Eurostat's role within the European Community; in contributing to a greater convergence of economies both within and outside the single market. The 'family spirit', which will cement the European Statistical System, can only be created in this way. We shall grow to share the same ideals of independence, neutrality and objectivity by holding discussions at all levels and understanding the peculiarities of each Member State and their separate statistical systems. All of us will be faced with major statistical issues as we organise the collective training of European statisticians. We shall learn to exchange ideas by helping the weaker links in the chain to be as strong as the others.

All such developments will be featured in the section 'Europe and statistics' in which we shall try to collate, clarify and follow-up the progress of the European Statistical System. Comments and reflections on interactions between other trading partners

of the world and the European Community, for example USA, Canada, Japan and ACP countries will also feature in this section.

Insight into Eurostat

In this section we shall look at another requirement of our present and future end-users: a greater knowledge of Eurostat. We shall endeavour to explain some of our projects; why we chose them and how best to use them. We shall also try to explain the aims of the people within our organisation who work on projects and products, and those needs they aim to meet. We shall reflect, as we hope our readers will, on the uses, needs, presentation and quality of our statistics. We shall also look at how and why we concentrate on certain projects and the results we obtain (in the eyes of our 'public' too), the future plans and lessons to be learnt.

News items

In many aspects, Eurostat is just like any other firm in that it makes products to answer the demands of the market. The 'News items' section will, in some ways, act as the shop window for Eurostat, as we will launch our products, in a very limited space.

A complete and comprehensive guide to Eurostat's publications and electronic services can always be found in the *Eurostat Catalogue*.¹ This information is complemented by the monthly brochure *Just published*, as it presents only those publications and documents that have come onto the market during the preceding month.

Alain Chantraine

**Director of Dissemination,
Eurostat**

¹ This catalogue may be obtained free of charge from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

S TATISTICS AND DEMOCRACY

The certainties of the past 30 years are over. The future, although promising will pose many questions and will create an ever-increasing demand for figures. It should be a very promising period for democracy ... and statistics!¹

A great need for statistics!

Both citizens and politicians alike are concerned about the future development of the European Community and the single market. They want to know what their competitors will be like and what will be their competitors' objectives. And how they can find their place in the market and make a success of it. A host of figures are needed because everybody wants to know the answers to these questions. An excellent opportunity for statistics!

Requests for clarification

People wish to be fully informed in all areas of EC activity. Take for example, the European Environment Agency which should soon be up and running: its prime objective is to provide statistics. All things being equal, statistics offer an overview of the current situation, past trends, and future options in all fields.

A need that justifies the means

When politicians decide to do something that seems important to them, they generally manage to get hold of the necessary funds. Even in unexpected situations, such as the problem of the Kurds in Iraq, the Commission managed to obtain adequate finance from the Council and the Parliament to help.

As far as Eurostat is concerned, the statistical programme has been a good opportunity to prove to the Commission that the allocated funds for statistics were quite inadequate. The statistical coordination between Central and Eastern Europe, for example, is currently managed by only three people in Eurostat; they are faced with hundreds of

people at national level and dozens of countries who are continually asking for information.

The 'strength of numbers' and the 'strength of words'

Given the number of decisions Member States now have to take at European level, it is a great pity that allocated Community resources are too small to ensure sufficient coordination between them. We cannot look at this shortfall purely from a budgetary viewpoint; the political angle must also be taken into account. Figures and words both carry weight in an argument and should be complementary, whereas in fact one sometimes contradicts the other.

Development and application

How important are statistics to the development of the European Community?

In the past, Eurostat, just like the national institutes, was probably private ground where each person just did a job, without being interrupted. Today, a kind of 'collective consciousness' exists which encourages people to do a worthwhile job to help in the development of the Community. But exactly how do we go about this?

A leading role

Eurostat's role is intertwined with Commission policies, although our governing body must recognise the nature and restraints of our sphere of activity. Eurostat gives utmost priority to the Commission in every aspect of its activities. There is no question of our saying 'We are not ready ... yet' The fact that Eurostat was 'in the front line' on matters such

as German re-unification and co-operation with the EFTA countries, meant that we took part in an extraordinary moment in European history. The Commission's areas of activity cover an increasing part of the economic field, both at social and financial levels; which justly reinforces the idea that the statistical service of the Community should also be the centre of the European statistical system.

Defining priorities is obviously very difficult, as in the construction of the European Community, everything is a priority. In the field of statistics it must be taken into account that turnaround times can sometimes be very long indeed. If it is a question of altering an existing system, new surveys must be created and questionnaires modified. In some cases it can take up to two years to obtain a clear reply on a certain subject. Therefore projects have to be carefully planned and programmed and this requires political authorities to recognise the priority of planning and programming.

Statistics should be clearly presented, easy to interpret and widely available by the end of the century, if our democracy is to continue to run effectively. It is with this in mind that a statistical law must recognise the uniqueness of Eurostat in this area.

Creating statistics is only useful as long as it is not limited to continual backtracking but concentrates equally on what lies ahead. This can only be achieved by forecasting and assessing the possible consequences of particular policy options.

Federalism and subsidiarity

We cannot reasonably have 12 national statistical systems plus one for the Community in a single market. Such an idea would be a great stumbling block to efficiency. A federal statistical system is needed to express what is happening at Community, national and regional levels.

This system must filter work through to subsidiaries more than ever before. In Germany, for example, there is a very strong federal tradition; those who have the right to access data may consult any number of systems and switch from one to another.

This approach can be applied to many areas. Diffusion of Community data, for example, should be possible at regional level. There is no reason why the diffusion of data on the Community should be carried out solely at Community level: such data should be widely available. Owing to new technology, easy access to this data is now possible practically as soon as it is published. Things will, most certainly, develop along these lines.

Marketing statistics

In response to the demand for statistics at European level, a new way of dealing with these demands should be developed. Great efforts are needed in the marketing of statistics. This does not mean to say that the quality of figures offered will drop, or that this will detract from the scientific nature of the work, but that an effort will be made to understand better users' needs so that we may cater for them. Alternatively, if users have difficulty in expressing the nature of their exact needs, we may help them to pinpoint their requirements by showing them where statistics can play a part.

The consequences of a lack of statistics

Currently statistics account, on average, for only 0.1% of the cost of the decisions they helped to make. This is totally insufficient if we are to do a proper job.

We realise very quickly that much more must be done:

- firstly on a general level, when precise numerical data are lacking on a certain theme or problem, conflicting statistics

feature in political discussions which frequently cloud the issue, just like watching a broadcast with interference. Instead of discussing the problem in hand, politicians spend hours disputing each other's data. We only have to look at the past year to find two excellent examples of this: poverty in Europe and immigration. The quality of political debates on such controversial themes suffers greatly in the absence of reliable and comparable statistics.

- on a political level, there is a risk of taking erroneous decisions because of a lack of precise statistics. For example, how can one know the best decision to take regarding the control or regulation of immigration? The aging of the European population is a given fact. What will the situation be in 10 or 15 years' time? If we close the door to Europe, we may have problems in trying to reopen it in future years... By then our relations with other countries will have unnecessarily deteriorated. It is surely better to try to regulate an existing system rather than to run the risk of closing off the existing one and doing away with it altogether.
- another example which highlights the cost incurred by the lack of statistics is when statistics are used as a basis for the allocation of funds. The Commission, for example, bases its budget on the national levels of GNP. If these figures are underestimated or overestimated or non-comparable, everybody is contributing in relation to an imaginary figure. If a country under-contributes to the Community over a number of years, it could result in a large chunk missing from the budget. The same thing goes for the programmes of the distribution of aid, structural programmes, and the administrative financing of the Commission, etc.

Just like a company

The cost of evaluating statistics is a subject very dear to companies. They complain of the cost of administrative formalities imposed on them, yet many of them would like to have access to even more statistics and even more statistical products ... They can rest assured this will soon be possible. The role of statisticians is changing.

What will happen in 5, 10 or even 20 years' time? A large percentage of documents currently generated by firms will be replaced by direct electronic systems used for extracting data from computer management systems. This is the first step towards EDI (Electronic Data Interchange), which already has firm foundations in certain sectors, e.g. the chemical industry, the automobile industry and inter-bank statistical systems. In future it will no longer be a question of exchanging pieces of paper; work will be carried out through interfaces (with protection for confidentiality). Through such interfaces we shall obtain necessary information on managing companies which will enable us to manage the democratic system in the single market.

The future of 'European statistics' holds two dimensions for Eurostat – areas of certainty coupled with areas of uncertainty

- Areas of certainty:
We still have to reinforce the management side, consolidate the budget, and obtain the necessary human resources from the Commission in order to achieve our priorities.
- Areas of uncertainty:
In our approach to the new dimensions offered by the construction of the European Community, should we favour ...
 - macro-economic convergence?
 - monetary union?

- the spatial aspect of statistics? (teledetection, and geocodification of data, etc.);
- research and feedback? (especially, everything relating to EDI);
- intracommunity trade? (finalisation of a system for directly extracting data from companies);
- environmental statistics?

The developing role of Eurostat

- as a service industry: listening to clients and forecasting their needs
- as a pioneer in the field of high technology: research and development, innovation: teledetection, telecommunication, computerisation
- as an efficient management team: programming and planning ahead, budgeting and training personnel ...

All of this will be subject to numerous modifications and reorganisation over the coming years. Eurostat will live through its period of 'revolution and reorganisation' just as the Commission and the whole of the European Community will.

This is the price we pay for democracy.

¹ This article was written on 19 August 1991, following an interview with Mr. Yves Franchet, Director General of Eurostat, on 31 July 1991.

A

GRICULTURE:

A HARVEST OF FIGURES

Decisions regarding the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which accounts for almost 60% of the Community budget, are based to a large extent on information provided by Eurostat. Statisticians therefore pay considerable attention to our field of agricultural statistics.....

The following comments were made by one user, who is always keen to see more 'fertile' ideas in this area.....¹

'Most of the data we use is obtained from Eurostat databases: Cronos, Eurofarm (FSSRs for structural surveys), Comext and Regio. Cronos and Comext are our main sources of information.

The data can be input straight away, which allows us to carry out simulation studies or use the information for other purposes. The statistics are also structured in such a way that we are also able to carry out additional studies, such as economic analyses.

However, the databases are not always compatible and updating them tends to be less than first rate. That is probably not Eurostat's fault, because it relies heavily on the Member States to provide data. But the quality of the statistics and the deadlines for sending them should be improved upon.'

You mentioned the problem of compatibility?

'To use, let's say, Cronos, we need to transfer files and apply other software packages. In other words, we receive raw data which we are then obliged to reprocess before we can use it'.

Will CD-Rom improve the situation?

'We've only just started using CD-Rom and have only received one disk so far, on external trade. Its scope is far greater than Comext's, but we might (and in the agricultural sector too) have put the cart before the horse, given that we've only received one reader so far.

CD-Rom looks very promising at the moment, especially for users outside the Commission: Agricul-

tural Ministries, Institutes for Agricultural Economy and employers organisations.

Does this signal the end for paper as a form of input?

'Not at all. We will always need to have documents at hand such as our Eurostat 'best-sellers': 'Production Structures', 'Animal Production', 'Crop Production', 'Agricultural Prices' and 'Basic Statistics'.

Could you give a brief outline of what DG VI uses Eurostat information for?

'Firstly, we need regular, aggregated data to deal with current events. We need to keep up to date with the main figures on animal and crop production, the number of holdings, prices, etc;

We also have more specific needs, e.g. we use statistical information for market management purposes, such as imposing ceilings on expenditure.'

Policy reform proposals are also based on statistical information. A recent example is the proposal to reform the CAP which is, of course, based on statistical information. Statistics are the foundation on which we construct our analyses and proposals.

Alternatively, statistics are used in econometric forecasting, especially, for medium-term forecasts. Statistics are an essential source of information in this case: equations involving demand-supply elasticities are invariably based on statistical data.

Another related, but nevertheless important, need for statistics arises in detecting and dealing with fraud. On an aggregate

level (national or regional), we can use statistical information to compare applications made to the EAGGF with claims made by the Member States for different types of output, to see if any discrepancies exist and if these can be explained.'

Can you give a more specific example?

'If we take the case of cereal production: prices paid to the producer obviously depend on the volume of his output, which is limited by the Commission on the basis of statistical information. Therefore, we need to know the level of production of different types of cereals as well as total production so that we can calculate the impact of this output on prices paid to the producer. You can imagine the sort of pressure we are under. It is essential that we always have access to an independent and totally objective source of information.'

Statisticians are responsible for forecasting the level of cereal production, which allows us to calculate the amounts we need to export, stock levels etc; On this basis, we have to calculate the related financial burden and the way in which prices must be adjusted to remain within the policy guide-lines.'

Again, in the case of cereals, our proposals to reform the CAP are based on statistical information (specifically medium range forecasts of changes in production) and on models developed to gauge the impact of these policies.'

Which information could be improved upon out of all the data you receive from Eurostat?

'Information concerning several grey areas. For example, no statistics are available on the current share of agricultural land planted for crop production, which means we have to wait several months for this data. The same goes for data on stock levels. We also lack harmonised

price series. There are three other areas which could be improved upon: data availability could be speeded up (even if accuracy is sacrificed in the process, since our market is 'hot' and changes from one day to the next); and the objectivity and harmonisation of statistical information could be improved.'

What is DGVI's contribution to Eurostat?

'Chiefly information on agricultural prices. We provide Eurostat with data on collective prices which we obtain from representative markets. We cooperate fully with Eurostat in this area to overcome any problems which might arise. The statisticians we speak to are completely aware of how important their work is, which obviously influences their motivation to a great extent.'

What are the most important points in the current dialogue between DGVI and Eurostat?

'There are several major topics to discuss, but let's take two as an example:

- The main item on our agenda is the 'screening' of agricultural statistics. The Member States inform us that they have insufficient resources and are obliged to allocate these to other statistical fields (economics and finance, tourism, etc;) and therefore wish to reduce the amount of data they send us.

We can see their point and would like to carry out a study, with Eurostat's help, which would provide us with information on which statistics we receive and use and for what purpose. We would like to make the study as detailed as possible in order to identify and eventually cut away the 'dead wood', since policy changes have meant that a number of statistics are now invalid. We should also decide which additional statistics we would need following a reform of the CAP. This project will have widespread repercussions and will need to be discussed

with the Member States. It will be our top priority next year. Our main concern is that there should always be sufficient information available. This could mean that a joint financial outlay with the Member States will be necessary.

- In the case of research into improving the speed, objectivity and harmonisation of agricultural statistics, we see two possible courses open to us:

a) Community legislation: to fill the gaps where no standards or norms currently exist (as is the case for crop statistics); and:

b) the introduction of new methodology to produce statistical information.: One programme which is currently being developed involves the application of teledetection by satellite to agricultural statistics. This project was launched in 1988 and we have been very satisfied with the results so far. It will certainly allow us to improve the speed of data collection and its objectivity in several areas (producers will no longer need to fill in questionnaires) as well as improving data harmonisation (resulting from a centralised system). The project has been guaranteed for 5 years by a Council decision and forms part of a 10-year development plan.'

What is happening in the current round of talks on agriculture with the rest of the world?

'Eurostat has made contact with the American and Canadian statistical services in order to work on harmonising concepts, which should facilitate the interpretation of statistics in future. An important project is currently being carried out by the UN-affiliated Economic Commission for Europe in conjunction with the FAO. The agricultural debate is also livelier, with the inclusion of delegations from the ex-Comecon countries that are particularly keen to set up their own statistical system for agriculture.'

A number of developments have also taken place with the EFTA countries, but those would take up a whole interview alone to describe.

Another important dialogue, this time on a global scale, is taking place with the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). The Department sends us regular and valuable data, online, on American agriculture as well as on world-wide changes and major events in the agricultural sector. The Americans have a very effective information and reporting system at world level and it is important for us to be able to access this reliable source of data in order to keep up to date with events in the rest of the world.'

Have any problems arisen with the ex-GDR?

'We lack reliable statistics because they weren't reliable in the past. Constructing chronological series in reverse is extremely difficult and we don't yet know if we will be able to solve this problem. Even now we are confronted with the fact that the German statistical system is a federal one and data collection is at 'Länder' level. While this works for the western 'Länder', an entire system must be set up for the 'East'. Germany has been granted several dispensations to get the problem sorted out, which should be by the end of next year at the latest.'

What is DGVI's long-range perspective?

'We will give full support to Eurostat in its efforts to acquire additional resources, not only to complete its work efficiently, but also to improve data screening and increase the speed of information dissemination.

We are also taking part in a number of joint projects with Eurostat: where new data needs are identified requiring a financial outlay from the Member States, we are also willing to contribute to these projects. This is obviously the right course of action

for us since we are final users of statistics produced by Eurostat. Eurostat's vocation reinforces its interest in this approach too. Completing the job together is, I think, our best course of action'.

¹ Interview with Mr. João PACHECO, Head of Unit FF, DG VI – A2, on 14 August 1991.

A SINGLE MARKET, A SINGLE STATISTICAL SYSTEM

The statistical areas of activity of the Community progress at the same speed as European integration. This results in an increasing interdependence between the statistical work carried out at both European and national levels. Interest and uses for statistics go beyond national boundaries making it more important than ever for the harmonious development of a 'European statistical system'.

The 'European statistical system' (ESS) is made up of administrations which shall create, elaborate, analyse and diffuse statistical information at varying levels (local, regional, national and Community). These administrations shall also have links with institutions e.g. district councils – central administration at regional level and central administration at Community level.

The progress towards ESS

The European statistical system is responsible for the following tasks :

- to provide the European Institutions, in particular the Commission, with the relevant information necessary for the implementation, monitoring and assessment of Community policies;
- to create the European statistical system, to be aware of the organisational structures, standards and methods used which could help in the dissemination of reliable, pertinent and comparable statistics both throughout the Community and at an international level;
- to diffuse statistical information of the Community to economic and social mediums;
- to coordinate and assist third countries (developing countries and countries which are changing over to market economies) in setting-up their own statistical systems.

The functions of the current programme are as follows :

- (a) to develop common classifications, methodologies and definitions, based on Community legislation, which can be directly applied in Member states

- (b) to compile, analyse and diffuse statistical data of the Community, including country comparisons;

- (c) to ensure that the 'acquis communautaire', that is, all statistical legislation in force, is integrated into the statistical programmes of the Member states;

- (d) to represent the EC in discussions on statistical coordination with international organisations as well as inter-Secretariat working parties;

- (e) to promote the convergence of national statistical practices starting with common training schemes;

- (f) to support the development of national statistical systems within the EC and in third countries such as the developing countries and countries which are changing over to market economies;

Due to its international nature, the monitoring and decision making of the Community statistical programme should be carried out by both internal and external committees.

The Council has recently created three such committees, they play a fundamental and important role in the development of ESS:

- The Statistical Programme Committee, set up by Decision 89/382/CEE;
- The Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics, set up by Decision 91/115/CEE;

- The European Advisory Committee on Statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres, set up by Decision 91/116/EEC.

Other coordinating Committees, responsible for specific sectors, have previously been created by the Council.

- The Permanent Committee on Agricultural Statistics, set up by Decision 72/279/CEE on 31 July 1972;
- The Committee on External Trade Statistics, set up by Regulation 1736/75 on 24 June 1975)
- The Committee on GNP, set up by Directive 130/89 on 13 February 1989;
- The Committee on Statistical Confidentiality, set up by Regulation 90/1588/CEE on 11 June 1990.

Together these Committees make up the foundation on which the European statistical system (ESS) shall be based.

The statistical programme also offers the possibility of communicating with the various institutions, users and suppliers of data. They are :

- Institutions, primarily the Commission;
- National administrations (EC and third countries);
- NSIs (EC and third countries);
- International organisations;
- Companies and citizens;
- Research centres

Improving subsidiarity...

The 'principle of subsidiarity' envisages that Eurostat be responsible for the tasks and objectives defined by European legislation, whilst the NSIs shall be responsible for their own national tasks and objectives.

In practice, this principle means that work can be carried out in those places that ensure the most efficient and effective job.

'The Community shall act only to fulfil the tasks transferred to it by treaty and to achieve the objectives defined thereby. If powers have not been exclusively or completely assigned to the Community, the Community shall, in carrying out its tasks, take action in so far as the achievement of these objectives requires its intervention because, by virtue of their magnitude or effects, they transcend the frontiers of the Member States or because they can be undertaken more efficiently by the Community than by the Member States acting separately.'

... by making full use of existing links within the system

It seems most likely that a federal statistical system will be created, with Eurostat at the head. Eurostat will make sure that Member States take the best possible decisions for the Community as a whole.

Recent developments

A real feeling of 'family spirit' is becoming increasingly evident. This is encouraged by the quickening pace of the innumerable changes occurring, both in Europe and outside its borders. The increase in this common working spirit clearly shows that members share the same ideals, governed by ideas of independence, neutrality and objectivity.

Moreover, with the aim of encouraging discussions between members, efforts will be made to arrive at a better understanding of the specific needs of each member country. It must be taken into account that each country has a statistical reasoning which stems from an administrative history and culture which is entirely their own.

Not only do members have to analyse major statistical problems together (notably via the previously mentioned consultative committee); they must also

follow a common training programme. The TES programme (Training of European Statisticians) is based on a network of training centres in the member countries and will have trained almost 400 people by 1991.

Exchanges of staff are also envisaged, this so-called 'cross-fertilisation' policy has already begun; whether it is a matter of welcoming national statisticians to Eurostat, sending statisticians from Eurostat to member countries, or even exchanging statisticians between two member countries...

This policy will help strengthen the weaker links in the chain. Through TES, countries with the most highly developed machinery will help the weaker ones, by advising in know-how or donating new technology. We wholeheartedly encourage such solidarity throughout the system.

¹ European Parliament Report on the principle of subsidiarity.

Luxembourg, 23 and 24 September 1991
First international Conference on the theme of:

MONETARY AND FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS IN ECU: STATISTICAL ASPECTS

We have come a long way since the first ecu-bond was issued in 1981! Today the ecu plays a particularly important role within the European Institutions and in multilateral banks.

Financial uses

An ecu clearing system has now been in operation for several years, and it has become the second most widely used currency for bond issuance. For personal or professional uses, people may now buy and sell titles denominated in ecu.

Central banks who take part in the existing mechanisms, place at least 20% of their reserves (or currencies) in EMCF (European Monetary Cooperation Fund). It is not surprising to learn that this percentage is considerably higher in certain countries.

Monetary uses

As far as monetary uses go, we realise that the ecu will remain marginal as long as there is no responsible monetary authority. Nevertheless, structures are being prepared for the day when, in accordance with the conclusions of the European Council in Rome (October 1990), and with the achievement of the final phase of Economic and Monetary Union, the Community will have a single currency – a strong and stable ecu – an expression of its identity and its unity. During the preliminary phase the ecu will be reinforced and developed.

With the use of existing structures, people may hold ecu in a current account, term deposit account and, in some countries, may even obtain a bank loan in ecu.

Commercial and accounting uses

Many multinational companies already publish their accounts in ecu or use this currency, as it will be on the international markets, for transfers between subsidiaries.

Use of the ecu in business transactions is still uncommon, but is gaining ground. The advantage of dealing in ecu, for both European and foreign businesses, is basically its relative stability compared to the majority of national currencies.

Ecus are already used in the following areas:

throughout the European clearing system used by European Railways (all settlements are made in ecu);

Eurocontrol's invoices are now expressed and payable in ecu;

To collate and clarify

The Commission has organised this international Conference in order to amass and then diffuse the information on the various uses of the ecu. More specifically the Conference aims to 'take stock of the present situation regarding the use of the ecu, and at the same time to circulate information in this area, especially on its statistical aspects; what are the monetary and financial instruments denominated in ecu which exist at the moment, how do they work in practice and what statistical information is available in this area?'¹

This Conference is only one of many projects organised by Eurostat in this field. It is, however, one of the most important.

Each monetary or financial instrument in ecu and each form of statistical information on the

ecu will be presented by the most aptly qualified people from the institutions and bodies directly concerned.

This Conference is really the first of its kind in covering all aspects of the uses of the ecu. It is also the first time the Commission has organised a conference on this subject.

Unfortunately, this edition of *Sigma* will be published after the Conference has finished, although it has already been widely publicised in other publications. This subject will be covered in greater depth in the next edition of *Sigma*.²

Further information on this Conference can be obtained from the following address: Eurostat, Secretariat of the ecu Conference, Bureau C3/041, Bâtiment Jean Monnet, L-2920 Luxembourg (fax (352) 4301-4150).

¹ Preface to the introduction of the Conference programme.

² This article was written on 19 September 1991, following an interview with Mr. Thierry Mathisse, Administrator for ecu statistics in Eurostat's financial and monetary statistics department, on 29 August 1991.

C ONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS: TO BE CONTINUED IN LUXEMBOURG

As a result of the proposal made by Eurostat in Geneva last June, Luxembourg will host a meeting of the Secretariats of the Economic Commission for Europe (EC-Geneva) and OECD on 26 and 27 September. The aim of the meeting will be to determine a common programme for meetings, working documents, National Statistical Office (NSO) questionnaires, etc; for the period October 1991 – June 1992.

A prestigious organisation

The Conference of European Statisticians traditionally meets once a year in Geneva. Its organisation is conferred to the 'Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), a UN-affiliated body, which brings together statisticians from the United States, Canada and several international organisations such as the IMF, as well as from all over Europe.

Eurostat has now gained a permanent place as an observer within this prestigious organisation and will play an active part in determining the content of its working programme in the future.

The September meeting in Luxembourg saves members from travelling to three different capitals (Luxembourg, Geneva, Paris) to discuss the same subjects, studying the same documents presented by the same people.

Eurostat initiatives

The June meeting in Geneva proved more dynamic than former discussions and attained a new dimension in the presence of statisticians from the 'Eastern Bloc'.

The visiting countries expressed their wish to incorporate the classifications and methodology used in the West into their own systems. Western nations, notably encouraged by Eurostat, aim to help them attain this objective within the framework of the Phare programme.

Ideology and strategy

The period between February and May 1991 saw a major change in Eurostat's conceptual approach.

On Eurostat's initiative, developments are underway to promote the concept of international norms and standards. Aided by the OECD, Eurostat is fully occupied in this task. New York will no longer be expected to be the creative source of classification systems: the Community aims to take the lead, with OECD support, in 'selling' its developments to the 'Group of Industrialised Nations' and presenting its work to the United Nations in a finalised form. Discussions with the Americans and Canadians will be necessary although the consensus on Europe (with the OECD) playing a greater strategic role in world affairs is facilitated by the current trend in European thought.

EFTA COUNTRIES AND THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL AREA

Although in general terms, negotiations with EFTA countries have progressed somewhat slowly, discussions on statistical matters have already reached their conclusion.¹

For the first time, statistics will be explicitly mentioned in a treaty due to be signed between the Community and third countries. Despite the fact that the Treaty of Rome failed to include legislation in the field of statistics, Eurostat has now been granted a specific role within the European Economic Area (EEA).

The direction to be followed in future foresees EFTA members adopting Community law on statistics, when this is considered to be both compatible with and applicable to the EEA. Negotiations in this area are based on 'secondary legislation', where 'primary legislation' refers to policy dictated directly by the Treaties.

As Eurostat's official coordinator for relations with EFTA countries within the EEA, what sort of problems do you anticipate?

Compromises must be reached. It is always a give and take situation and we will have to create and foster a positive atmosphere in our dialogue with EFTA members. This is all the more important, because EFTA countries are willing to provide resources for statistics to facilitate the development of Community projects. We must, therefore, ensure that we maintain and practise excellent relations and a continuously positive attitude in our negotiations. The EFTA countries also have a well developed statistical system, which is an additional factor we must take into consideration.'

The approach is not a purely formal one

The European Economic Area currently seems restricted to discussion for the most part. Nevertheless, an informal system of cooperation is already well established in the form of the 'Luxembourg process' (launched in 1984 on the initiative of Mr. Delors), which involves top level meetings with EFTA countries.

How will this affect Eurostat's Statistical Programme?

'From 1993 onwards the Statistical Programme will have to be discussed within the context of the EEA and not considered solely in terms of the Community. This means that, in drawing up the Programme for 1993-1997, we are obliged to include EFTA members in projects which are considered pertinent to the EEA.

How will this affect trade?

Is there a danger that one country might favour or adopt a particular approach over another ?

The countries are ready to adopt our classifications. Sweden was in the process of developing a new industrial activity classification, but they halted this project and decided instead to adopt the NACE. The Finns were slightly more advanced than the Swedes and were not able to terminate their project as quickly. They required a longer period of transition. Nevertheless, they are all turning towards our classification which is the most important thing.

The means to an end

'The EFTA countries are willing to participate in our work on

classifications. Very shortly, an EFTA expert will join Eurostat to get to work on the NACE. A second expert will also join us to work on the European System of National Accounts'.

Cooperation with EFTA member countries in the field of statistics really seems to be steaming ahead.

¹ Interview (13 August 1991) with Klaus Reeh, Head Administrator of Unit OS-1 (Programming and Resource Management) at Eurostat.

M ISSIONS – VISITS – MEETINGS

■ July 1991 began with the 5th meeting of the GNP Supervisory Committee, at which a decision was taken on the definition of the economic territory of the Member States for the implementation of the Directive on GNP. It was noted that, with the exception of Portugal, all the Member countries had produced a detailed list of sources and methods used in the calculation of the Gross National Product. Other topics discussed at the meeting included the treatment of income from accommodation rental and the structure of the report for the Council proposed in the Directive.

■ At the end of June 1991, Eurostat was host to a delegation from the Statistical Office of the Soviet Union (Goskomstat), headed by Vice President Nevzov. The objectives of the visit were twofold :

- to extend to Eurostat the co-operation already enjoyed by DGXXI regarding external trade statistics; and
- to develop a system for co-operation in other fields of statistics.

■ Eurostat played an active role in the International Conference on Statistics on Tourism, held in Ottawa from 25 to 28 June 1991.

The conference resulted in the elaboration of a general group of definitions on national and international tourism, as well as a classification system for tourism activities in line with international economic classification systems (ISIC, NACE).

Development of the concept of a 'satellite account' for tourism was also emphasised.

The recommendations of the Conference included developing indicators related to tourism and establishing a supervisory body to coordinate the tasks required to implement recommendations in the private sector.

As well as facilitating international cooperation within the field of tourism statistics, the mission served to establish contacts with the Statistical Offices of Canada and the United States and with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). This has paved the way for close future cooperation in the development of the methodology for tourism statistics and information exchange.

■ The Working Group of the Committee for Agricultural Statistics on 'Statistics on Animal Products' met on 19 June to continue its discussion of the 'screening' of agricultural statistics. As well as evaluating the current situation regarding statistics on milk and milk products, the Group also examined the degree of relevance of certain statistical data.

Consideration was also given to the possibility of creating new data series, or of adding sub-divisions which might improve the statistical interpretation of developments in the dairy products market (e.g. 'low fat' products).

Having considered the complexity of all possible transformations of the primary product, the Member States proposed that a manual be drawn up, clarifying related definitions and specific technical details.

The story behind the synthesis:

A SOCIAL PORTRAIT OF EUROPE

Many of the events and upheavals which have recently taken place – some of them close to home – will affect our lives in a way which we should be able to both anticipate and quantify. This was one of the reasons which motivated Eurostat to publish *A social portrait of Europe*, a booklet which provides us with a great deal of learning material.¹

A project like this will be a long-term undertaking. What were the reasons behind its launch?

The Unit concerned with 'Social Syntheses' is relatively new to Eurostat. It was set up some 3 years ago, with the aim of gathering and disseminating social statistics with a global perspective.

The work can be divided into two main blocks:

- creating a solid statistical foundation for social statistics; this involves collecting basic statistical data which are up to date and which can be used for comparisons and making these available to persons and organisations interested in obtaining social data, via a variety of media. *A social portrait of Europe* is one such medium of information; and:
- carrying out specific analyses on the basis of these statistics, especially in areas involving the implementation of Community policies.

Where did the idea for the new layout come from?

The presentation of *A social portrait of Europe* was taken from another of our publications, namely *Europe in Figures*. Our aim (in which we have also apparently

succeeded) was to produce a statistical publication which would be a pleasure to read and which, at the same time, would encourage people to find out more about statistics, while increasing their understanding of what the subject involves.

How were the relevant statistical series for different subjects selected?

The basic idea was to present the 'cream' of social statistics to the widest possible public, which involved a number of practical problems. For example, at the outset, as in legal practice, the unsatisfactory nature of certain information obliged us to eliminate a number of areas from our field of inquiry. Then, when we wanted to obtain social data at an aggregate level, we became aware of the fact that there were a number of areas in which there were no statistics which could be compared on a European basis. The field of legal statistics was one such area. We face the same problem with additional subjects we hope to include in future: for subjects which provide few, if any, statistics on a European basis, we only have access to non-harmonised data.

How does Eurostat evaluate the success of a publication like this?

Obviously, from the number of copies we sell. A successful publication, will be re-edited and supplemented either with more detailed studies of the subjects which were perhaps given little attention in the existing edition, or by including additional chapters such as law, transport, etc.

Apart from its chief objective of providing users of statistics with information, what other aims does Eurostat have in publishing a synthesis like this?

A project like this leads to constant self-analysis, because we are using our own data. We struggled to produce each one of the tables we published, but the advantage of analysing our work in this perpetually critical manner is that we have been able to put the finger on specific inadequacies in the data, as well as missing series, or data which are insufficient for users' needs. Sometimes, we also noticed that by trying to compare different data series, we were coming up against tremendous difficulties, due to methodological incompatibilities. Carrying out a project like this in collaboration with statisticians responsible for producing the figures we need, has made each one of us think about the use of the output he or she is producing and to constantly re-view the question of utility....

***A social portrait of Europe* should provide political decision-makers with a great deal of information. Do you expect much feedback from them?**

Yes, and we await it with considerable interest. We also hope that the publication will emphasise the need to consider economic and social policy together. In the chapter on 'Standard of living', for example, we noticed that economic statistics were constructed in such a way that it was often extremely difficult to use them in a social context. We believe that the need to establish such links will become increasingly pressing in future.

The weakness of current comparisons between economic and social factors often means that they are treated independently of one another, even when they are considered together. Opinions on this matter diverge or can be completely at odds: in one case the approach is enterprise oriented, while in the other the focus is on the individual and combining these two elements is not an easy task.

From your study of Europe in a social context, have you been able to draw any conclusions on major divergences between economies at national or regional levels?

Although we did notice significant disparities, the main factor that came across was an increasingly obvious convergence between countries on both the social and the economic front. Would that really be due to European integration? Or would it have come about in any case? Possibly. Whatever the cause, the pace of integration is clearly accelerating.

Is there more of a risk involved in forecasting the evolution of society than there is in providing prospects for the economy?

The time horizons are quite different in each case. In demographic studies, for example, a time horizon of 20 to 40 years would not be at all misleading. When a man or woman is born, we know that he or she will live for around 60 to 80 years on this earth. We can therefore foresee a number of needs: a house, a job, education, a pension, social security etc; all these elements are easily anticipated. That's the main advantage. With economic forecasts however, it is rare to consider an horizon exceeding 3 years.

These subjects are bound to be given major attention at the international conference organised by Eurostat and the Luxembourg authorities which will take place

in Luxembourg between 27 and 29 November next year. The theme of the conference is 'Human capital in Europe at the dawn of the 21st century' but the debate will not be restricted to demography alone. A number of other subjects will also be discussed:

- employment and unemployment
- education and training during the life cycle
- new family structures
- the place of women in our society
- the place of foreigners and migrants in society
- the ageing population
- the problem of exclusions, etc.

Are there any other projects waiting in the wings?

Yes, there are. Our unit is due to publish the results of a project covering different aspects of the social situation of women within the Community. Another publication with a monographing presentation will deal with the handicapped. We are also carrying out important studies on migrants and migration. All these subjects present major challenges for Europe at the outset of the next century and many of them will be in the social sphere.

¹ Interview of 9 August 1991 with Mr. Bernard Langevin, Head of Unit for 'Social Syntheses' and Bettina Knauth, Administrator.

International conference to be held in Luxembourg from 27 to 29 November 1991 under the aegis of Eurostat and the Luxembourg Government.

'HUMAN RESOURCES IN EUROPE AT THE DAWN OF THE 21ST CENTURY'



To determine, analyse and discuss the risks and to forecast likely developments between 2000 and 2020 on a firmly multidisciplinary basis. The basic aim of this conference is to pinpoint the options which will turn human resources at the dawn of the 21st century into a real asset.

Aims

To reduce the risks and challenges that will affect human resources at the dawn of the next century in the European Community; to analyse, with the help of scientists, their demographic, economic and sociological components; and to discuss, with the help of political and economic decision makers, strategies to be implemented now: these are the three aims of the conference, resolutely facing the future.

The conference is organised at the initiative of Eurostat in conjunction with the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the European Commission of the European Communities.

In the presence of HRH the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, the opening address will be given by Mr Henning Christophersen, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities, followed by addresses by Mr Enrique Barón Crespo, President of the European Parliament, and Mr Jacques Santer, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

After the scientific work of the conference has been completed, Mr Jacques Delors, President of the Commission of the European Communities, will address the conference on the subject of 'European society in the 21st century'.

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 27 November 1991

09.30 – 10.30 Opening session

in the presence of H.R.H. the Grand Duke of Luxembourg

Opening address by *Mr Henning CHRISTOPHERSEN*, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities

Address by *Mr Enrique BARÓN CRESPO*, President of the European Parliament

Address by *Mr Jacques SANTER*, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

1st session: Europeans at the crossroads of time and space

11.00 – 12.30 In the Chair: *Massimo LIVI-BACCI*, President of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Liège

The place of Europe
Jacques LESOURNE, Director of "Le Monde", Paris

Time in the lives of Europeans at the dawn of the 21st century
Eric VERBOGH, Deputy Director of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin

2nd session: Changes and discontinuities in the demographic process

14.30 – 17.30 In the Chair: *Charlotte HÖHN*, Director of the Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, Wiesbaden

The future of fertility; possible measures and their effectiveness
Gérard CALOT, Director of the Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, Paris

The development of longevity and life expectancy in good health
Graziella CASELLI, Università "La Sapienza", Roma

Viviana EGIDI, Università de Trieste, Trieste
Intra-Community migration and its impact on demographic structures at regional level
Phil REES, University of Leeds, Leeds

Extra-Community migration and the future of foreign populations
Georges TAPINOS, Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, Paris

European demographic system of the future: convergence or diversification?
David COLEMAN, University of Oxford, Oxford

19.00 Concert by the European Community Choir, followed by a dinner given by the Commission of the European Communities

Thursday, 28 November 1991

3rd session: Development of human resources

09.00 – 12.30 In the Chair: *Jo WALGRAVE*, President of the Conseil National du Travail, Brussels

The future of the family
Louis ROUSSEL, Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, Paris

The respective roles of men and women in tomorrow's Europe
Kathleen KIERNAN, Family Policy Studies Center, London

Women on the labour market at the dawn of the 21st century
Danièle MEULDERS, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels

Working parents in Sweden: an example for Europe?

Eva BERNHARDT, Demographic Unit, University of Stockholm, Stockholm

The role of training throughout life
Hywel Ceri JONES, Director of the Task Force on Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth, Commission of the EC, Brussels

4th session: Labour market

14.30 - 17.30 In the Chair: *Alvaro ESPINA MONTERO*, Secretario general de empleo y seguridad social, Madrid

The new types of work
Guy STANDING, International Labour Organization, Genève

Labour requirements and structures from the company's viewpoint
Peter MEYER-DOHM, Leiter der Abteilung Zentrales Bildungswesen der Volkswagen AG, Wolfsburg

Main trends in the labour market and matching supply and demand

Friedrich BUTTLER, Director of the Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, Nürnberg

Human resources in Eastern Europe – potential reserves

Lazlo HABLICSEK, Deputy Director of the Demographic Research Institute, Budapest

The ageing of the workforce: a comparison of government policy in Germany, France, Sweden and the Netherlands

Joop SCHIPPERS, Economic Institute of Utrecht University, Utrecht

Jacques SIEGERS, Economic Institute of Utrecht University, Utrecht

19.00 Dinner given by the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Friday, 29 November 1991

5th session: Three challenges for the future

09.00 – 12.30 Panel discussion

The ageing of European society

Michel LORIAUX, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve

Debate chaired by *Lady Susan GREENGROSS*, General Secretary of Eurolink-Age, London

GREENGROSS, General Secretary of Eurolink-Age, London

The problem of exclusions

Lee RAINWATER, Harvard University, Cambridge, Ma.

Debate chaired by *Mr Anthony ATKINSON*, London School of Economic and Political Science, London

A place for migrants and foreigners

Klaus F. ZIMMERMANN, Universität München, München

Thomas STRAUBHAAR, Universität Basel, Basel

Debate chaired by *Mr Dirk J. VAN DE KAA*, Director of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Wassenaar

14.30 – 16.00 European society in the 21st century

by *Mr Jacques Delors*, President of the Commission of the European Communities, Brussels

Closing address

by *Mr Yves Franchet*, Director-General of Eurostat, Luxembourg

Themes

The conference will study Europe and its human resources from demographic, economic and social viewpoints. This is broken down into five main themes:

1) Europeans at the crossroads of time and space

On the basis of an historical review, an analysis of the spatial dimension will open the way to a study of the Europe of tomorrow. What will be its major regions? What will be its place in the world? What will tomorrow's Europeans be like? Can we forecast the changes which will affect their living and working conditions? How might work and leisure be divided, and what might be the quality of life at the beginning of the 21st century?

2) Changes and discontinuities in the demographic process

This session will concentrate on demographic developments in order to pinpoint trends, so that the human resources of tomorrow can be estimated. Will populations develop towards greater unity or towards regional diversity?

3) Development of human resources

The third session aims to establish a link between strictly demographic resources, and human resources in their socio-economic dimension. Pride of place will be given to the family, the new forms of which might prove essential for the future, and we shall look at the possible development of the role of men and women in the society of the 21st century. Lifelong training would seem essential if the gap between demographic potential and human resources is to be bridged successfully.

4) Labour market

The fourth session will define the main trends in the labour market and its future structures, after which the problem of matching human resources and the labour market shall be dealt with.

5) Challenges for the future

A panel discussion made up of people from political, scientific or business backgrounds will discuss three 'challenges' Europe will be faced with in the future:

- the ageing of European society
- the problem of exclusions
- a place for migrants and foreigners

Organisation

The conference will take place at the Hemicycle in the European Centre.

There will be simultaneous translations into English, French, German and Spanish.

Participants may submit written communications on the topics covered in the various themes of the conference.

Applications

Registration forms and complementary information may be obtained from the following address.

CEPS/Instead
Anne-Marie Danon
Danielle Hemmerling
Boîte postale 65
L-7201 Walferdange

Tel.: (352) 33 32 33 – 255
Fax.: (352) 33 34 52

BASIC STATISTICS OF THE COMMUNITY

Publication of the 28th edition – A source of reference

As the completion of the single market draws near, it is more important than ever to be able to identify clearly the principal statistical parameters of the 12 Member States. This is the aim of *Basic statistics*: to provide readers with data on the similarities and differences within the European Community.

This annual publication of about 300 pages, produced in pocket-size format and in each of the 9 official Community languages, serves as a quick reference, enhanced by colour graphs, to the basic economic and social indicators of the Community.

Statistics are classified by chapter and subdivided into sections:

- Economy and finance (national and regional accounts, finance, balance of payments);

- Population and social conditions (population, education, employment, social protection);
- Energy and industry (industrial production, energy, iron and steel);
- Agriculture, forestry and fisheries (production, consumption, balances, structure, prices, economic accounts, fisheries);
- Foreign trade;
- Services and transport;
- Environment.

After each set of general indicators more specific indicators are used, where possible, to present a more detailed picture of the situation (branches of activity, regions, etc.)

The graphs are presented to offer readers an instant visual

comparison between the various States or groups of States.

Basic statistics clearly sets out the main aggregates for each Member State, for EUR12 as a whole as well as comparisons between a number of other European countries, (Turkey, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Finland), plus the main economic trade partners of the world (the United States, Canada, Japan and the USSR.)

Due to the dramatic changes in Germany in 1990, a GDR supplement covering demography, unemployment, industry and foreign trade appears in this edition.

Basic statistics is available from all sales offices of the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: ECU 8.50.

EURECO

The first collection of European educational material presented in database form...

Presented on diskette, Eureco is a comprehensive book on the economies of Europe and is the result of a broad collaboration between Eurostat and the Working Committee on Economics Education in EC countries.

Starting with data supplied by Eurostat and extracted from CRONOS (general economic information section), data is presented in tables organised by country and by indicator. Presented in SECOS-2 format, data is easily accessible by following a step-by-step guide.

Subjects covered are: population, employment, national accounts – principal aggregates, production, public finance, foreign trade and the balance of payments. Data is annually updated.

An accompanying manual, guide to methodology, features explanations on the organisation of data and certain aspects on their manipulation.

Introductory exercises on Community data are also featured in the manual. These are intended as a support to operations carried out on computer. The exercises also introduce pupils and

students to the uses and interpretations of socio-economic statistics.

The questions in each exercise are followed by suggestions on how to use the data in a highly structured way using Secos-2.

The Eureco pack is now available in French, English and Italian.

Readers interested in this product may obtain further information from Eurostat (bureau d'information, Bâtiment Jean Monnet, B3/089 – tel.: 352-4301-4567); alternatively demonstrations can be given by appointment.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE 1991

Bulgaria – Poland – Romania – Soviet Union – Czechoslovakia – Hungary

This is the first of many new joint projects that Eurostat intends to cultivate with its economic partners in these important areas...

In the *Country reports* series Eurostat has translated into English and French the Statistisches Bundesamt's (the German Government Statistical Office) *Länderberichte* series.

In this collective report, the most up-to-date details are given of the population structures, health and education systems and, particularly, of all the main areas of the economy including industry and agriculture, foreign trade and gainful activity, prices and wages, national accounts, tourism, transport and communications. Whilst the book concentrates on the presentation of data, brief comments are included to clarify certain questions.

A statistical panorama of economic and socio-demographic development trends is provided; the publication equally touches upon some of the more sensitive areas of our future economic partners: currency, public finances and credit.

For the most part, this is the first time that such data is available. It is of particular importance on a commercial level: the 'Eastern market' numbers 385 million inhabitants (of which 288 are from the Soviet Union alone). The production potential of this workforce has been underestimated until now. Moreover, in order to penetrate such a market, it is first necessary to get to know it.

'Once, Europe was divided by two diametrically opposed politico-economic systems. Today, in the wake of the peaceful revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, the countries of the old continent have re-emerged to try to work together to meet the challenges of the present age.

(...) The radical reforms needed in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe must be based on reliable statistics. Relevant and objective statistical information is essential for those making the far-reaching decisions which will enable those countries to achieve a political and economic standing comparable to our own. (...) I hope that this study will be useful to the decision-makers, both economists and politicians, who are playing or will play their part in the enormous task of reconstructing Central and Eastern Europe.¹

Egon Hölder, president of the German Government Statistical Office has described this country report in his own words as 'an indicator for the future in a Europe without frontiers, which borders on the East open for trade, and which shows the possibilities and future perspectives by giving extensive and detailed information on the present.'

He goes on to say in the foreword of the publication: 'This means that statistical information takes on particular significance for planning purposes. But it is not only in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that interest in up-to-date statistics has increased; considerably more emphasis is also being placed on statistics in the West.'

This joint project between the Statistisches Bundesamt and Eurostat, and the way in which it has been presented by those involved, is an encouraging sign of the 'family spirit in European statistics'.

Where possible, the methodology in the practical applications has been adapted to take account of differences in the 'statis-

tical culture' of the countries in question. 'The data from national and international sources have been presented in such a way that it is possible to identify and compare the structures and trends in the individual countries. Strict comparability has not been achieved in all cases, however. Conceptual and methodological peculiarities have been indicated by footnotes and explanatory notes. (...) In many cases (especially in the areas of prices and wages, money, credit and finance and national accounts) methods and classifications differ from those used in other countries.²

Eurostat is coordinating this statistical cooperation between the countries under study, with support from the Group of 24, as well as the PHARE programme of the Commission. The aim is to help those statistical systems, so often incompatible with our own, to evolve and adapt to the new economic system being set-up, both at European and world-wide levels.

This collective report is the first in a series devoted to the individual countries of Central and Eastern Europe which will appear in the coming months.

The English and French versions of this publication can be ordered from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2 rue Mercier, L-2985 Luxembourg. Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: ECU 17.50

The German version costs 36.00 DM and can be obtained from the Verlag Metzler-Poeschel, Stuttgart. Delivery: Hermann Leins GmbH & C KG, Holzwiesenstrasse 2, D-7408 KUSTERDINGEN (fax: 49/70 71 336 53)

¹ Extract from the preface to the publication, signed by Mr. Yves Franchet, Director General of Eurostat.

² Notice, p. 12.



SOCIAL PORTRAIT OF EUROPE

This publication is a new basic instrument, which – through an array of statistical indicators – deepens mutual understanding among Europeans, and paints in bold yet accurate brush-strokes a social portrait of Europe.



Great efforts have been made in diffusing and distributing *A social portrait of Europe*; as this magazine style publication will be for sale in bookshops – something quite unusual for Eurostat's publications.

This attractive publication of about 300 pages has 'user-friendly' texts. These descriptive explanations and graphs were written in order to help readers interpret the numerous statistics and tables, which they have probably never encountered before. The reader can also find out what his European counterparts earn, how much they spend or save, what they do in their spare time, how they live and even who they vote for.

From North to South disparities in standards of living remain considerable and, in some areas, are almost double that of other countries. Eurostat has taken care to calculate such differences in purchasing power standards (PPS), rather than in terms of currency, since this allows data to be presented after correction for differences in price levels between countries.

Gradual convergence of Member States' economies, however, will reduce such inequalities. A higher growth rate in GDP, for example, has been recorded by most of the less-wealthy countries. It is also the countries with the lowest levels of income which have shown the fastest growth.

Whilst Europe's diminishing population is a popular subject, Eurostat has decided to include a complete section on the foreign population in the Community and extra-Community immigration. These are important factors, when one considers that the number of births in the EC fell by 25% between 1960 and

1989, and thus by 2020 the majority of the European population will be made up of old (and single) people.

This is the first time that such an official anthology of the social factors of the European Community has been published.

A social portrait of Europe may well encourage those who are unused to dealing with statistics to explore other statistical areas about which they may have little or no idea. Such people will be pleasantly surprised by the clear presentation of the figures and what they can learn from them. Readers will also encounter Eurobarometer surveys, *rapid reports* and many other statistical tools.

A social portrait of Europe is an introduction to basic social statistics, with references to other publications, data-bases, CD-Rom and other supports.

Reference documents are listed at the end of each chapter under the title 'For further information'. Where possible, methodology and definitions used are also briefly explained.

A social Portrait of Europe can be ordered from the addresses listed at the back of this publication.

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