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Eurostat
Statistical Office
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Bureau d'information
Bâtiment Jean Monnet
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E DITORIAL

The Treaty of Maastricht, particularly the third part entitled 'Community policies', emphasizes that the convergence of the Member States' economic policies with a view to establishing economic and monetary union requires accurate monitoring on a permanent and comparable basis.

In this task, statistical information plays an essential part.

The statistical programme that ended on the eve of the advent of the single market has achieved a great many things through the combined efforts of all concerned. We must persevere resolutely in these efforts: Community statistics will be of valuable assistance to Europe, particularly in addressing one of the greatest challenges facing mankind at the end of the 20th century, namely the protection of the environment.

The time has come to launch a new framework programme of priority actions for the years to come. This programme must comply with one of the fundamental principles of European integration, now enshrined in the Treaty – the principle of subsidiarity, which applies as much in the distribution of responsibilities as it does in the division of labour.

Statistics that are clear, easy to understand and available to all are one of the conditions for the proper operation of democracy: we need information at the service of society as a whole.

Framed in this spirit, a new statistical law will confirm the key role of Eurostat in a pan-European information system open to Community and non-Community countries alike, the development of which will be actively pursued in the context of the European Union.

Henning Christophersen

**Vice-President of the Commission
of the European Communities**

A NEW PROGRAMME FOR A NEW PHASE

Interview with Mr Yves Franchet

Statistics require a complex infrastructure. Statistical work demands detailed planning. With a growing number of activities carried out jointly with the Member States, Eurostat work places an increasing burden on national statistical programmes. To ensure that all this work can be properly integrated into the multiannual programmes of the Member States, it is important to encourage all concerned, both users and providers of European statistics, to adopt a global outlook in both the short and medium term.

FROM ONE CHALLENGE TO THE NEXT

The 1989–92 statistical programme has drawn to a close. An assessment of its achievements will be carried out in the first half of 1993 by an agency independent of the Commission.

'We can already affirm that all its major objectives have been attained. The programme was taken very seriously by both Eurostat and the Member States. In all areas in which priority actions were undertaken, distinct progress was made, though different partners moved at different speeds, depending on the particular difficulties they faced.

In addition, we had to deal with a large number of unforeseen events: the explosion of our activities at international level, closer links with EFTA, assistance to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the former USSR, etc. But, together, we managed to stay the course. All the partners in the ESS (European statistical system) can be proud of having risen to the challenge.'

Between 1989 and 1992, cooperation grew considerably. Community statistics now cover a far wider field than before, and therefore require more careful planning. Controlling the development of the ESS means looking several years ahead, establishing an overall framework within which annual programmes, which place greater constraints on all parties, determine as accurately as possible the costs involved and the legislation required.

What were the initial objectives proposed by the Directorate General of Eurostat when the new programme was drafted? Were these general guidelines for the next five years adopted?

'In terms of guidelines, the period 1989–92 was devoted to setting up the statistical infrastructure for the single market, which has re-

cently come into being. For 1993–97, the general thrust is dictated by the Maastricht agreements: the enhancement of European integration. We have attempted to determine the statistical requirements of the various stages of this process. These general guidelines, in course of adoption, are ones that the Commission is implementing on the instructions of the Council and with the backing of the Parliament. Since the initial discussions, changes have been made, in particular, to accommodate the Maastricht decisions, which have led to the adoption, in consultation with the various political DGs of the Commission, of a series of adjustments in certain sectors, areas of activity and special fields.'

A MUTUAL AGREEMENT

The statistical programme now takes the form of a framework programme setting out general guide-lines for actions in each policy area. Is it intended to impose fewer constraints than before on the members of the ESS?

A framework programme

'The type of "constraint" has changed. It is impossible to programme, over a period of five years, a series of actions that must all be accomplished by the end of the period. From the start, the programme must confine itself to establishing a consensus as to the sequence of actions, the implementation of which will then depend on the progress of political agreements, the availability of resources, the conditions on the ground in each country, the capacity of the Member States to carry out the proposed actions and at what speed.

For this reason, we should not speak of "constraints", but of a mutual agreement regarding a series of tasks, the importance of which is acknowledged by all parties in the process of building the ESS.'

An innovation: the annual programme

An annual programme will now be drafted in close concert with the Directors-General of the national statistical systems, setting out in detail the actions to be carried out in the short term.

The annual programme appears to be an innovation. How has this been received by the NSIs?

'The new programme entails asking the SPC² each year to approve a detailed programme of activities and related legislative work. Such detailed short-term planning has not been carried out on a systematic basis before. We now take greater care to ensure that the Member States incorporate the planned actions more thoroughly into their own national programmes, from the point of view of both budgeting and implementation.

In clarifying in this manner the intentions of the Commission and Eurostat and drawing attention to the instruments required to achieve them, we hope to improve significantly the quality of communication and the efficiency of action.

This system of annual programming has been warmly welcomed by the NSIs. Though 1993 will in certain respects be a trial period, the system should run far more smoothly next year and will have become routine by 1995.

Greater clarity

Within Eurostat's organization, the new system means that activities will have to be planned in greater detail. From now on, in May of each year, a draft programme of activities will be presented for the following year. Thus, in May 1993, when the SPC meets in Dublin, an initial list of activities for 1994 will be submitted.

These initial objectives will be open to discussion from May until November so that they can be incorporated into each of the programmes concerned at national or Community level. The creativity and precision of the planning process therefore needs to be enhanced: our directors, heads of unit and officials at all levels are aware that their programming must be much more detailed. Everyone will benefit at the end of the day. The increased clarity will improve relations between the

Member States and the Commission. Both sides will be better able to situate themselves in relation to the objectives and thus take part in the combined effort on the basis of a true consensus.

In introducing greater flexibility into working procedures between the Member States and the Commission, we are making every effort to ensure, above all, that the principle of subsidiarity, the importance of which is strongly underlined in the Maastricht agreements, is properly applied wherever possible.'

Quality programming

What implications should be brought to the attention of the staff of Eurostat?

'In view of the amount of work involved, the new programme is significantly more demanding than the old one. The staff will have to adapt the rhythm of their work to that of the new system of programming. The objectives are defined in March, presented to the SPC in May, discussed from May to November and the programme finalized in November. This new timetable will set the pace for the whole organization of work.

Another message, on which I wish to lay great stress, is quality. The availability of data is of paramount importance, as is the quality that our users expect.'

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PARTNERS

In implementing this programme, what does Eurostat expect from its preferential partners?

The other departments of the Commission

'All the DGs were closely involved in drafting the new programme and can identify in it the operations they requested. I expect them to follow up their requests, to comply with the timetable and, by providing financial backing or cofinancing, to participate in the implementation not only of the operations planned, but also of those that were not planned but have become necessary because of unforeseen events. Various forms of partnership have become a traditional feature of the Commission's operations.

From the DGs as a whole, I also expect all statistical work to be incorporated into the programme. Set up in 1992, the CDIS, the first meetings of which have been a resounding success, provides a means of presenting all statistical operations to the Member States in a coordinated fashion and preventing uncoordinated operations from burdening unduly the national systems or calling unnecessarily on the services of outside contractors.

The members of the CDIS had the opportunity to appreciate how much coordination can help them. This realization has led to a very positive change of attitude.'

The Council

'From the members of the Council, I expect better understanding of the need for statistics, which underpin their political work. While this need is well understood at the Commission, the Council all too often seems to consider statistics an administrative problem.

I would like to see the Council discuss the utility of statistics and their financial requirements in greater depth. The enhanced clarity of our activities will perhaps prompt such discussions, as will the deliberations on subsidiarity.

Aware of the Council's misgivings about the proliferation of legislation, we have also introduced greater clarity as to the nature of our statistical legislation: why is it necessary, what is its scope, what are its objectives? I am very interested in the exchange of views we can expect to have with the Council on these matters.'

The European Parliament

'So far, the Parliament has always been a great supporter of statistics. It has been well aware of the need for objective figures on the building of the Community. Yet, in the name of subsidiarity, the Parliament has expressed doubts about the resources channelled into statistics. I do not understand this signal. We are therefore going to resume our exchange of views with the Parliament and attempt to resolve these misunderstandings with renewed discussion on the subject of "statistics and democracy".

I feel this to be a very important issue for the Parliament. Democracy within the Community cannot

be properly managed without a good Community statistical system. The signals we are currently receiving from the Parliament on this subject are different from those we received in the past. We must therefore resolve this ambiguity.'

The Economic and Social Committee

'I expect the members of the ESC (and the CEIES), once they have approved the broad lines of the statistical programme, to study its implementation and discuss the role of statistics in European integration. I expect them to view our work with a critical eye and let us have their suggestions in the various fields we cover. I expect a great deal from their comments and feel this kind of critical examination to be essential for the consolidation of the statistical system: what is the role of statistics in European democracy as all the economic and social partners see it?'

The users: they are partners too!

Building the ESS is a question of partnership. And this does not only apply to the 'preferential' partners, whose contribution has been discussed above. Our message to the business world, and especially the professional organizations, is that the Commission wishes them to be more and more closely involved in the implementation of the statistical programme.

One of the achievements of the previous programme, of which we are particularly proud, is the development of a product list (Prodcom) that goes a long way towards meeting the needs of enterprises and professional associations. It is in this direction that business statistics must develop: in close association with the businesses themselves. We are keen to develop this approach further.'

PRIORITIES

Eurostat's programme of work is divided into 7 policy areas, 72 themes and 238 modules. On what basis were priorities assigned within the programme?

'The policy areas and the 72 themes each correspond to a priority for the Community institutions. That is the structure requested by the Council, the Parliament and

the Commission. We cannot really talk about one policy having priority over another: it's a complete package.

Implementation

The programme assigns priorities to actions and their implementation rather than to policies.

The implementation of the sectoral programmes is obviously subject to budgetary constraints, at both Community and Member State level. Priority will be given to:

- completing work in progress and making the most of existing Community structures for collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating current data;
- methodological work: defining standards, classifications and frames of reference;
- collecting existing information in new fields;
- programmes for promoting the development of human resources throughout the Community statistical system;
- developing new techniques and technology for collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating data in order to limit the reporting burden on the statistical units surveyed.'

Avoiding duplication of effort

The implementation of the new sectoral programmes will be preceded by feasibility studies, cost-effectiveness analysis of the methods proposed and cost-benefit analysis of the foreseen results.

'We are often faced with the apparent contradiction that, while enterprises demand more and more information, they are less and less willing to devote the resources necessary to deal with the reporting burden involved.

However, it should be noted that our enquiries reveal that tasks of a purely statistical nature represent only 3 to 5% of the total administrative burden on enterprises. In other words, some 95% of the reporting burden on enterprises concerns non-statistical work.

Nevertheless, not only are we determined to use all the instruments that modern technology places at our disposal (EDI, remote sensing, etc) to lighten the reporting burden, but we also wish to examine with all concerned ways of using, for statistical purposes, the greater part of the administrative information that

enterprises have to supply in any case, subjecting it, wherever possible, to a suitable statistical treatment. This is another way of limiting the reporting burden by avoiding duplication of effort.

Different rates of progress

A significant cause of variations in the implementation of the programme will be the speed of application. This will depend on the state of existing structures in each Member State, the size of the investment required and budgetary resources. These factors will determine different rates of progress, the end-result being that some operations will be more advanced than others.'

The statistical programme is not limited to the implementation of actions relating to particular types of statistics required by users: it also involves structural measures aimed at strengthening the partnership, not only between national and Community structures but also between national organizations, with a view to fostering the development of the European statistical system. What direction will such measures take in the course of the next programme?

'Within the ESS, the principle remains that to improve quality one needs to strengthen the weakest links. The commitment made during the 1989-92 programme to give priority support to the statistical system in Member States where it is least developed has been carried over to the 1993-97 programme.

But it is time to go one step further and strengthen bilateral relations between Member States. With this in mind, for example, over the last two years France and Greece have been engaged in a major bilateral operation involving national accounts. This type of operation could be developed in other countries in other fields, and we will actively encourage such initiatives.

Another development that we support is the exchange of officials between Member States. We intend to promote such exchanges not only between Eurostat and the Member States, but between the Member States themselves. This form of "cross-fertilization" reinforces the cohesion of the whole.

Another phenomenon to which much importance should be attached is statistics in cross-border regions, which aim to cover "economic catchment areas". One example is the Saar-Lorraine-Luxembourg catchment area in which we hope to step up work already in progress on behalf of economic and social operators. In this region multilingual periodicals have already been produced by the regional authorities, comparing their data and attempting to harmonize them. The need to promote this type of initiative will increasingly be felt in all regions of Europe with similar characteristics to this one.'

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

'During the 1989-92 programme, Eurostat's international activities underwent a veritable explosion:

- the agreements signed with the EFTA countries, which have practically adopted the whole Community statistical apparatus, mean that we now have to work not with 12 but with 19 countries;
- the development of major bilateral programmes with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Romania, Poland and Bulgaria have already entered into agreements with us and discussions are forging ahead with other countries; at this level we coordinate the activities of the G-24 Group;
- 14 new presidents of statistical systems in the republics of the ex-USSR have requested our cooperation, technical assistance and support in creating a statistical system for the market economy;
- as a result, we have become the most active international statistical agency. In the light of these developments, we have been prompted to bring our work more into line with that of the United Nations and the OECD, under the aegis of the Conference of European Statisticians.

The changes induced by this four-fold explosion, as regards the adaptation of our services and structures, were made in the 1989-92 period. The task is now to administer and consolidate these

changes, which, it should be remembered, were quite unexpected only a short time ago.

The internationalization of our activities is a development that cannot be attributed to any desire on the part of the Commission to dominate the international statistical scene. We have had this impact on the operation of the world statistical system because our work, first with 12 and later with 19 partners, has dealt with issues that have engaged the interest of a great number of countries. Statistical organizations worldwide have also become aware of the need to develop close partnerships, particularly with the UN statistical system.'

AND IN 1997 ... ?

Assuming that the objectives of the new programme are achieved by 1997, where will that leave the ESS and Eurostat? What major difficulties will have been overcome?

The future face of the ESS

'First of all, it will be a system in which the principle of subsidiarity will operate effectively. Secondly, it will be one in which creative thinking has led to new forms of partnership wherever possible, in which the members of the system get together in groups of two or three to exchange points of view and suggest improvements whenever possible. Our role as a catalyst does not always need to operate from the centre outwards.

I expect great things, for example, from the agreement with the Member States providing for more frequent meetings of the SPC. More frequent meetings will deal with more topical matters, and this should allow the agenda to be more equally shared between the Commission and the Member States. I would like to see the concerns of the Member States discussed more often and bilateral contacts promoted, which should enhance the integration of the Community statistical system.

By 1997, the single market will be four years old: integration will have moved onto a new plane and will have raised innumerable questions for all concerned. Only by widespread discussion and a systematic search for solutions can we find answers to them. We must act as a clearing-house for

all these concerns: not only those of the Commission, but those of the ESS as a whole.'

Will the CDIS promote the exchange of views with the Commission?

'Without a shadow of doubt! The spirit of cooperation which is already apparent is very encouraging. By 1997, the CDIS will have been in operation for five years. The "freely accepted discipline" that it has introduced should lead to a better understanding and integration of the Commission's questions *vis-à-vis* the system's answers. The CDIS will enable us to make great steps forward.'

Will the CEIES promote the exchange of views with the economic and social partners?

'I dearly hope so! I hope that the CEIES and its work on major macroeconomic, social and microeconomic issues will enable us to develop a more effective exchange of views with the business world and explore various areas of social statistics.

A highly fruitful exchange of opinions must be developed in this field. It is too early to say what form it may take. The current lean structure of the CEIES may have given way, by 1997, to a series of sub-Committees, more permanent, more self-sufficient, less dependent on us, which will discuss among themselves certain complex and difficult questions that require the participation of a greater number of people.'

And what of Eurostat?

'It will probably still be a Commission DG in which the cooperation between national officials on secondment and Community staff will have attained a higher degree of maturity. But the future face of Eurostat will obviously also depend on that of the Commission. All agree that the organizational structure of the Community institutions may have been effective for the Community of Six, but is no longer adequate for the 14 or 15 countries that will belong to the EC by 1997. Eurostat will at all events remain the statistical agency of the Community working in partnership with all the Member States.'

What major difficulties will have been overcome by 1997?

'A significant increase in the resources earmarked for Community statistics will probably be more difficult to engineer in the years to come, even though the demand for essential statistical information is far from satisfied. It is up to us, by maintaining good relations with the Parliament, the Council and the Commission, to constantly draw attention to the essential role of statistics in the integration of our democracies. Adjusting demand to resources will probably be the main difficulty that we will have to overcome.'

From one challenge to the next, the new statistical programme marks the passage to a new phase ...

¹ Interview with Mr Yves Franchet, Director-General of Eurostat, 10 December 1992.

² Statistical programme Committee.

³ Steering Committee for statistical Information.

⁴ European Advisory Committee on Statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres.

THE VIEW FROM WIESBADEN

Interview with Mr Hans Günther Merk

How does the idea of subsidiarity work in official German statistics? How does the German statistical system view the application of this idea to the European statistical system? And with regard to the new statistical programme? The questions and answers can certainly prompt discussion – *Sigma* welcomes contributions.

After graduating in law at the University of Mainz, Hans Günther Merk began his career as a lawyer and became a judge in 1958. He joined the Ministry of the Interior in 1959 and reached Head of Division level in 1982. He was subsequently responsible for policy on sport and the media (in charge of coordinating international and national media policy at Federal level), with special interest in the rights of the press (collaboration with the German association of publishers and journalists). He was appointed President of the Statistisches Bundesamt in July 1992.

IMPACT ON THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM

You are at the head of the official statistical system in Germany and you were involved in the preparation and drafting of the new statistical programme. What impact do you think it is going to have on the European statistical system?

'There is going to be a dual impact: practical (what do we have to develop and perfect?) and structural (involvement of the NSIs in selecting priorities and implementing the programme).

Driving force

While it builds on what we have done before, the statistical programme must also explore the new ground which, as part of the political objectives of the Community, is now the responsibility of European statistics. In this respect, the statistical programme can well be regarded as the driving force of the European statistical system.

Cooperation and involvement

From the structural viewpoint, the decision-making arrangements are to my mind of vital importance for the long-term operation of the European statistical system.

In establishing and formulating priorities, as well as turning the objectives of the programme into actual measures, the Member States and their statistical institutes must be able to cooperate broadly with the services of the Commission.

Also, it is a good idea for the main suppliers and users of information to be involved on an ongoing basis in the discussion process, so that the statistical programme is tailored to their needs. The statistical programme Committee, together with all the other Community statistical bodies, has a new and vital role to play here.'

The new programme stresses the idea of subsidiarity. This has been a major element in the German statistical system for a long time. Is there any way your experience could be of help to the European statistical system?

'Like the State, the structure of statistics in Germany is based on a federal structure. But you have to remember that both structures are based on a single language, a homogeneous culture and administrative practices and traditions which are broadly similar throughout the country.

Where the European system is concerned, the initial situation is quite different, although there are some ideas which could be carried over.

Mutual information and cooperation

The principle whereby each administrative level must have exhausted every avenue of decision and action before referring matters to a higher level, which has the appropriate powers and skills, means that you avoid creating administrative behemoths and centralized bureaucracies which ultimately take on a life of their own.

In the case of statistics, this idea means that the collection and initial processing of statistical data must be done by the services which are in direct and close contact with the sources, i.e. those who are "responsible for providing information". In Germany this means the statistical offices of the *Länder*, while at Community level it means the statistical institutes of the Member States.

As for the harmonization and preparation of standard methods and classifications, this is basically the job of the national statistical institutes in association with Eurostat, with each responsible for its own particular sphere of activity.

When it comes to planning work and establishing priorities, the close involvement of the statistical

offices of the *Länder* in decision-making procedures has been very successful in Germany. This involvement takes the form of prompt information and a continuous exchange of ideas on measures that are planned and on methodological developments.

I feel that our experience can be applied to the Community, and I should like to see a system of mutual information and cooperation among the NSIs developed even further.

Another point is that the bulk of the financial cost of surveys is borne by the *Länder* in Germany. They therefore have a right to be involved in decisions on major statistical aspects for which they are responsible. In this regard, I am delighted that cost evaluation – and accordingly cost/benefit assessment, in which the Member States are involved – has been incorporated in statistical planning at Community level. It is my view that this information will be very useful in assessing which measures merit priority and which less so.'

TWO-SPEED PROGRESS?

New priority data will be collected in the Member States in accordance with harmonized methods but at different speeds depending on the particular circumstances and available resources of the various Member States. Is there not a risk that this flexibility in the programme may often end up by imposing greater burdens on the better-organized Member States?

Legal basis

'The European statistical system is made up of national systems which are not identical in performance. But in all the Member States, even in those which are lucky enough to have a good infrastructure, official statistics are increasingly running up against the barrier of budgetary restraint, which inevitably has an effect on the harmonization of statistics, especially in the new fields which the Community has targeted.

It is for this reason that I believe that standards, which are the essential basis of harmonization when it comes to defining methods, must have a legal basis. It is also easier to get the necessary

funds included in national statistical budgets if the legal regulations exist.

Same speed for everyone

It is also my view that, bearing in mind not only very different resources in budget terms but also (and especially) the fact that the statistical systems vary greatly from one Member State to another, we have to do no more than is absolutely necessary when it comes to establishing priorities and incorporating the statistical programme. We have to avoid at all costs creating a two-speed European statistical system since in the long term this would doom all our efforts to failure. The statistical system in Europe would be heading for a dead end.

This is why I want to urge users, especially within the Commission, to have another look at their information needs. I should also like to see greater importance accorded to the recommendations and reservations of the Member States regarding the practical application of the Community measures.'

DISTRIBUTED STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The start of a great deal of work designed to develop a distributed statistical information system, involving the EFTA countries as well, has been the subject of discussion recently. Germany is in favour of this development. Why?

Decisive significance

'This project marks a further major step towards our common objective: the integration of the European statistical system. That is why we support this work.

As we see it, there can be no doubt that the use of the technical opportunities for interlinking and swapping data with the idea of setting up networks, together with the harmonization of standards, will have decisive significance for the proper operation of the European statistical system. The large-scale project which has been outlined will have more than purely technical consequences, however, although it is too early yet to provide any assessment of the consequences in terms of finance and capacity requirements.

Conditions

Our approval in principle of this project is dependent on a number of conditions:

- A structured basic programme needs to be defined, outlining the involvement of the Member States in all the actions that are planned. This programme will serve as a basis for budget planning which will be as precise as possible.
- In line with the principle of subsidiarity, which underpins this project, there must be an agreed sharing of work between Eurostat and the NSIs of the Member States. It cannot be compromised by any new techniques for gathering or compiling data, with some of the work of collecting or producing statistics transferred to the Community, for example.
- The principles of statistical confidentiality cannot be threatened or restricted by networking techniques. This is a risk which is inherent in all advanced technologies using networks. We have to be aware of the risk.
- We have to make proper and responsible use of technical advances for sourcing statistical information and exchanging data. The existence of new networks and of more sophisticated transmission techniques must not overload the collection system with a surfeit of information.

If these general conditions are borne in mind – and for us they are a vital prerequisite for the success of the project – we are ready to go along with the objective of the project.'

MONETARY AND BUDGETARY PRIORITIES

Fundamental role of the CMFB

The Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics (CMFB) has a fundamental priority role in the formulation, implementation and assessment of sectoral statistical programmes. What are your comments on this role of the committee, and what are your expectations?

'The job of the CMFB is to monitor economic processes which are assuming increasing importance in modern economies. These statistical fields are traditionally covered

by the central banks, and the CMFB provides a good way of coordinating the statistical work carried out by these banks and the NSIs.

What we expect the CMFB to deliver in practical terms is a harmonization of these statistics. The committee and its working groups will not only have to ensure the comparability of statistics (banking statistics, for example) among the various Member States of the Community and those in the EEA but will also need to see that there is better harmonization (in the way of collection methods and variables covered) of monetary, financial and balance of payments statistics, which have developed separately in the past.'

Harmonization of indicators

In assessing the convergence of the various economies (one of the tasks imposed by the move towards economic and monetary union), performance analysis is complicated by the lack of harmonization of current indicators, especially in the budget deficit area. What practical measures can the NSIs, and especially the Statistisches Bundesamt, take along with Eurostat to rectify matters from now on?

'The convergence criteria defined in the Maastricht Treaty are a political fact as far as European statistics is concerned. On this basis, it is up to the statistical system to develop assessment tools which are comparable from one Member State to another.

I might add that developing statistically recordable values on the basis of abstract political or scientific concepts is one of the fundamental tasks of statistics. The same goes for the concept of "budgetary deficit" in the sense in which it is used in the Maastricht Treaty.

In defining statistical values which are internationally comparable, we can draw on our experience in other fields, such as national economic accounts.

Whatever the case, there is a need to call on the joint expertise of statisticians and budget experts. If we are going to make comparable convergence indicators available to all the Member States, we need to have the concepts, definitions and methods of

calculation harmonized, with the Member States required to abide by them.'

The Committee of Governors

The work of the Committee of Governors of the Central Banks is currently being developed to ensure that the EMI (European Monetary Institute) and the planned ECB (European Central Bank) can perform their jobs, as outlined in the new statistical programme. In your opinion, what are the main legislative proposals on which the Committee of Governors should be consulted by the Commission?

'During this century Germany has had to cope with two periods of inflation, and it is only against this historical background that the special importance which is given to a stable currency in our national economy and to the Bundesbank as an institution responsible for economic policy can be understood.

With regard to the role of monetary stability and the role of the European Central Bank, important declarations were included in the Maastricht Treaty, with the agreement of all the Member States.

In fulfilling its role as guardian of monetary stability, the ECB must have access to statistical information. The primary question the Commission must therefore put to the Committee of Governors of the Central Banks is as follows: Is the European statistical system capable of providing the ECB with the data it needs to do its job? If the answer is no, then the first thing we have to do is remedy the existing shortcomings.'

REGIONAL AID

Aid to the least favoured regions requires very precise, and especially comparable, statistical information throughout Europe. What is the situation regarding regional statistics in Germany now? Is the regional statistical set-up in Germany going to be any different from what was in place until the end of 1992?

'It goes without saying that substantial financial aid cannot be handed out to the regions in an objective and efficient manner unless we have decision-making tools in the form of suitable

regional indicators which are comparable at European level. In the case of Germany, what we have to do as a matter of priority is to remedy the serious information shortcomings of the new *Länder*.

Limits of regional relevance

However, if you make a tremendous effort to expand and break down the information which is needed for a more regionalized approach to Community policies in general and for the structural Funds in particular, you quickly run up against the limits of regional relevance. This is particularly true for sample surveys.

A considerable effort is therefore needed – along the same lines, for example, as what we have done in the last few years with regard to microcensuses (which abound in statistics) – with the aim of achieving a better regionalization of the results of sample surveys by means of appropriate statistical methods and procedures.

This need is all the greater since, in Germany as elsewhere, comprehensive surveys, and especially geographical censuses (very suitable if you are looking for statistical information from a very limited area), are being increasingly queried as far as the traditional methods of conducting them are concerned.

Also, with regard to every aspect of regional policy and statistics, responsibility and the potential for implementation will always be looked at carefully, with the idea of applying the principle of subsidiarity.'

SOCIAL DOMAIN

In the social domain, the advent of the internal market threatens to accelerate changes for which the European economies are not always ready. From the viewpoint of subsidiarity, what are the domains/topics/concerns which European social statistics should now tackle as a matter of priority, especially in the case of Germany?

'The alterations which the introduction of the internal market is going to bring to the social domain may vary greatly in nature. It is not yet possible to get a very clear picture. A whole series of statistics which are already being compiled,

as well as others which are being prepared, are going to make it possible to see how the situation is developing. By way of example, look at the Community labour force survey, the Community household panel and the study of poverty indicators.

Migration and ageing

Prominent among the topics which European social statistics should now be dealing with are the presentation and analysis of migratory movements, which have to be observed along the north-south route as well as from east to west.

The harmonization of legislative measures to control the movements of people needs in particular to make a distinction on the basis of the reason for migration and to separate, for example, those seeking asylum from refugees. In Germany 438,000 people requested asylum in 1992, up from 256,000 the year before. These figures point to the importance of this phenomenon and its repercussions.

Another objective, the successful integration of resident foreigners, requires the development of a statistical apparatus to assess the extent of integration in the different areas of economic and social life.

Another important aspect of European social statistics is the continuous observation and analysis of the ageing process among the population and its effects in the various areas of society, in view of the continued low birth rate.

The statistical system in Germany is well equipped to deal with these two topics. Information is inadequate only when it comes to the reasons for migration and the proposed length of stay.

If we look at social benefits in general, statistics on social protection indicate breakdown by function. It would be preferable if these statistics could be supplemented by information on the recipients of benefits.

Given the widely differing social systems and benefits from one country to another, it is vital – again with subsidiarity in mind – for social statistics at national level to reflect the specific systems in each country. These statistics have to provide data which are relevant to each country and

which ultimately serve as the basis for decisions in the area of social policy. Take as an example the whole area of social transfers, or such widely differing systems as education and training.

It is not possible to draw a simple analogy between the harmonization at European level of economic statistics and the same process with regard to social statistics. This would be to disregard structures and powers which have accumulated over the years, and indeed it would be like trying to compare apples and pears.'

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Environmental policy is becoming a major European policy. What does the Statistisches Bundesamt expect from Eurostat in order to cope with the demand for information in this field, which has become even more sensitive with the opening of the single market?

'Environmental protection and policy can no longer be dealt with solely at national level. Finding answers for environmental problems, which have scant regard for frontiers, calls for joint efforts and international cooperation.

This is borne out by the legislative actions and measures which the Community has taken in various areas of environmental policy.

Where information is concerned – a vital element in any policy – Eurostat has already done a lot. The Statistisches Bundesamt considers the development of the SERIEE system combining economic and environmental data to be of prime importance.

Main topics

If we look at the Community work programme for environmental statistics for 1993–97, we ought to note in particular:

- organization of statistical surveys on waste, based on Community legislation;
- organization of surveys on expenditure by industry for environmental protection ('green industries');
- creation of registers of emissions and waste in various branches of the economy, in collaboration with the European Environment Agency;

- harmonization of statistics on expenditure for environmental protection and on R&D spending for environmental protection;
- calculation of environment-related indicators based on relevant statistics in the fields of transport, raw materials, energy, agriculture and tourism;
- involvement in international work on global economic systems for the environment (satellite accounts, in particular).

Broad collaboration

It would also be a good idea if there could be more detailed discussion at Eurostat on the possibilities of expanding national accounts to take in the environment. However, in our view, the traditional economic accounts should stay as they are. Any expansion should be in the form of supplementary accounts.

Collaboration with the statistical office of the United Nations, which has already formulated some proposals in this area, would be a good idea. The Statistisches Bundesamt supports this work, both by offering the results of its experience in Germany with the law on environmental statistics and by being involved in the methodological work. International discussion will also have a positive impact on the development of national statistical programmes concerning the environment.'

STATISTICS ON SERVICES

Tremendous changes are planned for statistics on services in the very near future. What are the priorities of the Statistisches Bundesamt in this field? What do you expect from Eurostat, now and in the medium term?

Business services

'Major sectors in the services industry, distributive trades and hotels and catering, as well as the banking and insurance sectors, are more than adequately covered by official statistics in Germany. However, there are still some big gaps in our coverage of business services: informatics, legal and economic advice, technical planning and consultancy, information services, leasing, staff recruitment, etc.

Since these fields have acquired a particular importance in the economy, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs is currently preparing, in collaboration with the Statistisches Bundesamt, a bill on services statistics which will provide for annual surveys of enterprises involved in the provision of business services. This bill should reach the Bundestag in the spring of this year.

Conclusion of preliminary work

Eurostat's preliminary methodological work – what I mainly have in mind here is the manual for statistics on services – was an invaluable help in defining the characteristics of the survey. We are waiting for Eurostat to conclude this preliminary work.

As we see it, special attention has to be given to the needs of the enterprises which are asked to provide statistical information. It would be useful to carry out pilot surveys, like the ones referred to in Council Decision 326/92/EEC of 18 June 1992 establishing a two-year programme (1992 to 1993) for the development of European statistics on services. These statistics should cover economic fields, such as audiovisual services for example, for which there are as yet no regular official statistics in Germany.¹

¹ Interview with Mr Hans Günther Merk, 26 January 1993.

T HE CLIMATE IS RIGHT

Interview with Mr Alberto De Michelis

Apart from any sectoral achievements it might have prompted, the most recent SPEC¹ will have fostered in particular the development of a climate of confidence and collaboration, without which the partners in the statistical system could not have opted for the coordinated approach which is now leading them towards the adoption of a European statistical law.

Alberto De Michelis studied economics and politics at the University of Florence and at the Ipsos institute in Turin before joining the price statistics unit of the Statistical Office in 1963. During his career he has worked in most of the Member States and has been involved in major international negotiations (GATT Kennedy Round) and the introduction of regional and quarterly accounts. He has also spent extended periods in various African countries. In particular, he was involved in the preparation of ACP statistics as part of a European programme designed to provide, in cooperation with the Member States, technical assistance to developing countries in various statistical fields.

After taking over the agriculture division in 1984, he became head of the unit entitled 'planning, budget, relations with other Community institutions and international organizations' in 1988. He is a member of the scientific council of the Munich Centre² and of the Paris-based CESD.³ He is on the administrative board of both the CESD and Eurocost.⁴

In December 1992 he became acting head of the Directorate entitled 'economic statistics and national accounts, prices and coordination relating to the single market'.

A SOUND RESOLUTION

The purpose of the statistical programme which has just finished was to bring the ESS to the verge of the single market. It was also in order to meet 'target 1992' that the programme was scheduled for four years instead of five. The legal basis for the programme took the form of a resolution, which is not actually binding legislation but a document indicating a political decision on the part of the Council.

Major transition

'This was the only way of getting the NSIs to accept a framework programme at the time. We were in the middle of a period of transition in the relations between Eurostat and the Member States. We had to keep the SPEC flexible enough to incorporate, if need be, any new objectives which might subsequently come to the fore and which had not been thought of in the preliminary stages.

This was how areas such as tourism and relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe ended up getting much more attention than had been planned at the outset.

New links

If we have managed to go farther than we originally planned, it is because we have managed to put in place a whole institutional framework linking the Member States and Eurostat and because we have had the whole-hearted backing of the Commission and the hands-on involvement of a "boss" like Mr Christophersen, who was always ready to support our initiative.

Cooperation and dialogue

These institutional links have been strung through a whole set-up of cooperation committees. It was on the basis of a decision (not just a resolution this time) that the SPC⁵ was created in 1989. Its specific job was to put the relations linking the set-up on an institutional footing.

Thanks to this management tool, the Member States have been directly involved, through the Directors-General of their NSIs, in the decision-making process and in the work of selecting priorities. They have also felt the effects of the more downstream approach in devising programmes which Eurostat wanted to foster.

Eurostat was looking for dialogue between the Member States, not only at NSI level but also with the producers and users of statistics. Take the central banks, for example. They are responsible in the various countries for statistics in their specific fields and this work is coordinated at Community level by the CMFB (Committee for Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics), which Eurostat helped to set up.

Changing times

It was about this time that there was first talk of a "European statistical system". The idea was that the various institutions and statistical services at Community, national and regional levels had to be brought together, by inviting them to get involved in the joint effort to forge a common language which would then make it possible to communicate and to arrive at comparable results, for which there would be shared responsibility.

Sole spokesman

When they agreed to take part in the programme for 1989-92, the Member States were adamant that the emphasis should be on the coordination of work to ensure that the NSIs were not approached by a variety of Commission departments.

This was why the CDIS (Steering Committee for statistical Information) was set up. Its purpose is to optimize cooperation between the Directorates-General of the Commission and Eurostat and, where possible, to endeavour to develop the partnership approach where production efforts are concerned.⁶

The CDIS provides the final element in the dialogue set up on a formal basis with the major categories of professional users by the CEIES (Advisory Committee on statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres), which was created in 1991 at the same time as the CMFB. The CDIS puts the seal on the coordination process which is centred on Eurostat and which is now acknowledged by every statistical authority.

Structural measures have been implemented with the idea of reinforcing the partnership approach, not only between national and Community bodies but also between different national bodies. These measures will be developed during the new SPEC along three lines.

- The first concerns the ongoing training of European statisticians. Eurostat was the prime mover behind the launch in 1991 of the TES (training of European statisticians) programme, which sets out:
 - to compare and enhance experience at national level and to develop common languages;
 - to make use of the most up-to-date technologies for the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of data;
 - to ensure proper dovetailing of the work of official statistical services, universities and research centres and statisticians in the private sector.

The TES programme is open to all statisticians in the European Community and the EFTA countries and has also been made accessible to some of their colleagues in Central and Eastern Europe.

- The second measure consists of setting up an exchange scheme for officials, between the Community level (Eurostat) and statistical services at national level and also between various national services. The first phase of this scheme, involving Eurostat and the NSIs, got under way in 1991, with the secondment of a first group of officials to Eurostat. Exchanges between national statistical services is one of the aims which Eurostat has pledged to pursue in the coming years.
- The third structural measure involves a number of "massive"

operations designed to bring about fundamental changes to the weakest statistical systems in Member States where there was obviously a need to upgrade systems to better standards.

Restructuring plans were thus introduced:

- in Italy, for agricultural statistics;
- in Greece, Ireland and Portugal, for the whole statistical system.

The plans involve substantial Community funding over fixed periods and take the form of technical assistance schemes provided by other Member States in the areas of computerization, creation of local and regional structures, training programmes, implementation of pilot projects and Community surveys, etc.

Every sector

Significant progress has been noted in every sector. 'It is hard to say where the most progress has been made. One area where visible progress has been made is the whole field of statistics on the calculation of GNP, following the Community decision in 1989 that GNP would become a direct reference base (the fourth resource) for the payment of own resources. In the effort to harmonize national accounts systems, a lot more had to be done than was planned in the original programme.

On the credit side for the period which has just finished, special mention may be made of the following achievements:

- Community standards, with the GNP directive which prompted a noticeable alignment of methods for compiling economic accounts; common classification systems have been devised and will gradually be adopted by the Member States:
 - classification of economic activities (NACE Rev. 1);
 - Community product classification (CPC-COM);
 - classification of products by activity (CPA).
- where agricultural, social or industrial surveys are concerned, there has been significant progress thanks to increased harmonization of concepts and definitions;

- in the case of business statistics, new common surveys have been agreed and a Community system of registers is in the process of being created;
- general frameworks for statistics on services and on the environment have been worked out and will be phased in over the next few years;
- a fairly substantial overhaul of the labour force survey has been accepted by all the Member States;
- greater harmonization of statistics on households' income has been introduced;
- a start has been made on the work of harmonizing statistics on migration;
- there has been new work in the area of research and development;
- and so on.'

A CHANGING ROLE

When you look at the role which you had to play during the drafting and implementation of the previous SPEC as regards planning, budget and relations with other Community institutions and international organizations, how do you see this role developing in the future?

Making things work

'We have just completed the stage of erecting the general framework. What we have to do now is take the tools which exist and which are recognized and accepted and make them work for us.

The SPC is already doing a good job in its role as management committee for the system, just like the Committee for Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics is doing in its particular field. Although it is a more recent creation, the CDIS is also doing its job well. These are the three committees where we have the biggest say.

Support for the CEIES

A special effort must be made to help the operation of the CEIES. We need to create within and around this committee a whole structure to provide closer links among the members, who sometimes come from widely different backgrounds and who often meet on other bodies. There needs to

be better coordination, leading to the formulation of long-term ideas which the members can put forward and submit to us and discuss in a less fragmented manner than now.

There are some logistical problems which still need to be solved, so that everyone can get on the same wavelength. When this structure is up and running, it will be a major help in our dialogue with external users.

Informing the public

Thanks to the structures which have been introduced in the last 10 years, the Community statistical system is now expanding to embrace a role which is much wider than just serving the institutions: providing information for society at large. This is a new approach which has been pressed on us to some extent by the NSIs. This change of direction is well understood by the NSIs, which generally have this same role almost everywhere, and it is a significant element in the changing times we are talking about.

Together we are detecting new opportunities for the development of statistical activities which go way beyond those of the Commission. We are keeping a responsive eye on everything that the public needs to know through statistical information. The success of such a general-audience publication as *Europe in figures* shows how our concern in this area is catering for a serious demand.

The CEIES in particular should serve as a sounding board, prompting new opportunities for using statistics which have probably not yet occurred to many users in both the public and the private spheres.

A new Community statistical law

All this work of cooperation will eventually lead to a legal act, still being drafted, which will be called the "Community statistical law".

Every country has its own statistical legislation governing its own system and organization. To some extent, it is the Member States which have encouraged us to create Community legislation which will provide the general outline for a proper definition of the role of Eurostat, the role of each NSI, decision-making procedures and above all – and this is the most

important point – the principles, and particularly the deontological rules, which have to govern Community statistics everywhere.

The Member States are now ready for a Community legal act to become the point of reference for everyone, not only in their relations with the Community system but also, to some extent, in the relations between the actual partners in the system.'

STRONGER INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The acknowledged role of European statistics

'One of the great successes of the statistical programme for 1989–92 was the increased cooperation with the EFTA countries. There was clear evidence of a greater desire on the part of these countries for closer dialogue with the Community and especially with Eurostat.

This desire matched our own and meant that in the Treaty establishing the EEA⁷ the role of statistics was acknowledged as such. It also means that a statistical dialogue using a common basis is emerging from one end of Europe to the other, without any interruptions. In this respect, statistics in Europe are well ahead of other aspects of European development.

A long-standing tradition

It has to be said that statistics have always been somewhat ahead of the field. Since the last century, statistics have been viewed as a way of comparing economies and societies. The International statistical Institute was one of the first learned societies; statisticians at the time already felt the need to get together and talk, to work out common standards and common principles. Statistics are a science which has never been fettered by frontiers.

There have been other notable developments in the area of international relations which have occurred even though they were not originally planned: collaboration with the US and Canadian statistical systems, in particular. We have actively developed relations with various international organizations, and in bodies such as the United Nations and the OECD we have played a more ac-

tive role in specific fields such as the revision of systems of national accounts, services, research, etc.'

'BESPOKE' STATISTICS

Which parts of the previous SPEC did the Member States find it hardest to mesh with? Can we talk about 'multi-track European statistics'?

Major budget problems

'The biggest problems we have to face with the Member States do not involve our relations with them but concern the obstacles in budgetary terms which the NSIs increasingly have to cope with. Whereas the Commission has seen a fairly hefty rise in its budget (from ECU 8-9 million in 1988 to more than 50 million in 1992), the Member States have generally seen their budgets for statistics standing still, if not actually shrinking.

What this means is that in our dealings with them we have to select priorities much more carefully in terms of cost-effectiveness than we did before. We are going to have to tailor our proposals more and more to the ability of each NSI to cope with them, and to keep this in mind for subsequent planning.

A form of "bespoke" or "multi-track" statistics may well be the way to keep statistics moving in all areas, even if some of them advance faster than others. We have to support the parts of the system where budgetary constraints require slower progress by targeting the objectives which we are all striving to reach by a certain time. If everyone is determined to get there in the end, there is no reason why we should not proceed at different speeds.'

Gentlemen's agreement

When a programme has not been developed enough to warrant its complete acceptance by all the Member States, or when its implementation does not require major funding, Eurostat and the NSIs come to a gentlemen's agreement whereby they undertake to carry out certain actions without the need for any formal legal constraint.

'The current trend is to resort to legislation only when it is really necessary and to reach a "gentle-

men's agreement" whenever possible. There are times, however, when legislation is more than just a legally binding act. In some countries it is an aid which the NSIs can brandish in the face of the government, the budget process, the supervisory body. It is a form of constraint which sometimes sets them free!

Subsidiarity: nothing new

It is also for the sake of subsidiarity that we make every effort to avoid introducing new binding legislation and to get things done on the basis of informal agreements. But we have noticed that among the Member States there is a desire for binding legislation which is sometimes more evident than in the past.

All this is undoubtedly part of the better climate for development which we have been working on. The system of dialogue which we have set up with the various statistical institutes has probably pre-empted the current situation in which subsidiarity seems to be the vogue word, whereas we have been employing the principle for a very long time.'

Room for improvement

For an institution such as ours, which normally takes a fairly conservative approach to change, the transition to a "planning mindset" involving the introduction of five-year programmes, annual plans and management tools (operation charts and so on) required tremendous effort.

The use of these tools should provide our officials with regular feedback, which is vital for the proper management of their work.

Of course, there is still plenty of scope for improvement. This is why we are putting a lot into training schemes, which should teach people how to react when new situations arise.

And you can bet that there will be some in the future, but let us hope that those we have not anticipated will be pleasant surprises!⁸

THE INSIDE VIEW

How do the statisticians at Eurostat, who have been on the inside of all these changes, view what has been done? Is there still room for improvement?

Greater commitment

'The increasing pace of European union, which has taken us far beyond the framework programme worked out in 1989, has called for much greater commitment from everyone. Our productivity is now much higher than it was some years ago. The number of meetings has increased threefold in three years. There has been a sharp rise in the number of missions. The number of pages translated (a fair indicator of "output") has doubled in three years. Everywhere you look, there has been a tremendous increase in activity, thanks also to a significant rise in external resources. In 1988 there were about 50 outside experts and consultants working at Eurostat. Today there are around 300!

¹ SPEC: statistical programme of the European Community.

² Munich Centre: Carl-Duisberg-Gesellschaft, Munich, centre for advanced training in applied statistics for developing countries.

³ CESD: European training centre for economist statisticians from the developing countries.

⁴ Eurocost: European centre for worldwide cost of living comparisons.

⁵ SPC: Statistical programme Committee.

⁶ Details of the precise remit of the CDIS were outlined in *Sigma*, N^o 1/92, January/February 1992, p. 13.

⁷ EEA: European Economic Area.

⁸ Interview with Mr Alberto De Michelis, 10 December 1992.

T HE CHALLENGE OF THE 1990s

Saving the environment
Interview with Miss Gertrud Hilf and Mr John Allen

There is an increasing feeling in the Community and elsewhere that the major ecological battles will be won or lost in the next decade. It will probably be too late by the next century. There is no time to lose – and no room for error!¹

Gertrud Hilf

Gertrud Hilf studied economics and statistics at the University of Munich before joining the Statistical Office in 1960. After starting out in the transport sector, she was involved between 1965 and 1975 in helping to establish the system for agricultural statistics and then for labour cost statistics. She was in charge of the unit responsible for compiling statistics on international and intra-Community trade from 1980 to 1989. She is now head of the unit which deals with environment statistics.

John Allen

John Allen studied botany at Oxford University and then became a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, where he taught environmental studies and did research on the mathematical models of ecosystems. In 1980 he went to Ecuador where he spent six years in charge of a research project to develop better varieties of wild cacao trees in the Amazon. He joined Eurostat's environment statistics unit in 1989.

It was almost 20 years ago, in 1972, at a time when the European Community was beginning to take an interest in environmental protection, that the Heads of State or Government declared that economic expansion was not an end in itself and that it had to be reflected in an improvement in the quality and standard of life.

Just as the main challenge to the European Community in the 1980s was how to bring about the internal market, the main challenge of the 1990s is how to achieve sustainable development.

The Heads of State or Government acknowledged this in their declaration at the end of the Dublin Summit in June 1990:

'We recognize our special responsibility for the environment, both to our own citizens and to the wider world. We undertake to intensify our efforts to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Community itself and the world of which it is part. We intend that action by the Community and its Member States will be developed on a coordinated basis and on the principles of sustainable development and preventive actions ... The objective of such action must be to guarantee citizens the right to a clean and healthy environment ... The full achievement of this objective must be a shared responsibility.'⁶

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The idea of 'sustainable development' lies at the heart of Community actions to protect the environment. Can you explain what it means?

'The idea is not new. It was the Brundtland report² which defined sustainable development as development which satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs. The Rio Conference really highlighted this idea, which in any case has

been defined in countless ways. In a book on the green economy, Professor Pearce lists a gallery of definitions! It is obviously difficult to give any statistical substance to these definitions.

The Brundtland report outlined three conditions which have to be met by sustainable development:

- maintain the quality of life in general terms;
- maintain permanent access to natural resources;
- avoid any lasting damage to the environment.

The idea can really be summed up in the old proverb: don't eat the goose that lays the golden egg!

The fifth programme

The fifth Community policy and action programme on the environment and sustainable development does not deal solely with the development of the economy in general but also with sectoral aspects. The Community environment policy now makes it quite clear that these principles are to be incorporated in other Community policies.

Responsibility, whether at national, regional or local level, must be shared by those involved (enterprises, households, government authorities) as well as by the various sectors (industry, energy, transport, agriculture, tourism).

The areas which the programme targets are the main areas of environmental concern nowadays:

- climatic change;
- acidification and quality of air;
- protection of nature and biological diversity;
- management of water resources;
- urban environment;
- coastal areas;
- waste management.³

What are the legal bases?

In the vast array of legislative weapons which the Community has deployed (with the imple-

mentation of more than 200 legislative acts since 1970) to combat air, soil and water pollution and uncontrolled waste and to protect nature, what are the legal bases which Eurostat plans to use as a matter of priority?

'There are two angles to the job we have to do. Our twofold duty is:

- to take a statistical approach to environmental legislation;
- to take an environmental approach to actual statistical legislation.

From the first angle, the legislation referred to contains a large number of elements which are useful for statistics: legal definitions, basic legislative data, reports to be submitted to the Commission for the implementation of its directives, results of monitoring, infringement of standards, authorizations, etc. As statisticians, we want to be involved at all these points to make sure that the legislation reflects our classifications, since this will then make it easier to integrate economic and social statistics with the environmental statistics which will be based on this legislation.

If we look at the second angle (the environmental approach to statistical legislation), our work will concern industrial registers, major structural surveys of industry, household surveys, agriculture surveys, etc.

What we have to do here is to insert in all these surveys questions which will then provide easy access to data on the environment through general statistical information. Take investments as an example. Industry is asked to invest in environmental protection. If the data on such investments are included in industrial statistics, it will be possible to make a direct comparison of their significance in relation to total investments.³

First legislative act

A proposal for a Decision adopting a four-year programme (1993-96) to develop regular official statistics of the environment has been submitted to the Council.⁴ The priority areas for the four-year period are:

- economic statistics of current expenditure and investment for environmental protection;

- data collection in collaboration with the OECD and the UN Economic Commission for Europe;
- statistics of the management of waste and dangerous products;
- statistics of the quality and management of water;
- linkage of transport statistics to environment statistics;
- linkage of energy statistics to environment statistics;
- integration of environment statistics in industrial surveys;
- integration of environment statistics in agricultural and forestry surveys;
- linkage of environment with other statistics through land information (collection of satellite data).

'This is the first piece of legislation we have prepared. What should follow, to our mind, is further legislation covering the statistics of expenditure on environmental protection in industry and statistics on waste.'³

Even without any legal basis

'It has to be said that much of the information which is currently assembled is collected without any real legal basis, thanks to voluntary agreement among national experts on the importance of environmental indicators. There is a joint Eurostat-OECD questionnaire which was devised some years ago. It is interesting to note that even without any legal basis there is already a keen desire for cooperation at international as well as at Community level.'⁵

GREEN GDP?

The national accounts add up figures representing production. In all logic, there should be some allowance for 'negative production', the waste that has to be re-processed and all harmful substances in general. Do you think it is feasible to calculate a 'green GDP' in which all pollutants have been excluded?

'One of the major shortcomings of economic policy in the past has been its failure to take into account or measure accurately the full external costs imposed on the environment. Historically, the earth's ecosystem has been treated as an infinite source of raw materials, energy, water, etc.

Society's income (or GDP) was seen to depend only on capital and labour resources. However, it is now clear that society's income today and in the future and the sustained production of goods and services depend not just on the availability of capital and labour but also on natural and environment resources. Failure to properly account for, cost and value the environment and environment policy may lead to a wholly misleading understanding of society's wealth, its income and its real sustainable development potential.

Effective costing mechanism

The following five-point plan is advanced as a package to be pursued during the term of the programme in order to come to terms with the difficulties outlined above and to devise an appropriate and effective costing mechanism which will serve the dual requirement of environmental protection and sustainable development.

- As a matter of priority, improved information on the state of the environment, appropriate indicators and tolerance capacities must be made available to policy-makers in order to better define sustainable development parameters.
- Future intensive research efforts are needed to value and account for the environment; international coordination and burden-sharing should be encouraged wherever possible in this domain.
- A Community cost-benefit methodology should be drawn up as a matter of urgency which could be applied to all projects and policies with an environmental dimension.
- All Community environmental policies and other policies having an environmental dimension must be costed as comprehensively as possible, taking into account all costs and benefits of "action" and "non-action" in conformity with Article 130R of the Treaty.
- Environmentally adjusted (i.e. to take account of the natural resource stock of air, water, soil, landscape, heritage, etc) national accounts should be available on a pilot basis for all Community countries, with a view to formal adoption by the end of the decade.⁶

'All this has been the subject of a lengthy debate, which is far from over. Together with the national accountants, we have realized that it is impossible for the time being to adjust GDP. We are aware of the size of the problem, which means that we are going to opt for a provisional solution: the creation of satellite accounts to operate alongside the national accounts and deal with environmental questions.⁷

The UN statistical Commission is about to publish a manual on "integrated environmental and economic accounting". A look at this publication will show that a lot of scientific and conceptual problems remain to be solved.

The fact is that there are several possible approaches. There are several schools of thought. What we have in mind at Eurostat, along with various other Commission departments, is to attempt first of all to compile an inventory of the research which is being carried out in the Member States, not only by the NSIs but also by universities and other centres, so that we can have an idea of where this research is going and see what kind of feeling is emerging on where to go next.

SERIEE on the job

A European system for the collection of economic information on the environment (SERIEE) is part of the statistical programme for 1993. Initially, it will cover only expenditure which is actually spent on environmental protection by enterprises, households and government authorities.

This will take the form of a small "sub-entry" in the main account. The spending of those involved is already well defined, their environmental activities have been clearly outlined and there is a proper idea of the costs and expenditure which have been included in the national accounts.³

WHAT A LOAD OF RUBBISH!

The European Community alone produces more than 21,000 tonnes of toxic waste each year, out of some 30 million tonnes of hazardous waste – all of it overwhelmed by the 2 billion tonnes of waste of all kinds.⁸ Is it really feasible to

compile an inventory of all this pollution which will help to identify where it comes from, where it goes (inside and outside the Community) and who is responsible?

'The figures we quote in our publication *Environmental statistics*⁹ do not allow us to arrive at such totals. The figures which are widely quoted, and which you repeat here, come from various studies, probably carried out at the request of the Commission, but they are not based on official statistics. Waste is a by-product which is not always dealt with in existing economic statistics. Products and not waste are covered by such statistics, and they look at primary rather than subsidiary activities involving recycling. It has all been left out of the picture until now, and at the moment there is a plethora of local, regional and industrial sources, which provide figures which do not always add up.

One of our first priorities is to try to rectify this situation.³

An inventory: is it feasible?

The answer is yes, now that new Community legislation on the environment, applicable in the EFTA countries as well as in the Member States, is being introduced. This legislation gives us the legal definitions and provides a list of types of waste, with their most hazardous features. This means that there is an official reference list, with very strict regulations on the issue of permits and accompanying documents. These are all elements which will help us in defining a survey plan and deciding what forms to use as a basis for compiling adequate statistics.

Our next proposal will then be to follow all the movements of waste, mainly through questionnaires:

- to industry, to identify production;
- to various professional categories, to identify processing and disposal stages;
- and to local authorities.

At the same time, a procedure for processing the accompanying documents will collect figures on the transport and external trade of waste. This work is really topical at the moment, and we attach a great deal of importance to it.³

Transport

What are the links which you use (or plan to use) between statistics on transport and on the environment?

'Everyone knows that transport is a special case. Using mainly statistical information, we can work out roughly that road transport, for example, produces about 50% of nitrogen oxide emissions, about 25% of emissions of volatile organic compounds and about 25% of carbon dioxide emissions. Together with DG XI, we have noted that there has been a great deal of effort towards better calculation of these figures, which depend on very detailed information about the number and type of vehicles in particular.

Since the new Community legislation lays down standards for vehicle exhaust emissions, it will be possible to devise forecasts for the future, based on trends in the number and type of vehicles. The various scenarios for the use of private cars, for example, will give quite different results when it comes to modelling projections.

As for the statistics on transport accidents, we have not previously felt that we had any authority in this area. Anyway, as far as the specific case of shipping accidents is concerned, accurate data are available from a number of international organizations. We did not feel that there was any need for the Community to duplicate the work of collecting this information.⁵

It is to be hoped that statistical use will be made of these data, which could be particularly useful from the angle of prevention, described below.

CHANGE OF STRATEGY

The fifth action programme on the environment, which the Commission published in April 1992, marks a change of strategy. From now on, the accent is on preventive action (less production and better use of existing production, with greater re-

course to recycling and reuse) rather than on corrective measures.

How can statistics calculate the data needed to promote this change of strategy and quantify progress?

'It is practically the whole statistical information system which has to cope with this question. It is not only a matter for environmental statistics as such. Changes can be detected by analysing the major pollution/pollution-free sectors of industry and identifying products amid the variety of production statistics. Changes in households' consumption patterns can be monitored through the results we get from the household panels. And statistics on recycling should reveal changing attitudes in industry and various other factors.'³

'In more specific terms, with the aim of using materials more effectively and attempting to push as much as possible the idea of recycling and reuse, we plan to work with material balance sheets. It is a field of statistics in which Eurostat already has a fair amount of experience. We are going to look at the whole cycle of production, manufacture, use and disposal of certain key materials: the whole process through to the waste and recycling stages. One of the units in Eurostat has been working for a long time on raw material balance sheets, which are now going to prove a great help.'^{5 10}

European Environment Agency: an essential tool

'Improvement of environmental information will demand a combined effort on the part of all relevant bodies and levels of administration working in an effective partnership. Against this background it was decided to establish a European Environment Agency and a European Environment Information and Observation Network.'¹¹

The task assigned to the Agency is to supply those concerned with the Community environment policy, in the Community institutions or in the Member States, with reliable information, comparable across the European territory. This will describe the quality and sensitivity of the environment, as well as the pressures bearing upon it.

The Agency will operate in conjunction with Eurostat and the R&D arms of the Commission.'¹²

Statistics: helping to provide a fair share

The Cohesion Fund envisaged in the Maastricht Treaty will channel funds to environment projects in the four poorest Community countries (Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain).'¹³

Statistics ought to be an aid in the procedures for sharing out these resources. How?

'Environmental indicators might well serve both for allocating resources and for assessing the success of investments. We are already proposing such indicators for the structural Funds, through the use of classifications devised in collaboration with the OECD and the UN Economic Commission for Europe and with other Commission departments. What we are lacking at the moment is the data, at regional level, which the Member States find very costly to provide.'⁵

GLOBAL DIMENSION

It is acknowledged that in the next 50 years the world population could double, and even if there are only modest improvements in standards of living economic activity could well increase fivefold (!) in all the key sectors targeted by environment policies: energy, transport, industry, agriculture and tourism.'¹⁴

Even if most of these changes occur outside Europe, the Community is bound to feel their impact.

How is the European statistical service going to monitor these changes? How is it going to get information from elsewhere (especially from the newly industrializing countries)?

'There are indeed a lot of questions hanging over the general set-up of European statistics. While certain statistics reflect to some extent pressure from elsewhere (statistics on external trade, for example, and especially those on migration), these questions also underline the importance of forecasting in demographic areas as well as with regard to industrial activity, energy, transport, etc.

Mention should be made here of the international aspects of our work. In every field, Eurostat supplies its basic statistics to the United Nations, the OECD and many other organizations, and it receives their basic statistics in return.'³

'In the environmental field, statistics is one of the key areas in which agreement among countries is essential. It is vital for the statistics – on waste production or emissions, say – published by the Commission to be acknowledged by as many third countries as possible as being valid estimates, when it comes to international negotiation. This is one of the reasons why we are working hard with the countries of Eastern Europe on a large-scale project which should lead to a pan-European report on the state of the environment.

What this means is that we are expecting everyone in Europe, including the former Soviet Union, to speak the same language on the environment. The problems and the figures have to be acknowledged and accepted in the same way.'⁵

IN PRACTICAL TERMS

To sum up, which actions outlined in the new statistical programme for 1993–97 are you likely to accord greatest attention and resources, in the short and medium term, as far as environmental statistics are concerned?

'Well, first of all, actions designed to carry on collecting available information. From this year, the emphasis will be on the pan-European aspect, with the work involving more than 40 European countries. As an immediate follow-on from this initial priority comes greater integration of statistics from the EFTA countries. The idea is to expand and improve publications jointly.

Next, in view of the fact that environmental statistics in general are not harmonized, we shall work towards harmonization by considering as matters of priority:

- statistics on waste;
- industrial statistics.

Our findings will be linked to the economic statistics on expendi-

ture in various environmental fields (air and water pollution, waste treatment, etc).

We shall then be looking at how to bring everything together, ranging from the links between environmental and economic indicators to satellite and national accounts.

We should also mention the developments with the geographical information system (GIS) or the new data-processing facilities which allow traditional statistics to be combined with the data provided by remote sensing (including satellite imaging).

Our statistical programme will be closely linked to the work programme of the European Environment Agency. Official statistics have an important role to play in getting this Agency operational.⁵

Relevance is the key

'Official statistical information on the environment will provide data of use to every kind of policy. Consequently, our programmes make every effort to respond to the requirements of policy-makers in general, and they already provide detailed and accurate pointers to the action which the Commission is going to take between now and 2000.

The inclusion of environmental aspects in sectoral policies is already a reality. This is clear if you look at the various sub-programmes, which all have an environmental aspect. But, again, the lack of available information for the Community as a whole has to be stressed. That is why it is our job to get the idea across in statistical circles as well. This is something new for the politicians, but in many cases it is also new to some people in statistics. We have to alter our view of things together, and we have to show them in such a way that the problems are highlighted for everyone.³

If you are talking about political vision, you are also talking about civic duty. This is something which environment statisticians really feel. It is a duty which prompted the French author Saint-Exupéry to write: We haven't inherited the earth from our parents, we have it on loan from our children.

¹ People in Europe are worried about environmental protection and want it to be the responsibility of the Community. These were the findings of a Eurobarometer opinion poll in June 1992. At least seven out of ten people throughout the Community felt that environmental protection and the fight against pollution were pressing and immediate problems, and at least six out of ten believed that decisions in this area should be taken jointly within the Community rather than by individual countries (*source*: Eurobarometer, DG X, Commission of the European Communities).

² Mrs Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, headed the Commission on Environment and Development, which was responsible for the publication in 1987 of the report entitled *Our common future*.

³ Interview with Miss Gertrud Hill, 22 December 1992.

⁴ Amended proposal for a Council Decision adopting a four-year programme (1993-96) to develop regular official statistics of the environment (COM(92) 483 final).

⁵ Interview with Mr John Allen, 22 December 1992.

⁶ *Towards Sustainability*, European Community programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development, Commission of the European Communities, COM(92) 23 final, Volume II, pp. 96-97.

⁷ See the article entitled 'Methodology and national accounts', *Sigma*, N° 1/92, January/February 1992, pp. 16-17.

⁸ See *Protecting our environment*, in the *European File* series, catalogue number CC-73-92-877-EN-C, p. 2; *Pollution knows no frontiers*, in the same series, catalogue number CC-60-91-466-EN-C, p. 4.

⁹ *Environmental statistics* (catalogue number CA-72-91-100-3A-C) may be purchased for ECU 11 (excluding VAT) from sales offices of the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, the addresses of which are given on the inside back cover.

¹⁰ Eurostat: EC raw materials balance sheets 1987-90 (in preparation).

¹¹ Council Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90 (OJ L 120 of 11 May 1990).

¹² *Towards sustainability*, European Community programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development, Commission of the European Communities, COM(92) 23 final, Volume II, pp. 64-65.

¹³ See *Protecting our environment*, in the *European File* series, catalogue number CC-73-92-877-EN-C, p. 7.

¹⁴ *Idem*, p. 8.

T HE AGE OF SERVICES

Interview with Mr Marco Lancetti

Although services contribute almost 60% to the generation of GDP in many industrialized countries, they have always presented a problem when it comes to compiling statistics, as the heterogeneous nature of the sector does not lend itself to a methodological approach. The fact that they are a driving force in the changing shape of the world economy is the reason why the European statistical system, with the assistance of those enterprises most directly concerned, is trying to integrate them into the main corpus of other statistical domains.

On leaving the University of Rome (where he studied statistics and actuarial science), Marco Lancetti went straight to the Commission, before joining the United Nations Statistical Office in New York and Geneva, where he worked on external trade statistics. On his return to the Commission, he was given the task of managing the Cronos database and short-term economic statistics. From 1978, he was responsible for the section dealing with balance of payments statistics, before taking charge of the Services and transport unit of the Directorate for business statistics.

THE METHODOLOGY FOR SERVICES

The Palmela guidelines

Although services often account for over 60% of GDP, it is only relatively recently that statistics have been compiled on them. The DGINS Conference held in Palmela in 1986 sketched out two main guidelines:

- Statistics on services are statistics on enterprises.

This apparently straightforward correlation needs to be qualified: what is to be done with "non-market services"? Is it possible to examine the turnover of hospitals in the market sector without examining health services provided by the non-market sector? This places us at the border of a statistical domain which is barely monitored at Community level: general government seen from a micro-economic viewpoint.

- In order to progress, statistics on services should also encourage and coordinate activities aimed at achieving a better coverage of services within social statistics, employment statistics, the national accounts and even within industrial statistics.¹

Which definition should be chosen?

Neither the national accounts nor any other statistical system gives a satisfactory definition of statistics on services. They are virtually always regarded as the part left over once statistics on agriculture and industry have been taken away.

Given that its constituent sectors are very disparate in nature, it is a constant challenge to try and find a methodological approach which can unite all its various elements.

The methodology for services

Eurostat's methodological approach is centred on a general framework and a sectoral approach covering each of the following areas:

- the distributive trades;

- the tourism, hotel and catering sector, and travel agencies;
- transport;
- financial services (including insurance);
- information, communication and other business services;
- the audiovisual sector;
- other services.

The general framework gives definitions which are to be applied to the whole of the services sector. It will, therefore, be harmonized as far as possible with other statistical systems – national accounts, manufacturing industries, etc – and with the Community Directives on company accounts.

The sectoral chapters adapt the definitions given in the general framework to each specific sector, revising the guidelines in such a way as to find a suitable balance between the desire to synthesize and the demand for precision in each sector.

The continuation of the work carried out to date with the Member States, the EFTA countries and several Commission departments should enable us to finalize a reference methodology in 1993, not just for official statistics, but also for research institutes, professional associations, market operators, etc.

International coordination

The methodology for services drawn up within the context of the EEA has been presented to the OECD, the Voorburg Group (an informal United Nations forum on services statistics) and the United Nations Commission in Geneva. It has been favourably received everywhere, and there seems to be a very good chance of its being adopted, with some amendments, in international circles.

The methods advocated form the basis of the statistical aid being offered to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the CIS. They are also being circulated throughout South America via the Spanish statistical office.

COUNCIL DECISION

The Council Decision of 18 June 1992², establishing a two-year programme (1992 to 1993) for the development of European statistics on services, examined and set out the work programme for compiling a methodology and other data collection and analysis work.

Objectives

The programme's objectives are as follows:

- to set out a European reference framework for statistics on services defining the most appropriate concepts and methods for managing and monitoring Community policies, especially the implementation of the Single European Act, and for satisfying the possible needs of national, regional and local administrations, international organizations, economic operators and professional associations;
- to establish a European statistical information system for services;
- to promote and support harmonization of statistics on services in the Member States.

Measures

The following measures are stipulated by the action plan annexed to the Decision:

Analysis and evaluation of user demand for statistics on services

This measure lays particular emphasis on the need to provide small and medium-sized enterprises, most of which are in the service sectors, with statistical information to enable them to operate efficiently in the internal market.

Developing a methodological framework for statistics on services

The methodological framework sets out the reference framework for statistics on services, both for existing data at national level and for additional data collection at a European level.

This reference framework will increase the comparability of data between the different service sectors and the various Member States, despite the fact that service activities vary from one country to another because of different practices and legal systems.

The methodological framework will be used as the basic harmonization tool for the development of official European statistics on services and as a recommended framework for non-official statistics, particularly for market research.

Setting up a European statistical information system for services

In addition to the integration of data into the Mercure information system (examined later) and the transmission of confidential information on the main sectors identified, this point also makes provision for non-market services to individuals and the community by planning an exploratory study on concepts and definitions with the purpose of establishing whether and, if so, what information is necessary in the Member States for measuring the importance of the following sectors:

- social security,
- education,
- health and social work,
- activities of membership organizations,
- recreational, cultural and sporting activities,
- other services to individuals and the community.

Carrying out pilot surveys of service enterprises

To improve the availability of data on services, it is necessary to carry out pilot surveys in Member States which do not have comparable survey instruments in certain service sectors. The pilot surveys will supply preliminary data for the sectors covered and prepare the way for regular data collection based on the methodology. These pilot surveys will be carried out in accordance with the concepts and methods developed in the methodological framework, will cover only the service sectors and will be carried out only in Member States where there are insufficient data.

Developing basic statistical tools

Basic statistical tools must be developed in order to simplify as far as possible data collection procedures for enterprises, whilst maintaining data quality.

These statistical tools are part of an infrastructure common to both industry and services, and include registers, EDI (electronic data in-

terchange) techniques, classification systems, sampling, questionnaires, survey processing tools and research into the convergence of statistical and accounting concepts.

A PACKAGE OF MEASURES

The two-year programme launched last year by the Council increases the impact of the measures already initiated and highlights some of the activities being carried out.

Mercure

The data collected are integrated into the Mercure statistical information system, which came into operation in 1990 and encompasses:

- official data collected under national statistical systems;
- data from other Eurostat projects on services;
- non-official data that may be collected by Eurostat in cooperation with other Commission departments.

The data contained in the Mercure information system are accessible through:

- a database;
- statistical publications which cover the different service sectors and will gradually incorporate all the variables processed.

Publications

Services: annual data

The publication *Services: annual data* stresses in particular:

- that the service sector is the main driving force for the radical change which has taken place in the world economy in recent years;
- the prominence of the sector in the European economy, to which it contributes 60% of employment and value added, and the growing interest shown in studying it;
- its specific and all-encompassing nature: the age of services is the culmination of the industrial era. The vitality of service activities and companies coincides with the intensification of the sector's relations with agriculture, and even more so, with industry.

The publication aims to highlight the innovative nature of the sector, and is made up of two separate sections:

- a general, methodological section;
- a statistical section which includes data on the various service sectors.

The retail trade

Eurostat will shortly issue a publication on *Retail trade in the EC countries at the beginning of the 1990s*.

For the first time, existing statistics have been gathered together, analysed and compared, with a view to providing an exact picture of the commercial structures and their latest developments in each of the 12 countries. A summary is included, offering an overall vision for the Community and also for a larger Europe encompassing the EFTA and Central European countries. The distribution system (i.e. the network of enterprises and their outlets), employment, economic activity and market shares, the role of the major groups and that of cooperation between enterprises are the main variables or characteristics described.

Future prospects are mapped out for the attention of public authorities, academics and enterprises prepared to invest in the large European economic area.

Other publications are planned in 1993 or 1994, including one on the wholesale trade in Europe.

The services functions

In addition to the statistics on services compiled as part of business statistics, some sectors are also examined from a more functional angle. This is the case with communications, the audiovisual sector and the distributive trades.

A work programme for statistics on tourism has been adopted by a Council Decision but, on account of their specific nature, they are also the subject of a separate project within the statistical programme.

Given the importance of the transport sector and the associated Community policy, which has featured in the Treaty of Rome since its inception, particular attention must be paid to transport statistics.

TRANSPORT: A WHOLE RANGE OF SERVICES

Of all the services to be covered by statistics, the transport sector plays a particularly important role, and yet although these statistics are well-advanced in some sections of this domain, they are very much in their infancy in others.

Land transport

- of goods:

information has been available for a long time under the three existing Directives (on road, rail and inland waterway transport). 'It was felt that there was a great need for further information on road transport and a new Directive will appear shortly. This will have the advantage of helping to homogenize the quality of the data, insofar as it explicitly stipulates certain requirements as regards precision.

- of passengers:

in order to harmonize the statistics, a considerable amount of data still needs to be collected, particularly through the introduction of coordinated surveys of households to find out about their interregional and long-distance international movements. This type of information, which is essential for developing infrastructures, is sadly lacking in most countries.

Cooperation with the EFTA countries is absolutely essential, whether it be in the field of goods transport statistics or passenger transport statistics. At present, the statistics available are obtained nationally, with each country surveying its own nationals on issues such as ownership of vehicles registered in the country for road haulage, or households resident in the country for surveys on the mobility of individuals. The importance of the links between EEA countries is such that, in order to have a good statistical knowledge of the transport situation in any given country, data must also be available on transport activities carried out in that country by the nationals of other EEA countries. Each is therefore dependent on the others.

The new "road" Directive

This should be adopted in 1993 and come into force in January 1994. It will bring in information which, with the liberalization of the road haulage sector, is vital for the Commission, the Member States

and the transport operators themselves. It will, for example, provide information on "cabotage" (national transport between two points in a Member State carried out by a vehicle registered in another Member State), which was not covered by the previous Directive. The new Directive will also provide valuable information on transport supply (the available transport capacity) and the extent to which this capacity is utilized. Finally, transport relations will also be defined on an interregional basis in international transport, whereas before it was only the foreign country which was identified.

Maritime transport

In the field of maritime transport, Eurostat is currently devoting considerable energy to drawing up a "standard" Directive, i.e. one which defines the statistical variables (information relating to the goods, passengers, ship and journey) but leaves the method of implementation up to the Member States.

Discussions held with the Member States have confirmed that in most cases the source of the information will turn out to be the ships' manifests, although at present these are not harmonized (the existing harmonized manifest not being used by all shipping companies). It would therefore seem to be desirable to reduce the burden on the economic operators and statistical collection services involved by attempting to introduce a harmonized Community manifest, which would, obviously, be used for more than just statistical purposes.

As part of this process, Eurostat will also make the necessary approaches to the EDI MD2 (transport messages) and MD6 (statistical messages) groups to ensure that the statistical requirements set out in the Directive are integrated into existing and future messages, as well as those currently being developed.¹

Transport and the environment

With regard to transport policy, the impact of transport on the environment was the subject of a Green Paper presented by the Commission at the beginning of 1992, which set out the main issues to be considered over the coming years in the form of a general approach. An analysis of the inher-

ent needs involved in developing the Community's statistical policy is contained in the 1993-97 statistical programme.

Priorities

Data are urgently required for the development of the following activities:

- reduction in the emission of contaminants;
- noise reduction;
- limiting the risks inherent in the transport of dangerous substances;
- limiting the overall impact of transport flows on the environment;
- limiting the impact of developments in the transport infrastructure.

At present, Eurostat does not carry out any work on accident statistics. There are plans to examine this domain in future, depending on the coordination of activities between DG VII (Transport) and DG XI (Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection) and on the need to develop joint transport and environmental indicators.

THE PRACTICAL APPROACH

In short, which activities set out in the new statistical programme should receive the most attention and resources in the short and medium term?

Consolidation and development

'The 1993-97 statistical programme has been drawn up with a view to consolidating general activities and extending the sectoral measures. We need to find the right type of legislation for each of these activities: a general framework Directive, linked to changes in industry and integrated with a Directive on enterprises (such as the role of services in the enterprise), and to accompany this general Directive, there should, if necessary, be a number of more sectoral directives.

With the consolidation of the "enterprises approach", there will be an ever greater need to extend Prodcom to the service sector. We are, however, well aware of the problems this will pose, particularly as regards quantifying and valuing services.

The large volume of methodological work carried out in the field of communications, the audiovisual sector, tourism and transport has been made possible by close cooperation and budget-sharing with the different DGs, with which we should also:

- develop new spheres of activity, such as shipping, aviation and tourism;
- consolidate the existing fields, according to the priorities drawn up.¹

Priorities in the field of transport statistics

These are directly related to the needs expressed in the Commission's White Paper (drawn up by DG VII) on the future development of the common transport policy.

The measures mentioned, which feature in the preliminary draft Council framework Decision establishing a three-year programme for the consolidation of European transport statistics, cover the following aspects:

- first of all, it is important to add to the Community patrimony by extending the Directive on road haulage and introducing a new Directive on maritime transport. The adoption of these two Directives will necessitate the allocation of more resources to the collection, processing and dissemination of these data;
- secondly, the importance attached by the Maastricht Treaty to the development of trans-European transport networks will have an effect on the additional work to be carried out for statistics on transport by rail and inland waterway, and on combined transport statistics;
- finally, the liberalization of the air transport market will oblige us to focus greater attention on the development of a sectoral statistical system, which, on account of its fine targeting and the freshness of its data, is well adapted to users' needs and covers not only information on the flows of goods and passengers, but also various data of economic and political importance, such as flight delays, fluctuations in the numbers using certain flights, etc.

The distributive trades

Eurostat is attempting to improve the statistical observation of the trade sector in the Community countries, and is being encour-

aged in this endeavour by the Council of Ministers, which twice already has stated its support for the development of a statistical system for this sector: the Resolution of 14 November 1989 and the Decision of 18 June 1992. Directorate-General XXIII, whose remit covers distributive trades, has already taken steps to promote its development in a statement of 11 March 1991 entitled *Towards a single distribution market*.

Eurostat's action programme encompasses the organization at national level in the Community and EFTA countries of a harmonized collection of structural and short-term economic data. A draft Directive containing technical and methodological Annexes has been drawn up.

Furthermore, pilot surveys were carried out in 1991 and 1992 into some forms of retail sales.

Involving enterprises

'On 8 December last year, we held a meeting in collaboration with DG III which brought together the various professional associations in the sector: over 80 associations, around 60 of which were represented at the meeting. We want to encourage work which makes it easier to identify federative elements uniting all these groups, whose heterogeneous nature should not obscure the considerable volume of activity they represent, since this is the most active and probably the most dynamic sector of all. We intend to study all aspects of statistics on enterprises with these groups, and actively encourage this growing form of cooperation.'¹

The cooperation of everybody involved will always remain a prerequisite for unravelling the considerable intricacies of service activities: no easy task, given the number of blue-collar workers switching to white-collar jobs every day.

¹ Interview with Mr M. Lancetti, 16 December 1992.

² OJ L 179, 1.7.1992, p. 131.

M ISSIONS, VISITS AND MEETINGS

STATISTICAL PROGRAMME COMMITTEE (SPC)

Meeting of 25 November 1992

The meeting concentrated on the following topics.

- Strengthening the role of the SPC:
a number of additional meetings would be organized. It was Eurostat's wish that the agendas be more evenly divided between the Commission and the Member States so as to encourage bilateral contacts which would make for better integration of the Community statistical system.
- Legislation to implement the new statistical programme:
once they had examined the implications of the legal form given to the multiannual statistical programme and its associated sectoral programmes, the financial implications and the application of the principle of subsidiarity in the organization of surveys, the members of the Committee gave their approval to the proposal.
- Work programme for the Community statistical system in 1993:
the document presented was very well received by the members, who gave their general approval to the programme as a basis on which to work. The Member States would submit their comments in writing. The new work schedule, whereby a preliminary draft annual programme would be submitted in May of each year, should considerably raise the quality of the preparatory dialogue and make the measures undertaken more effective.
- Statistical requirements of international organizations:
general agreement.
- Combining the three Directives on livestock statistics:
the members wanted the Advisory Committee to be more of a Management Committee and also asked that the proposal be

transmitted to the Commission and the Council only after the Agricultural Statistics Committee had been properly consulted.

- Change of base year:
general agreement, with the possibility for some countries, and under certain conditions, to change the reference year rather than actually changing the base year.
- Developments in the field of monetary statistics:
the operation of the Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics was explained in detail, and a document would shortly be circulated on the agreement about the breakdown of statistical tasks between the central banks and the NSIs.
- The Commission's requirements as regards estimates of industrial variables:
the NSIs had reservations about Eurostat's proposal to make estimates of a number of industrial variables, given that most of the NSIs only supply Eurostat with data for these up to 30 months after the period concerned. The SPC did, however, agree to intensify the work carried out by the 'Estimates' working party, in order to obtain much fresher data.

THE 78th DGINS MEETING

The DGINS met in Luxembourg from 25 to 27 November 1992.

This meeting had been preceded by the seventh meeting between Eurostat and the heads of the national statistical offices in the seven EFTA countries, the last to be held under the 'Luxembourg process' prior to the coming into force of the EEA Treaty. This process was officially brought to its conclusion with a formal agreement on the arrangements and procedures for setting up a joint statistical programme at EEA level.

The DGINS meeting then discussed the following topics.

- The principle of subsidiarity in drawing up the statistical system:
discussions were held on the papers submitted by the Spanish, United Kingdom and French statistical offices and the comments made by the German office. The participants felt that subsidiarity was already widely applied in the field of statistics, but could probably be implemented even more fully by improving the programming procedures.
- Telematic networks for statistics:
the large scale of the project and the considerable resources required to implement it seemed excessive to some of the Member States. Eurostat asked that the issue of statistics be considered in all the places where discussions were held specifically on telematic networks programmes (e.g. IDA programmes, Comedi, etc).
- Statistics on services:
general approval of the progress made, particularly in the field of harmonization: go-ahead given to the project.
- Statistics on tourism:
agreement given, but the participants wanted a certain amount of flexibility to be introduced so that countries which had difficulty in collecting all the data could reduce the number of variables collected.

- **Intrastat:**

some countries (Benelux, UK) would be able to provide reliable data on intra-Community trade as of 1 January 1993. Other countries, however, would not even be able to transmit rough estimates for several months. The Commission would keep a close eye on developments, particularly during the first half of 1993, and would take any suitable measures it felt to be necessary.

- **Confidentiality:**

the 19 countries (EC and EFTA) undertook to stipulate 'Eurostat' as the recipient of statistical data in legislation, instead of 'the Commission'.

- **Public sector:**

the purpose of the surveys mentioned in the document was not to collect data, but to compile a list of the available data and the methods, definitions, etc used in the different Member States.

Next meetings of the DGINS:

- 25 March 1993: SPC in Brussels
- 24 to 26 May 1993 in Dublin
- 24 to 26 November 1993 in Luxembourg

■ EUROSTAT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Eurostat's annual general assembly was held on 4 December last year.

Addressing some three hundred people, Mr Franchet commented on how the objectives he had set for 1992 had been attained and stressed that the implementation of the 1989-92 statistical programme had had to be adapted as a result of a number of unforeseen circumstances: the EC/EFTA agreement on the EEA, the cooperation programme for the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, the training programme for the statisticians in the former USSR (TES-FSU), etc.

The priority issues raised during Mr Franchet's meetings with the units visited in 1991 were discussed at length, and all those present felt that there was a need for better information about who did what in the organization.

The prospects for 1993 included:

- efforts to strengthen the Eurostat team in terms of human resources, which should result in the creation of 30 new posts for each of the next three years, as part of the programme to convert appropriations into jobs;
- the plans to construct a new Commission building in Luxembourg were beginning to take shape, and it seemed almost certain that the new building would be allocated to Eurostat.

■ NEW TRAINING PROGRAMME

For some years now, Eurostat has sought to strengthen and systematize its staff training.

The outcome of developments

The previous system was that once a year the Commission circulated its training programme to its staff, who then had the opportunity to decide with their immediate superior which programmes to follow and when they would attend the courses, depending on their requirements. However, it became fairly clear that a large number of officials were not taking advantage of this opportunity and that most of them only enrolled for the training programmes once these were announced.

In June 1991, the Commission announced its new training policy, which had been developed with a view to improving the organization of its vocational training. Eurostat had been involved in the study which led to the formulation of this policy, and is now one of the first Directorates-General to put it into practice.

Content and application

Eurostat's staff training requirements cover four areas:

- management and administration;
- economics and statistics;
- informatics and computerization;
- languages and general training.

An internal Eurostat committee, made up of staff members of all categories and of specialists in all the above mentioned areas, drew up a list of proposed courses. A survey was organized in 1992 to give all Eurostat officials the chance to express their interests, their needs in terms of the courses proposed and their intention to take part in these.

The heads of unit were asked to discuss the training requirements of each member of their staff and to draw up an agreement setting out a list of the individual needs. The 1993 programme has been compiled on the basis of the replies to this survey.

This idea of arousing interest in the programmes announced at a sufficiently early stage should make the implementation of the whole training programme more cohesive.

F FROM THE PRODUCT TO THE SERVICE ...

Dissemination policy Interview with Mr Alain Chantraine

What principles must govern dissemination policy in the European statistical system? Now that the new statistical programme is getting under way, reflecting on how the dissemination of the various projects planned can influence their timetabling and implementation raises a number of questions with sometimes contradictory answers ...

After graduating in advanced business studies (HEC, Liège), Alain Chantraine began his career in the Statistical Office in 1962. One of his first tasks during those early years was working on the team which drew up the European system of integrated economic accounts. In 1973 he took up a post reporting direct to the Director-General (Jacques Mayer), where he dealt mainly with the dissemination of information. In 1977 he was appointed head of the Industrial Short-Term Trends Division and in 1980 head of the Economic Accounts Division. Since April 1987 he has been Director of the Dissemination and Computer Processing Directorate, where he is working to set up an information system to serve both Eurostat and the Commission as a whole.

His experience has enabled him to take part in a number of world-wide projects (run by the OECD, the United Nations, the IMF, etc) and to be involved in programmes of technical assistance to developing countries.

He has also been a member of the Council and the Editorial Board of the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth.

More recently, he agreed to become a member of the United Kingdom's Central Statistical Office Advisory Board.

The discussion of this range of problems has now extended to two bodies: the CEIES and the working party dealing with development of the statistical law. These two bodies will thus assist the Eurostat working party which deals with dissemination policy.

THE OPINION OF THE CEIES

The CEIES¹ has the task of organizing the dialogue with representative bodies on the economic and social scene (industrial and trade federations, trade unions, academic circles, Community institutions other than the Commission, etc) in order to identify as accurately as possible what kind of statistics economic and social operators require.

It follows that in the normal course of its work this Committee deals with matters relating to the dissemination of such information.

What expectations?

The CEIES will tackle three subject areas, the first of which is naturally 'What kind of information do economic and social operators expect? For whom is it intended?'

These questions immediately raise a number of others, such as:

- what are the exact information requirements of the various operators?
- how must this information be presented according to the various target groups? Information intended for journalists cannot be presented in the same way as information intended for university research staff.
- what media should be used? Paper? Databases? Electronic media (magnetic tape, CD-Rom, etc)?
- what terms of access should be laid down for the various target groups?
- how can the collection process be geared to requirements? At national level? At Community level?

The concept of 'public property'

This is the Committee's second subject area. statistical information is generally regarded as 'public property'. But since this concept is not taken by everybody to mean the same thing, the CEIES will have to take account of at least two attitudes.

Wholly 'public property'?

This means that the NSIs collect information and allow anyone to have access to it ... In extreme cases, users are charged, if at all, only the marginal cost of the medium and the cost of supplying the information.

Or a 'public-utility company'?

Here the NSIs are regarded as public 'companies' whose purpose is to meet users' requirements according to the rules of a free market. Market laws therefore imply that the information must be marketed, the main concern being to recoup costs.

A balance to be struck

Not only the collection of information but also the entire statistical programme will be affected differently depending on which of these approaches is chosen.

If only market information is collected and processed, is there not a risk of jeopardizing entire areas of less marketable information (e.g. social or sociological information, which is very often of interest only to research workers, whose documentation and information budgets are generally very limited)?

Although the marketing approach has this drawback, it would, on the other hand, have the advantage of making an organization like Eurostat even more attentive to the needs of its 'customers' than it is today: abandoning one's role as a producer of information and casting oneself as a provider of services requires a major change of attitude!

It is true that on the whole it is rather the concept of public property which has predominated so far, except in the Scandinavian countries, where – in Denmark in particular – the marketing of information is much more in the forefront than in the other Member States. But how far can we go? Certainly not all the way in either direction. Where should the emphasis be placed?

What marketing policy?

The second subject area gives rise directly to the question of how to lay down a pricing policy. What criteria should it be based on?

If we opt for the public property concept, should the charges cover only the cost of supplying the information (the 'minimum minimum'), or should they be higher?

At the other end of the scale, should we adopt an all-out marketing approach, whereby consumers/users are asked to pay what surveys indicate they are prepared to pay?

If we tend too much towards free-market pricing, is there not a danger that some users (research workers, journalists, etc) may be deprived of certain information sources?

THE STATISTICAL LAW

Alongside the discussions being held in the CEIES (which should be concluded at a plenary meeting at the end of March 1993), a number of principles should be singled out for incorporation into the 'statistical law' being drawn up by a working party which is also due to submit its conclusions in February/March.

These conclusions will therefore deal with the problems and questions tackled by the CEIES and will attempt to cast them in the form of principles to be incorporated into the legal basis for Community statistics.

Fair shares

These principles should also touch on wider concepts affecting the sharing of the common property between the NSIs and Eurostat.

If Eurostat markets both European and national information, should it pay the Member States part of its corresponding income? And vice

versa: if the Member States market information which comes from their partners and which they obtain from Eurostat, how should the proceeds from the sale be redistributed?

Or, within the European statistical system, could we consider that the common property 'belongs' to all of us, Eurostat and the Member States, in equal measure?

IMPACT ON THE STATISTICAL PROGRAMME

Does the new statistical programme place enough emphasis on the problems of dissemination?

'No. Certain positions have yet to be clarified. But the trend is visible: all the new programmes launched include a project to determine what the real requirements of users are. But, as things stand at present, the very concept of a 'user' of official European statistical information is far from being perceived in the same way by all the parties involved.'²

What is a 'user' of European statistical information?

Does this term cover only the Commission and its departments? Does it also cover the industrial and private sectors which revolve around the sector concerned? Is it the widest possible public, going beyond the academic world and the university population?

The deliberations on the statistical programme topics which will, at one stage or another, involve dissemination are fairly diverse. Coinciding as it does with the beginning of a new programme involving countless departments both inside and outside the Commission, this debate could not have come at a better time!

We shall come back to the conclusions it produces.

¹ European Advisory Committee on statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres.

² Interview with Mr A. Chantraine, 15 December 1992.

PORTRAIT OF THE REGIONS

A much awaited new publication

For the first time, Eurostat and the Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policies have jointly produced a publication containing detailed figures and commentaries on the 200 or so regions which make up the 12 Member States of the European Community.

A SYSTEMATIC DESCRIPTION

The regions of Europe are presented one by one, in an identical format, via maps, diagrams, statistical tables and textual commentaries on:

- their area;
- regional strengths and weaknesses;
- population patterns and trends;
- employment;
- the economic fabric;
- the environment.

In this way, systematic coverage is given to all the regions of the Community:

- from those which have been part of it from its earliest days through to the five German *Länder* incorporated as a result of German unification;
- from major metropolitan regions such as Ile-de-France, Greater London, the Autonomous Community of Madrid or Attica through to sparsely populated rural regions such as Epirus, the Alentejo or parts of Ireland;
- from the regions at the geographical heart of Europe through to those at its outermost edges, such as the Canary Islands, the Azores or the French overseas departments.

The analyses are based on official statistics which are as comparable as possible and have been written by local observers closely in touch with the realities of each region.

WHAT INFORMATION IS GIVEN ON EACH REGION?

Information on each region is given under the following headings:

- a general and geographical description;
- regional strengths and weaknesses;
- the region in relation to the Community;

- an up-to-date thematic map;
- comparable regions (what other EC regions are similar to the region in question?);
- imbalances within the region;
- the profile of the subregions;
- population patterns and trends;
- training and availability of employment;
- employment trends and patterns;
- unemployment;
- economic fabric and gross domestic product;
- labour costs and household incomes;
- description of the main economic branches;
- employment and value added by economic branch;
- main businesses;
- environment.

FOR WHAT TARGET GROUPS?

The *Portrait of the regions* is intended for a very wide public. It will be particularly useful for the following:

- chambers of commerce and industry;
- business federations and associations;
- national, regional and local politicians;
- schools, colleges and universities;
- economic, geographical, demographic and sociological research institutes;
- all those who wish to improve their knowledge of Europe and its regions.

THREE VOLUMES

The *Portrait of the regions* is published in three volumes covering the regions¹ of the following countries:

Volume 1: Germany, Benelux and Denmark;

Volume 2: France, United Kingdom and Ireland;

Volume 3: Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece.

- Available in German, English and French.
- A total of approximately 1 000 pages.
- Hardcover, printed in four colours, DIN A4.
- Price: ECU 250 for all three volumes, or ECU 100 per volume (not including VAT and postage and packing).
- First volume available by the end of April 1993.

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Further information may be obtained from the following addresses:

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EUROSTAT-CD

A statistical vision of the entire European Community

Based on common classifications and methodologies and expressed in uniform units, the statistics presented are fully comparable. They are indispensable for any thorough economic analysis of the European Community.

CONTENT

The CD-ROM disseminated by Eurostat contains general statistical information on socioeconomic data, regional statistics, trade statistics by product and the nomenclatures used to classify the various data.

Macroeconomic data

The socioeconomic indicators selected cover all Eurostat's statistical domains: economics and finance, population and social conditions, energy and industry, agriculture, forestry and fishing, external trade and balance of payments, transport and tourism.

They cover the 12 Member States, the Community as a whole and, as far as possible, the United States of America and Japan.

The periodicity of the data may be monthly, quarterly or annual, depending on the indicator chosen.

Regional indicators

The annual data, which are distributed geographically according to the NUTS classification,¹ cover the regional entities of the Twelve. They cater for an economic approach at regional level.

Trade

The annual data concern external trade by product, are recorded on the basis of the Nimexe or CN nomenclature and enable trade flows between Member States and/or non-member countries to be calculated.

Nomenclatures

The main nomenclatures used at Community level, such as NACE, CN, Nimexe and NUTS, are also accessible.

USER FUNCTIONS

The user software operates under PC/MS-DOS. The interface proposes on screen a series of user-friendly menus for locating and retrieving data and for compiling tables and graphs.

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¹ NUTS: nomenclature of territorial units for statistics.

² New subscribers will be entitled to a 40% reduction.

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