



SIGMA

The bulletin of European statistics



No 5/1993 – November/December 1993
Statistics, cooperation and development

Statistical Office of the European Communities

C ONTENTS

Editorial	3
-----------	---

Publishers:

Office for Official Publications of the
European Communities

Managing Editor:

Fernando De Esteban,
Director of Dissemination, Eurostat

Chief Editor: François de Geuser

General coordination:

Nicolas Mavraganis —
Public relations, Eurostat

Design and editorial:

Jean Drappier — C.R.E.A.M.

Graphics and lay-out:

Hans Wilhelm — Database
management and publications,
Eurostat

**Luxembourg: Office for
Official Publications of the
European Communities, 1993**

Catalogue number:
CA-AB-93-005-EN-C

© ECSC-EC-EAEC, Brussels,
Luxembourg, 1993

Reproduction is authorized, except
for commercial purposes, provided
the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Luxembourg

The points of view expressed in this
publication are those of the authors
and not necessarily those of the
European Commission.

This publication may be obtained
free of charge from

Eurostat

Statistical Office
of the European Communities
Information Office
Bâtiment Jean Monnet
L-2920 Luxembourg

DIRECTIONS AND INDICATORS

Development and democracy by M. Marín	4
Statistics for the EBRD? by J. De Larosière	7
The experience in Poland by J. Olenski	11

EUROPE AND STATISTICS

To improve and support	18
Statistics and transition by A. Chantraine	20
A long-term process by F. de Esteban and B. Langevin	24
An uphill task in the East by K. Löning and O. Crocicchi	30

MISSIONS, VISITS AND MEETINGS 36

INSIGHT INTO EUROSTAT

DOSES—the statistical research programme	38
--	----

NEWS ITEMS

Eurostat-CD, second edition	40
Portrait of the regions	41

E DITORIAL

A government is as credible as its statistics. 'It takes a lot of time and effort to build up an image of official statistics which ranks high in public opinion. But such an image can be eroded very quickly, especially when governments start tinkering with sensitive data.'¹

Strengthening democracy through all kinds of cooperation activities which can help its development: this sums up what the Community policies on development cooperation are aiming at.

During the last 30 years and more, the ACP States and many developing countries have signed agreements— especially in the area of statistics—on cooperation, technical assistance and training, and these agreements have been regularly renewed. The significance of everything that has been accomplished over the years must not be underestimated in the light of the tremendous efforts which have more recently targeted our partners in Eastern Europe.

In deciding to link in broad terms Community actions on cooperation to the sound development of the recipients' statistical systems, Mr Delors and Mr Christophersen have put the emphasis on what statistics can provide, to both sides, for the management of joint actions.

Eurostat will not hesitate to accept responsibility for this clearly defined task.

In returning to a topic which it has covered before, SIGMA hopes that it will be joined in its efforts at communication by everyone who in some way has a share of 'statistical responsibility' in Europe, in technical or political terms and at Community, national or regional level.

The target audience includes the major private and public users of European statistics, as well as scientists and academics, leading associations and both sides of industry.

Where our efforts are concerned, everyone's contribution is crucial.

François de Geuser
Chief editor

Head of the Unit 'Public relations, dissemination and statistical digests'

¹ Excerpt from the speech by Mr Yves Franchet, Director-General of Eurostat, at Sofia University on 6 May 1993 during the signing of the Protocol of cooperation between Eurostat and the National Institute of Bulgaria.

D

DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

Interview with Mr Manuel Marín

How can there be development without democracy? What would be the point of European efforts on cooperation if they did not serve to underpin democracy? An infallible way of measuring the quality of a democratic society: the extent to which its statistical system is independent.



After graduating in law at the University of Madrid, in Community law at the University of Nancy and in advanced European studies at the College of Europe in Bruges, Manuel Marín was elected to the Cortes in June 1977 when the first elections were held after the restoration of democracy in Spain. His government posts included that of State Secretary for Relations with the European Communities from 1982 to 1985. During this time he was responsible for negotiations on Spain's accession to the Community. On 1 January 1986 he was appointed Vice-President of the Commission. He was initially in charge of social affairs, education and employment before moving to cooperation and development, where he is in charge of relations with the ACP countries and those of the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia, as well as humanitarian aid. These special responsibilities were renewed in January 1993. Following the creation of the European Union, he was appointed First Vice-President of the Commission on 21 December 1993.

DIRECT LINK

In view of the changes which have occurred throughout the world in the last few years, especially the end of East-West confrontation, there is a very clear link between the ideas of democracy, the defence of human rights and development policy.

Respect for differences

It was Manuel Marín who was behind the idea of putting to the Council a proposal that these ideas be a definite and constant part of any European initiative on cooperation and development.

'The evolution of democracy is a priority matter for the European Union. While respecting our cultural differences, we have to make sure that our efforts focus on the areas where democracy can benefit, and especially where it is emerging or re-emerging.'

Reflecting democracy

'Naturally, there is no way you can "measure" the quality of a democracy in systematic or statistical terms. On the other hand, the quality of a statistical system, and especially its independence, are indicators which do not lie. It has always been a fact that statistics are vague and unreliable under totalitarian regimes. They are controlled by those in power and used for propaganda purposes, thus losing all credibility.

The role of statistics is therefore vital. It is not only an essential aid on the path to democracy but a reflection of how well democratic systems are working.'

WHERE ECHO LIES

The European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), which became operational in April 1992, is responsible for channeling European humanitarian aid to non-member countries. It organizes the preparation, implementation, financing, follow-up and assessment of humanitarian

decisions and activities. It comes under the direct responsibility of Mr Marin.

Leading donor

The Community has been providing humanitarian aid since 1970 and its policy in this area has expanded tremendously in the last 20 years, on account of the number of natural disasters and armed conflicts which have occurred. As an example, the European Union is currently the leading donor of humanitarian aid in the former Yugoslavia. The EU and its Member States provide 42% of the UNHCR budget for the refugees of this conflict, while the second biggest donor, the United States, has provided only 19%.

Higher-profile solidarity

'This is something which people in the Community should know. It is thanks to their solidarity that we can do something. It is only proper that they should know about it.

The idea of the Community authorities in setting up ECHO was to achieve better control of the whole range of humanitarian aid to cope with the soaring number of appeals. A proper statistical picture of what the European Union is doing in the humanitarian field would give a higher profile to ECHO's activities, which most people in Europe have no real idea of, because of a lack of information.

Our aim in this area is transparency, especially as our policy is strictly non-discriminatory. We operate in any country without making any political judgment and without insisting on any democratic conditions.

If we can get across in statistical terms the significance of the European Union's role in humanitarian affairs, we can show what the people of Europe are doing through the Community budgets when it comes to expressing solidarity.'

EASTERN EUROPE: A PROBLEM THAT RIGHTLY CONCERNS THE COMMUNITY

In the same way, there should be no attempt to gloss over current priorities. Indeed, we should make every effort to give a proper ex-

planation for the major decisions that are taken. The reasons which have prompted the Community to channel a considerable chunk of its cooperation activities to the countries of the former Eastern bloc have to be properly understood, with figures to back them up.

A right to know

'It is right and proper that Europe should be concerned about its neighbours in the East. It is a matter of political priority, and through the sense of solidarity that is involved it is also a question of joint security.

The aid which has to be provided for Eastern Europe is something new for the European Union, and something which has to be tackled without neglecting the activities which have been running for much longer in other parts of the world. We are entering new territory where, once again, statistics have a major role to play.

Coordination through statistics

The potential for coordination that can already be found in existing statistical systems must not be ignored. It is quite likely that the problem is not so much a question of statistical training as how to match the methodologies and terminologies which exist on both sides. Where cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is concerned, statistics have a lot to offer in terms of coordination with dogged efforts to achieve a common language.

ACTIVITIES IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

It is a general fact that far too little is known about Europe's efforts to help the developing countries. There is far too little mention in the press. The general public has only a vague idea of the figures involved which show what is being done. There is a tremendous gap here, which has to be filled with statistical information.

A story worth telling

'European statistics definitely have a key role to play in demonstrating just what the Community has done over the last 30 years in the "rest of the world". It ought to be possible to tell the whole story of development cooperation in terms of figures.

Putting the picture straight

We have to use statistics to assess the results of European efforts in the areas they have targeted. The statistics have to show everything that the institutions and their partners are doing or have done. When an action is prompted and governed by political priorities, there is still a role for statistics so that something can be learned from the action in due course or so that any amendments can be made and justified, again as the situation demands. The picture which the general public has nowadays of the glaring difference between East-West cooperation and North-South cooperation is one of those false pictures which have to be put straight with the help of statistics, by using figures to give a proper account of the events of the last 30 years.'

Looking at cooperation in purely statistical terms, what are the priorities to focus on at present with regard to Eurostat's actions for the developing countries?

'The European Union provides the developing countries with a considerable amount of technical assistance through Eurostat. Its role is to bolster the national statistical systems of these countries in response to requirements which are expressed in the public as well as in the private sector. There are two main thrusts, the first being to ensure the quality of statisticians by means of proper initial training and by building on the skills of local statistical staff, with training preferably carried out in the country of origin. The second is to help the national statistical institutes, both with their organization and with the introduction of new or large-scale surveys.

Although the resources never match the scale of the problems, the technical assistance which Eurostat is able to provide for the developing countries is a matter of considerable importance to us. Framework agreements on cooperation or schemes supported by the European Development Fund can have a significant knock-on effect. It is worthwhile looking into ways of working together with the departments in charge of statistical cooperation with the developing countries in the statistical services of the Member States.'

HARMONIZATION AND CLARIFICATION

Mediterranean investment

Statistics not only provide immediate data but should also reveal trends.

There is specific provision in the financial protocols which were signed with the Mediterranean countries, most of which were renewed in 1990-91, for the encouragement of private investment.

Is there an adequate role for European statistics in drawing up the criteria for encouraging such investment? Can the main direction of such investment be discerned? It would seem not.

The fact is that it is not possible at the moment with balance-of-payments statistics to identify the chief trends of private investment in the Mediterranean area. Work on harmonization as part of the EMU process will make it possible, however, to break down the destination of direct investment flows by geographical area and sector of activity. In the short term, this information has been requested for all Mediterranean countries, for the Maghreb and Mashreq countries, and a breakdown by major sector of activity for the countries in the Mediterranean is a possibility. But there is still a fair number of problems to be solved, particularly with regard to data confidentiality. Eurostat is endeavouring to deal with these difficulties.

More clarification

'To my mind, we really need to make a tremendous effort to help the non-member countries who are our partners to develop their own statistical system. It is only by talking about the same things in the same way that understanding comes.'

Rural development

There has been forceful emphasis on rural development in successive versions of the Lomé Convention. Are the results of these rural development actions sufficiently highlighted? Can statistics help to spotlight them?

'Rural development is a complex action which needs to be spread over lengthy periods of time. It is very hard to quantify results, which in any case have not always lived up to our expectations.

On the other hand, there are a lot of ACP countries which now want the emphasis to be shifted more towards structural adjustment and macroeconomic measures.

If our statistical system could help us to highlight the results of our actions in the area of rural development, it would certainly be of tremendous use in formulating new actions for the future.'

THE WAY FORWARD

Given the scale which it has attained and which is destined to continue growing, the management of development cooperation is going to need more and more data. What is the way forward?

Demographic statistics

'We have to have vital development indicators, which are generally very reliable and relatively easy to follow: life expectancy at birth, infant mortality, perinatal mortality, etc.

One of the first signs of the breakup of the Soviet empire appeared in its demographic statistics, which revealed a very clear pattern as time went by. We have to pay careful attention to these statistics and to what they can teach us for the operation of our own particular action.'

AIDS

'The task of monitoring this affliction is complicated by the fact that there is no uniform pattern to the way in which it spreads. There are some regions where entire strata of the population are affected, where whole generations are doomed. Elsewhere, it is spreading more slowly, because of a different demographic structure or a different way of life. Could statistics play a greater role in forecasting how the disease is going to develop? Could Eurostat cooperate with the WHO in this field? Could it help us in identifying where the biggest problems are likely to emerge, for example with regard to a shrinking labour force, overwhelmed hospital services, etc?'

Everything you wanted to know about development ...

'Statistics have to help us, along with people in all the partner countries involved in cooperation, to have a better understanding of the whole issue of development. They

have to help us in trying to get an idea of what the world is going to be like in the future. The GATT talks revealed, for example, just how little sub-Saharan Africa — with barely 1.9% of world trade — counts in the scheme of things. How is this part of Africa going to develop? Could trade statistics not give us a better idea of how each country is doing, over the years? Another question: how are 30 years of European efforts for development cooperation reflected in statistics on trade, investment, energy, agriculture, environment, etc?'¹

There can be no development without democracy. And no democracy without sound statistics. If Europe is going to have a better understanding of development, there is more than ever a tremendous need for data.

¹ Interview with Mr Manuel Marin, 20 December 1993.

S TATISTICS FOR THE EBRD?

Questions to Mr Jacques de Larosière¹

Bankers and statisticians go together. But does the EBRD in its role as ‘development banker’ pay proper attention to ‘development statistics’ and ‘statistical development’ in the countries where it operates?

A graduate in law of the University of Paris and of the Institut d’Etudes Politiques and the Ecole Nationale d’Administration (both in Paris), Jacques de Larosière de Champfeu held various posts in the Ministry of Economic and Financial Affairs, where he became Head of Department in 1971 following his appointment as chairman of the OECD’s Economic and Development Review Committee. After serving as principal private secretary to Valéry Giscard d’Estaing (then Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs, 1974), he was Managing Director of the IMF, Governor of the Bank of France and Chairman of the Committee of Governors of the Group of Ten. He became President of the EBRD in 1993. In management, he has headed various companies including Renault, SNCF French Railways and Aérospatiale. He is a member of the Institut de France (Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques) and has been awarded numerous titles and orders.

LESSONS OF THE PAST

‘If you know the past, you can understand the present! And if that is the slogan of historians, it is also a fervent belief of statisticians. But what about development bankers?’

The EBRD, as **the** European banker with the job of financing reconstruction and development throughout the area which comprises the countries of the former Eastern bloc, makes no use of Eurostat’s services—at least, not directly. How can you explain why the main tool for measuring European integration and development, and the only one which can provide a harmonized picture of what is happening, is so little used by the main tool for providing finance to the countries in question?

Can it be that what Eurostat produces or offers does not match the needs of this type of banker?

It has to be admitted that in the past the “official statistics” in the countries where the EBRD now operates did not often reflect reality in the same way as Western statisticians saw it. But there is no need to dump everything from the past. With regard to investment, in particular, there are “old” data which can still be used.² If they were freshly processed as part of the new cooperation in statistics, these “lessons from the past” could well help to provide a better understanding of the present and to make better plans for the immediate and long-term future. In short, to make a better investment in the future.

Psychological effect

The idea of “reconstruction and development” is not simply a matter of factories and projects. Above all, there is the human factor.’

The psychological effect of the donor-recipient relationship can sow the seeds of frustration or misunderstanding on both sides. How do you see

European statistics helping you to cope with this psychological effect?

‘The EBRD, keeping in mind the political aspects of its task and in its desire to help in the process of reform, pays close attention to the indicators describing the circumstances to which various questions refer. It takes a keen interest in a wide range of survey data.’¹

DELICATE TASK

‘Encourage, foster and support private initiative across a whole continent that is in need of modernization and reconstruction. Now, that’s some task! But does it involve providing encouragement through showing which way to go, by suggesting investment in this location and in this sector rather than in another, or is it simply a matter of approving this or that project on the basis of its intrinsic merits without taking too much trouble to see just how it fits in to the pattern of development, to the area where it is going to operate and to the social circumstances which will have to absorb it?’

New course for investment

As structural reforms get under way—and this is already the case in some sectors in a large number of Central and Eastern European countries—the aid provided under the PHARE programme will have to be rejigged. As the capacity for absorbing technical assistance in the traditional sense of the term diminishes, there will be a need for further development of schemes to finance equipment and subsidies, as well as pilot projects.³

What are the data we are going to look at, the trends we are going to monitor and the actual statistics we are going to use in opting for one project over another and in backing one sector instead of another? If capitalist private initiative—which by definition seeks the best return for the least outlay in the shortest time—targets only those areas where swift profit

seems feasible, is there not a risk that it will undermine the whole economic and, in particular, social fabric just where it is already in dire straits?

Modernization of statistical infrastructure

The availability of reliable statistical information plays a key role in socioeconomic decision-making. The process of changing and modernizing the statistical system of the republics of the former Soviet Union needs considerable investment in terms of infrastructure and data-processing equipment.

Do aid projects for the reconstruction of the economies of the former Soviet republics incorporate a statistical dimension on a regular basis? Would the EBRD welcome projects financed jointly with the European Union (TACIS programme) to modernize the statistical information systems of these countries, especially with regard to its clients' infrastructure and data-processing equipment?

'The EBRD hopes that the former Soviet Union will get technical assistance for economic and financial statistics which are adapted to the market economy, but it is not in a position to propose joint financing. The fact is that the Bank can use its shareholders' resources solely for investment projects, although these may cover equipment and communications which are part of a programme for the development of statistical activity.'¹

Glaring lack of resources

There is no provision in the TACIS programme for the supply of data-processing equipment. Statistical cooperation is greatly hampered by this limitation. A statistical office usually depends on a solid data-processing infrastructure, but there is not much of this in the republics of the former Soviet Union.

INVENTORY

In order to make a proper assessment of the risks that it will have to take in the countries and/or regions where Europe is going to ask it to finance development efforts, the EBRD will naturally need to know the initial situation 'on the

ground', with an inventory of actual or potential riches, assets, liabilities, etc.

What figures is the EBRD going to base its assessments on? How can Eurostat help it in making these assessments?

'In the case of macroeconomic figures, the Bank uses national sources, the IMF, the World Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the OECD, etc.

Since the Bank itself does not carry out sectoral studies, the balance sheets relating to assets and other inventories are of no direct use to it. Its activities focus on projects and not sectors. If the promoters of a private project want to link it to a specific sector, it is always possible to call in consultants. The Bank has in fact commissioned studies on nuclear safety, telecommunications and transport in a number of countries.'¹

Eurostat—and the whole statistical system which revolves around it—could well use these studies and provide sectoral data and analyses and the results of work carried out by statisticians in the East, or with their collaboration, for the benefit of the EBRD.

An observer role at the CDIS

In view of the scale of the actions for cooperation and development involving the countries of the former Eastern bloc and the upheaval sometimes affecting the planning of statistical priorities, would it not be a good idea if the EBRD attended meetings of the CDIS (Steering Committee on Statistical Information) or took an interest in the priorities which were decided?

Fifty years of work

The work in which the EBRD is involved is a long-term job. We have to pace our efforts, apply them where needed and have a clear idea of priorities. This explains the importance—as we see it—of having a proper 'inventory' of what exists and of being able to assess the progress we have made as we go along. It all comes down to statistics.

There are a lot of people who feel that Russia is likely to be the crucial element in European cooperation, probably for the next 50 years. But there are also a lot of people who are surprised by a cer-

tain lack of flexibility in the approach. 'If the statistics produced by us and by the Russians cannot get in step, what will have been the point of all the efforts at harmonization?' That's the question that gets asked.

Running out of steam

When it comes to statistical cooperation, there is a marked difference in what the various Member States contribute, especially in the case of Russia. This is a venture with a tremendous amount at stake, involving the future of several generations of people in Europe, and yet there are some who are already running out of steam and calling for help. Is it not vital to see that all efforts—and especially financial resources—are properly coordinated?

European statistics are more than simply functional. They have an important role to play in the coordination of actions and resources.

THE OVERALL PICTURE

In addition to this job of coordination, European statistics must help those who provide the money for development to get an overall picture.

Human resources

When the EBRD makes a risk assessment for a particular country, how does it take into account a country's human resources, in terms of population patterns, migration, etc? What help can Eurostat give the Bank in assessing these human resources?

'It is a firm belief of the EBRD that the human resources which exist in the countries where it operates are a major asset and that demographic growth and movements of people are indicators of no little interest. However, it has to be emphasized again that the Bank's focus on projects reduces the significance of information on these aspects. In any case, they do not play a part in the procedures which the Bank uses in making its risk assessments.'¹

Are demographic statistics not in a position to provide useful help in defining investment strategy?

'Demography is indeed one of the subjects which has already been mapped out for the coming decades. Fertility and mortality rates

change fairly slowly, which means that we already have an idea of what the population is going to be in 20 years from now.

It seems that the business world and many politicians are only just waking up to the usefulness of demographic statistics and their long-term reliability, in relation to the economy.

This would really be a sound argument for encouraging everyone involved in the economy to think about devising strategies which were not linked to the short term or very short term, which is all too often the case nowadays.⁴

Social problems and SMEs

'Some key sectors of the economy cannot rely on financing from normal commercial sources or international bodies to get the process started because of the shakiness of the economic situation and the strict criteria which are applied by such sources in assessing risks. Among the reasons in favour of expanding the role of the PHARE programme in the investment sphere, mention must also be made of the lack of response on the part of the banks to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and the concern at rising unemployment. The encouragement of investment should be geared to suitable actions such as the development of SMEs, regional reconversion, better environmental protection, agricultural restructuring, etc. PHARE will support appropriate financial intermediaries in providing financing instruments such as start-up capital or suitable credit or guarantee mechanisms.'³

The emergence of a tremendous number of small undertakings in the changing economies is getting special attention from statisticians, in the form of work designed in particular to measure the extent of the economy's privatization and the social stability which should gradually result, together with the financial, social and political repercussions of multiple bankruptcies or massive restructuring.

We get invaluable knowledge from statistics. Should we not make use of it in this area, where the banking community's lack of response to the needs of SMEs is going to prompt the Commission to think about resorting to measures to provide encouragement to financial operators?

Environment

Environmental problems have reached dramatic proportions in many of the countries where the EBRD operates. What is the Bank looking for from Eurostat in the way of environmental statistics?

'The EBRD is acutely sensitive to environmental matters, but here too its range of action is almost exclusively limited to specific projects. As an example, it is more interested in the impact on the local environment of dust control devices on smelter chimneys than in air quality regulations in any particular country or town.'¹

It is an acknowledged fact that the main challenge in the 1990s—and probably way beyond—is the attainment of 'sustainable development'⁵. It is a particularly daunting challenge in the case of Eastern Europe.

Consequently, we need to mention here the massive work undertaken by Eurostat to ensure that the same priorities are evident to everyone in a common language. In more practical terms, when we are dealing with some specific matter, we need everyone to be reassured that the standards being talked about are the proper ones.

'Where the environment is concerned, statistics must inevitably appear as one of the key areas where consensus among countries is vital. It is essential for the statistics put out by the Community—say, on waste production or emissions—to be regarded as reliable estimates by the greatest possible number of non-member countries when it comes to international negotiations. This is one of the reasons why we are working closely with the countries of Eastern Europe on a major project which should result in a pan-European report on the state of the environment.

This means, as a minimum, that Europe in the widest sense—which includes the former Soviet Union—has to have a common language when talking about the environment. There has to be a common approach in acknowledging questions and accepting data.'⁶

'Our action will involve industrial registers, major structural surveys, household surveys, farm surveys, etc. The idea will be to include in all these surveys questions which

will make it easy to derive environmental data from general statistical information. Let me take investment as an example. Industry is being asked to invest to safeguard the environment. If the data on such investment were included in industrial statistics, it would be easy to see how it compared with overall investment.'⁶

When you consider the cross-border nature of the phenomena to be observed, the need for sophisticated processing techniques for statistical data, combining geographical information systems and remote sensing, justifies the application and use of geo-referenced information in many areas. Satellite remote sensing, for instance, has already made it possible for statistics to be of considerable help in compiling forestry records. Thanks to the GISCO system⁷ which it operates, Eurostat has a whole new set-up to meet the new demands of the European Environment Agency.

Is it not important to ensure that full use of all this European statistical work is made by the European banker, who is in fact going to be responsible for indicating the proper 'investment in sustainable development' in the countries of Eastern Europe?

Geographical data display

There are various new techniques for the geographical positioning and display of statistical information which, together with powerful geo-referenced statistical processing systems, should make it possible for development bankers to check regularly how their action is progressing. Are there any plans to make use of these?

'The EBRD is keen to devise indicators which can measure how transition is progressing. Some of the problems which arose when calculating the size of the private sector—which is a key indicator—are covered in the Bank's *Annual economic outlook* which came out recently.'¹

In the same way as for European integration, where statistics can show how 'non-Europe'—failure to integrate—would affect certain countries and illustrate the phenomenon in a very telling manner, would it not be a good idea if the EBRD made use of statistics to illustrate how it can help in

the way of development, to the benefit of donors just as much as of those on the receiving end of development programmes? Are there any plans for joint EBRD-Eurostat action in this area?

'Since the Board of Governors includes the G7 members and the European Community, the EBRD is aware of their interests, in the same way as it is cognizant of the interests of the countries in transition. The Bank is interested in the statistical data which reflect the impact of trade on both importers and exporters.'¹

Would the EBRD not be interested in getting involved in the research and development work which Eurostat is carrying out,⁸ with the idea of developing advanced statistical and data-processing tools which would enable it to highlight and display all these phenomena?

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

Proper coordination of agreements

'Aid coordination, including co-financing with the G24 countries and international agencies, will continue to be a major consideration for the Commission and national authorities alike, with the emphasis increasingly shifting to local coordination arrangements organized by the relevant national authorities, with help as required from the Commission. In particular, there is a need to work closer together with other major sources of finance such as the EIB, EBRD and World Bank. The Commission will look at various ways of encouraging co-financing through PHARE and the Member States, and it will report on this to the management committee. Aid coordinators will also need to relate very closely with colleagues involved in the negotiation or implementation of European agreements.'³

Europe has developed a working relationship with almost all the international organizations involved in cooperation and development, and this has often led to specific coordinated actions. What is to stop the EBRD from coming up with ideas and plans—just as the EIB does—which Eurostat can endeavour to coordinate statistically?

Financing after 1994

'The restructuring and development of statistical systems in the former republics of the USSR, together with the cooperation in support of this process, must probably run for at least 10 years. Community investment will be seriously jeopardized by the lack of commitment to provide long-term financing for the statistical cooperation programmes.

The financing of data-processing equipment for the priority statistical projects is currently limited to 10-15% of the funds available for technical assistance in 1993-94, i.e. no more than ECU 600 000 for all the republics. This restrictive position of the Commission seriously hampers the restructuring and development of statistical systems in the republics, especially in the fields for which the Commission (Eurostat) has been given responsibility for a focal-point area by the steering committee chaired by Mr J. Ripert (note: especially the areas of particular interest to bankers, external trade and business statistics).

The seminar on the strategy and organization of statistical information, which is to be organized by Eurostat during the first half of 1994, should make it possible to analyse the data-processing equipment needs expressed by the republics and to compare them with what can be supplied by G24 donors. The Commission will have to present its own financing strategy'⁹

Is this not further reason for the EBRD and Eurostat to work more closely together?

¹ Paragraphs containing answers to the questions from SIGMA to the President of the EBRD, Mr Jacques de Larosière.

² See the interview with Mr Josef Olenki, President of the Polish Statistical Office, in this issue, p. 11.

³ PHARE General orientations 1993-97 (PH//EN/447/92/Revision 1).

⁴ Interview with Mr Yves Franchet, Director-General of Eurostat, 31 March 1992.

⁵ The Brundtland Report listed three conditions for sustainable development: maintain the general quality of life; maintain permanent access to natural resources; avoid all lasting environmental damage.

⁶ Interview with Ms Gertrud Hilf, 22 December 1992.

⁷ Geographical Information System for the Commission.

⁸ See the article on R&D activities in this issue, p. 38.

⁹ 'Statistical cooperation between the Community and the republics of the former USSR', memorandum for Mr J. Ripert's meeting with Mr Delors, September 1993, Eurostat C/5.

THE EXPERIENCE IN POLAND

Interview with Mr Jozef Olenski

There is a lot to be learnt from the experience of statistics in Poland, which were quickly involved in the process of transition. This holds true for statisticians in the West and also for their counterparts in Eastern Europe. Mr Olenski provides an overview which focuses on specific points but which also provides interesting pointers for the future.

Josef Olenski is an economist, lawyer and sociologist. After studying at Warsaw University (M.Sc., Ph.D. in economics), he worked on statistical and econometric analysis, data-processing and the development of information systems for various government departments and construction companies in Poland. In 1974 he joined the Central Statistical Office, in charge of developing new statistical standards and information technologies. He became President of the CSO in 1992. He is also Co-President of the UN Statistical Commission and a member of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians. Since 1970 he has taught computer and information science at Warsaw University.

WIDE VARIETY OF COLLABORATION

What do you think of Eurostat's services? And which do you appreciate most, or least?

'Collaboration between Eurostat and the Central Statistical Office in Poland goes back to 1989. In the spring of that year the top people at the CSO decided to switch Polish statistics from a system based on material product accounting (MPA) for central planning and management of the economy to a market-based statistical system which was in line with international standards and which included the system of national accounts.

This decision was also in line with the desire voiced by Eurostat at the time to help Poland in this process.

Priorities defined

Official contacts between Eurostat and the CSO were put on a formal basis during a visit which the President of the CSO and a group of experts made to Eurostat in December 1989. I was a member of that group in my capacity as Director of the Statistical Research and Development Centre. The Director-General of Eurostat, Yves Franchet, and the President of the CSO, Franciszek Kubiczek, signed a document on Eurostat cooperation and assistance in the transition process of Polish statistics.

That visit was tremendously important for statistics in Poland. It made it possible to define the priority areas for the transition of Polish statistics and it laid down what would be the basis of cooperation and assistance by Eurostat and by all the countries in the European Union, whose activities are coordinated by Eurostat.

The types of assistance which Eurostat provides for Poland are rigorously linked to transition projects in specific statistical fields

and they match the progress of statistics as the system is adapted in Poland.

Defining a strategy

We are very grateful for Eurostat's help, above all in defining a strategy for transition and establishing priorities for change. This strategy considered the urgent requirements of the initial transition phase of the national economy, a period which was marked by rampant inflation, soaring unemployment, the reorganization of the national economy after the privatization of large sectors of the economy, the emergence of a very large number of small enterprises, etc.

In all areas of statistics methods were introduced, which were new for statistics in our country, thanks to the help of experts from Eurostat and from various statistical institutes in the Member States, especially INSEE. Mention also has to be made of the help provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) during this initial phase.

Adapting to circumstances

The types of assistance were adapted to various circumstances and included seminars, short-term missions and training courses for Polish statisticians at Eurostat and other national statistical institutes, consultations with experts and, in particular, all the joint work which European experts and Polish statisticians were involved in to devise new methods and techniques and to introduce the new surveys which were needed to satisfy the demands of users and of the economy.

Thanks to the cooperation and help we got, it was possible to introduce new surveys in a very short time to monitor the labour market, inflation, liberalized external trade and small statistical units for "economic demography".

Beyond the short term

The transition strategy also covers medium and long-term projects. The former include: the introduction of an integrated system of business statistics based on a set of multiple surveys (and a general enterprise register which was re-drafted and introduced with the help of Eurostat, INSEE and the BLS), the development and application of classifications and nomenclatures which were consistent and compatible with European and UN standards for classifying goods and services, economic activities, occupations in general, classifications of environmental statistics, household surveys, etc.

The seminars and workshops organized in this area were tremendously useful. The attendance of Polish statisticians as observers at regular Eurostat meetings and working groups, working on the development and adoption of common classifications and nomenclatures for the European Union, was particularly helpful.

After the initial contacts with statisticians in Central Europe, it became clear that the model for assistance used in the developed market economies and offered to developing countries could not be applied in Europe. Poland, together with other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, had teams of statisticians who were relatively well trained and experienced. It turned out that there was no need for basic training in statistical theory and analysis, which was an element of the TES programmes and other actions.

Dealing with new problems

The emphasis should be more on the problems (which are new for the economies which previously operated under central planning) and aspects related to transition, together with those areas which were not adequately developed in the statistical systems of the planned economies (e.g. sample surveys for economic statistics, development of survey frameworks and practical methods for sampling, quality control of data starting with small sets, problems of non-response and biased answers, survey management, consideration of the effect of statistical confidentiality in defining sur-

vey methodologies, regional differences in socioeconomic situations, etc.

Reuse of the experience gained

It is my impression that both Eurostat and the statistical offices in the European Union and in Poland have worked together on effective and useful types of cooperation and assistance with the idea of providing other countries which are lagging behind in transforming their statistical systems—the countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU), for example—with the experience and particular methods of our transition phase, by pooling the efforts of the experts from the European Union, Poland and the other countries which signed the Visegrad agreement.'

THE STATISTICIAN'S ROLE

How do you see the statistician's role developing in Poland at the moment? What are the features of this development?

'In a centrally planned economy the official statisticians were the "helpers" of the planning departments at central and regional levels as well as in the government ministries. They were involved in the decision-making and management processes affecting State enterprises. They were obliged to collect and produce a certain number of data at the request of certain central ministries. As a rule, statistical questionnaires had to be approved by the relevant ministries.

A fundamental change

In the early stages of the transition process, the role of statistics underwent a fundamental change.

First of all, statistics became independent. Responsibility for defining the official statistics programme now lies with statisticians themselves, instead of with the planning departments and ministries as in the past.

But it often still seems that neither statisticians nor users were ready for this new situation. There a lot of statisticians who still wait for orders from the ministry and who

are wary of taking the initiative—and the responsibility—for some statistics or other. It is much simpler to ask a ministry "What do you want me to do?" and just wait for the answer, instead of conducting a thorough analysis of potential user requirements, defining a methodology and suggesting the suitable information services.

The change in the role of statistics must be accompanied by a change in the job of the statisticians. They have to move from being producers of raw data to become experts in social economy and policy, expected to know everything in the social and economic sphere which it is their job to describe using the appropriate statistical methods.

Statistics and democracy

Another important change which deserves mention is the growing awareness of the role of statistical information as a vital element for the exercise of human rights in a democratic society. Every citizen is entitled to have politically neutral information on society and the economy. Although the former overseers of statistics find it hard to accept this idea, it is becoming steadily better understood by public authorities.

Building confidence

The third change which has clearly emerged is the confidence of the general public in the data provided by statistics.

Under the old centrally planned system, the official statistical setup was viewed by the public as an organization providing the State propaganda machine with the data it needed. It was generally believed that the statistics lied. The statisticians knew that this belief was based on a false image of statistics in society. Statisticians could not disseminate data themselves or provide public comment on them. The image of statistics was contaminated by the overall image of the propaganda system. After three years of transition, society is now showing a slow change—modest but tremendously significant—in the degree of confidence and credibility which it is willing to give to the data produced and disseminated by the Polish statistical system.'

ARE NATIONAL ACCOUNTS A PRIORITY?

Statisticians in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe seem to favour giving priority to the development of national accounts. If so, why?

'There are several reasons to explain why countries in transition are giving priority to the introduction of a system of national accounts:

1. The system of material product accounts, which was based on the fundamental idea of "national income" and on the division of the economy into "productive" and "non-productive" sectors, is not up to describing the new economic situation, even during the early stages of transition, i.e. freeing of prices, removal of the legal restraints which hampered economic activity and the abolition—albeit partial—of currency exchange controls. This means that statisticians have to produce basic economic indicators which use the concepts of national accounts.
2. As a result of requests from international financial organizations such as the World Bank, the IMF and the OECD, as well as from international statistical organizations such as Eurostat and Unstat, we have to be able to provide basic indicators (GNP and derived indicators), and this gives extra emphasis to the need to have a system of national accounts in operation.
3. There may also be political pressure from governments, which want to move from a system using material product accounts to one based on national accounts, as part of the general transition of the national economy.
4. Economists and analysts are calling for more and more data which are presented using the methodology of national accounts. This methodology has been introduced in universities and research institutes and forms the basis of macroeconomic theory.
5. The current lack of knowledge about national accounts systems and the extent of the problems to be solved when it comes to sources of statistical data are prompting many statisticians to accelerate the introduction of the system of national accounts.

Moving towards a system

There has to be a distinction, however, between adopting certain categories of national accounts (GNP and related categories) and the introduction of a complete system of national accounts. At the present stage of development there are a large number of statistical departments which tend to restrict their ambitions to the introduction of elementary categories of national accounts at the macro level.

The CSO departments in Poland have a fairly extensive experience of presenting basic macrodata using the system of national accounts (SNA 68). We started publishing GNP and related data way back at the start of the 1970s. The long-term programme for the changeover from a system using material product accounts to a system based on national accounts was defined as a set of consistent actions operating at several levels. It covered the creation of new enterprise registers, with the particular inclusion of a classification of activities (compatible with the NACE), classifications of legal forms of activity which will be useful in generating other classifications of units by institutional sector, changes in household surveys, changes in statistics on various fields in the national accounts, development of financial statistics in line with the concepts of financial categories in the system of national accounts, as well as the necessary changes to trade and business statistics to incorporate the concept of "rest of the world", statistics on transfers, etc.

A coordination approach

To my mind, the introduction of national accounts statistics should be a long-term aim of any statistical office in a period of transition, but should not be an immediate operational objective.

The way of achieving this aim should be indicated by defining a large number of projects at various levels of the transition process. To some extent, the coordination approach should be provided by the methodology of the system of national accounts.

At the same time, however, there should be an immediate strategic decision to replace the idea of "na-

tional income" by the notion of "national product", as the first step in the process of transition.

GDP estimates and related indicators can be compiled at macro-data level, using existing data sources. Figures here will of course use annual estimates. Quarterly and regional estimates for GNP—as far as countries in transition are concerned—are more a matter for research than of regular statistical production. Our office is involved in research in this area.'

MEASURING TRADE

Do you have the suitable tools for measuring trade flows with your European partners? How can Eurostat help in this area?

'The Polish system of external trade statistics is entirely compatible with European standards. Since 1 January 1990 Poland has been using the SAD (Single Administrative Document) and the Combined Nomenclature in its customs procedures. The external trade statistics are based on SAD documents.

Unexpected difficulties

It has to be said, however, that the introduction of the SAD ran into some unexpected difficulties.

More than two years after its introduction, there are still hold-ups in getting data, which arrive with lots of errors and omissions. The development of accurate and promptly available external trade statistics depends on an improvement, upstream, of the administrative data produced by the customs authorities.

We received substantial aid from Eurostat for the development of a Polish version of the Combined Nomenclature. We are grateful for the help which Eurostat provided in updating the notes to the Combined Nomenclature and other standard data for the SAD document. The CSO would like to be able to make better use of the import statistics of the countries in the European Union and of Eurostat's external trade database, so that we can validate our own sources of data and improve our estimates.

Coping with the surprise

Without reliable and timely data, information on external trade cannot be available when it is needed, i.e. every month. The systems for providing administrative information and the customs authorities in every country in transition were taken by surprise at the consequences of opening frontiers and liberalizing external trade. Statistics, too, are still trying to cope with the surprise.'

ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS

Europe is struggling to meet the challenge of environmental changes, both at European and at world levels. How do you see your involvement in the development of environmental statistics? What can you offer the European statistical system in this area? And what do you expect in return?

'Poland was the first country in Central and Eastern Europe to publish statistics on the environment—which we started doing at the beginning of the 1970s—especially on territorial distribution (pollution maps). Environmental statistics thus have a fairly long record and a good reputation among scientists.

We are now thinking about integrated systems, linked to administrative systems for monitoring the environment, in liaison with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources.

Coordinating observation

The idea of coordinated statistical observation of the environment in Europe provides Poland with an opportunity to get to know its own environment better and to help the various government bodies to assess the situation and identify risks.

We are willing and ready to share our experiences with our colleagues and to learn from their experiences. Pollution knows no borders. As far as this statistical field is concerned, I am convinced that international cooperation among statisticians, free of any political pressure—which might aim to suppress, for example, information on how pollution is exported by air or

water, or on the sale of waste to less developed countries—is a prerequisite for sound statistics and reliable information on the world around us, which our children will inherit.

I should like to encourage the idea of more formal international collaboration among statisticians in the field of environmental statistics, on the basis of the UN resolution.'

SOCIAL DIMENSION

The social dimension in general, and the problems of unemployment in particular, are a very complex area for statisticians. How can your statistical system and ours in Europe approach these aspects and attempt to quantify them to arrive at sufficiently compatible views?

'In Polish statistics, employment and unemployment are looked at from different angles and using different methods:

- surveys of enterprises on employment;
- data from the social insurance system on officially registered jobs;
- administrative unemployment records;
- labour force survey using a sample of households;
- an analysis of time use (in preparation and scheduled for 1994);
- estimates of employment in agriculture (family holdings).

These sources of data reveal several aspects of employment and unemployment. They are appreciated by our main users, both for their methodology and for their content.

Sensitive aspects

In an economy in transition, however, there have to be more thorough analyses of these very sensitive aspects of society. I am thinking, above all, of the need to conduct labour force surveys at more frequent intervals. The sample of households also has to be expanded, so that regions of employment and unemployment can be identified better. We ought to include an analysis of movements to places of work, in view of the

very low level of mobility of the labour force in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

"Black" labour

Statistics should also deal with the problems of "black" labour. Some estimates which can be used to correct under-reported data will be collected at the start of the labour force survey. The extent of this informal sector of the economy and the lack of reporting, during the period of transition, should be assessed better, so that we can get better estimates and improve the comparability of information.

Immigrant workers

One aspect which is completely ignored by statisticians in Poland is that of foreign workers in the country, especially those from the countries of the former Soviet Union.

The borders are open and a large number of people from the ex-Soviet republics have come to work in Poland. Most of them are working without a permit, and without being registered, for fairly low wages which, because of exchange rate differences, are several times more than the wage rates in their home countries. This has a significant impact on the labour market in some regions and in some branches of the Polish economy. These problems and their social and economic repercussions in Poland cannot be described adequately by the estimates which are compiled for migration statistics.

Bankruptcy and restructuring

A more specific problem in monitoring the job market, during the most recent phase in the transition of the Polish economy, is the supply of data which ought to make it possible to compile short-term forecasts on the impact of bankruptcy or the restructuring of major State enterprises, especially in the mining, metalworking and mechanical engineering sectors.

Lack of resources

The areas in the labour market which official statistics do not yet cover are clearly known. But more

resources are needed to conduct surveys, and they are not available at the moment.

To sum up, we can say that as far as employment statistics are concerned our statisticians have applied methods which are compatible with those used in the developed market economies. Special approaches are needed, however, during the transition period. Collaboration with our colleagues at Eurostat, in the countries of the European Union and at the ILO has been a great help, and we feel that this cooperation needs to be pursued even more closely.'

MONITORING INVESTMENT

Are investment trends in Poland—industrial, real estate, infrastructure, etc.—measured statistically according to methods and concepts similar to those employed in Community statistics?

'In the old centrally planned economy, Poland had very detailed statistics on all types of investment. They made it possible to monitor statistically all investment projects in the State enterprise and cooperative sector and to obtain estimates of investment in the private agricultural sector and, to a minor extent, in the private non-agricultural sector. There were also reliable data from the banks which supervised the whole process of investment in State enterprises. Investment in non-profit-making bodies controlled by the State and the government was also monitored.

The situation with regard to investment statistics has now changed. Data on investment are collected from State enterprises and major private enterprises. The survey also includes a sample of small and medium-sized enterprises.

New problems

New problems are nevertheless emerging with regard to the quality of the data obtained, with small enterprises holding information back.

Definitions of the concept of investment need to be reviewed and adapted to the new registers

of enterprises. We hope that the changes in the tax system (reduction of basic taxes linked to investment) will make it possible to improve the quality of the data which are input.

Investment statistics (if these are considered in terms of increasing fixed assets) is the field in which we can produce data comparable with those produced by the Community, subject to certain adjustments to take account of differences of definition. The changeover to market-related methods is currently at the methodological stage.

The classification of fixed assets which was employed for years in the centrally planned economic system and which was used in making investment decisions is still in use. A new classification system—covering raw materials, services and the building sector, and including various aspects of "genuine" fixed assets—should be ready by the end of 1995 and introduced in 1996. It will go hand-in-hand with the change in investment statistics.'

CAPITAL MOVEMENTS

What importance do you attach at present to the statistical monitoring of international movements of capital?

'International movements of capital are very important for our statistics and for the Polish economy. The question covers various aspects:

1. transfers of capital by foreign investors for purposes of direct investment: construction or reconstruction of factories, investment in infrastructure, etc;
2. transfers of foreign capital for investment in the process of privatizing State enterprises;
3. dealings in foreign capital on the Polish stock exchange;
4. transactions involving foreign capital on the Polish financial market, including the financing of the internal debt by underwriting State loans;
5. withdrawal of capital outside Poland by foreign or joint-capital enterprises;
6. loans provided by foreign banks to Polish or joint enter-

prises, guaranteed by assets (property, infrastructure, etc) located in Poland;

7. transfers and investment by foreign operators without specifying economic use;
 8. investment abroad by Polish or joint enterprises;
 9. transactions carried out by branches or subsidiaries of foreign banks in Poland;
- etc.

Aiming for a consistent system

The system for the statistical monitoring of international movement of capital comprises statistical surveys, administrative records and contacts with the banks. It ought to be reorganized to become a system of consistent and routine statistical monitoring of how capital and investment are moving, as part of the overall statistics on the financial market. This field of statistics is included in the programme of assistance which Eurostat and the Member States of the European Union are providing for Poland.'

VISEGRAD: THE WAY AHEAD

Have the summit declarations at Copenhagen on the prospects of membership for the countries that signed the Visegrad Agreement made any difference to the way ahead as far as statistics are concerned?

'Not a lot, for the time being. We are carrying on with our programme to adapt our statistical system to a market economy and to fit in with the requirements of a democratic society.

Political impetus

However, the declaration at the Copenhagen summit provided powerful political impetus to the statistical offices and the governments, in very close collaboration with the European institutions. In the case of statisticians, this means collaboration with Eurostat, the drafting of a long-term programme of statistical adaptation for the four countries that signed the Visegrad Treaty—so that we can reach European

standards—and new types of co-operation within Cestat (organization of the statistical offices of the countries that signed the Visegrad Agreement). For each country, this programme should set deadlines for the major statistical fields.

Document of tremendous impact

I much appreciate Mr Franchet's efforts concerning the agreement signed between Eurostat and the statistical offices of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

The preliminary version of this agreement, which we have accepted on our side, clearly defines the practical measures and the actions covered by multilateral coordination in the statistical services of the four Cestat countries, together with Eurostat's role. I am convinced that this document will have a tremendous impact, in both political and professional terms, during the period of transition which our various statistical offices are experiencing.'

BUCHAREST CONFERENCE

You have just come back from Bucharest. What was the topic of discussion at that international meeting, and what was the outcome?

'The Bucharest Conference—although it was actually held at Sinaia—was an important meeting.¹ This goes for everyone who attended, I believe. It was a kind of checkpoint along the process of transition for all the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It was an opportunity for each of these countries to take stock of what progress had been made along the road of statistical transition.

Specific problems

How to define problems and the requests which were formulated seemed very important to my mind, especially in the case of countries which have recently emerged or re-emerged and which are developing statistical systems based on elements from former federations (e.g. Soviet Union, Yugoslavia).

The various types of assistance were evaluated. There was emphasis on the need to fine-tune assistance to the specific circumstances of each country, to the stage in the transition process which it has reached and to the specific needs of a particular field of statistics. The need for the countries which are farther along the process of transition to help those which are still some way behind was also mentioned.

I should also like to emphasize the fact that a lot of attention was devoted during the conference to the particular problems of monitoring statistics during the process of economic transition. A "transition economy" needs to be watched very carefully by "transition statistics". In this respect, the collaboration with the statistical services of international organizations and multilateral regional agreements (Cestat, CIS statistical service), as well as the bilateral contacts between countries in transition, are a tremendous help in speeding up the process of statistical transition and making it more effective.

Human resources

It was also stressed that transition needs resources, and above all human resources, with new knowledge to be absorbed by older statisticians and the training of their younger colleagues in new methods and techniques. For many new statistical fields, new information technologies are vital. Limited resources have an effect on the introduction of new surveys, new methods and new techniques.

Moreover, there are objective limitations which have to be borne in mind with regard to the speed of transition, since this also depends on the progress of transition in other branches of the national economy and on the extent to which a statistical office can absorb new knowledge. The need for transition at the management levels of the national statistical offices was also mentioned as part of the overall process of statistical transition.

Concrete proposals for new types of multilateral cooperation and assistance were formulated.

Bringing together all the countries in transition

I feel that "checkpoint" meetings of this kind are useful, both for the countries in transition and for those who are providing assistance, the international organizations and the developed economies. I should like to suggest the idea of a similar conference in three years, involving even more international organizations and all the countries in transition, not only those which are geographically part of Europe.'

TO SUM UP

As you see it, what are the main benefits for your country of statistical cooperation between the European Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe?

'The list of the benefits which come with cooperation between the European Union and the countries in transition is a long one. It is not possible for me to pick out the most important. I think it is better to speak of the statistical cooperation "syndrome" which has been prompted by the process of transition in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and which has met with such a positive and friendly response from European statisticians.

In answering the earlier questions, I think I have given a long list of the benefits which our statistics, and our statisticians, have derived from cooperation with the Community. If you want me to make a general comment on its effects, however, I should like to say that without the help from the Community the transition of statistics in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe would have required a lot more effort and a lot more money and would take much longer.

Mutual experience

Thanks to the help of Eurostat and of our colleagues in the developed market economies, Polish statistics have managed to react in time to the changes in the economy and to observe its speedy transformation and development. As the economy is transformed, and as statistics are transformed, we can learn a lot from those with

more experience, and from our own mistakes. The latter method is rather expensive, but it can be very interesting too. It is the taxpayers, and not the statisticians, who pick up the tab for official statistics. Cooperation with Western statisticians has taught us methods, techniques and set-ups which have been tried and tested in actual use. This was particularly important in the statistical fields for which we had no time to develop our own approaches, on account of the tremendous speed with which economic and social changes were taking place.

Keeping in step

In the countries in transition the pace of economic and social change is much faster than in the countries with a developed and stable market economy. Statistics should try to keep in step. This involves using models which have been devised and tested by other statisticians. We have been given this help and we are still getting it.

What is more, the experiences, methods and data collected by the countries in transition can also be of use to economists and statisticians, at international organizations and in developed economies, who analyse the transition process. The "transplant" of a method or survey to circumstances different from those for which it was devised provides additional testing of that method or survey. Better comparability of data is also ensured.

National circumstances

There are many statistical fields in which the national circumstances of a country are such that the experiences gained in other countries are of no direct use. They have to be considered simply part of general statistical knowledge. In these fields—and I am talking from personal experience now—our colleagues in Europe and in other parts of the world with developed market economies, with whom we have had an opportunity to cooperate, have focused particular attention on this problem of special national circumstances, either by warning our young statisticians—who have less experience but who are sometimes a bit too eager—of the risk of a transplant being rejected, or by encouraging our more conservative teams to take a bolder approach in the introduction of new ideas. I attach tremendous importance to this psychological effect of cooperation, which will be felt for a very long time.

Statisticians in Central and Eastern Europe were isolated from the international statistical community for many years. International contacts were restricted to a small circle of high-ranking officials, with very few experts taking part. One significant benefit of cooperation and assistance is that the European statistical community has now been joined by many fellow statisticians in Central and Eastern Europe. Many of those who now attend seminars, receive training and go on mission feel that they really belong to the European statistical community.

Every statistician, whether providing or receiving assistance, now has a better idea and a better understanding of Europe as a whole, with all its various aspects and regional differences, and he now knows what the integration of the peoples of Europe means: the need for freedom, democracy and responsibility throughout the continent and cultural sphere of Europe, in the spiritual tradition of ancient Greece and Rome and of Christianity, which have bound Europe together for centuries.²

¹ This conference was organised by the Romanian Statistical Office (National Commission for Statistics, Bucharest), at the initiative of the Statistics division of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Europe and with the support of Eurostat and the statistical services of EFTA and the OECD. Poland described to the conference its experience as an economy in transition and its views on the various forms of cooperation which have been developed.

² Interview with Mr Jozef Olenski on 9 December 1993.

T O IMPROVE AND SUPPORT

A framework of priority measures

In addition to producing statistics that can be used as a basis for decisions by the European institutions and the Member States' governments and in addition to disseminating this statistical information as widely as possible, Eurostat must fulfil another specific task: it must 'work to improve the statistical systems in the Member States and support the development of developing countries and those in transition towards market economies'.

A DUAL OBJECTIVE

This task takes the form of sector programmes aimed at the Community and the rest of the world. The objective is twofold:

- to ensure that the statistical standards and methods developed and implemented within the European Union are applied at international level in order to increase the comparability and quality of the data;
- to coordinate and assist with the development of modern, efficient statistical systems which meet the same criteria as those of Western European countries; this task is targeted particularly on the countries of Eastern Europe in transition towards market economies and on the developing countries.

In terms of statistical objectives, therefore, it is a question of proposing that the statistical systems of the Member States coordinate the action of the European Union within the framework of international organizations and implement cooperation and technical assistance measures.

STATISTICS AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

Article 76 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area provides for the need to develop a system of comparable, harmonized statistics in all the Member States of the EEA. Implementation of this provision takes the shape of a joint EC-EFTA statistical programme.

The Commission intends to involve the statistical systems of the EFTA countries closely in all the Community programmes in order to promote the development of a coherent European statistical area, based on common principles, standards and methodologies.

DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICAL SYSTEMS IN COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION

The transition towards a modern economy calls for a radical change in the statistical system.

Statistical cooperation will be primarily of a technical nature and will aim at making available the methodologies and practices applied in developed market economies, particularly those of the European Union.

The Commission is responsible for the organization of training in the broad sense (ranging from theoretical training to technical assistance) and the coordination of the measures taken by all the countries and international institutions involved.

Cooperation is channelled through a multiannual programme, which is divided into statistical areas and sets out the order of priority of projects and individual actions.

Basic training is organized in seminars and workshops either on a bilateral basis between the Commission/Member States and a country of Central and Eastern Europe or on a multilateral basis.

Technical assistance is provided at bilateral level between the Commission or a Member State and a country of Central and Eastern Europe.

By coordinating the cooperation projects of the G24 countries and international institutions, the Commission is ensuring that sound use is made of limited resources (funds and expertise).

DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICAL SYSTEMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Commission and the Member States have developed an overall strategy taking into account the programmes of other bodies such

as the World Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

For the 1993-97 period it has been proposed that Commission cooperation measures should focus on the following priorities:

Training of statisticians

Education is a basic activity which enables developing countries to lay the foundations for the institutional development of statistics.

Two types of action should be undertaken in this area:

- the funding of vocational training schools in French, English and Portuguese-speaking African countries. Such measures are also envisaged in other regions (Latin America, Asia, etc.) to meet demands from the countries there.

Coordination with the network of European training centres for economist statisticians from the developing countries (in Paris, Lisbon, Madrid and Luxembourg) and with the Munich Centre will remain a priority in order to ensure the best possible resources for cooperation.

- the provision of support for the constant improvement of human resources by organizing courses and short seminars on appropriate subjects.

External trade statistics

Commission support for external trade statistics will continue to deal with the finalization and installation of the Eurotrace system. French, English, Portuguese and Spanish versions of this programme are planned so that developing countries in all regions can be supported in this field.

Social aspects

The statistical information needed for the social aspects of development to be taken into account is another area for future cooperation. The European statistical system will be particularly involved in supporting structural adjustment, which is at present one of the priorities of the fourth Lomé Convention.

Food security

The purpose is to support the setting-up of information systems which can contribute to the drawing-up and management of food

policies and rural development. This will include participation in programming and carrying out the Diaper III project in the ICDCS (Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel) countries funded by the European Development Fund (EDF) and the bilateral programmes of the Member States.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER NON-COMMUNITY COUNTRIES

The years 1993-97 will be devoted to achieving the objectives laid down in the cooperation agreement concluded with the US Office of Management and Budget and Statistics Canada following the transatlantic declaration signed in autumn 1990 between the Community, the USA and Canada.

This joint work will deal with the development of classifications and nomenclatures, common standards and methods, the coordination of technical assistance to countries in transition, statistical training and the dissemination of information.

COORDINATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Coordination with the statistical departments of international organizations will remain at the heart of Commission policy in the future.

At world level, the Commission will reinforce its presence in all the cooperation arrangements made under the auspices of the United Nations. The recent revision of these arrangements should enable the United Nations Statistical Commission to improve the conditions for cooperation and better define the role which the Commission is to play within the coordination bodies, such as the working party of the Statistical Commission on Coordination and the Statistical Subcommittee for the Cooperation of International Organizations.

As regards the individual fields, the Commission will participate in all the inter-secretariat working parties, dealing in particular with national accounts, statistics on services, environmental statistics, nomenclatures, registers, etc.

At European level, or more generally that of industrialized countries, the Commission is intending to step up cooperation with the OECD and the UN Economic Commission for Europe. The inter-secretariat working party set up in September 1991 will enable the three institutions to cooperate, with a view to improving the development of statistical standards and methods and the system for collecting data from the national statistical systems.

¹ These main lines of action on statistical information were the subject of a proposal for a Council Decision on the framework programme for priority actions in the field of statistical information 1993-97 (COM(92) 395 final).

S TATISTICS AND TRANSITION

Interview with Mr Alain Chantraine

When the going gets tough, the tough get going! Switching suddenly from a planned economy—the only system that tens of millions of “consumers” knew for generations—to a market economy responding to new laws creates a shock wave which has to be countered with massive cooperation in the form of technical assistance and training. Statistical cooperation is part of these massive programmes. This introductory article can merely skim the surface.

Alain Chantraine began his career in the Statistical Office in 1962, after graduating in advanced business studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales in Liège. 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 directly 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. In 1987 he became Director in charge of Information Processing and Dissemination. Since June 1993 he has headed the Directorate for General Matters, International and Interinstitutional Relations, and External and Intra-Community Trade Statistics. His experience has enabled him to take part in a number of worldwide 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 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.

Among Eurostat's responsibilities, its 'fourth function'¹—which is the theme of this issue of SIGMA—is to improve the statistical systems in the Member States and to support the development of developing countries and countries which are changing over to a market economy.

CLEAR DISTINCTION

First of all, a clear distinction has to be made between the task of providing assistance and cooperation for the development of statistics and the job of collecting information.

When the Statistical Office gets involved in cooperation activities, the initial aim is not to gather information for the Commission on the countries in question. The aim is to help countries develop a statistical system which matches their needs.

'In doing this, we naturally have to be careful on both sides that the systems we devise together are compatible. The demand for information from our users, whether the Commission or economic operators, requires an approach which actually differs from the work involved in cooperation.'²

A different approach and rhythm

'Those who are confronted with immediate operational objectives need figures and syntheses very quickly. Our objective, on the other hand, is more long term. In some respects, this is what sets us apart from other international organizations, such as the IMF.

When the IMF is developing the Russian balance of payments, you can see it negotiating debt re-scheduling at the same time. It needs to work simultaneously on the long-term development of the system and on getting information right away.

So far at Eurostat, we have been less involved in that kind of urgent demand, which means that we can focus most of our efforts on developing systems. We are not

averse to collecting "immediate data", but it is not our primary objective.'²

Pros and cons

Are short-term figures not extremely important for quantifying market shares? Is there not a risk that Europe is going to be let down by a statistical system which is less concerned with the production of ready-to-use data than that of our US rivals, which immediately sets out to find—in the countries of Eastern Europe, for example—whatever can lead right away to new business opportunities for its economic operators?

'That is not necessarily true. When the IMF collects information on balances of payments, for example, its approach is more from the angle of debt management. In our case, when we work on developing external trade statistics, we look at trade statistics in terms of products, and there we get information which is of immediate use to firms. If we are going to help reform statistical systems, we also need to have a good idea of the quality of existing data, since this provides us with practical expertise.

Each approach has its pros and cons. Neither partner has a stranglehold on what is likely to be strategic information. In any case, information flows freely among the various organizations.'²

DIFFERENT TASKS

As far as aid to Eastern Europe is concerned, there is a second important distinction which has to be made. The system of cooperation does not operate in the same way for every country. It varies depending on whether they are involved in the PHARE³ or TACIS⁴ programmes.

Countries in the PHARE programme

These are the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and also the Baltic republics and those coun-

tries of former Yugoslavia where the political situation makes cooperation possible (e.g. Slovenia, FYR of Macedonia, etc).

It was as a result of the summit in Paris that the Commission was given the job of coordinating all technical assistance, including the statistical aspects, to these countries, with Eurostat responsible for the overall planning.

Countries in the TACIS programme

These are the countries of the former Soviet Union, plus Mongolia, but excluding the Baltic republics.

In the case of these countries, the work of the international organizations is coordinated by a steering group, with the IMF providing the secretariat.

'Where statistics are concerned, the group can draw on the experience of leading specialists on the subject, especially Mr Ripert, a former Director-General of INSEE. His knowledge of the European statistical system proved invaluable when he was appointed Assistant Secretary-General at the United Nations, before he was asked to run the group coordinating the work of the international organizations.

Ripert Committee

This committee coordinates the action of the various organizations, which are each responsible for part of the work. Working alongside Eurostat are the OECD, the IMF, the World Bank, the United Nations Statistical Office and the ILO, together with two UN regional commissions, the Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which maintains links with Mongolia and the other republics of Central Asia.

In the breakdown of tasks, Eurostat is in charge of projects on external trade and business statistics, as well as plans for restructuring the old statistical systems in the changeover to a market economy.²

MODULAR ACTION

Coordination of the PHARE programme

'Eurostat is responsible for coordinating all the projects for the countries involved in the PHARE programme.

Coordination is achieved by means of a data base which covers, in addition to the Community schemes run by Eurostat, any kind of cooperation whether it is provided bilaterally by a Member State of the Community, by non-member countries or by the international organizations.

All these actions are grouped in sectoral programmes for the development of the statistical systems of the recipient countries. These sectoral programmes are geared to the areas where statistics seem to be most needed to run the economy of each country both now and in the future.

A few examples

Let me make a general remark. In most of these countries the macroeconomic aspects — national accounts—are extremely important, in the sense that there is a changeover from national accounts which previously served a centrally planned economy to a system of national accounts which can be used in developing a market economy.

This changeover requires taking a different approach to a whole series of notions, and sometimes there are problems of terminology. There are a lot of terms which do not have the same meaning in the old system and in the new one.

Seen in this light, the system of national accounts is a good way of coordinating the whole statistical system. The accounts are compiled from the whole range of basic data, the collection of which has to be substantially modified. The national accounts are the point where economists and statisticians have to come together.

Since the major macroeconomic figures are expressed in terms of the national accounts, the latter offer by virtue of all the applications which we coordinate a sound introduction to the market economy and to all the systems for its management. The OECD is particularly active in the area of national accounts.

Another area which demands a lot of attention in our work in the countries involved in the PHARE programme is that of price statistics. Here, too, the concepts which have to be harmonized differ greatly at the outset.

Lastly, statistics are going to make it possible to get a more and more rapid idea of how private enterprises are doing in the economy and how quickly they are multiplying. We want to measure the extent of privatization and how fast it is developing.²

Is there already enough credible information to measure this trend accurately?

'We are getting there. It is going to take a lot of joint work, based mainly on registers of enterprises. By keeping an eye on the programme for the development of these registers, we can already see fairly clearly how the various parts of the economy are developing.

Integrated programmes

With the countries in the PHARE programme, we are endeavouring to set up integrated actions for the development of statistical systems. On the basis both of these programmes and of the database which controls all the actions which come under them, we are coordinating a whole range of activities, especially those provided by the Member States. At Eurostat we are focusing on a relatively limited number of actions, by looking for the optimum synergy with what others are offering. We are also trying to promote the twinning of teams of national statisticians from the Member States and from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with the idea of creating project teams.

Working with EFTA in the Baltic republics

Let me give you an example. We are working very closely with EFTA on the coordination of the activities in the Baltic republics. Traditionally, this is where countries such as Finland and Sweden have strong links.

It is through EFTA that we are trying to coordinate the programmes for the development of statistical systems in the Baltic republics. The conventional approach involves defining demand together, establishing a basic programme

and identifying those who are most likely to be able to contribute best to cooperation actions.

We also act as a kind of relay between the various people involved in cooperation actions and the national statistical offices in these countries, some of which have in a way been taken under the wing of some Member State or other.²

Visegrad

The signatories of the Visegrad Agreement got together to prepare for joint membership of the Union European. These countries are Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Substantial action

'With the countries in this group, whose membership of Europe was accepted in principle at the Copenhagen summit, we are involved in more substantial action.

Remember that the idea of membership is not linked to any specific date. It will depend on the ability of these countries to satisfy a certain number of criteria, involving both the democratization of their political systems and compliance with certain economic criteria.

Statistics will play a particular role here, in the sense that it will be statistical indicators which provide the basis for devising and deciding on the criteria for assessing economic development.

Decisive attitude

As soon as the Visegrad countries have attained these objectives, it will be possible to get down to serious talks on membership.

This method is encouraging these countries to adopt a more "voluntarist" attitude to the European Union, in the sense that they are attempting to develop their own statistical system by applying Community statistical standards in a way which is often more decisive than in other countries. They are making every effort to adopt them as quickly as possible.²

Is this the first time that statistics are going to play such a role in the accession process?

'It is not statistics but the indicators which come from statistics. Obviously, these indicators have to be produced on a solid statistical basis.

It is the first time, in fact, that decisions on accession will be so closely linked to the results of statistical work which has been coordinated on both sides.²

Resources

'The resources are made available to the Commission mainly through the PHARE programme. Some countries and organizations contribute some of their own resources.

Overall, these resources are adequate at the moment, but we are just at the start-up and feasibility stage. The eventual introduction of large-scale systems and surveys will definitely lead to these countries having to combine their own resources with help from outside.

The role of the European Union is not to provide them with their entire statistical system but to propose a scheme which gives them enough encouragement to carry projects through on their own. And we really want to emphasize that they are their projects, not ours.²

MANAGING SPECIFIC AREAS

Things are organized in quite a different manner in the TACIS programme. Here, it is Eurostat which is managing the three areas mentioned earlier: external trade, business statistics and restructuring of statistical systems.

Systems in need of restructuring

'For the statistical systems which need restructuring, top-level experts are helping us—mainly through numerous trips to the countries in question—to determine the strategic aspects of the cooperation we are providing. The emphasis is on the organization of statistical offices, planning of their data-processing and the organization of dissemination of data. It all amounts to the general organization of the work of a statistical office.

The aim is to ensure that these offices achieve independence with regard to technical and conceptual aspects, that they have all the resources they need to work with total independence and that they

also have complete freedom when it comes to the dissemination of their data.

One major task is to build confidence between respondents (enterprises or individuals) and official statistics.

Thematic missions

Another action, which is organized slightly differently, covers thematic aspects. These are being dealt with at the moment through a series of missions covering both business statistics and external trade statistics. The idea is to get a picture of what the existing situation is like and of what is needed, so that we can work out the best way of developing the statistical systems in the areas for which we are responsible.

Of course, we are not doing all the work on our own. Activities are coordinated with Canada and Australia, for example, which are heavily involved in these areas. On the other hand, other areas such as national accounts and balance-of-payment figures are not off limits to us, even though they are currently being coordinated by other bodies.²

CONTINUING TRAINING

Special mention ought to be made of the importance which is attached to training in all these actions.

'Training schemes have in fact been running in all these countries for a number of years. Initially, they were attached to a number of programmes for Community statisticians (e.g. TES schemes for the Training of European statisticians).

Nowadays, about 40-45% of those involved in the TES programme come from the countries of Eastern Europe. It is now universally felt that training should be more specifically geared to those involved.

Identifying demand

We hope that from next year we can provide these countries with programmes which are more "demand driven" than "supply driven". On the basis of training requirements which they are now in a better position to outline, it will be easier for us to identify the particular statistical areas which call for special programmes, in response to

both regional and individual needs, in line with what is asked for and what is possible.

We feel that all this will help to boost the attraction of these training programmes even more.²

IN RETURN

Until now, the European Union has paid more attention to the needs of users in the countries in question than to the requirements of users in the Member States. The primary aim was to set up programmes and to get systems up and running.

Now that these long-term plans are under way and we have a fair idea of how resources are going to be used in the next few years, the EU is going to be able to start looking at its own needs with regard to information on these countries. We are moving steadily towards the first priority which was referred to earlier.

Organizing a collection programme

'Until now we have benefited tremendously from the services of the Statistisches Bundesamt, with its wealth of knowledge about the countries in Eastern Europe, and from international organizations.

We are now trying to get a better idea of the information needs both of the Community institutions and of the industrial or business circles in our countries. An expert consultant is currently conducting a survey of our users with the aim of helping us to devise a consistent programme for the collection of statistical information.

Intuition and awareness

This job calls for a great deal of intuition and awareness as regards the peculiar needs of each of these countries.

What particular information do we have to focus on, for example, in relation to the major indicators, or in relation to the major systems of conventional data?

While it was fairly easy to identify conventional needs in terms of national accounts, business statistics or trade statistics, it was a trickier job—and one which we have to be able to manage now—

to identify the areas where shortcomings were giving the most concern to our politicians as well as to our economic operators.²

Serving development bankers

'In its job of helping the countries we are talking about move towards a market economy and of funding a variety of projects for infrastructure and new productive investment and so on, the EBRD has a great need for reliable figures and statistics.

The question is whether it needs general economic information, or rather very specific micro-economic data on particular enterprises or regions, for its investment programmes.

Until now, we have not been in the habit of supplying bankers with microeconomic data, but we could do so, in certain circumstances.

On the other hand, we want to have the right tools to be able to provide them with macroeconomic information on the major trade patterns, the major background data, the overall picture. We feel that the development bankers (the EBRD, the EIB, the World Bank and its specialist agencies, etc.) could get a lot of benefit from what we are trying to develop, and even get involved in some of our actions.'

By way of example, why should the EBRD not get involved in the actions which Eurostat has advocated but only partially implemented—for want of resources—to promote and finance the development of advanced statistical computer technologies in the countries for which it is responsible? Would there not be a definite return on investment in terms of cooperation, and with regard to the development of techniques which would be more likely to help everyone get a better understanding of each other?

What can any 'long-term risk-taker'—be he banker or insurer—achieve without comparable, reliable and relevant statistics?

If you are going to get anywhere, you have to know where you are going! This is an idea we have to think about.

¹ The four functions of Eurostat are:
(i) to set up a system of standards, organizational methods and structures for producing statistics which are comparable, adequate and viable for and on the Community;
(ii) to supply the European institutions and the governments of the Member States with the information required to implement, monitor and evaluate Community policy;
(iii) to disseminate statistical information to the general public, to businesses and to all economic and social operators to help them in their decision-making;
(iv) to improve the statistical systems in the Member States and to support the development of developing countries and countries which are changing over to a market economy.

² Interview with Mr Alain Chantraine, 27 September 1993.

³ Launched in 1990, the PHARE programme channels Community financial aid in support of economic and political reform in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic republics and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The programme is governed by Council Regulation (EEC) No 3906/89.

⁴ The TACIS programme (Technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Georgia) is the largest programme of technical assistance in the world. The legal bases for the programme were provided by Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 2157/91 of 15 July 1991. Funding for the programme amounted to ECU 400 million in 1991 and ECU 450 million in 1992.

A LONG-TERM PROCESS

Interviews with Mr Fernando De Esteban Alonso and Mr Bernard Langevin

Although European cooperation and development projects have concentrated on the ACP countries during the past 30 years, they have also involved many other developing countries. By the beginning of 1993, 117 third-World countries had concluded cooperation agreements with the Community and development projects were under way in over 100 countries. Statistical cooperation comes into all this work.

A graduate of the University of Madrid, with a degree and doctoral studies in economics and business sciences and a diploma in transport economics from the ASTEF (Association for the organization of training courses for foreign technicians in France), Paris, Fernando de Esteban Alonso, currently Director of Dissemination and Public Relations, Computer Processing and Relations with ACP countries, was previously in charge of social and regional statistics. He had held many posts prior to that, in particular in the OECD and the Spanish railways (RENFE and FEVE), where he was a member of the board and chairman. He has held various academic posts and helped to run several commercial companies and State-owned concerns. He holds many honorary awards.

A doctor of physics and a research scientist for 10 years, Bernard Langevin is also an economist, a graduate of the Paris Collège des sciences économiques et sociales. He joined Eurostat some 21 years ago and was responsible for publications from 1984 to 1988. He has also worked on quarterly accounts, regional statistics and employment and unemployment statistics. Until this year, he was in charge of the 'Synthesis of social statistics' unit of the Social and Regional Statistics Directorate and is now head of Relations with ACP and Other Developing Countries.

MANY DIFFERENT LINKS

There are many kinds of link between the Member States and the countries or regions where cooperation and development projects are running. Statistical cooperation takes on many forms.

Nothing new

'Our cooperation is nothing new and is a long-term rather than a short-term process. What we have developed with the ACP countries can be seen in terms of standard-setting. Working via centres which take over the initiatives which we introduce, we have something of a symbiotic relationship with the international activities of certain governments.

Although it would be true to say that Eurostat's current activities targeting the countries of Eastern Europe account for a substantial part of its overall cooperation budget, this does not detract in any way from the importance of the assistance which has been and will continue to be granted to the developing and ACP countries. Although these countries may now be receiving rather less assistance overall, they have been receiving it for much longer than the 'new beneficiaries' of closer East-West ties.

We should look at all past budgets taken together if we are to make a valid comparison between more recent projects to help the countries with emerging market economies and everything Europe has done for cooperation and development in all the other countries during the past 30 years'.¹

Lomé renewed

By highlighting the 'partnership' aspect of work with the ACP countries, the Commission is making clear that it wants partners who can be responsible for their own interests and for a 'sustainable' development policy.

'The renewal of the protocol governing the Lomé Convention introduced new policy aspects which are bound to be welcomed by everyone.

Conditionality, decentralization and partnership

The conditions laid down concerning human rights and the proper management of projects undertaken were introduced in response to widespread concern.

It has also become increasingly important for cooperation to be decentralized geographically and involve local workers.

The current revision should not undermine the cornerstone of the Lomé Convention, which is the firm understanding that it is not up to us, as Europeans, to decide what aid should be given to a particular developing country. On the contrary, the countries themselves must decide what action they think most appropriate in the light of their needs and the many different constraints to which they are subject. As soon as projects are included in the 'indicative programmes' submitted at either national or regional level, or even for the ACP countries as a whole, our role is to do all we can to promote and coordinate the implementation of the projects.

Our main users

Internally, our work is directed at DG I and DG VIII and, in the broader sense, at all Community bodies which may submit requests to us.

Our external activities centre mainly on national statistical systems, more particularly the NSIs in the various countries. The training we provide is very broadly aimed at statisticians who have to meet the information requirements of the political decision-makers but also at statisticians working in industry or in fields such as health or education. It is thus not aimed at the NSIs alone but seeks to meet the requirements of as many people as possible working in national statistical systems'.⁴

WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITY?

The choice of activity is a delicate and difficult process.

'In some cases, messages or suggestions come to us from DG I or DG VIII or from certain of our delegations. At other times, we may receive political signals.

In principle, we give preference wherever possible to the areas in which we are able to contribute considerable value-added.

We always try to avoid duplication of effort: if other organizations are already doing what we are thinking of doing, we contact them and try to see if it would be worthwhile cooperating with them or whether what is already being done is, quite simply, enough and does not need help or guidance from us.⁴

Training statisticians—the Comstat programme

One feature of this is initial training. In line with the principles on which the Comstat programme is based, our work increasingly takes the form of direct aid to students rather than support for schools and institutions.² The main aid is in the form of grants to students themselves, but some of the amount available is used to cover teaching costs.

The training of statisticians also aims to build on existing expertise. In this field, we are working in conjunction with the Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft, which organizes long or short-term training courses in Munich or, possibly, in the recipient countries.

A major constraint: human resources!

One serious obstacle to the production of statistical information in the ACP countries is the shortage of staff. Up till now, the European Community has played a leading role, recognized by the international community, in the field of statistical training via assistance to regional training centres and grants for study and training courses.

The Comstat programme also aims to build on existing training structures, to make them more efficient and to adapt them to meet

new information requirements and cope with new statistical techniques.

The ultimate objective is to produce reliable and up-to-date statistics in the ACP countries, so that development policies there can be properly planned.

If we are to achieve this overall objective, it is important for us to continue to support training schemes and to help increase the number of qualified statisticians, both 'ingénieurs de travaux statistiques' (general statisticians) and 'ingénieurs statisticiens-économistes' (statistician-economists) working in the national statistical systems, to meet the requirements already identified by national users and producers of statistics.

Desired results

Comstat is intended to cover:

- basic regional training for approximately 450 senior-level French and Spanish-speaking statisticians, including some 270 EDF grant-holders;
- the adaptation of training programmes in line with user priorities;
- tailor-made, more intensive use of microcomputing;
- the regionalization of training staff;
- basic, ongoing training for multipliers in the African centres, in particular via masters courses at the CESD in Paris and appropriate training courses;
- support for regional centres providing basic national training for medium-grade officials when national training courses are set up or major statistical collection campaigns are organized;
- ongoing training for some 200 statisticians from ACP countries, both French and English-speaking, at the CDG in Munich;
- the preparation of statistical training activities in the Caribbean and Pacific ACP countries.

Study grants and training courses

The system of allocating grants under Lomé III did not operate very satisfactorily as regards the regional aspect of statistical training centres. Under Lomé I and II, selected candidates were awarded individual EDF grants, in

line with the usual procedure, to enable them to attend a training centre. Under Lomé III, this system continued to operate for some time using funds left over from Lomé II, but by 1990 funds for grants had almost dried up in every country. It had become increasingly difficult to propose grants even for good candidates, with the result that training centres were underutilized and increasingly difficult to organize.

It was therefore decided to finance grants from regional funds in order to make available to each institution, depending on its requirements, a certain volume of grant money to enable good candidates to be admitted in sufficient numbers and thus make each institution a viable proposition, offering good-quality, well-managed courses.

A new way of managing grants in the training centres is being set up so that candidates whose abilities are recognized by the training centres can take advantage of EDF grants more rapidly and thus embark on higher-level statistical training.

This new formula has the advantage of flexibility within the appropriate structures, and of producing a certain degree of synergy between the Comstat/EEC-ACP programme and the other regional programmes financed by the European Union, in particular those dealing with food security (the ongoing diagnosis programme, Diaper, and the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, the CILSS) and foreign trade (Eurotrace programme with Ecowas, the Economic Community of West African States, the preferential trade area, etc.). It is possible that grants will be awarded only for work ultimately geared to these priority projects.

Under the new instrument for financing grants, the institutions in the CESD network will select and recruit students and manage the grants, which will be awarded via a quota system to ensure a balanced distribution among the different countries. This system will raise the level of candidates, since they will be selected from a wider field. There will be several applicant files per country rather than the single file on the applicant for a grant.

It will be easier to schedule courses in the schools involved and make the best possible, cost-effective use of the money invested. Finally, this system for awarding grants will be simpler and more readily understood.

Aid for the national statistical institutes

This aid is in two parts.

'First of all, there are comparatively large-scale operations to restructure some of the NSIs or some of their departments. For example, Lebanon has asked the Community to help rebuild its shattered statistical system.

Another task is to set up or analyse surveys. In Benin, for example, we have helped to set up a household budget survey which will be used to review the weighting of the price index and compile accurate price indices. It may also be used for national accounts.

This assistance for the NSIs may be in the form of surveys spread over a period of several years. One example is the ongoing diagnosis project in the nine Sahel countries.³ This survey can be used to detect in good time the likelihood of food insecurity and to measure the risk of famine or shortages. The results will enable appropriate aid schemes to be launched when and where necessary.

Collection, analysis and dissemination

Mainly to meet Commission requirements, we are going to relaunch an old project to set up a data bank on the developing countries and to begin publishing the data again, in order to provide decision-makers with reliable and up-to-date syntheses, so that they no longer have to collect sometimes widely differing material published almost anywhere in the world.

Analysis of trends which are of particular political interest to the Community authorities

One example would be the marked interest in recent years in analysing and understanding migration between the European Community and the developing

countries, in particular the Mediterranean countries. The European Parliament and some of the countries directly concerned have asked for a reliable statistical analysis of these migratory movements. We are carrying out this analysis and attempting to extend it beyond the Mediterranean by developing a programme which will analyse migratory flows between Europe and all the developing countries'.⁴

At this point, there spring to mind the lessons to be learned from the international conference held in Luxembourg in November 1991 on the theme 'Human resources in Europe at the dawn of the 21st century'.

In his introductory message, Vice-President Christophersen emphasized that:

'Europe refuses to be colonized, just as she refuses to be a colonizer. She sees herself as a partner in all-round development, making it less a matter of sharing out the goodies than of increasing the goodies so that everyone may have a share. Charity would reach its limits even more quickly than imperialism did. Put more simply, we want to help the developing countries to manage on their own, and to do that we have to begin by listening to them. We cannot solve their problems for them but we can help them to solve them, starting with those where the developed countries could achieve a great deal at marginal cost to themselves: I am thinking particularly of the debt problem, which has caught many countries in a deadly spiral of sacrificing education and health, i.e. their future potential, to pay off their debts. We can perhaps help them out of generosity. But we must definitely help them out of self-interest. We cannot hope that the gap between what is commonly called the "North" and the "South"¹ can continue to widen without negative consequences for us. We cannot stand idly by and watch our neighbours suffer economic ruin.

In any event, they will not stand idly by themselves. Ruined economies lead to disturbances in the world economy which may become serious and also to political, or even military, disturbances, the dangers and consequences of which have been illustrated recently by events in the Middle

East, Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, Africa and South America. The increase in asylum-seekers in general, rather more than in Europe in particular, has been widely discussed by the media. Will Europe respond by resisting the consequences of this increase and turn itself into a fortress, or will it tackle the root of the problem? The Commission has begun (...) by drawing up proposals for action in three areas, in a spirit of realism and solidarity:

- taking migration into account in the Community's external policy;
- controlling migratory flows;
- doing more to integrate those who have settled legally in another country.

(...)

In order to plan our future actions, we need a greater volume of accurate statistical knowledge, and among the many unknown quantities of the future, demographic trends can help us to fine-tune those actions. Economic growth in itself does not tell us a great deal: more accurate references are needed to the way in which that growth is divided up among the members of society.'

A WIDE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

Regions are not all the same

'Our projects in the developing countries must be worked out in detail for each region. Statistical cooperation with Latin America is very different from that with the Mediterranean countries.¹

'Traditionally, aid from Europe went first of all to the ACP countries, especially Africa. Whilst consolidating our work with those countries, we should like to extend our field of action to the Mediterranean regions (see the example of Lebanon referred to above, or the question of migration) and we should like also to develop links with South America and Asia.⁴

Eurotrace

One example of what has been achieved within the European statistical system is the Eurotrace software, which resulted from close cooperation with the CESD net-

work⁵ with a view to improving and harmonizing external trade statistics.

Lack of an institutional framework and legal bases

One point which emerged from our work was that many developing countries lack an institutional framework and that this leads to data which are not sufficiently exhaustive or reliable. The data were frequently processed centrally in computer centres which had large but badly maintained systems and applications which in many cases did not meet user requirements.

It was also realized that at regional level the lack of legal bases exacerbated the difficulties of collecting, harmonizing and standardizing information transmitted via a variety of statistical systems.

Programme development

Developed by Eurostat, the Eurotrace software is intended for computerizing the management of data on external trade in the statistical office of the country concerned. This software can be used in conjunction with Asycuda, developed by Unctad, for computerizing customs procedures.

Alongside the national version of Eurotrace, there is a regional version.

The programmes provide for an informatics unit to be set up to collect and process national data on trade.

This unit will also be responsible for training national officials and maintaining the national Eurotrace software in the statistical offices of the countries in the region.

The European Community is financing several regional programmes for computerizing customs and foreign trade statistics. Two main objectives underpin these programmes:

- harmonizing customs documents, classifications and methodology within a given region; and
- automating the collection, processing and analysis of data at national and regional levels using microcomputers.

Strategy selected

It was decided to set up a programme comprising various optional modules based on international standardization and sufficiently straightforward to enable them to be set up in the different administrative environments.

The programme is designed to use tools which are standardized both technically and functionally, in order to reduce costs and to be able to disseminate the results under an international tag in countries which request them.

The programme will be carried out by regional organizations, for the sake of consistency between projects in the different countries, to make it easier to integrate projects and to exchange experience, to avoid duplication of effort and contradictions and to ensure that the organizations in question provide training and maintain the national systems.

Programme description

The programme is in two phases, the first covering:

- standardization of the data, which may include, within a given subregion:
- methodological support for implementing statistical regulations harmonizing, in line with international regulations, the rules of accounting as they apply to data on trade;
- assistance with the setting-up of a tariff and statistical classification based on the Harmonized System (HS) and including the compilation of tables of correspondence on electronic support;
- assistance with the drafting of a single customs document with headings which refer to international standards, definitions and codes.

These projects also include a programme to train national officials in the new procedures.

The second phase, to improve the collection of data, covers:

- at national level, computerization of the management of data on foreign trade using the national Eurotrace software and, if necessary, computerization of customs procedures using the Asycuda software or another system;

- at regional level, the setting-up of a computer unit to collect and process national data on trade using the regional Eurotrace software, the training of national officials and the maintenance of Eurotrace.

Widening the horizons

Programmes are currently up and running with Ecowas (Economic Community of West African States), the IOC (Indian Ocean Commission) and the preferential trade area. These programmes ultimately involve setting up Eurotrace in some 40 African countries.

Specific support programmes have been set up in Algeria and Laos.

Currently, there are plans to extend cooperation projects in this field to Latin America (in particular, Central America), certain Mediterranean countries and Asia.

OUR ALLIES

The field of action is so vast and resources often so limited that they cannot, of course, cover everything.

Continual search for synergy

Apart from the invaluable support Eurostat receives from the different units and divisions in DG I and DG VIII, and from the European Delegations on the spot, it attaches particular importance to involving all Europeans in these projects.

'My ambition is not that we should have a policy for the Commission of the European Communities alone, but that we should have a broad-based European policy, making the maximum possible use of subsidiarity.

Thus in the extended context of the European Economic Area we are examining various projects which are either under way or have been announced, in order to pinpoint all the fields where we can work together'.⁴

The CESD network

The European centre for statisticians from the developing coun-

tries is a network set up some 30 years ago in Paris. It has various strands in both Europe and Africa:

- in Europe, there are centres in:
 - Paris (1962),
 - Munich (1972),
 - Lisbon (1990),
 - Madrid (1991), and
 - Luxembourg (the Community centre) (1989);
- in Africa, there are the:
 - Ecole Nationale de Statistique et d'Économie Appliquée, ENSEA-Abidjan (1961),
 - Institut Africain et Mauricien de Statistique et d'Économie Appliquée, IAMSEA-Kigali (1976),
 - Institut Sous-régional de Statistique et d'Économie Appliquée, ISSEA, Yaoundé (1961),
 - Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics, ISAE, Kampala (1969),
 - Eastern African Statistical Training Centre, EASTC, Dar-Es-Salaam (1965).

The two parts of the network are vital for implementation of the Comstat programme. Training in Europe supplements and reinforces training in the ACP countries. Thus initially the training of 'ingénieurs de travaux statistiques' was transferred from Paris to Kigali, Yaoundé and Abidjan and, since 1987, the training of 'ingénieurs statisticiens économistes' has gradually been transferred from Paris to Abidjan, with recruitment to the CESD in Paris halted in 1993. The last batch of ISE students entered the Paris CESD in 1992 and will leave in 1995.

The Munich Centre retrains and introduces new technology whilst the Lisbon centre offers higher-level training to the African countries whose official language is Portuguese, in line with the requirements of those countries.

A proper distribution of resources

The CESD has a Eurostat budget line which enables it to implement projects adopted by the Commission. The network, under the financial control of the Commission and the Court of Auditors, carries out flexible statistical coopera-

tion programmes designed jointly by the Community and the countries concerned.

Most budgetary funds come from DG I and DG VIII and are allocated to concrete projects. They are paid directly to some countries or in full to the CESD or partly to one and partly to the other.

Being aware of demand

'It is not always easy to identify demand and to make the appropriate response, and those who manage cooperation should not merely manage the funds earmarked for it. The resources available should be constantly brought into line with the requirements expressed by our users. Statistics have an important role to play in the two-way system of communication, which should be based on reliable, constantly updated data so that demand may be correctly analysed even when it is not always expressed in the same way everywhere'.¹

THE RETURN

What do we (Europeans, and Eurostat in particular) expect from these cooperation projects? What do the users of European statistics expect from us? What do they hope to do with the figures which we attempt to collect, process and analyse, etc.?

Mutual benefit

'We wanted first of all to help these countries by helping to train technicians called upon to develop their own statistical systems. This area of our activities may appear to be the most altruistic.

What do we expect in return? To obtain the best statistics from them, data which can be harmonized with ours and which enable us to make comparisons between us and be constantly abreast of each other's facts. The return that we expect from this exchange of knowledge is, in fact, of enormous benefit to us all'.¹

Improving our knowledge of each other

'Should we go as far as a wholesale transfer of our respective knowledge? Statistics are not simply figures and columns, they are an administrative system which has to be set up, a set of complex techniques and a great deal of experience.

We do not wish to impose our methods at any cost, but if they can help us all to see the same things in the same way, we think it is important that this transfer of knowledge, which is in any case a two-way process, should be as comprehensive as possible'.¹

¹ Interview with Mr Fernando Esteban Alonso on 27 September 1993.

² The Comstat programme, with a budget of ECU 9.65 million, will cover the period 1994-98 and two main types of aid: technical support (ECU 2.906 million) and regional study and training grants (ECU 6.744 million).

³ Diaper, the ongoing diagnosis project (with a budget of ECU 10 million, spread over five years) was adopted at the beginning of 1993 to cover the period 1993 to 1998. Diaper III (following on from Diaper I—1984-88—and Diaper II—1988-92) is for collecting information on food resources (the cereals sector in particular) with a view to managing food markets efficiently. It also seeks to collect information quickly enough to enable food aid to prevent shortages, or even famine. Diaper III is, in principle, the final phase of this programme. During the next five years, it should be taken over directly by each of the nine countries concerned (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad), whose involvement will thus increase from 0-100%. This project is coordinated with that of the CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel).

⁴ Interview with Mr Bernard Langevin on 6 October 1993.

⁵ CESD: European Centre for training economist-statisticians from the developing countries.

A N UPHILL TASK IN THE EAST

Interview with Mr Klaus Löning and Mr Ovidio Crocicchi

In the former Eastern bloc, the most vital information was often a State secret. As for statistical information, it was one of the main propaganda tools. Getting statistics operating properly again, ensuring the independence of the system and underpinning its role as a guarantee of any democracy: that is no easy task! And it is not going to be achieved in a day!

A graduate in economics and business studies, Klaus Löning held various posts in a number of German firms before joining Euratom, where he became head of the procurement department of a research centre. After moving to the Statistical Office in 1970, he was involved in adapting the British, Irish, Danish and Greek statistical systems when these countries joined the Community. He subsequently specialized in wages statistics and he is now a kind of liaison officer between Eurostat and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. His job is twofold: to administer the funds allocated by the Community to these countries in the statistical sphere; to see that these countries set up a statistical system compatible with the European system and, as a result, with the world system.

After graduating in information science at the University of Pisa, Ovidio Crocicchi began his career in the Italian air force, where he was involved in the organization and computerized management of air traffic. He joined the Commission in 1976 and initially worked on statistical information systems in Eurostat's computer-processing directorate. After three years working on statistics on services, he is now deputy head of the unit dealing with 'Relations with Central and East European countries and newly independent States.'

Statistical information has a significant role in the process leading to a better mutual understanding of two different worlds, which were kept apart for more than 70 years! It has a major part to play in the process of democratization which has got under way and which will lead to a fairer share of opportunities and wealth and to a better organization of society.

A LABOUR OF SISYPHUS?

The task confronting statisticians in the East—and everyone in the West who is endeavouring to help them—is enormous. It will need dogged determination.

The price of freedom

It is a task which democracy, whether already existing or re-emerging, cannot shun.

Strengthening civil society and social dialogue

'The process of decentralization and transforming the role of the State whether in industry and agriculture, in housing and education or in regional development involves a complex range of interventions to develop new economic actors and institutional partners in both the public and private sector, including the professions, chambers of commerce, trade unions, universities, research institutes, NGOs and the media. Priority will also continue to be attached to assistance for the strengthening of civil society and social dialogue, for supporting local and regional government, as well as for reform and modernization of central administration and legal systems.'¹

All these economic actors and institutional partners have a vital need for statistical information, and for information on statistics.

Community commitment

These statistics must provide a constant reflection of the 'commitment of the Community to provide support for the implementation of reforms and assistance to cope with the economic and social consequences of structural readjustment whilst also helping to strengthen political and economic freedoms in the CEECs (Central and Eastern European countries).¹

In this commitment on the part of the Community, statistics will make it possible, in particular, to ensure that the efforts of everyone involved are properly balanced and fairly shared.

Social stability

Statistics will also have to reflect the impact of the 'assistance for the process of political reform, institutional development and social stability, without which economic reforms cannot succeed.'¹

Reinforcement and independence

Vital as it is, the role of statistics will be neither straightforward nor easy, especially when it is remembered how it was often used for propaganda purposes under the 'old system'.

Reinforcing the position of the statistical offices

Reinforcing the existing statistical systems is just as important as ensuring their integration with our systems. 'In all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe or of the former Soviet Union, the statistical office was an integral part of the system of planning and surveillance. The job of these offices now is how to secure a different level of credibility, since even if data and results are accurate, they are useless if no one believes them.'²

Statistics and independence

'Although the regimes have changed, the people are in many cases the same. In the statistical offices, everyone has to realize that his role under the "new system" is now completely different from what was expected before.

Statistical independence is perhaps the most difficult idea for the former statisticians to come to terms with.'²

Definition and transparency

'You have to go beyond the notion of statistical projects and look at ways of defining the overall set-up of the statistical system as a whole. In each country, you have to bear in mind the links between the various institutional, organizational and methodological elements of the statistical system.

You have to ensure the transparency of all cooperation work and apply criteria of efficiency in the use of the available human and financial resources.'³

A labour of Sisyphus? A fair description, when you think of what has to be done!

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD!

'Just try telling directors and heads of department who have spent their whole life working with the old system that they have to learn everything again. There are a lot of them who think that a minor change, here or there, will do. In many cases, however, they need to start again from scratch.'²

Don't dictate!

'Unfortunately, there are too many Western advisers whose approach is to turn up, want to get rid of everything at a stroke and then push off again. It is not the kind of approach we want. Our job there is to answer questions and offer opinions when and where they are asked for. It is also out of the question to encourage an abrupt rejection of everything that is in place, in favour of what does not exist and what still has to be created. The old system can still give some pointers, at times very accurate ones. However, it is true that in practice it is proving difficult to merge the old and the new systems. There are tremendous psychological barriers.'²

Proper planning

'In the past, all government statisticians, right up to director-general level, were told what to do by peo-

ple "upstairs". They had no say in choosing priorities or methods. Even today, they are still very poorly prepared mentally to select options or establish priorities. Everyone is too inclined to see just his own little world, to see in it only what he wants to see and, at most, to set up a project around it. This need to establish priorities was one of the points we emphasized during the process for the Visegrad Agreement (which could very soon take in other countries, in addition to the original signatories): the need to draw up a multi-annual plan covering all statistics, domain by domain, so that everything is properly dealt with when the time for accession comes.'²

The way to go about it

High-ranking statisticians from the republics of the former Soviet Union attended a meeting in Luxembourg in March 1993 to look at ways of adapting their statistical systems to the changes in their economies. This seminar, jointly organized by Eurostat and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, provided an opportunity to emphasize how important it was for a democratic society to have objective and accurate statistics.

Providing expertise

On the assumption that the technical assistance programme will gradually shift towards the training of instructors and the transfer of specific knowledge, it will be necessary for 'European professional associations, industry groupings and public agencies in the EC, combining with private consultancy as appropriate...(to)... have an increasing role to play in providing expertise in particular instances.'¹

Bodies involved

The following bodies are involved in this statistical cooperation:

- Eurostat: within the guidelines laid down by the Commission, Eurostat decides the general and specific strategy for statistical cooperation and, in cooperation with the Member States, determines the content of programmes and assesses them;

- Member States: with Eurostat as coordinator, they are involved in deciding the strategy, in determining the content of programmes and assessing them and in implementing actions under the direction of CESD-Community;
- CESD-Community: in its capacity as Commission implementing agency, CESD-Community ensures that programmes are carried out and supervises in particular the involvement of all the partners in the programmes.

PHARE: EFFECTIVENESS IN ACTION

Background

Launched in 1990, the PHARE programme—though not without certain difficulties—has shown itself to be capable of adapting to very rapid change: the quadrupling of countries covered, the tripling of the budget, the diversification of sectors and types of measures and the ever increasing range of partner organizations.

Clearly defined objectives

In its desire to contribute to the process of economic reform, structural adjustment and lasting development, the programme focuses attention on the four core areas of activity defined in the 1991-92 guidelines, which outlined the fields of statistical cooperation to be covered:

- restructuring and/or privatization of State enterprises, in industry as in agriculture;
- support for the private sector, notably SMEs, and promotion of private investment and tourism;
- modernization of the financial system, ranging from fiscal policy through to financial services;
- development of a social policy safety net, including pro-active employment policies as well as adequate anti-poverty measures.

'For the years ahead, a new focus of activity for PHARE, in liaison with TACIS, will be on nuclear safety, to which the international community attaches the highest priority and for which programmes will be developed in line with the recent G7 and G24 deliberations.'¹

Regional and cross-border programmes

'PHARE assistance...(will)...be linked more explicitly to the preparation of regional infrastructure investment in liaison with loan finance from the EIB, EBRD, World Bank, etc. Special importance will be attached to the promotion of trade among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Specific incentives may be envisaged to implicate CEECs on the periphery and to assist in subregional groupings which seek to build on Benelux or EC experience of economic integration.'¹

With regard to customs and statistics, for example, it will probably be necessary to introduce small-scale regional programmes of technical assistance and training to achieve more effective implementation. The need to develop on-the-spot training has been stressed on a number of occasions.

Coordination in each CEEC

'A particular responsibility will fall to the aid coordination authority in each CEEC to ensure coherence and greater integration of PHARE assistance with its national medium-term economic programme and public investment plans.

For countries at a mature stage of reform, the programming dialogue should seek to define how PHARE may contribute to the overall financing required for the implementation of key components of the economic programme, subject to the achievement of specific reforms.'¹

The role of statistics is clearly to help in marking out the stages in this programming dialogue. The sequencing of reforms may undergo some revision, and the order of priorities will then have to be reviewed.

'Financial sector development is a precondition, for instance, for progress in the private sector. Assistance for reform in areas such as tax policy, land reform (including urban property), social security organization and financing, together with public administration reform as a whole, have taken on a greater urgency and a higher profile than was initially the case.'¹

Towards greater effectiveness

The financial prospects for 1993-99 should provide a suitable framework for a multiannual programming approach (in line with European agreements) and make it possible to enhance considerably the effectiveness of the PHARE programme.

DIALOGUE: THE SECRET OF TACIS

Main problems

'They vary very widely:

- Economic concepts: some of the problems concern simply what we are talking about. There is a tremendous difference between them and us when it comes to economic concepts. The first thing we have to do is to put a lot of effort into reconciling these terminological differences.
- Problems of mentality: for a statistical system which ultimately is no longer going to be an integral part of the administrative structure as it was in the past, it is vital to acquire a mentality adapted to ideas of resource management, with precise criteria of efficiency and a definition of the priorities to be followed.
- Variety of players: in some republics there are several institutions involved in statistics, but there is very little coordination.
- Instability of departments: there is a kind of statistical brain drain, as some statisticians lose incentive and move to the private sector. This instability is evident at the top as well as at middle management levels. In most of the republics, it is also aggravated by the instability of the political situation.
- Professional background: the people we talk to in the statistical offices have varied backgrounds, being lawyers, computer experts, politicians, economists, etc.
- Psychological mindset: there is a prevalent feeling that a major power should not need this kind of assistance.

The two major difficulties seem to be the problem of mentality, which explains in particular the difficulty of deciding on priorities, and the problems of a conceptual and terminological kind.'³

Long-term investment

Some features of statistical cooperation with the countries of the former Soviet Union merit special emphasis:

- integrated projects within an overall framework: for each republic each project must be placed in a 'system' framework, taking into account the links between the different institutional, organizational and methodological elements of the statistical system;
- programming flexibility: while adopting a project-by-project approach and sound management rules, the terms of reference of the different financing operations and contracts must allow for programming that is sufficiently flexible to adapt measures to the state of the statistical environment;
- long-term measures: while taking account of short-term requirements and the need for immediate action, investment in statistical cooperation will bear fruit only through long-term action.⁴

Strategy

Community strategy on statistical cooperation with the FSU countries focuses on three main areas:

- system advising: this area is designed to provide the top levels of management in the statistical services with help in determining objectives and strategy for the modernization and development of the statistical system, identifying needs and priorities regarding training and technical assistance and coordinating international cooperation and relations between the republics;
- technical assistance: this area aims to help the FSU countries restructure and develop the production and dissemination of statistical information;
- training: this area sets out to create and develop the human resources which are needed to modernize statistics in the FSU countries through a programme of training for managers, statisticians and instructors in the republics.

⁴These three areas are complementary and form an integrated approach to Community support for the transition of the statistical systems of the FSU countries: investment in human resources on

the one hand, and system advising on the other as an efficient framework for programmed technical assistance with operational objectives for the production and dissemination of statistical information.⁴

1993-94 programme

The TACIS programme provides a budget of ECU 8 million for Community statistical cooperation activities in 1993-94.

Six geographical areas

Cooperation has been divided into six geographical areas: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Caucasus and Central Asia.

On-the-spot attention

'We have recruited high-level advisers from the NSIs of the Member States. They act as direct representatives of Eurostat, liaising with the presidents and upper management of the statistical offices in the republics. During their regular visits—for familiarization, fact-finding, impact assessment, etc—these experts are aided by consultants, who are semi-residential. They spend more time in the countries in question, with the idea of providing ongoing assistance to local management officials and of coordinating local implementation of the statistical cooperation programme.'³

Outline of the programme

The broad outline of the 1993-94 programme, which is already under way, is as follows:

- First half of 1993: seminar on statistical information systems in a market economy, organized in conjunction with the US Bureau of Labor Statistics for top levels of management in the republics; six fact-finding missions by the high-level advisers; three information seminars on focal-point themes; three training courses in other priority fields;
- Second half of 1993: six follow-up missions by the high-level advisers; installation of semi-resident consultants; establishment of contacts with other government departments in the republics; six meetings with the re-

publics to determine specific strategies; five training courses; identification of requirements in terms of data-processing equipment for the priority projects;

- First half of 1994: seminar on strategy and organization of statistical information for top levels of statistical management in the republics; six information seminars; 12 training courses; acquisition of priority data-processing equipment;
- Second half of 1994: six information seminars; six training courses; targeted consultations in the republics; courses in the Member States; implementation of priority statistical developments; first evaluation of the cooperation programme.⁴

Coordination network

Statistical cooperation with the republics of the former Soviet Union is considered at meetings of various Community and international statistical bodies:

- Steering Committee on Statistical Information (CDIS);
- Statistical Programme Committee (SPC);
- Conference of Directors-General of the National Statistical Institutes (DGINS);
- Conference of European Statisticians (CES).

The actual coordination network for statistical cooperation with the FSU countries comprises:

- the Steering Committee of the international organizations for the coordination of technical assistance on statistics to the republics of the former Soviet Union (Ripert Committee), which ensures political coordination at G24 level;
- the joint EC-FSU steering groups and the Community working parties which are responsible for the definition, supervision and coordination of Community statistical cooperation programmes.

Using available resources

The role of Eurostat in the Community—and at G24 level for the areas of business statistics and registers and external trade statistics—is to integrate the human and financial resources which are contributed by various multilateral

and bilateral donors. This work of integration is based, on the one hand, on operational partnerships with all the countries which are willing to supply manpower for the Community programmes of statistical cooperation with the FSU countries and, on the other hand, on synergy of initiatives through an information and consultation system which also covers cooperation initiatives undertaken outside the TACIS programme.

Eurostat maintains appropriate contacts with national institutions—including those in Central and Eastern Europe—and with international organizations, in order to take account of their views on statistical cooperation with the republics of the former Soviet Union and their desire to be involved in the work of integration. The experience of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will, in particular, be increasingly significant for statistical cooperation with the FSU countries.

Some national institutes are going to play a more effective part in cooperation by acting as leader in a specific geographical area and/or a specific statistical field. This does not imply any exclusive involvement and the contributions of other partners will be incorporated. This approach involves better programming of the available human and financial resources and complies with a supply-and-demand attitude which has been advocated both by the republics and by the donor countries. Joint ventures between donors are encouraged and supported, for example, France and Poland for Belarus, Netherlands and Turkey for the Caucasus republics.⁴

Long-term prospects

The particular requirements of statistical cooperation, together with the financing problems which are involved, must be considered when the political, legal and budgetary framework of the TACIS programme beyond 1994 is being devised:

(a) statistical cooperation must be explicitly included among the political priorities of the Community in its long-term support for the republics of the former USSR;

(b) statistical cooperation must be included in the general planning of TACIS activities after 1994 (guideline programmes);

(c) the priority need for data-processing equipment for the modernization of statistics must be borne in mind;

(d) the legal framework (decisions by the Council or Commission) concerning the TACIS programme should make it possible to finance the assistance of experts from countries outside the Community, such as the EFTA countries, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Turkey;

(e) the budget framework for statistical cooperation activities after 1994 should take the form of a new framework contract of at least three years (1995-97) between DGI/TACIS and CESD-Community.⁴

Coordination between PHARE and TACIS

Adjustments in the Commission management of PHARE will also be required, linking PHARE more closely with the Europe Agreements, drawing more on medium-term economic analysis, building up a stable team of professionals and strengthening the effective role of the delegations. There needs to be proper cooperation with the TACIS programme.¹

VISEGRAD: LEADING THE WAY

Specific treatment

'The signatories of the Visegrad Agreement (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia)—whose application for membership was accepted in principle in Copenhagen—must now be treated in the same way as the EFTA countries which have applied. It was against this background that a joint declaration was drawn up by the statistical offices of these countries and Eurostat. There could be further expansion soon, with Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia joining the process.'²

Objectives

In view of the fact that, long before accession to the European

Union becomes reality, it will be essential to have proper statistics for all the negotiations, the presidents of the statistical offices of the countries in question have adopted a plan with a view to:

- introducing the legal and administrative measures needed to establish statistical services suited to a democratic society and a market economy;
- preparing for the introduction of the statistical standards, classifications and methodologies used by the European Union and the rest of the world;
- preparing for the forwarding of the data needed for the accessions negotiations;
- ensuring that, by the time of accession, the four countries are capable like every Member State of providing all the statistics which the Community demands.

Modus operandi

'After looking at matters on the ground, we are now defining a plan of work: a long-term cooperation programme in stages which are at least yearly. This programme is divided into projects covering the various domains of statistics, and these in turn are divided into sub-domains and specific actions. The description of a project involves a breakdown of long-term and short-term objectives, with the resources needed. Management of these resources involves precise description of the actions: seminars, visits by experts to the country or to us, etc. All these actions must comply with objectives which have been clearly defined in advance, so that they can properly fit in with the overall plan.

We devised this work programme from scratch, making the necessary adjustments as we went along, but we nevertheless endeavoured to provide a structured response as swiftly as possible and to propose a planned scheme of action. It is essential—for the countries in question much more than for us—for the long-term objectives to be clearly defined, so that the shorter-term aims and each action which is planned can be properly coordinated. We feel that this is a much more sensible way of doing things than dealing off the cuff with every idea or request that gets thrown at us.'²

What about their priorities?

'Statistics on national accounts come way ahead of the rest. It is all very well to attach priority to these 'synthesized' statistics—but what happens if the other statistics on which they are based are not up to the job? The real priority is how to devise and start introducing an overall system that works.'²

Using what exists

'As a matter of priority, we also have to look at how what already exists can or should be used, with the idea of gradually moving towards a system which is more compatible with a market economy. We have to make full use of what we already have. Statistical cooperation has to endorse elimination and reconversion where it is warranted and compatible with the priorities and objectives which have been decided, especially with regard to a balanced approach to short- and long-term needs.'³

CONCLUSION

'We realized that a "lecturing approach" did not go down well. It gave us no real insight into the situation. With the dialogue which is now getting under way, we can offer solutions. And with the experience we acquire from trying out these solutions as they are introduced, we are learning on both sides what we need to know about each other's organizations and how they work.

It is a kind of give-and-take, with everyone opening up and talking about his circumstances, revealing his requirements and deciding what needs to be put in place.'³

'This dialogue must lead to a relationship between equals, between professionals who know, respect and esteem each other, and who are working together so that the different systems can ultimately come together.'²

¹ PHARE: General orientations 1993-97 (PH/I/EN/447/92/Revision 1).

² Interview with Mr Klaus Löning, 6 September 1993.

³ Interview with Mr Ovidio Crocicchi, 6 September 1993.

⁴ 'Statistical cooperation between the Community and the republics of the former USSR', memorandum for Mr J. Ripert's meeting with Mr Delors, September 1993, Eurostat C/5.

M

MISSIONS, VISITS AND MEETINGS

■ EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA): PROGRESS

The sixth joint Eurostat-EFTA meeting was held in Brussels on 23 September. Barring any last-minute obstacles to the ratification of the EEA Treaty, 1 January 1994 will mark the start of the EFTA countries' participation in the statistical programme of the EEA. This will cover, within the five-year Community programme, elements of relevance to the EEA. The protocol of the EEA Treaty dealing with statistics will be amended in order to incorporate the programme. The arrangements for EFTA's share of financing were discussed, especially the secondment to Eurostat at the beginning of 1994 of 20 officials from EFTA national statistical institutes. Seven other officials will be assigned to work on statistical information and dissemination.

■ MEETING OF THE STATISTICAL PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

The Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) held its tenth meeting in Brussels on 24 September 1993. The following topics were discussed:

- horizontal: management of the statistical programme (role of the SPC and its reinforcement by a task force for annual programming); draft Council directive on the protection of individual data; TES programme (Training of European Statisticians) 1994-95;
- sectoral: restructuring of agricultural statistics; harmonization of the CPI; external trade statistics after 1992; framework regulation on business statistics; draft directive on maritime transport statistics.

The final assessment report on the 1989-92 statistical programme of the Community was submitted to the Committee.

During its meeting in Dublin in May 1993, the SPC had decided to set up a task force on programme planning. Its remit was to draw up a report on the implementation of the statistical framework programme 1993-97 in conjunction with the NSIs in the Member States, in accordance with Article 3 of the Council Decision of 22 July 1993 (OJ L 219, 28.8.1993) and in line with the principle of subsidiarity. The subjects covered included: module types, costs to the Commission and the Member States in connection with Community statistical surveys, statistical burden on respondents.

The task force held another meeting on 15 October 1993 to prepare the final version of its report, which was submitted to the SPC on 26 November 1993.

■ FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR

The Frankfurt Book Fair (6 to 8 October 1993) again provided an opportunity for numerous visitors to discover the EC stand organized by the Publications Office. Electronic products were on display for the first time.

On 7 October Mr Pinheiro, Member of the Commission, and Mr Emringer, Director of the Publications Office, announced the launch of some new Community products, in particular Eurostat-CD, to a large audience which had gathered for this purpose.

Eurostat-CD and other Eurostat products—such as the *Portrait of the Regions* and *Retailing in the European single market*—aroused tremendous interest among visitors to the stand.

■ CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

The second meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians was held in Ottawa on 26 and 27 October 1993.

The main topic of discussion was the joint presentation of the 1994 statistical programmes of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the OECD and Eurostat. This topic had already been considered earlier in the year, and some amendments regarding presentation were adopted for next year.

Other discussion centred on the seminar for top NSI officials scheduled for 1996 in Lisbon and on a possible contribution to the 1995 world summit on social development, environmental statistics and the countries involved in the changeover to a market economy.

A report of the meeting may be obtained from Eurostat, Unit C1 Secretariat, tel. (352) 4301 32459.

■ CONFERENCE ON EDI AND STATISTICS

The Conference on EDI and Statistics brought together more than 100 people from various national and international organizations for a meeting in Luxembourg on 8 November 1993. The event provided an opportunity to present the results of work carried out on the exchange of computerized data in the statistical field.

It was possible, after three years of work, to offer the first conclusions and to provide an idea of the prospects for the coming years.

The efforts to standardize EDI messages for the collection and dissemination of statistical information were presented, with particular emphasis on the UN/Edifact standard (committee chaired by Eurostat). Demonstrations of EDI message use were offered (e.g. generation of Gesmes messages using CUB.X).

Many of those present expressed the interest of their organizations in using these various techniques to simplify their exchanges with economic agents. The introduction of EDI techniques is likely to offer cost-saving solutions in this field.

Prospects relating to the work were outlined, particularly with regard to technical recommendations and standardization and recommendations aimed at the organizations.

The delegates were asked to comment on these proposals. Once their response has been summarized, recommendations will be put forward for approval by the Statistical Programme Committee at the beginning of 1994.

Further information may be obtained from Mr Philippe Lebaube at Eurostat, tel. (352) 4301 34524.

■ GREEN ACCOUNTS

On 9 and 10 November 1993 Eurostat attended a seminar in Brussels devoted to 'Environment and development', which had been organized at the initiative of Mr Delors, President of the Commission. There were some 150 participants from government offices, political parties, industry and academic circles, together with representatives from various interest groups (Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, WWF, etc.).

The topic was introduced by Mrs Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, Mr Delors and Mr Paleokrasas. Mr Yves Franchet outlined the view and response of the statisticians: development of a coherent set of indicators on the environment and a group of satellite accounts linked to the conventional national accounts to make it possible to highlight expenditure of a 'defensive' kind to combat the deterioration of the environment, emissions by industry and households, together with an inventory of natural resources. This approach was generally endorsed by those present.

With the aim of helping Eurostat develop a Community work programme for 'green' national accounts, a task force comprising notable experts from various Member States held a meeting at Eurostat on 8 November 1993. This resulted in a very useful initial exchange of views, which will be dealt with in various written communications and will be followed by a further meeting in January 1994.

DOSES

The statistical research programme

An exhibition to demonstrate the chief results of the DOSES research programme was organized in Luxembourg on 28 and 29 October 1993. It provided a unique opportunity for those taking part to exchange the results of their work and to benefit from the significant experience which the various research teams had acquired.

As an outstanding meeting-place for scientists and experts from the Member States and non-member countries, the event provided the opportunity to exchange views on the objectives and on the options indicated for future research.

There was also a large number of prototype software packages on display, in addition to the 40 or so papers which were presented to more than 150 participants.

DOSES: HOW AND WHY

DOSES stands for 'development of statistical expert systems'. As an official research and development programme for European statistics, it was formally approved by the Council of Ministers of the European Communities in the form of a special action as part of the activities of the second framework programme for research and technological development.

As long ago as 1985 various studies prepared by Eurostat revealed a desire to make statistics benefit from research, especially through the systematic use of knowhow developed elsewhere in connection with expert systems. Mr C. W. D. Peare of Eurostat commented at the time: 'There are many potential uses for expert systems in the context of official statistics but any realistic programme must recognize that this is an area of research which is in its infancy'. He felt that there was a need to develop 'an appropriate Community programme targeted on achievable projects which will yield clearly defined results within a closely specified timetable'.

The reasons for Eurostat's initiative

How did it come about that Eurostat instigated the research?

There are three main reasons which provide a simple explanation for Eurostat's decision to push for research at European level to foster the development of new statistical tools adapted to a rapidly changing situation.

Firstly, most statistical offices have limited resources for research, and most statisticians at the national institutes are basically not research workers.

Secondly, the universities and technical institutes which really ought to have been the ideal places for this kind of research are more concerned with developments in computer science, statistical analysis and compilation of models, and contacts with the world of 'official statistics' are lacking.

Thirdly, there is very little demand in the business world for statistical research, with the result that investment in this area is a risky affair in view of the lack of interest and the absence of any viable marketing prospects.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The basic objectives of DOSES in order to improve statistical information production and analysis capacity, using the most advanced processing techniques, were as follows:

- to promote pooling of the efforts of academics and official statisticians, which meant that the major producers of statistics, especially the national statistical institutes, would be involved as much as possible in the programme;
- to promote cooperation between universities and the private sector in the development of marketable software;
- to stimulate multinational efforts, the idea being to help countries with only limited resources available for R&D to work with more advanced teams, thus aiding cohesion.

'Since statistical knowhow is very unevenly distributed, anything which can facilitate its transfer, as quickly as possible, to every partner, is to be encouraged' (Photis Nanopoulos, Director, Eurostat Directorate D).

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The DOSES programme has succeeded in enhancing contacts and improving cohesion in its field. Closer links have been established between scientists and official statisticians, leading to better cooperation between universities and NSIs. There are now better relations between institutes in different Member States. Relations have developed between commercial partners and academic institutions. Producers and potential users of statistical information have been greatly encouraged to work together.

To quote Mr Daniel Defays (Head of Unit D3, who supervised the programme): 'Although we handled only seven projects, we looked at dozens and contacted hundreds of people. Teams were set up and a whole new approach was created for procedures of approval and introduction'. Mr Yves Franchet, Director-General of Eurostat, has endorsed this view, pointing out that the DOSES programme involved more than 2 000 correspondents and led to dozens of publications, communications and meetings organized throughout Europe.

The synergy sought by the DOSES programme and the value-added at Community level were objectives which definitely seem to have been achieved.

New challenges

DOSES has certainly indicated and highlighted the need to introduce modern information technology for the processing of public and official statistics, as well as the need to create and harmonize standards and interfaces between national standards. A tremendous range of prospects and opportunities has been opened up by the activities carried out under the programme.

The main challenge now will be how to merge all the results that have been achieved and the contacts that have been developed during the initial phase, so that the end result will not simply be better statistical tools but the introduction of a greatly improved statistical information system, both within and linking the individual Member States.

Nowadays, the main debate is about the quality, reliability, relevance and availability of statistical information. In the future, the emphasis will be on speed, i.e. the rapidity with which the information becomes available and with which it can be analysed. The challenges met by the DOSES programme will make it possible to satisfy both present and future requirements.

FROM DOSES TO DOSIS

The future of DOSES is looked at in the context of the fourth framework programme for research and development. In line with the structure of the programme, Eurostat is preparing its statistical research programme. The main areas of interest—as listed in the framework programme—are information technology, telematics, the environment and transport policy. In particular, Eurostat's new research programme will have to focus on subjects such as networking technologies, database standards, forecasting models, processing software, etc. A new strategy has had to be devised, with attention centring on overall objectives, within the basic structure, and on the demand for the production and use of statistical information systems (SIS). The results produced by the DOSES statistical expert systems should logically become a starting point for the new programme—DOSIS—aimed at the 'development of statistical information systems'.

Further information about the DOSES programme, including a recent publication produced by Eurostat (*DOSES—Its evaluation, its results, its future*), may be obtained by contacting Mr Leonidas Kioussis (programme manager), Eurostat, Unit D3, Jean Monnet Building, L-2920 Luxembourg, tel. (352) 4301 32052, fax (352) 4301 34771.

EUROSTAT-CD

Statistical yearbook of the European Community on CD-ROM—second edition

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 produced by Eurostat contains statistical information on macroeconomic features, regional statistics, trade statistics by product and the concepts, methodologies and nomenclatures which are used to classify the various data.

Macroeconomic data

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

They cover the 12 Member States both separately and as a whole (EUR-12) and, as far as possible, the United States and Japan.

Regional data

The annual regional statistics are broken down geographically in accordance with the NUTS classification and cover the regional units of the Twelve. They cater for an economic approach at regional level.

Maps and information on the geography, strengths and weaknesses of individual regions are available at level 2 of the nomenclature.

Trade

The annual data cover external trade by product in accordance with the Combined Nomenclature or SITC.¹ They make it possible to observe trade flows between the 12 Member States and approximately 200 non-member countries and economic zones.

Periodicity

The periodicity of the data depends on the specific domain:

- macroeconomic—annual, quarterly, monthly;
- regional—annual;
- trade—annual.

USER FUNCTIONS

The user software operates with PC/MS-DOS. An interactive interface offers user-friendly menus for locating and retrieving data, for compiling tables, graphs or maps and for printing out data and texts.

The following functions are available:

- data search and selection by hierarchical access or key words;
- data search and selection by reporting country/region;
- compilation of two-dimensional tables;
- consultation of the complete disk index and of nomenclatures, including the NUTS classification;
- calculation, sorting and graphics facilities; cartographic representation of regional indicators;
- compilation of user-defined geographical aggregates;
- consultation of sets of structural, regional and short-term data;
- consultation of explanatory notes on methodologies and classifications during search;
- downloading of data to external files.

PRICE

The current price for end users is valid for one year from 1 January 1994.

Price: ECU 1 500 for the two annual versions, ECU 750 per copy

Languages: English, French and German

Catalogue No: CA-CM-93-00-3A-Z

INFORMATION

Further information may be obtained from the following addresses:

Eurostat
Information Office
Bâtiment Jean Monnet
L- 2920 Luxembourg

¹ The main nomenclatures used to classify Community statistics can be accessed on the CD-ROM:

NACE: nomenclature of activities;
NACE-CLIO: nomenclature used for input/output tables;
CN: nomenclature of products for external trade;
SITC rev.3: nomenclature of products for external trade;
NUTS: nomenclature of territorial units of the Community.

PORTRAIT OF THE REGIONS

Eurostat has won an award from the European Information Association

For the second year running Eurostat has won a major award for proving that statistics do not have to be dull.

Its publication *Portrait of the regions* has won the official category of the 1993 European Information Association award for European information sources.

Last year the same award went to Eurostat's best-seller *Europe in figures*.

Portrait of the regions presents—in three volumes—in a vivid and simple way the rich diversity of the 200 regions that make up the European Union. It is available in English, French and German—in total 1 000 pages in full colour; price ECU 250 for all three or ECU 100 each.

Says EC Vice-President Henning Christophersen: 'Once again this

proves that statistics don't have to be dull. Presented in the right way—as in *Portrait of the regions*—they can paint a vivid picture of contemporary life in Europe.'

An EIA spokeswoman says: 'Again Eurostat was a clear winner with an excellent presentation of complex statistical issues in a way we can all understand.'

The EIA was established in 1991 and has 400 members. It is a forum for individuals or organizations interested or involved with European information and its effective presentation.





OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

L-2985 Luxembourg