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10 May 2005

ENGLISH ONLY

**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION
STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)**

Joint UNECE/Eurostat work session on statistical data confidentiality
(Geneva, Switzerland, 9-11 November 2005)

INFORMATION NOTICE No. 1

The meeting will be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, from 9 to 11 November 2005, starting on 9 November at 9.30 a.m.*

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. The main objectives of the meeting are to facilitate the exchange of experience and identify the best practices in dealing with technical issues related to statistical data confidentiality in national statistical offices. The meeting is primarily intended for experts from national and international statistical offices dealing with statistical disclosure limitation.
2. Statistical disclosure limitation (SDL) is an important issue influencing public perception of official statistics. Statistical confidentiality and protection of respondents' privacy is included in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe adopted at its 1992 annual session.

II. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

3. The work programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive topics:
 - (i) Web/on-line remote access (techniques, confidentiality protection and organizational issues);
 - (ii) Disclosure risk, information loss and usability of data;
 - (iii) Confidentiality aspects of statistical information (including panel surveys) taking into account (partly) register-based data;
 - (iv) Access to business microdata for analysis;
 - (v) Confidentiality aspects of tabular data, frequency tables, etc.;
 - (vi) Software for statistical disclosure control;
 - (vii) General statistical confidentiality issues (legal framework, political and conceptual aspects, terminology);
 - (viii) State of affairs with respect to SDC in Eastern Europe.
4. Detailed explanatory notes on the nature and expected outcomes of topics (i) – (viii) are provided in Section V of this Information Notice.

* New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings held at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the attached registration form also available from the Internet Web site of the UNECE Statistical Division (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2004.05.msis.htm>) and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat, at the latest two weeks prior to the session, either by fax (+41-22 917-0040) or by e-mail (diane.serikoff@unece.org). On the first day of the session, delegates are requested to present themselves at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Villa Les Feuillantines, 13, Avenue de la Paix (a map is attached) for the issuance of an identification badge. In case of difficulty, please contact by telephone the UNECE secretariat (internal extension 73328 or 72241).

III. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

5. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and of interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the meeting. Participants representing non-governmental organizations in a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council may also attend. All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization. All participants attending the meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the participant resides, with a reference to the joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality.

6. The statistical offices and international organizations are asked **to inform the UNECE secretariat before 1 June 2005** whether their organization intends to participate at the meeting and/or submit a contribution on the topics mentioned above. Please indicate the topic to which the paper will refer as well as *participant(s) name(s) and their contact data*.

7. Participants are requested to fill in the attached Conference **registration form**, which will also be available in Word format on the website at the address indicated in paragraph 14. It should be sent to the secretariat by fax (+41 22 917-0040) or email (diane.serikoff@unece.org) by **3 October 2005** so that it may be processed well in advance of the meeting.

8. In order to enter the Palais des Nations, all participants need to obtain a security pass (ID card). For this purpose, please present yourself with your passport at the Villa les Feuillantines (shown on the attached map) by 8:30 a.m. at the latest on Wednesday, 9 November 2005. Participants are requested to keep this ID card with them at all times for the duration of the meeting.

9. Two gates can be used for entering the UN premises: the pedestrian passage at Place des Nations (buses 5, 8 and 18, stop Nations) and the Pregny Gate (Avenue de la Paix, 14, buses 8 and 18, stop Appia).

IV. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

10. The only working language of the work session is English. The documents may be submitted in any of the official languages of the UNECE (English, French, Russian), but no translation and interpretation facilities will be available. The following deadlines and requirements apply:

- The intention to submit a paper (topic and/or preliminary title) should be communicated to the UNECE Secretariat **by 1 June 2005**;
- The papers, not exceeding 10 pages, should be sent electronically to the UNECE Secretariat **by 3 October 2005 at the latest**.
- Documents should be submitted in MS Word and/or PDF formats. Templates in Word and LaTeX containing the header, and format will be made available on the website or may be requested by e-mail (diane.serikoff@unece.org).

11. For each substantive item on the agenda the organizers will invite a small number of speakers to write an **invited paper** and to present them at the meeting. All other participants are welcome to submit a **supporting paper** on any topic of the agenda.

12. Authors of invited papers will have about 20 minutes per paper for the presentation. Time permitting, authors of supporting papers may be given a short time to highlight the main issues raised in their papers. Presenters may use PowerPoint presentations, Adobe Acrobat full screen presentations or A4/letter transparencies. The UNECE secretariat cannot provide translations of the presentations.

- Presentations in PowerPoint or Adobe Acrobat should be sent to the UNECE secretariat by **1 November 2005 at the latest**, so that these can be installed on the conference room computer prior to the meeting.

13. Eurostat will publish a special volume in the series Monographs of Official Statistics devoted to this work session, containing a wide selection of the papers presented.

14. Invited and supporting papers will be made available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following location:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2005.11.confidentiality.htm>

Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website and bring their own copies to the meeting. Documents posted on the website before the meeting will not be distributed in the conference room.

V. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE AGENDA

Topic (i): Web/on-line remote access (techniques, confidentiality protection and organizational issues)

Session Organizer: Anco Hundepool, Statistics Netherlands (ahnl@rnd.vb.cbs.nl)

15. In recent years the statistical institutes have been faced with increasing requests for direct access to microdata for research. The rich datasets can be used very well for statistical analysis, but impose huge confidentiality problems. Statisticians started with safe microdata files for researchers and moved from there to on-site data centres, where researchers could analyse the data in a controlled setting at the premises of the National Statistical Institutes. Now, many statistical institutes plan to establish controlled on-line remote access to data. These remote access facilities have many advantages for the users of the data, but pose several new challenges on the protection of the data. The meeting will seek answers to questions such as:

- How to build a remote access facility technically over the Internet;
- How to protect the outcome of the analysis with respect to the confidentiality;
- Organizational issues.

Contributions are encouraged on each of these aspects, but discussion papers providing preliminary results are greatly appreciated.

Topic (ii): Disclosure risk, information loss and usability of data

Session Organizer: Luisa Franconi, ISTAT (franconi@istat.it)

16. The classical paradigm of a Statistical Disclosure Limitation (SDL) method concerns the definition of a measure of risk and the development and application of protection methods. Once the correctness of the framework has been accepted, the assessment of the whole process should consider two aspects. The first concerns the level of protection achieved according to the type of access — restricted, i.e. Microdata For Research (MFR) or free, i.e. Public Use File (PUF). The second concerns the amount of information loss for the user and the usability of the released data. In this session we focus on both aspects. Contributions should focus on:

- Defining methodological frameworks for measuring disclosure risk in the release of microdata files;
- Assessing the protection level;
- Assessing the usability of the data.

Real life applications that address drawbacks and implications of different approaches are encouraged.

Topic (iii): Confidentiality aspects of statistical information taking into account register-based data

Session Organizer: Eric Schulte Nordholt, Statistics Netherlands (else@cbs.nl)

17. Nowadays, statistical information is coming more often from registers and less often from surveys. This trend is not (yet) observable to the same extent in all countries, but such a move has an important effect on statistical confidentiality. It is to be expected that more countries will explore the richness of national registers for statistical purposes in the near future. Register holders can limit the dissemination possibilities and that effect has to be taken into account when statistical information is being released. Moreover, combining information from statistical offices that is (partly) based on registers with public information could lead to unexpected disclosure of individual information. Examples of statistical information that is partly based on registers are census data that are based on a population register and panel data where part of the information is from administrative sources.

Topic (iv): Access to business microdata for analysis

Session Organizer: Josep Domingo Ferrer, Rovira i Virgili University of Tarragona, Spain (jdomingo@etse.urv.es)

18. As for any output of official statistics, access to business microdata for analysis can take at least three forms:

- (a) Local access to original data in secure premises (safe centres);
- (b) Remote access using an on-line query system;
- (c) Dissemination of disclosure-protected microdata sets.

19. The first form of access is dealt with by Topic (i) in this work session. Also, generic information loss and disclosure risk measures for microdata disclosure protection are covered by Topic (ii). In this topic, we seek papers on safe centres and/or dissemination of disclosure-protected microdata. In this latter subtopic, we encourage pragmatic papers dealing with:

- Identification of typical data uses for business microdata;
- Design of information loss measures adapted to specific data uses;
- Identification of realistic disclosure scenarios (taking into account plausible external identified data source available in one or more EU countries);
- Measurement of disclosure risk against plausible specific disclosure risk scenarios.

Topic (v): Confidentiality aspects of tabular data, frequency tables, etc.

Session Organizer: Lawrence H. Cox, U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, (lcox@cdc.gov)

20. Contributions for this topic cover the field of data confidentiality and protection for tabular data. The session is intended to include contributions on:

- Confidentiality issues for tabular frequency data, tabular magnitude data, and on-line statistical data base query systems;
- Disclosure limitation methods for tabular data such as collapsing, rounding, perturbation of tabulations or original microdata, suppression, controlled adjustment, etc.;
- Measurement of disclosure in tabular data; release of statistical or mathematical models or synthetic data in lieu of original tabulations;
- Connections between disclosure in tabulations and in public use microdata derived from the same source; and,
- Implications for and connections to the preservation of data quality, utility and analytical properties/outcomes of original tabular data.

Contributions representing new results not presented or published elsewhere are also sought.

Topic (vi): Software for statistical disclosure control

Session Organizer: Sarah Giessing, Federal Statistical Office, Germany (sarah.giessing@destatis.de)

21. Contributions for this session may cover the entire field of statistical disclosure limitation. They should, however, focus on practical implementation and solution, rather than on discussion and analysis of theoretical concepts. Papers documenting progress in the state of development of standard tools, as well as papers on pilot implementations of recently proposed methods are encouraged. Contributions may survey or compare software, or focus on aspects of a software implementation, as well as on practical application.

22. Apart from solutions for the disclosure risk problems associated to data typically released by national statistical institutes, i.e. tabulations, and anonymized microdata sets, we particularly welcome contributions on software tools addressing problems arising in the context of on-site access, remote execution, and remote access, like disclosure risk assessment for the output of statistical analysis, tools to control and limit the use of procedures for statistical analysis, or solutions perturbing the input, or output data of such procedures.

Topic (vii): General statistical confidentiality issues (legal framework, political and conceptual aspects, terminology)

Session Organizer: Pedro Diaz and Jean-Marc Museux, Eurostat, (pedro.diaz@cec.eu.int, jean-marc.museux@cec.eu.int)

23. The objective of this session is to establish the link between the technical work carried out in the work session and initiatives from other concerned horizons (political, legal, conceptual etc.) launched in different forums. Bridging this gap helps to identify the need for further methodological and technical developments, thus enriching initiatives from both sides. Communications should report on on-going initiatives related to legal, organizational or conceptual issues. As an example, some of the presentations in this topic could focus on the development of general principles for the access to microdata by researchers, on-going work to adapt EU legislation on statistical confidentiality, the need for good practices which conciliate legal and technical constraints, and development of a harmonized language in the field of statistical confidentiality (glossary).

Topic (viii): State of affairs with respect to statistical disclosure control in Eastern Europe

Session Organizer: Juraj Riecan (ECE) (juraj.riecan@unece.org)

24. This session aims at encouraging dialogues between traditional participants to work sessions on statistical confidentiality and the Eastern European countries, particularly from the CIS and South-east Europe. The session is not limited to a particular aspect of confidentiality, but contributions are expected to provide an overview of the state of affairs with respect to confidentiality from the managerial and operational perspective.

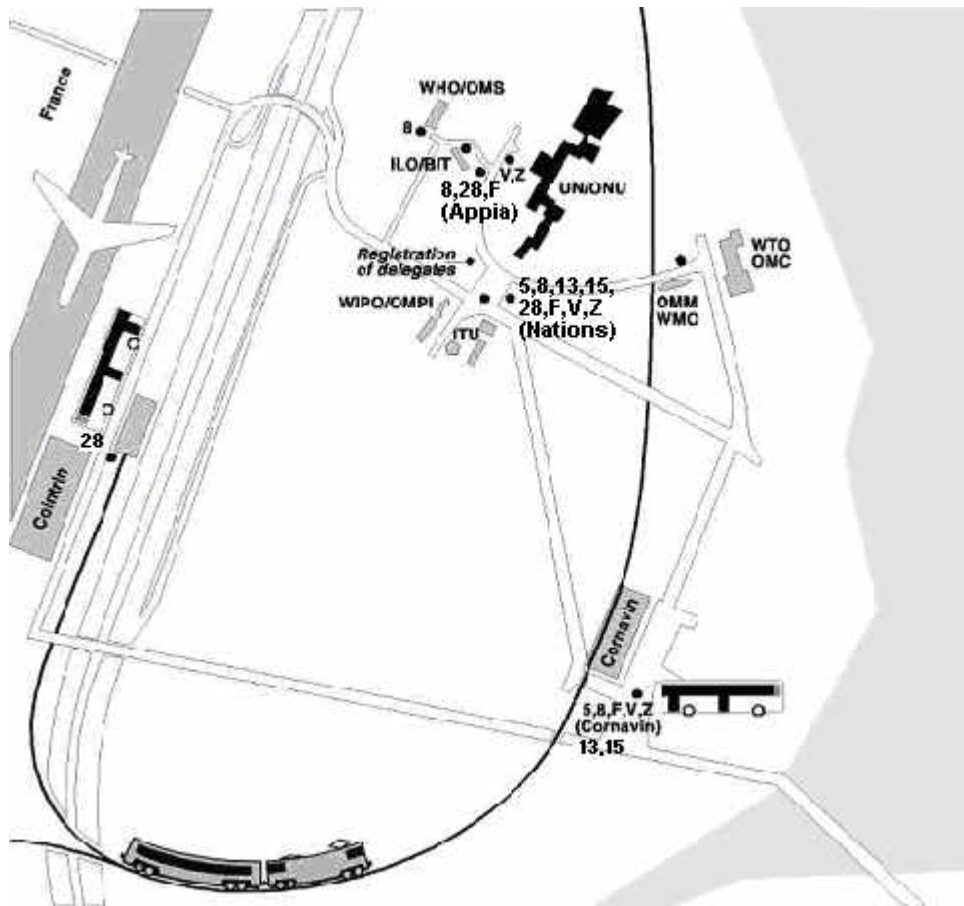
VI. FURTHER INFORMATION

25. For further information, please contact the following organizers:

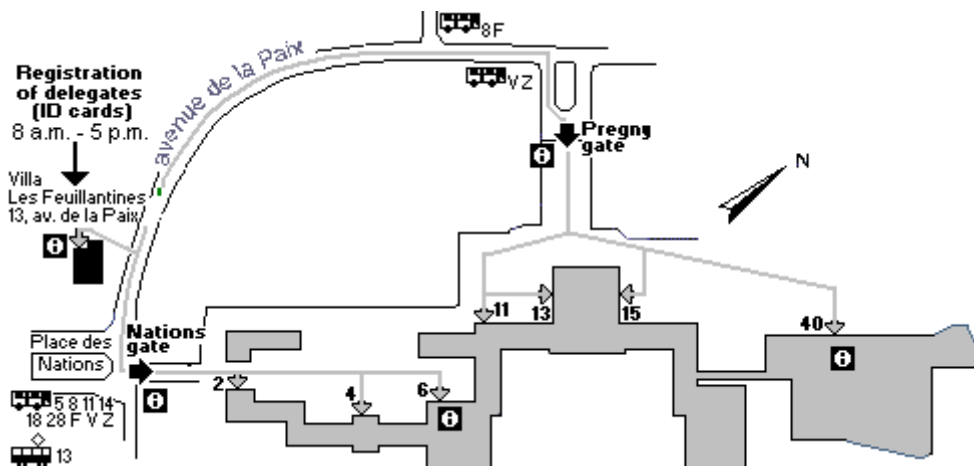
UNECE: Mr. Juraj Riecan
Chief, Dissemination and Statistical Information Systems Section
Statistical Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
1211-GENEVA 10, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 917-3328
Fax: +41 22 917-0040
e-mail: juraj.riecan@unece.org

Eurostat: Mrs. Maria Joao Santos, office A2/157
Unit for Research
Statistical Office of the European Communities
Bech Building
5, rue Alphonse Weicker
L-2721 Luxembourg
Tel: +352 4301 33793
Fax: +352 4301 34149
e-mail: maria-joao.santos@cec.eu.int

How to find the UN building in Geneva:



Where to obtain the entry pass (Security Identification Office, Villa les Feuillantines, 13 avenue de la Paix):



Entry for delegates with valid ground pass: "Place des Nations gate" and "Pregny gate"

Entry for visitors: "Pregny gate" only

Note: a valid photo ID is needed to obtain the ground pass and to gain the entry to the UN premises.

Please send this form by fax to Diane Serikoff, UNECE Statistical Division: +4122 9170040 (diane.serikoff@unece.org) and bring this original with you to Geneva

An additional form is required for spouses.



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

Meeting Registration Form

Please Print

Date

Title and dates of the meeting

UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality (Geneva 26-28 October 2005)

Delegation of country, Organization or Agency

Participant

Family Name

First Name(s)

Mr. ☐
Mrs. ☐
Ms. ☐

Date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY)

Participation Category

Head of delegation (member country) ☐

Observer (international organization) ☐

Other (Please specify below) ☐

Delegation member (member country) ☐

Non-governmental organization ☐

Observer (country) ☐

(in observer status with ECOSOC)

Participating From / Until

From

Until

Do you have already a valid (at the time of the meeting) badge for entry to the UN Office at Geneva? (leave blank if not sure) ☐

Place of issue of the passport or ID

Passport or ID Number

Valid Until

Official occupation (in own country)

Permanent official address

Official telephone N°.

Fax N°.

E-mail address

Address in Geneva (if known at the time of registration)

I intend to submit a paper on (working title and topic)

On Issue of ID Card

Participant Signature

Date

Security Use Only

Card N°. Issued

Initials, UN Official