

Eurostat  
Unit A5 Phare

**Fourth Meeting of the  
Management Group on Statistical Co-  
operation**

14 - 15, March 2002

Luxembourg, Bech building  
Room Ampère  
Start: 10.00 am

*Minutes of last meeting*  
*(Document MGSC/2002-2/02)*

Point 1.2 of the Agenda

# **DRAFT MINUTES**

(second version)

## **of the Third Meeting of the Management Group on Statistical Co-operation**

**Luxembourg, 29-30/3/2001**

Mr. Salmi, Head of Unit A5, welcomed the participants to the third meeting of the Management Group on Statistical Co-operation (MGSC). He gave a brief summary of the points to be covered during the meeting concentrating around the Phare and Cards Programmes and the ongoing Enlargement activities. He remarked that the Nice Summit has provided the road map to EU Accession which will take place probably in 2004/2005 for a first wave of Candidate Countries (CCs).

Mr. Salmi introduced two new members of the Phare team of Unit A5: Mr. Bernd Wild and Ms. Sylvie Carette.

### **1. Meeting administration**

#### **1.1 Adoption of agenda (doc. MGSC/2001-1/01)**

The agenda was adopted.

#### **1.2 Adoption of minutes of the last MGSC meeting of 4/2000 (doc. MGSC/2001-1/02)**

Received written comments on the draft minutes have been incorporated, the minutes were approved with two minor corrections from Slovenia and Hungary.

#### **1.3 Information from the last PGSC meeting of 10/2000 (doc. MGSC/2001-1/03)**

Mr. Wurm made remarks on the following conclusions of the last PGSC meeting:

- The by the CCs wished involvement in the SPC meeting and in the discussions on the new Statistical Programme for the years 2003-2007 will be dealt with under point 2.2 of the MGSC meeting (conclusion 6 of doc. MGSC/2001-1/03).
- The different levels of reporting about compliance monitoring do not really overlap. Eurostat Unit A5 asks a detailed report from which the Candidate Countries can extract summaries to submit to e.g. Taiex and DG Enlargement (conclusion 8 of doc. MGSC/2001-1/03).

- The Compliance Database is a well accepted tool and will be treated in point 4.2. (conclusion point 9 of doc. MGSC/2001-1/03).
- A possible seminar on statistics in the enlargement process will probably not be organised, these issues will be rather discussed in the next DGINS meeting in Madrid (conclusion point 10 of doc. MGSC/2001-1/03).
- The document on the code of good practice in statistical co-operation will be discussed under point 5.6. Amendments from the Phare NSIs have been incorporated. EU Member States are also requested to give comments from their point of view (conclusion point 17 of doc. MGSC/2001-1/03).
- The already proposed new m-b programme for the West Balkan countries described in agenda point 7.2 is now covered by the Council Regulation 2666/2000 on the CARDS Programme (conclusion point 19-3 of doc. MGSC/2001-1/03).
- Additionally, Mr. Wurm informed the meeting on the acceptance by the Phare Management Committee of the Phare Strategy Paper 2000-2002. The 2000 budget has been allocated now (see agenda point 5.4).

## **1.4 Organisational issues**

Nothing to report.

## **2. Commission policy issues**

### **2.1 Reform of the Commission and impact to external aid**

The internal reform of the Commission will probably also affect the implementation process of our external aid programmes on statistics. Since last summer the enlargement activities of the Commission have been concentrated in one body, DG Enlargement. The EC Delegations in the beneficiary countries will have a bigger role in enlargement activities, meaning concretely managing Phare budgets and Phare National Programmes. A new European Commission Office called the Europe Aid Co-operation Office (AIDCO) has started on 1/1/2001. This office will act as an Agency managing the whole programming cycle including implementation of multi-beneficiary and national programmes like e.g., Cards, Meda and Tacis. AIDCO will work side by side with DG RELEX which is responsible for policy issues. This new structure should ensure a still better execution of programmes, should improve budget management and should give a clearer accountability.

At this moment the Phare m-b statistics budget is still being delegated to Eurostat, so far not the national Phare programmes, but Eurostat is together with the Phare NSIs actively lobbying for allocations to statistics in National Phare programmes. Eurostat gives e.g. its comments to related drafted papers of Phare NSIs that finally have to be forwarded to their National Phare Co-ordinators.

Eurostat's role in the Cards programme is still unclear, there will probably be no sub-delegation to Eurostat. Eurostat should be involved in the programme's technical contents, but the programme budget and administration will probably stay with AIDCO. More info is likely to be available before summer.

Externalisation is also part of the Commission's reform. Activities will be externalised to Member States, private companies and special public bodies called agencies.

Discussions on roles, regulations and statutes of such agencies are ongoing, which will probably result in a clearer situation in the beginning of 2002. Eurostat has made a proposal to the responsible Commissioner for establishing its own agency dealing with e.g. development work, data production and technical assistance. There will be a cost benefit analysis in order to make a final decision on the feasibility of such an agency. A defined timetable does not exist for the moment, but Eurostat expects a decision in Autumn 2001 and the real start of the agency will probably not take place before Autumn 2002.

The role of Member States will also be discussed in this externalisation process. Already subvention type of grants concerning several statistical domains are being sub-delegated to Member States, e.g. the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of Research.

Slovenia mentioned that the Statistical Office is involved in similar procedures and wondered if it could be informed on Eurostat's work and produced documents so far in the process. Eurostat advised Slovenia to contact EU Member States as their situations are more comparable to the Slovenian one.

## **2.2 Important SPC issues**

Some Candidate Countries have requested a deeper integration into the ESS decision structures. They deem it amongst others very important given their status as CCs to be involved in the discussions on the future Statistical Programme 2003-2007. This and other points were mentioned in the CCs' common proposal made to Eurostat in November 2000. Eurostat was quite positive on the proposal had to consult the proper services within the Commission. The paper in itself was found very reasonable but because of legal grounds (presence status of CCs') it was decided not to agree to the request for the moment as it is not wished to set a precedent now for other Committees. SPC documents can currently not be accessed by CCs.

There are however ways to reach some of the papers' objectives without striking Commission rules, this is to be reflected in the next DGINS Conference to be held in Madrid in May 2001. Sweden is preparing a paper on this subject for this DGINS meeting.

France underlined that CCs should not only be informed on programming, but should also be practically involved. The CCs emphasised that their deeper involvement is indispensable with regard to stay up to date with new Acquis Communautaire. Slovenia proposed to hold a Task Force of CCs' management back to back with the SPC meeting. Eurostat advised the CCs to continue sending experts to Eurostat Working Groups which are the central information points on e.g. new Acquis Communautaire. Naturally, the participating experts are responsible for disseminating the information received at Eurostat inside their offices.

## **2.3 Training issues**

New orientations/procedures have to be followed on training. Therefore, the training component inside the Phare programme was tendered after the last year's MGSC meeting. The contract for 2001-2002 was awarded to the TES-Institute being the only tender applicant. About one third of the participants of the overall high course participation rate come from a CC or a West Balkan country.

CCs and West Balkan countries will also attend the TES Working Group taking place in Luxembourg on 5/4/2001. Amongst others they will have the opportunity to discuss on the contents of the 2002 training programme which will also be on the agenda of the next SPC meeting.

Countries were advised to besides attending Core courses also try to organise the so called in country courses of which a relative big number of staff could benefit. The Czech Republic mentioned its satisfaction about an in country course on the ESS conducted by a retired Eurostat official. Mr. Salmi encouraged this type of training for a wide audience including also other statistical bodies than the NSI, but due to the restrictive Eurostat mission budget it is however difficult for Eurostat officials to conduct such courses in Phare countries.

### **3. General information**

#### **Round table**

All delegations were invited to inform the meeting on the latest news inside their countries and to comment on the current statistical co-operation with respect to e.g. budget, human resources, bilateral co-operation, priorities.

#### **Albania**

The population and housing census will start on 1/4/2001. The data of the executed household budget survey are being elaborated. By the middle of 2001 INSTAT will organise an international conference in Tirana to promote the final results of the living conditions survey. INSTAT has agreed with the Albanian Ministry of Labour and the World Bank to participate in the Living Standard Measures Survey. A long term IMF experts has assisted on GDP which will be produced from 9/2001. Albania has participated in activities on the pilot project on structural business statistics (m-b Phare programme). Works on improving the statistical law are being carried out.

#### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Comments on the draft Law on Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina are being collected from the relevant state institutions and will then be forwarded to the Council of Ministers for approval and adoption. The implementation of the 1998 National Phare programme started in 10/2000. The inception report has been approved. BiH is also participating in activities of the 1998 m-b Phare programme. OBNOVA is funding the design of the sample frame for future surveys. The Council of Europe was requested to also participate in the funding for this and some other projects. The IMF assists BiH in the field of macro-economic statistics. Switzerland and EFTA have made funds available for office equipment. Switzerland was requested to provide additional assistance and support. Sweden is implementing a SIDA funded project on IT consultancies, equipment and English language courses. The Italian Government has provided funds for the rehabilitation of the Agency's permanent offices in the Parliament Assembly Building. Italy has also financed reconstruction of the Federal Regional Office in Mostar and the Institute of Statistics of the Republic of Srpsk. The Italian Statistical Office has given technical assistance on the implementation of the household budget survey and on price statistics. Norway and FAFO (Institute for Applied Social Science) has signed a protocol with BHAS for 2001-2002. Proposed activities are work on social survey data, the set up of a research analysis unit in BHAS and a training programme on data analysis. Further co-operation exists with the World Bank, UNDP and United Kingdom (DFID).

#### **Bulgaria**

The population census has been conducted, first preliminary results will be available by the end of 4/2001. Amendments to the statistical acts have been approved by the Government and have now been submitted to the Parliament. The national programme for statistical

surveys in 2001 was approved by the Government and was integrated in the NPAA. The necessary budget is available. The terms of reference for the 2000 Phare National programme have been submitted for a final decision. The tender for equipment concerning the National Phare programme was organised. Work on the project fiche for the 2002 Phare National programme will start in 4/2001. A global assessment is foreseen for 6/2001. Bilateral co-operation partners are United Kingdom (DFID, social statistics), Spain (statistical data dissemination) and Germany (mirror exercise in the field of foreign trade statistics).

### **Croatia**

The population census begins on 31/3/2001. New technology used for this and future surveys will improve the quality of the surveys. Preparations for the first agricultural census have been assisted by Germany. This census will probably take place in about 1,5 years. State level negotiations with the European Commission have been held on the Stabilisation and Accession Agreement. In this context the Statistical Office has met with DG Relex and AIDCO and discussed a possible future National Programme.

Although there have been budget restrictions, the number of surveys will not be reduced. These budget restrictions have caused a lower participation rate in Eurostat seminars and working groups. Future plans are to get assistance on applying the AC in statistics with amongst others the help of the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) and this project will be opened to neighbouring (CARDS) countries, to work with Eurostat and EFTA on institution capacity building and to continue co-operation with Germany and United Kingdom (DFID, mainly social statistics). An additional future co-operation partner could be Sweden.

### **Cyprus**

The census on establishments was executed last year and a fully harmonised register is expected to be available in 6/2001. The population census is planned for 10/2001. Bilateral co-operation with Greece is ongoing on national accounts and agricultural statistics. Some discussions with Statistics Norway have taken place regarding possible co-operation, but nothing has been decided yet. Cyprus participates actively in the Medstat programme. Cyprus uses own funds for the various activities of the Phare pilot projects and hopes that this year funds from the 4<sup>th</sup> Financial Protocol can be used for this purpose.

### **Czech Republic**

Amendments to the statistical surveys act have entered into force on 1/1/2001. Thanks to the help of Eurostat experts and experts from Germany, Austria, Finland, Portugal and the Netherlands the act is now deemed in line with EU requirements.

The population census was conducted on 1/3/2001. There was a decline in the response rate due to negative publicity in the months preceding the census on sensitivity of questions and the protection of individual data. The Statistical Office has hired an international law company as arbiter between them and the Office of Protection of Individual Data. The NSO has to adjust surveys according to the new administrative division in the Czech Republic. The NSO will be represented in all regional capitals and has to recalculate statistical series for the new regions. The agricultural census was held in 9/2000. The results are expected to be published in a few months. The Statistical Office has focused its priorities on the quality of the business register and on the quality of regional national accounts. The NSO also focuses on statistics on small and medium enterprises, Prodcom and structural business statistics. Bilateral co-operation is carried

out with France (projects on harmonisation with the AC), Germany, and Slovakia. The Statistical Office is also involved in some TACIS projects.

### **Estonia**

The preparations on dissemination of the results of the population census are ongoing. Implementation of Prodcom and annual business statistics surveys are carried out according to the Acquis Communautaire in these fields. The agricultural census is planned to be held in 7/2001. Estonia has close co-operation with Statistics Sweden and Statistics Finland.

### **FYR of Macedonia**

The inception report of the 1998 National Phare programme has been approved. The practical implementation has not started yet. This is a problem, because this programme could serve as a bridge between the end of the 1998 m-b Phare programme and the start of the CARDS programme. For the 2001 National Phare programme statistics is only accepted as an integral part in the framework of the Phare programmes of the country and further information for operationalisation is needed.

In 3/2001 the Statistical Office has hosted some international seminars. The second meeting of the working group of customs, taxation and statistics was held in Skopje as well as a Eurostat training course on statistical confidentiality and disclosure control. Finally, a joint UN ECE/Eurostat working session on statistical data confidentiality took place. Also in 3/2001 Eurostat Unit A5 held its yearly programming mission with the Statistical Office and the first part of the global assessment on the statistical system was carried out. A working visit from OECD took place in Skopje during which it was agreed that the Statistical Office would host the Regional Conference of national accounts in South-East Europe. EFTA also visited the Office in order to define the works to be done in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the EFTA project on desk top mapping which was adopted on 23/3/2001. An evaluation mission was executed by the World Bank on the closure of the grant this year. The population census will be executed in 5/2001 under the new census law. The Statistical Office is preparing an international conference named "Statistics as basis of creation of the economic development in South-East Europe" which is due to be held in Skopje in 10/2001 in co-organisation with the Association of Balkan Statisticians (ABS), Association of statisticians of the FYR of Macedonia and the Economic Faculties. In the Statistical Office there are some changes according to the law of state officials and now with recommendations of Eurostat a new sector has been set up for European Integration and International Relations. In the context of the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement the Statistical Office takes directly part in the preparations of the action plan and the strategic paper of the FYR of Macedonia.

### **Hungary**

The population census was conducted in 2/2001. There will be a first publication on the results in 6/2001. Preliminary data on the main demographical characteristics are expected early 2002. Final data are planned to be published from 6/2002. A fruit growing and vineyard survey will take place between 7 and 10/2001. The HCSO is updating the NPAA in which the HCSO expects to comply with the AC at the end of 2002. Bilateral co-operation takes places with twinning partners Spain and Sweden. Hungary has also proposed a modest Phare project for the development of national health accounts in the framework of a project of the Ministry of Finance. There will be co-operation with the Dutch CBS starting this year financed by the Dutch Government in the light of assistance programmes between the two countries (HU + NL). The programme has a duration of 2 years and will cover mainly macro-economic statistics, environmental statistics, social

statistics and automation policy. Work with France will start soon in the field of nomenclatures. An extension to industrial and social statistics is planned if the necessary financing is available. There are also activities with Poland (bilateral agreement), Slovakia and TACIS countries.

### **Latvia**

The CSB received governmental support for finalising the population census which first results are now published and for realising the agricultural census to be launched in 6/2001. Statistics Finland was selected as twinning partner. The preparations for the Twinning Covenant have started. The project that will be financed by the Phare National programme. Further good bilateral co-operation exists with Sweden, Denmark and Finland. The CSB is hosting currently a seminar on the pilot project on structural business statistics and will host another one on short term statistics in 5/2001.

### **Lithuania**

The budget of the Lithuanian Statistical Office is adequate. Last year's NPAA has been revised in order to incorporate it into the Government work programme and an institution building/development plan including needed financial and human resources for the coming 3 years has been added and was supported by the Government. This plan will be discussed shortly by the Government. The budgetary outlook thus seems good. Bilateral co-operation exists with Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Poland. Numerous projects are dealt with, so much attention is given to avoiding overlap in co-operation with the several partners. The preparations for the population census have ended and the actual census will start on 6/4/2001. The Government has given green light for starting the preparations of the agricultural census to be held in 2002 and for which the Statistical Office's budget and human resources will be increased from next year.

### **Malta**

A new statistical law has been adopted on 1/3/2001 which increases authority of statistics and the statistical office is now called the National Statistics Office. The new law is more in line with Eurostat's recommendations and enables the office to produce statistics that are more in line with the EC's Acquis Communautaire on statistics. In 12/2000 the labour force survey was executed for the second time thus serving as basis for HCPI. The household budget survey is to be finalised in 3/2001. Eventual corrections on HCPI will be based on this household budget survey. Malta has produced culture statistics for the first time. The budget requested by the National Statistics Office to execute work on compliance with the AC has more or less been met. At the moment additional interviewers are being recruited to be active for "Tourstat" at the international airport mainly. Statisticians for the NSO will also be recruited.

### **Poland**

In 2000 almost all statistical legal acts have been translated into Polish. Preparatory work is ongoing for the population and agricultural censuses which will be held in 2002. A global assessment of the Polish statistical system will be made in the week of 2/4/2001. The participation of GUS in 3 Subcommittees (finance and money in statistics, agriculture and fishery and regional policy) is found very important given the statistical aspects dealt with in these Committees. Bilateral co-operation with EU Member States is mainly executed with France and Sweden. Germany assists GUS on agriculture. There is also bilateral co-operation with the CCs Lithuania and Hungary as well as with some TACIS countries. The President of GUS was invited by the Polish Ministry of Economy to provide some lectures on statistics on e.g. compliance status of statistics. GUS may in

future also organise such seminars for other Polish Ministries that are involved in the surveys programme.

### **Romania**

An amendment to the statistical law was approved by the Government last year and is now under discussion at the Parliament which will probably decide again on a name change of the Romanian office from the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies to the National Institute for Statistics. Due to budgetary problems several censuses have been postponed; the population and housing census until 3/2002 and the agricultural census will take place in 12/2002. The Romanian office is faced with a budget reduction which might lead to a reduction in staff. Bilateral co-operation is slowing down due to the numerous activities of the m-b pilot projects. Ad hoc co-operation exists and will continue with France, Germany and Portugal. The in general well running 1997 National Phare programme will end in 9/2000. Some press conferences will be held on the results. The 2000 Phare National programme will probably start in 5/2001 being a twinning programme on agricultural statistics with the Italian Agricultural Ministry. A proposal with 4 subprojects under the 2001 National Phare programme will probably be approved.

### **Slovakia**

The main priority has recently been the preparation of the new statistical law. By the end of 5/2001 it will be submitted to the government. The new law is expected to come into force on 1/1/2002. Comments in the preparatory phase from Eurostat experts have been taken into account. The second priority has been the population census which will take place on 26/5/2001. In the process of harmonising with the AC in statistics 8 bylaws measures were issued last year, mostly regarding statistical nomenclatures. The deemed successful bilateral co-operation with the United Kingdom during 10 years has finished. Main co-operation partners are now France, Germany and hopefully in the coming period Denmark. Activities with the Czech Republic and Hungary have been intensified. Under the National Phare programme the farm structure census has been conducted with the assistance of twinning partner Italy. Currently the execution of pilot projects is underway. The planned census on small and medium enterprises has some delay due to procedural problems which are hoped to be solved soon. Spain will be Slovakia's twinning partner in this project. There were budget reductions in 1999 and 2000. This year there will be no reduction.

### **Slovenia**

A new statistical law has been adopted in 2/2001. This enables the Slovenian office to continue with the mid term programme covering 5 years and annual programmes. The mid term programme for which preparations started in 2000 is to be adopted this year.

There is an act amending the Slovenian business register and the act on population and housing census has also been amended. This last act was adopted at the end of 3/2001, which allows the Slovenian Statistical Office to conduct the population census next year. In addition there has been set up a maintenance and linking and use of data from records under the public law act which is planned to be adopted this year. Work has also started on the decree on introduction and use of standard classification of education by levels. This decree is also going to be adopted this year.

The 2001 budget is good compared to previous years. The well running 1998 National Phare programme ends in 9/2001. The 1999 one will start in 9 or 10/2001. This national budget allows Slovenia to conduct the population census which had been postponed for 2 years. The results of the agricultural census have been disseminated. Work on this issue is

still ongoing. Human resources are under restriction which means that new staff can not be recruited. Externalisation of work would thus be among the priorities. A global assessment will take place in 4/2001.

### **Turkey**

The Turkish Government has recently approved the NPAA which will accelerate the work on compliance with the AC in statistics. The SIS has also sent its Annual Work programme for 2001 to Eurostat. Currently the SIS staff is analysing the received methodological documents from Eurostat and has started preparatory work for transition to EU statistical methods. The SIS is also drafting project proposals to be submitted to the Commission requesting for funding. The statistical law is being looked at closely at the moment in order to define eventual modifications. Eurostat's recommendations will be taken into the process. The Turkish participation rate in multi-beneficiary activities inside the Phare programme was not very high in 2000 due to restricted funds which overall slows down very much the compliance work of the SIS. The Medstat programme is deemed as an important complement to the activities on compliance inside the m-b Phare programme. Training courses for Turkey on business registers and the European statistical system would be very useful.

### **Austria**

Austria has bilateral co-operation with Bulgaria on construction statistics and is having contacts with Lithuania on the organisation of an input output seminar in the framework of the Phare National programme.

An Austrian expert has been assigned as short term expert to execute a global assessment of the Slovakian statistical system. Austria is also involved in the pilot project on prices and the one on external trade statistic.

### **Finland**

Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is aiming at reducing funding for future bilateral international co-operation activities from 2002, discussions are ongoing. At this moment bilateral co-operation takes place with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Finland is Latvia's twinning partner for next year which requires a lot of Finnish resources. The Finnish Ministry of Finance is twinning with the Polish Ministry of Finance on statistics. In the statistical part of this project, experts from Statistics Finland will be involved as well as experts from GUS Poland. Finland co-operates with Slovenia in the framework of the National Phare programme.

### **France**

France is Poland's twinning partner on a project on regional statistics. In this context an INSEE expert is executing a one year assignment in GUS. The twinning programme will last 2,5-3 years. On this programme France has also co-operated with Germany and Sweden. About 25 INSEE experts will participate in the project. INSEE will organise a seminar in the same field in Ostrava from 4-5/6/2001. A seminar on short term statistics (economic analysis and forecasting) will be organised in Libourne in May 2001. Besides the Phare NSIs France also co-operates with Ministries of Finance of some Phare countries and sometimes with Central Banks of these countries as well. Projects that have connections with the above-mentioned partners will start soon in Slovakia. A seminar on short term statistics, modelisation and forecasting has been jointly organised with Poland in 3/2001. Participants were the Statistical Office, the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank. INSEE considers to organise in 2002 an international seminar on administrative sources and their quality, jointly with Finland.

### **Germany**

Bilateral co-operation exists with Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania (World Bank funds), Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Croatia (financed by German Government).

### **Italy**

Italy has together with Switzerland, Greece and the European Commission supported the Albanian population census due on 31/3/2001. A bilateral programme with BiH is hoped to start soon in the framework of a larger multi-donor programme for the undertaking of several household surveys together with the World Bank, UNDP and DFID. In BiH Italy is also implementing the National Phare programme in consortium with Spain and Denmark. Italy is twinning partner of Romania and Slovakia on agriculture. Italy assists Poland in their co-operation with TACIS countries. It is hoped that this programme will continue and increase its activities quickly.

### **Portugal**

Co-operation exists with Romania on agricultural statistics and statistical data dissemination in particular. Portugal assists Hungary in the field of national accounts and has recently evaluated Hungary's national accounts. Portugal co-operates with Bulgaria on agricultural statistics (farm structure surveys) and as a consultant on the Acquis Communautaire. In Autumn 2000 a bilateral agreement was signed with the Czech Republic to work on a legal framework of the national statistical system. Further activities within this bilateral agreement are expected. Last year, Portugal was involved in 3 pilot projects in financial domains in the framework of the m-b Phare programme. The Phare programme is treated as priority inside Portugal's co-operation strategy. Therefore, Portugal is in that sense willing to participate in additional areas of co-operation.

### **Spain**

INE informed the meeting that due to an internal restructuring process the International Relations Office does not report directly to the President anymore. The new policy on international co-operation is not yet known, but this will not affect any cooperation commitments made. Spain is Slovakia's twinning partner. INE is though not the project leader nor the pre-accession advisor, but will co-operate on the projects. INE started active international co-operation in 2000. Study visits to INE on tourism statistics were requested and due to the high demand, the idea was launched to hold with Eurostat a jointly organised seminar on tourism statistics which Hungary offered to host. A traineeship on information technology and statistical dissemination of a Bulgarian statistician at INE financed by the 1998 m-b Phare programme will take place from 7/5-15/10/2001. INE assists together with CESD Rome Bosnia & Herzegovina. A fact finding mission on BiH's technology infrastructure has taken place. Bilateral meetings took place in 2000 with Hungary, Latvia and the Czech Republic which will hopefully be turned into more concrete actions.

### **Sweden**

The current bilateral co-operation with Candidate Countries is phasing out within 1-2 years, but projects with West Balkan countries will still continue for some years. Possible projects with this area are being discussed at the moment. The project with BiH (see heading BiH above) will be finalised 4/2001. Two missions financed by Phare were carried out to Albania and a bilateral project on business registers and business statistics is foreseen and will be discussed with SIDA in 4/2001. In the same month a feasibility study

on agricultural statistics will be carried out in the FYR of Macedonia on request of SIDA. Croatia is being assisted on internet databases and Kosovo is being supported in a project on agricultural statistics.

### **United Kingdom**

There is strong support for statistics for policy making in the United Kingdom and in particularly DFID at the moment. However the UK's technical assistance policy will focus more towards Asian and African countries and thus Phare co-operation will be phasing out. Current bilateral co-operation partners are Croatia, BiH and Bulgaria. Co-operation with Hungary and Slovenia is finished.

### **Switzerland**

In future Switzerland will concentrate on co-operation with West Balkan countries. Until now Switzerland has been involved in projects with Albania, BiH and the FYR of Macedonia, but is prepared to also co-operate with other countries in the region.

### **EFTA**

The new EFTA contribution for 2001-2003 is linked with the Phare and Cards programmes. Part of this contribution will be the secondment of an EFTA expert to Eurostat Unit A5 to co-ordinate and implement the statistical co-operation programme in the Cards countries. For 2001 all approved projects in the Balkan region will be launched. Amongst others there will be a major institutional building project co-financed with Switzerland and Eurostat.

### **OECD**

OECD has assisted several countries in the field of national accounts, prices, purchasing power parities, business tendency surveys and leading indicators. The OECD has run many bilateral programmes in the past, but is now executing only regional programmes with South-Eastern European countries. This programme grew out of the bilateral programmes OECD used to have with Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia. Co-operation with these 3 countries has decreased, but they still attend OECD workshops on national account and on price statistics. In 2000 the OECD extended the regional programme with the inclusion of Croatia and the FYR of Macedonia. A workshop was held on national accounts as well as one on prices for national accounts attended by the Baltic States, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia and the FYR of Macedonia. These last two countries were included in the 1999 round of the European Comparison Programme and work is being carried out for inclusion in the ECP round of 2002.

The OECD has also started work with the FYR of Macedonia on business tendency surveys. With Croatia the OECD is collaborating on the sources and methods for quarterly national accounts. In 2001 work with these two countries will continue and the OECD wishes to extend the programme to Albania, BiH and Serbia by giving them the opportunity to attend OECD's workshops on national accounts, price statistics and purchasing power parities.

## **4. Accession related issues**

### **4.1 Enlargement process for statistics (doc. MGSC/2001-1/06)**

The Intergovernmental Conference of 12/2000 has led in Nice to a new Treaty amending the Treaty of the European Union and the Treaty for the European Community. It

contains a Protocol on Enlargement which creates the necessary institutional changes to host maximum 12 new EU Member States. The Commission's policies on enlargement changed a lot which made accession very concrete now. For the supporting role of statistics in providing required data for the accession process more emphasis has to be put on quality, reliability and trust in statistics.

In 12/2000 Chapter 12 on statistics was closed for Bulgaria, Romania and Malta. This means that the Chapter is now closed for all CCs except for Turkey as negotiations have not started yet. The 12 CCs have declared to implement the AC at the moment of accession and of course to apply new AC that appears between now and the accession date.

The European Union has made progress on the way to accession for Turkey. An Accession Partnership with Turkey has been adopted in Autumn 2000. The Turkish State Institute of Statistics has finalised its NPAA in statistics. In 12/2000 an unofficial screening meeting on the SIS has been held at Eurostat. Co-operation with Turkey is expected to intensify.

## **4.2 Permanent compliance monitoring, compliance database (doc. MGSC/2001-1/07)**

The paper submitted by PS to the meeting presented an overview of current state of art and activities planned in the nearest future within the framework of the project.

**Loading of new information into the database** is a success story, all CCs provided information in electronic form, no major problems were reported, the information is now integrated into the central database. The countries were also asked to provide aggregate information on the chapter level, and majority provided that also.

**The new legal acts are loaded into database** with a cut-off date of 1 January 2001. Agreement statistics were collected from all production units at the beginning of this year. The purpose of loading the agreements is to provide complete information on the *acquis* as the agreements constitute about 40 % of the *acquis*. A note was sent to the countries by Eurostat at the end of March asking for reactions to the new reference information loaded with a deadline at the end of April. A new version of the SRC will be derived from the database in paper form to facilitate dissemination of the *acquis* inside the offices.

The Programme Secretariat revised recently the structure of CDB to adapt it to the new European Statistical Programme for the years 2003-2007 in order to allow the countries to follow the changes. A correspondence table for all the modified modules was prepared and sent with the note for easy reference. The CDB starts to be used inside Eurostat in the form preferred by particular units, which may be an extract from the CDB on the topic dealt with by the units or whole overview. The tool will be disseminated inside Eurostat and work on the most efficient use of it will continue.

At the last PGSC in Budapest, Hungary countries requested a repetition **of a special training session for the Candidate Countries** on the CDB. This is an additional action not in the TORs of the PS, but as the countries confirmed their strong interest in it and still consider it as a priority it is proposed to organise it at the beginning of September 2001. The discussion should cover not only technical issues, but also contents, the level of aggregation and ways of monitoring compliance.

**Global assessments** envisaged under the current PS project are successfully launched with teams of experts already set up for three countries (PL - F, UK; SI -F, DK; and BG - UK, FIN) and first missions starting at the beginning of April 2001. For the remaining 4 countries (LT, LV, HU and SL) assessments will be launched at the end of this year.

The situation with **sectoral assessments** is the following:

- **Agriculture** - debriefing done, Eurostat discusses internally the need for updating the information on annual basis (more general not so detailed).
- **Prodcom** - launched for 3 countries (BG, LV and SL) with dates fixed, 3 remaining countries will be visited by the expert after summer
- **SBS** - questionnaires were discussed in Riga during a SBS seminar and the results of work are planned to be presented also to the Member States during a working group.

The Terms of Reference for the PS project envisage issuing a **publication on the national statistical systems of the Candidate Countries**. It is proposed that the publication is based on final reports from global assessments. A first detailed proposal of the contents will be submitted for discussion at the PGSC meeting in October 2001 in Bratislava, Slovak Republic.

The PS expressed their thanks to the Candidate Countries, Member States and Eurostat for efficient co-operation and support provided in launching and implementing activities within the framework of the PS project.

### 4.3 Data collection and publication

Information on the following four points were given:

- a) The CEC Yearbook
- b) The regular issuing of the Leaflet
- c) The Employment Bulletin (labour market in CCs)
- d) Short term indicators

ad a) There is some delay on the CEC Yearbook due to the start up with the new contractor, a text is to be written for each chapter and some clarification is needed on environment and steel methodology. The related questionnaire was this year again sent to Turkey which was able to provide much more detailed data than last year.

ad b) It is aimed to make the leaflet available just before the European Summits, this is an excellent dissemination and information possibility. The number of prints will be increased.

ad c) Also here a new contractor. A meeting has taken place in Warsaw. Remarks were the good co-operation with Eurostat Unit E1 and the good progress Bulgaria has made, as before it had some difficulties to get the labour force survey started. The bulletin will be available in 3 languages in a PDF and paper version. The number of prints of the bulletin will be slightly increased. All Parliaments in the EU Member States will be addressed, in particular the Committees dealing with the EU enlargement.

ad d) Short term indicators are risking to become a “long term project”. The project was briefly mentioned in the PGSC in Budapest after which Malta made a proposal which was circulated for reactions. Unit A5 has also circulated the proposal inside Eurostat’s production units after which a short list was made. Most likely Unit A5 will suggest to put directly on Eurostat’s website page a very short list of basic indicators concerning GDP, prices, unemployment and external trade. On top of that the idea is to supply more detailed indicators along the line of the list that was circulated but slightly more modest, because Eurostat wants to have the system limited to indicators which are comparable among countries. The idea is to more and more hand over data collection to Eurostat production Units. This works

already well for annual indicators. More time will be needed for quarterly indicators. It is stressed that there will be no overlap in data collection inside Eurostat, Unit A5 will only do complementary data collection. After Easter Eurostat's Comité de Direction will take a decision on the list of indicators to be published free of charge on the internet.

## **5. Phare programme related issues**

### **5.1 Final report and experience from Phare 1997**

CESD-Communautaire held a final presentation on the now finished 1997 m-b Phare programme of which they were the contractor. The service procurement contract was signed in June 1998, which should have ended in 5/2000, but it was extended until 10/2000. The amount of 10,5 Meur was divided over pilot projects (4 Meur, a monthly pilot projects newsletter was distributed by CESD-C during the projects duration), technical assistance (5,45 Meur) and contract management (1,05 Meur). The final figures deviate just a little bit. The disbursement rate of 99% was high and independent programme evaluations were good. 13 Phare countries participated in the programme that had the following activities:

- Participation in seminars and working groups
- Study visits to EU and EFTA NSIs
- Consultations of EU/EFTA experts to Phare NSIs
- Traineeships at Eurostat
- Translations of statistical manuals (ESA, EEA, APS)
- Participation in training courses (TES and others)
- Publication of Statistics in Focus
- Surveys

CESD-Communautaire concluded framework contracts with 11 out of the 13 Phare NSIs, a few EU Member States NSIs and training institutes. This reduced mission costs enormously, travel costs were reduced by 35% as it is much cheaper to organise travel from the participants' home countries than from Luxembourg. CESD's Phare MIS database was installed in those countries in order to administer all activities from planning lists until financial reports (invoicing).

Some Phare counties remarked their satisfaction on CESD-C's programme execution and administration.

### **5.2 Phare statistics 1998 budget (doc. MGSC/2001-1/08)**

The 1998 m-b Phare programme with a budget of 5 Meur serves as a bridge between the bigger 1997 (10,5 Meur) and 1999 (15 Meur) programmes. As the funds of the 1999 programme are not available yet, all Phare countries with a subcontract are requested to plan carefully their activities. They should stretch the remaining budget of the 1998 programme until 7/2001. By then it is hoped that the 1999 funds are available to start the activities. For Albania, BiH and the FYR of Macedonia, this is their last participation in the Phare programme. In the future they will be beneficiaries of a new Commission programme called Cards. It is foreseen that also Croatia, and the FRY (Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo) take part in this programme. A starting date is not known yet, therefore Albania, BiH and the FYR of Macedonia may plan activities until 10/2001 which is the 1998 programme's closing date.

Some Phare countries stated that the technical assistance component of the 1998 programme (contractor is CESD-C) works well, but they are not satisfied with the practical implementation of the pilot projects part. They have had practical problems with the consortium (NEI-ICON-ASA) which led to unpleasant situations, e.g. no availability of daily allowance before the meeting or even at the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the meeting. The consortium should be made aware that it is not possible for the Phare NSIs to pre-finance all activities. Also sometimes Phare NSIs were not informed on a meeting that would be organised in their countries. More transparency and better co-ordination and communication is asked for. It was mentioned that besides the “Good Practice guide on Phare co-operation” aimed at Phare countries, also a good practice guide for contractors could be made. Contractors should not contact Phare NSIs experts directly, but go through the International Relation Departments being co-ordinators in the NSIs. Eurostat will mention the problems in the upcoming quarterly meeting with the consortium. A Phare country requested to receive the minutes of these quarterly meetings. Another remark concerned the fact that the NSIs are the official authority in a country for statistical data and they have to deliver official statistics. Private contractors should not try to disturb this role of the NSIs by contacting other Ministries for data.

### **5.3 Phare statistics 1999 budget (doc. MGSC/2001-1/08**

### **5.4 Phare statistics 2000 budget and outlook 2001 (doc. MGSC/2001-1/10)**

Points 5.3 and 5.4 were dealt with as one agenda point.

The 1999 budget of 15 Meur is exceptionally large. The outsourcing of the different project components to several contractors has been unfortunately delayed. There might be a gap between the 1998 and 1999 budgets. The agricultural pilot projects have been decentralised by Unit A5 to Eurostat’s Directorate F, and the contract for this has been awarded to Landsis. The remaining pilot projects will be outsourced to one contractor which will be known in 4/2001. This delay endangers some projects to run out of time. The Dutch firm DHV is the new contractor for the technical assistance part. New subcontracts with the CCs are under preparation and might be signed in the coming three months. The Programme Secretariat has already been active in the 1999 programme since 11/1999. The Employment Bulletin tender has recently been launched. No activity has been found for the use of the reserve of 0,3 Meur. Originally this was foreseen for translations, but this activity has been withdrawn.

Phare 2000 has allocated relatively large amounts to Phare countries’ National Phare programmes. A new 3 year period of m-b- Phare programmes has in principle been accepted. This covers 2000 (8 Meur), 2001 (7 Meur) and 2002 (6 Meur). The 2000 budget has not yet been sub-delegated to Eurostat. The programme is divided in a Technical Assistance part (4 Meur) and in a Pilot Projects part (4 Meur). Eurostat Unit A5 needs from the 10 Phare Candidate Countries a provisional commitment on participation in the pilot projects as soon as possible.

Unit A5 is at the moment collecting proposals for pilot projects from the Eurostat Units for the 2001 Phare programme. Dir. E (social statistics) will have this time the biggest bulk of projects. The 2001 Phare programme is planned to be defended in the Phare Management Committee in Brussels around this summer.

### **5.5 Information on National Phare programmes**

For the 1999 and 2000 rounds Phare countries have been very successful in trying to get funds allocated to their national programme proposals. It was underlined to have no contents overlap between the different Phare programmes (national, multi-beneficiary). This asks of course for a good co-ordination between all involved statistical actors. In future countries could include a paragraph in their proposals on the differences in the national and m-b programmes. It is clear that all programmes have compliance with the Acquis Communautaire in statistics as its aim. Eurostat has the co-ordinating role as far as statistics are concerned and needs therefore to be informed continuously. Eurostat for instance has to be asked to give comments on the terms of reference of project proposals before they go to the National Phare Co-ordinators in the Phare countries. Eurostat should also be invited to participate in Steering Committees in the CCs dealing with tenders. This information flow between Phare countries and Unit A5 should become automatic also at the implementation stage. The countries were also asked to involve the EC Delegations more and more as they are the ones who will eventually submit the proposals to the European Commission in Brussels. In future EC Delegations will have an even bigger role in National Phare programmes.

Twinning is made compulsory by DG Enlargement when programmes are very large. Countries should try to make terms of reference well in advance and also here Eurostat can be asked for advice. National Phare programmes should be made visible in the countries. E.g. Romania has held press conferences on the outputs of the Phare national programmes which will support future requests for funding of projects from the Phare National programme. Phare countries could exchange information or documents among themselves and benefit from each other's experiences. Unit A5 was asked to give explanations on "light twinning". From the 2001 Phare programme on countries can carry out "light" twinning projects. Short term experts from EU Member States can be seconded to Phare NSIs for a period of up to 3 months, which burdens the EU NSIs obviously much less than in a regular twinning exercise where EU experts stay 1 year in a Phare country.

The task manager of the EC Delegation in Albania mentioned that through the good co-operation with Eurostat the disbursement rate of the National Phare programmes in statistics increased with 40% to 97%.

Some years ago the Phare programmes made a switch from demand to accession driven. Unit A5 emphasised once again that contents of National Phare programmes should reflect the Enlargement exercise and thus not something different.

Some Phare countries stated that the combination of Eurostat lobbying on EC side and the NSI on its government side has already proven to be successful.

## **5.6 Good practice in Phare co-operation (doc. MGSC/2001-1/12)**

A first draft of the code of good practice in Phare statistical co-operation was submitted to the PGSC meeting in Budapest. The concept of such a code was well received and was discussed shortly.

It is found good to define the programmes' target orientations once and forever. The code is compelling for the Candidate Countries, but some rules are in principle also valid for West Balkan and TACIS countries. The programmes having quite large budget should show their accountability and concrete and touchable results. More and more responsibility is given to the countries. Eurostat does not want to check every single action, Eurostat trusts on the Phare countries to use the money in a proper and rational way. Some recommendations were given, e.g. CCs should have a strategical multi-annual approach oriented on output and the funds of the m-b Phare programmes should preferably not be used for bilateral or national actions. As an example of how to rationalise the follow up to the pilot project on external trade statistics by some bilateral study visits to EU Member States can be mentioned. This will not be one study visit per country, but there will be about 3 study visits grouping countries together.

Relations with the several programme contractors should be handled with utmost care, no company should be privileged and there should be no conflict of interest.

Naturally, participants in Eurostat Working Groups should have adequate knowledge of the languages spoken in meetings (normally English) and Phare experts are invited to actively participate. This active participation has e.g. improved in the traineeships of CEC statisticians at Eurostat.

France referred to a similar code adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994 and suggested that the Phare code endorses the UN code's general provisions and focus on specificities of Phare cooperation. Actually some points overlap with the Eurostat document. In fact Unit A5 has used the UN's document as background paper for its own code. Unit A5 could refer in its paper to the UN's one. United Kingdom emphasised that it is very important that Phare experts that have attended a meeting or a bilateral action transfer their knowledge to their colleagues at the home office. Finland added to give more importance to evaluate bilateral co-operation. It is very important to know for the EU Member States assisting Phare NSIs if Phare statisticians have really benefited from the co-operation. OECD also underlined this point. Although evaluation questionnaires are distributed to participants in OECD actions, OECD still needs more feedback, CEC statisticians should be more explicit. OECD sometimes requests participants to submit a paper before the meeting. These papers are often not very substantial. OECD would like to know about specific problems of NSIs in a certain statistical domain well before the meeting, so that they can be discussed still before the meeting starts. France also agreed with that and stated that every planned bilateral action should be grounded with good terms of reference of the assisted country. In this context in order to have an overview of the progress of the Phare NSIs the establishment of the compliance database is very much welcomed. Phare countries were suggested to translate the code on good practice into their national language.

## **6 Co-operation with Cyprus, Malta and Turkey (doc. MGSC/2001-1/14)**

Cyprus and Malta now have the same level in the accession process as the Phare Candidate Countries. Since 2000 Cyprus, Malta and Turkey have submitted a NPAA in

Statistics. Chapter 12 of the accession negotiations has been temporarily closed for Cyprus in Malta just as for the 10 Phare CCs. Target date for complying with the AC in statistics is 1/1/2003 for Cyprus and Malta. Planned statistical global assessments for these two countries will give a good insight on their actual compliance status. Though negotiations with Turkey have not yet started, an Accession Partnership has entered into force in 3/2001. Sub-Committee meetings take place twice a year. Turkey produces the annual Regular Report for the Commission. The NPAA is expected to be ready still this year. Eurostat has already received a draft version as well as an annual Work plan. The output of a pre-assessment meeting with Turkey held at Eurostat in 12/2000 gives a good starting point on the compliance situation. Also for Turkey a global assessment has been planned inside the Meda programme.

The three countries have so far participated in selected activities of the 1997 and 1998 m-b Phare programmes. Cyprus and Malta have financed the participation from own and Medstat's resources. Compared to Cyprus and Malta Turkish participation has still been modest due to the only recent involvement in m-b activities. All countries feel that the Medstat activities are very important as complementary factor to the compliance activities of the m-b Phare programmes.

The Fourth Financial Protocol will enable Cyprus and Malta to finance its participation in the 1999 m-b Phare programme. Cyprus will be able to spend a maximum amount of € 166.500 and Malta €511.000. The budgets will be committed through several contract types, covering technical assistance, equipment and participation in pilot projects and the Programme Secretariat.

€250.000 have been allocated to the Maltese NSO for a Financing Agreement for a pre-accession strategy 2000. The sub-delegation to Eurostat for implementation is in process. €100.000 has been allocated this year to the Turkish SIS from the "Administrative co-operation" component of MEDA 1. The project proposal will be based on the short term priorities of Turkey's Accession Partnership. The terms of reference are being prepared and will contain a needs identification, projects design, etc. Activities will most likely start from mid 2002 and will be financed from MEDA 2. Two staff members of Eurostat Unit A5 will in this context visit the SIS shortly.

In general all 3 countries would not like to be excluded from the Medstat programmes which is planned to happen on longer term. The Medstat activities are considered by them to be valuable as complementary work to the accession activities for CCs inside the m-b Phare programmes. France underlined this opinion and stated that the loss of this financial source might cause a gap in compliance level with the 10 Phare CCs. Turkey mentioned that the gap in compliance between them and the other CCs existing at this moment is due to the very restricted budget of the SIS and to the fact that financing of the Commission will only start next year.

#### Requests from Eurostat:

- Eurostat expects from Malta to provide as soon as possible the terms of reference and technical specifications for the Fourth Protocol contracts and to start the identification of projects for the 2000 budget.
- Eurostat expects from Turkey to prepare properly the Ankara meeting in 4/2001. Requested are inventories of Turkey's needs in terms of statistical projects based on the short term priorities of the Accession Partnership and inventories of SIS's needs in terms of equipment, training and translation.
- Eurostat expects from EU Member States expertise for consultancies for Malta under the 4<sup>th</sup> Financial Protocol and for Turkey in the framework of the MEDA Programme which is under preparation.

- Cyprus is to prepare the Global Assessment of its statistical system in 5/2001.

## **7. Co-operation with West Balkan countries**

### **7.1 New CARDS and FRY Agency Regulations (doc. MGSC/2001-1/15)**

The legal base of the newly adopted CARDS programme is laid down in a Council Regulation of 12/2000. Beneficiaries are Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the FYR of Macedonia. Albania, BiH and FYR of Macedonia will thus not participate in the Phare programmes anymore. CARDS will cover national, regional and cross border programmes and aims at strengthening the regional co-operation among the 5 countries. The programme is linked with the Stabilisation and Association Agreements which has already been signed with the FYR of Macedonia. The one with Croatia is currently under discussion, the one with BiH will be discussed at a later stage and discussions with FRY on the SAA have not yet been planned. The programme implementation is not well defined yet. DG Relex will have to approve the budget on a multi-annual programming basis. Europe Aid will be involved in the programme implementation. Eurostat Unit A5 works together with DG Relex on the programme substance. An initial planning will be made only for this year, but from 2002 there will be plans comprising 4 or 5 years. DG Relex has given green light to establish a Cards National programme for Croatia. This will probably happen for FRY later. Albania, BiH and the FYR of Macedonia are still benefiting from National Phare programmes. When applying for a Cards national programme these 3 countries should have finished the National Phare programmes. Eurostat underlined the importance of lobbying by the countries in their responsible national administration(s). Eurostat will do this on Commission side. Discussions on the 2002 budget for National Cards programmes start in Autumn 2001. As in the National Phare programmes Eurostat should be automatically involved by the countries on establishing terms of reference for programme proposals. The FYR of Macedonia does have experience with preparing strategic documents with Eurostat's help. The other countries are therefore advised to exchange information with the Statistical Office of the FYR of Macedonia.

About the Former Republic of Yugoslavia can be said that the EC policy is to postpone contacts with this country until further notice. FRY (Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo) has though access to regional programmes.

### **7.2 Multi-beneficiary programme for the West Balkan region (doc. MGSC/2001-1/16)**

Eurostat together with representatives from the Statistical Offices of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and the FYR of Macedonia have analysed the current problems, objectives and future needs to develop a modern statistical system in the region. This agenda point's document 16 is the basis for a future multi-beneficiary statistical programme to be implemented based on the CARDS programme. The Statistical Office of the FYR of Macedonia was thanked for their input in the early definition of the programme. Later on the contents were discussed with all future beneficiaries in the PGSCs in Sofia, Brussels and Budapest in order to further define the programme. Comments on the contents can still be made.

The CARDS contribution to the programme financed by the 2001 budget will be € 2.500.000 for the period 2001-2002 (see page 11 and 12 of doc. 16). The part on pilot projects (PPP, DOSME and External trade statistics) will be run in a similar way as the ones in m-b Phare programmes in some of which Albania and the FYR of Macedonia have participated. An exact starting date for the m-b CARDS programme cannot be given at this moment. Activities are not expected to start before 2002. This probably implies a break in funding for Albania, BiH and the FYR of Macedonia as the 1998 m-b Phare programme ends on 31/10/2001.

The OECD mentioned that the statistical infrastructure on national accounts and price statistics should exist in order to make the pilot project on PPP successful. This year the OECD will look at the countries' national accounts and other statistics in order to assess the needs of the countries to participate in the European Comparison Programme or the PPP Programme. OECD has worked very closely with Slovenia ("bridge country") on including Croatia and the FYR of Macedonia into the 1999 ECP round. Slovenia has done additional pricing for the OECD. The OECD had to pay for some of the pricing and the OECD would hope that there would be some funding available for the assisting country outside the group of 5 West Balkan countries also in view of the in future intensifying pricing that has to be done. Eurostat said that these kind of exercises indeed are costly and therefore it is aimed to establish sustainable systems in the countries that can then be continuously financed with own sources. The pilot project in this field in the m-b Phare programme tries to have these sustainable systems as a result.

### **7.3 Other co-operation programmes (doc. MGSC/2001-1/17)**

As largest donor for statistical co-operation in the Balkan region, Eurostat has a co-ordinating role in the co-operation activities. Overlap in activities by different donors should be avoided. In this context assisting countries should send Eurostat a paper on its present co-operation situations and its long term co-operation planning. A common communication tool could be Eurostat's CIRCA system (internet tool) which use then will be explained to the donor countries.

The Western Balkan countries have answered to a questionnaire asking for information on their main donors' activities in statistics for the budget year 2000 (see doc.17). Donor countries are now requested to complete the received information from the Western Balkan countries. The questionnaire will be sent to the assisting countries in 4/2001. The information will not focus on the amounts of budget allocated to statistical cooperation, but on which areas are supported by which donors. In future there should be continuously updates with information from all actors. The NSIs of the donor countries will serve as Eurostat's central contact point. These offices can request Eurostat to send the questionnaire or information also to other bodies in their countries active in statistical co-operation (e.g. SIDA in Sweden).

Global assessments are planned to take place this year in Albania, Croatia and the FYR of Macedonia. The Swiss Statistical Office will organise a meeting to present the results. BiH will conduct this exercise with own means, the country is requested to present the results in that same meeting that is planned to be held in 9/2001.

## **8. Other points**

The next MGSC meeting will take place in the beginning of 4/2002.

The Chairman thanked all participants for their valuable contributions and declared the meeting as closed.

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