

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2022/2023 Bureau  
Cork, Ireland, 12-13 October 2022

Item III (a) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STEERING GROUP ON STATISTICAL  
LEGISLATION**

**Prepared by the Organizing Committee of the Expert Meeting**

*In February 2022, the Bureau reviewed the report on the outcomes of the first two Expert Meetings on Modernizing Statistical Legislation and supported the proposal to set up a Steering Group.*

*The Bureau reviewed and approved the terms of reference for the new Steering Group on Statistical Legislation.*

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. Official statistics are an indispensable element of the information system of democratic societies, serving governments, economies and the public. A strong legal and institutional setting is an essential precondition guaranteeing their independence, integrity and accountability, and assuring statistical quality and data security. Particularly, in the context of the currently changing data landscape, emergence of other data producers and new data sources, a flexible and forward-looking legal basis is needed to support and enable national statistical systems that are fit for purpose and for the environment that they are trying to measure.

2. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) has been supporting its members in the area of modernizing statistical legislation by developing and endorsing, together with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Eurostat and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the *Generic Law on Official Statistics* (2016) (GLOS) and the *Guidance on Modernizing Statistical Legislation* (2019). Aligning with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the documents provide guidance on developing statistical legislation to support the modernization of statistical systems and unleash the full value of official statistics.

3. When endorsing the *Guidance on Modernizing Statistical Legislation* in 2018, the Conference agreed that regular meetings of legal and managerial experts should be organized to continue working on this topic. In February 2022, the Bureau reviewed the report on the outcomes of the first two Expert Meetings on Modernizing Statistical Legislation and supported the proposal for further work in this area, including setting up a Steering Group to provide direction to the work and identify and address the emerging issues on a continuous basis.

**II. MANDATE**

4. The work of the Steering Group is conducted within the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians. The Steering Group will regularly report to the CES Bureau on its activities as well as on emerging issues related to statistical legislation and possible ways of addressing them.

5. The Steering Group may identify new areas of work to be undertaken by groups of experts (task forces or task teams) and submit proposals to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

### **III. OBJECTIVE**

6. The objective of the Steering Group is to provide direction to the CES work on statistical legislation, identify and address emerging issues and facilitate the implementation of CES guidelines in this area.

### **IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS**

7. The Steering Group carries out the following activities:

(a) Organize the annual Expert Meetings on Modernizing Statistical Legislation (next meeting planned for November 2022);

(b) Identify and provide guidance on emerging issues related to statistical legislation and any other legal frameworks related to or impacting statistical activities;

(c) Follow up on the implementation of the GLOS and the *Guidance on Modernizing Statistical Legislation*, periodically review existing guidelines and make recommendations regarding their updates;

(d) Coordinate with other relevant groups and bodies working on topics related to statistical legislation and in the substantive areas where legal challenges occur;

(e) Oversee the work of task forces and task teams set up by the Steering Group;

(f) Provide advice to the UNECE Secretariat on capacity development and other activities that support the implementation of CES guidelines on statistical legislation.

### **V. TIMETABLE**

8. The work of the Steering Group will be ongoing with an Expert Meeting organized once a year. The terms of reference for the Steering Group will be reviewed by the CES Bureau in 2027.

### **VI. METHODS OF WORK**

9. The Steering Group will primarily work via email and video conference. The Steering Group may organize informal meetings at events attended by a significant number of members, such as the Expert Meeting on Modernizing Statistical Legislation.

10. Members of the Steering Group are expected to contribute actively to the work and provide ideas for future activities. The Steering Group elects its Chair or Co-chairs.

11. The Steering Group may invite representatives of other relevant groups and bodies working on topics related to statistical legislation to the Steering Group meetings and organization of the annual Expert Meeting as deemed appropriate. Representatives of other groups may also be invited to participate regularly in the Steering Group as observers.

## **VII. MEMBERSHIP**

12. As of October 2022, the representatives of the following countries and organizations expressed interest in being members of the Steering Group: Albania, Armenia, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, United Kingdom (chair), EFTA, Eurostat, OECD, UNECE, and UNSD.

13. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Steering Group.

## **VIII. PROPOSAL TO THE BUREAU**

**14. The Bureau is invited to:**

**(a) Review and approve the terms of reference;**

**(b) Advise on the groups and bodies with which the Steering Group should coordinate, particularly beyond the CES teams of specialists.**

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