

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF STATISTICS

(Paper prepared by the Secretariat for consideration
under Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda)

1. At its Second Session the representative on the Statistical Commission for the Netherlands drew the attention of the Commission to the work done toward the integration of statistics within the framework of economic co-operation among Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg and proposed informally that a committee of European statisticians be created to give special attention to statistical matters of particular interest to European countries.
2. The Statistical Commission did not act formally upon the proposal but expressed the view that statistical co-operation among Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg might lead to valuable suggestions and stimulants for its own work. The Commission requested the Secretariat to prepare a report for its Third Session dealing with some of the details of the Benelux plan.
3. The following report is submitted. The Council of the Economic Union (Benelux) in 1946 established a Statistical Committee composed of the heads of the Statistical Offices of the three member countries. At the first meeting in December 1946 the Committee established rules of procedure and agreed upon a tentative programme of work. In anticipation of the common tariff to be adopted by the three countries agreement was reached by the Statistical Committee upon various definitions referring to external trade which were submitted to the Council of the Economic Union and subsequently to the respective Governments for adoption. The recommendations dealt with definitions of countries of origin and destination, methods of valuation of imports and exports, the recording of net and gross weights, the introduction of a statistical copy of customs papers, the nomenclature of commodities, the classification of countries, arrangements for the protection of confidential information about individual firms, the statistics of imports and exports by parcel post, the imports and exports of gas, electricity and water, statistics of warehouse trade, and the monthly publication of trade statistics. In
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In addition, the Statistical Committee has investigated the methods used in the three countries for compiling indexes of prices and wages, and has considered transport statistics and other subjects in a preliminary way.

4. Reference is also made to the various conferences of British Commonwealth statisticians for the purpose of discussing methods of comparability and other statistical problems of mutual interest.

5. Since the Second Session of the Statistical Commission (27 August to September 1947) the Netherlands Government has proposed to the Economic Commission for Europe that it establish a European Statistical Committee to embrace all countries participating in the work of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Committee to concern itself with statistical problems common to European countries and to be in some defined relationship with the Statistical Commission.

6. The Economic Commission for Europe is to meet from 26 April to 7 May 1948. The matter of a Statistical Committee for Europe appears on its agenda as well as on the agenda of the Statistical Commission. A possibility exists that the Economic Commission for Europe can base its recommendations on that of the Statistical Commission in order that the Council not receive divergent recommendations.

7. The Statistical Commission is requested to consider whether it would be desirable to recommend to the Economic and Social Council the establishment of a European Statistical Committee.

8. It is suggested that the Statistical Commission may wish to consider, inter alia, the following matters in connection with a proposal to establish a European Statistical Commission:

(a) The needs of the Economic Commission for Europe for the advice of a European Statistical Committee.

(b) The composition of such a committee.

(c) The terms of reference of such a committee.

(d) The relationship between the terms of reference of such a Committee and the terms of reference of the Statistical Commission.
