

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL
E/CN.3/191
26 January 1954
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Eighth session
Item 11 (i) of the provisional agenda

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS
(Memorandum prepared by the Secretary-General)

1. Following earlier meetings in 1949 and 1951, a third Regional Meeting of European Statisticians was held in Geneva from 15 to 19 June 1953, under arrangements established by the Economic and Social Council at its seventh and ninth sessions for regional co-operation in statistical questions.
2. The meeting considered two technical subjects, namely, statistics of external trade and statistics of wholesale prices. The results of these discussions have been incorporated in the papers dealing with these two subjects which are before the Commission viz: E/CN.3/173 (external trade) and E/CN.3/175 (wholesale prices). In addition, the meeting considered the future programme and organization of work.
3. On this last question, the result of the discussion was that, in accordance with the request of the Economic and Social Council that consultation among representatives of statistical agencies of European Governments should be encouraged and facilitated, the participants in the meeting agreed to meet henceforth as a continuing body, to be known as the Conference of European Statisticians, under the auspices of the United Nations. This was in order to meet a generally felt need for intensified efforts to improve European statistics, and to establish on a firmer basis the machinery for consultation established by the Economic and Social Council. The objects of the Conference are to improve national statistics and their international comparability, and to promote close co-ordination of the statistical activities in Europe of international

organizations. The director of the central statistical office of any country participating in the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe may be a member of the Conference. The meeting also elected a Charman and two Vice-Chairmen who together constitute the Bureau of the Conference.

4. For a more detailed account of the various conclusions reached, reference may be made to the report of the meetings (E/CN.3/Conf.3/1).

5. In consultation with the Secretariat, the Bureau subsequently drew up a first work programme for the Conference, consisting of the following five subjects: (a) statistics of stocks and work in process; (b) sample surveys of manpower; (c) current movements in wholesale and retail trade; (d) statistics of fixed capital formation; (e) the preparation and use of input/output tables. It was agreed that, as a general rule, the work on these subjects would be conducted by groups of national experts who would report to the Conference.

6. Meetings of two such working groups of national experts have so far been convened. A meeting on stocks and work in process will be held in January 1954 and a meeting on manpower sample surveys in March. It is planned to convene a third working group, probably on statistics of wholesale and retail trade, in May. For these groups, invitations are issued to all countries. For the remaining two subjects in the first programme, it is provisionally planned to convene, before the next session of the Conference, smaller groups of experts from three or four selected countries to advise the Secretariat on the problems involved, the establishment of a programme and the division of the future work.

7. The next meeting of the full Conference is scheduled for the middle of June 1954.
