# Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

2007/0156(COD) - 19/07/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (the "MEETS Programme").

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: business and trade statistics are faced with major challenges in the coming years: the strong integration of world markets is changing the structure of the economy and also European integration is progressing further. Statistics have to react to these trends and have to describe new phenomena. At the same time, the administrative burden on businesses must be reduced. These two challenges are not contradictory to each other. The need for new types of indicators can go hand in hand with efforts to modernise the production system. New types of indicators providing the required information could be obtained by using new sources of information and by linking already existing types of business statistics without the necessity to increase the reporting burden on the enterprises. However, investment is needed to exploit the potential synergies efficiently, and this is the main reason for this programme. The programme has four general objectives, and a set of actions will be implemented under each objective.

The general objectives are as follows:

**Objective 1: to develop target sets of indicators and to review priorities**. Actions under this heading involve the development of new areas and the identification of areas of lesser importance. Target sets of indicators need to be defined and underpinned by methodological agreements, so that comparable data might be produced. Furthermore, a changing environment does not only create new requirements, but also the need for a permanent review of old requirements.

**Objective 2: to achieve a streamlined framework of business related statistics**. Actions under this heading include the development of statistics on enterprise groups, and European surveys to minimise the burden on business. The proposal states that efforts are needed to enforce the integration of concepts and methods in business statistics. In addition, the focus might shift from a national perspective to a European perspective. This integration will include: co-ordination of the legal acts, harmonisation of the methodologies, work on the further integration and linking of statistical classifications, work on the further integration and linking of business registers and related sources, the appropriate inclusion of multinational enterprise groups into the business register and the set up of the reporting on multinational enterprise groups.

**Objective 3: to support the implementation of a more efficient way of collecting data**. Actions under this heading include making better use of data that already exist in the statistical system, including the possibility of estimates; making better use of data that already exist in the economy; and developing tools for the more efficient extraction, transmission and processing of data. By either integrating all collected data into a single system, or by techniques of micro-data linking, a much more effective use of already existing information will be possible. The second pillar of the reform of the production system is the support of the use of administrative data. Governments collect quite a number of data for all kinds of purposes, such as tax reasons, and labour market policy. It would be highly efficient if statistical offices did not need to collect the same data again. However, a considerable effort is needed to guarantee data quality, since the administrative data are often not available in the form needed. It is important, too, to ensure that data that is still required may be obtained easily from company accounts. The harmonisation of

accounting standards will help to achieve this target. Lastly, standard estimation techniques have to be developed to lessen the burden on business wherever possible, e.g. these techniques could be applied to estimate the information needed for the SMEs, without burdening them. To provide comparable data, a set of standards and conventions is necessary.

**Objective 4: to modernise and simplify statistics on trade in goods between Member States ("Intrastat")**. Actions under this heading include harmonisation of methods to improve quality under a simplified Intrastat system; better use of administrative data; and improving and facilitating the data exchange for Intrastat. Simplifications to the Intrastat system will continue to be carried out along traditional lines (thresholds, ICT improvements, nomenclatures etc.). Furthermore, the potential of switching to a single flow system will be investigated. This could reduce the burden considerably, while at the same time maintaining the most important information. To make sure that such a transition is carried out in the most effective way and that the quality of statistical information is ensured, a careful steering of this transition is needed. The effects of such a change and its full implementation in Member States should therefore also be one of the objectives of the new programme.

The MEETS Programme will start on 1 July 2008 and end on 31 December 2013.

The financial framework for the implementation of the programme for the period 2008-2013 is set at **EUR 42.50 million**.