

Distr.  
GENERAL

CES/SEM.37/6 (Summary)  
3 February 1998

Original: ENGLISH

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STATISTICAL COMMISSION and  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN  
COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Joint UNECE/Eurostat seminar on business registers  
(Geneva, 19-20 February 1998)

### **Developing economies and their business registers**

Summary of the paper presented by the ONS, UK <sup>1</sup>

1. Business registers support the economic surveys that form the basis of the national accounts of a country. Just as the national accounts require comparable coverage of economic activity and high (and measurable) quality, so do the business registers that underpin them.
2. The importance of the creation and maintenance of a business register for statistical purposes has been recognised within the European Union. The Regulation on the harmonisation of business registers for statistical purposes that came into force in 1993 has established the principle of consistent use of administrative registers and has specified the structure of a good business register. Separate Regulations cover the definition of statistical units and the industrial classification to be used for classifying these units. These standards are consistent with the European System of Accounts and provide the basis of a Regulation on structural business statistics.
3. It is against this background of standardisation that other countries in Europe are developing their statistical systems. It is natural to call on expert advice, to study relevant statistical documents and to expect to be exposed to new ideas. This accelerates the implementation of the process of change while reducing the associated risks. Given the speed of transition and the major social and economic change being experienced, the rapid transfer of "know how" is an essential ingredient of a developing economy. This paper looks at issues from the UK perspective and provides specific examples from Hungary and Croatia.

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<sup>1</sup> John Perry, UK Office for National Statistics