

## **Recommendations of the Joint ILO/Czech Statistical Office Meeting on the statistical treatment of persons on extended types of leave in respect to the international definitions of employment and unemployment (Prague, 15-17 November 1995)**

The international standards on employment and unemployment statistics are embodied in Resolution I concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (October 1982), and reproduced in the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 1983-3 (pp. XI-

Countries in transition to a market economy are increasingly using these standards in their efforts to set up a system of statistics on employment and unemployment which can be compared internationally.

At the ECE/ILO/OECD Work Session on Labour Statistics and Issues of Concern for Transition Countries (Paris, 17-18 December 1992), the ILO agreed to examine certain issues of common concern for which no explicit provision could be found in the relevant 1982 standards, in particular, the statistical treatment of persons on extended types of leave such as (a) maternity and parental leave, (b) leave initiated by the employer or administration or by the employee; and (c) educational or training leave.

In order to review the above issues, the ILO convened jointly with the Czech Statistical Office a meeting in Prague from 15 to 17 November 1995. The meeting was attended by 29 specialists from the following 18 transition countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Ukraine. Experts from the United Kingdom, OECD and the ILO also participated in the meeting. Three papers were prepared on the statistical treatment of persons on various types of extended leave, respectively, by Farhad Mehran (ILO Bureau of Statistics), Ralf Hussmanns (ILO Bureau of Statistics) and Jaroslav Kux (ILO Consultant), and discussed at the meeting. The recommendations of this meeting are presented below.

As these issues are of concern to a number of other countries, it is envisaged to complement the above-mentioned papers with studies concerning countries not covered here, and to submit the results for consideration by other international fora, before eventual submission to the Sixteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, planned to be held in Geneva in 1998.

### **Persons on maternity and parental leave**

#### *Maternity leave*

1. (1) Women on maternity leave who have an assurance of a return to work following the end of the leave, and who, during the reference period, were in receipt of all or part of their wage or salary from the employer or an equivalent payment from other sources received by virtue of being an employee, should be considered as in employment for the compulsory period of the leave stipulated by national legislation to ensure that mothers before and after

childbirth have sufficient rest, or for a period to be specified according to national circumstances (e.g. one to six months).

(2) In countries where women on maternity leave are not classified as employed according to paragraph 1.(1), they should be classified as unemployed like other categories of non-employed persons, if they were available for work during the reference period and actively seeking work during a recent period. Women on maternity leave who do not satisfy the criteria of the definition of unemployment should be classified as not economically active.

#### *Parental leave*

2. (1) Women or men on parental leave should be considered as having a formal job attachment and, therefore, be classified as employed, if the duration of the leave is fairly short (e.g. one to three months) and immediately preceded by a period of employment, and if the person has an assurance of a return to work following the end of the leave. A period of maternity leave according to paragraph 1.(1) above is to be considered as a period of employment.

(2) Similar to the case of maternity leave, persons on parental leave who are not classified as employed, and who were available for work during the reference period and actively seeking work during a recent period, should be classified as unemployed like other categories of non-employed persons. Persons on parental leave who do not satisfy the criteria of the definition of unemployment should be classified as not economically active.

#### **Persons on leave initiated by the employer or administration or by the employee**

##### *Unpaid leave initiated by the employee*

3. Employees on unpaid leave initiated by themselves should be classified as employed, if they have an assurance of a return to work with the same employer, and if the elapsed duration of the leave does not exceed a short time limit (e.g. one to three months) to be specified according to national circumstances. Otherwise, they should be classified as unemployed or not economically active, depending upon their current availability for work and recent job search activity.

##### *Paid leave initiated by the employer or administration*

4. Persons on paid leave initiated by the employer or administration should be classified as employed, if they have an assurance of a return to work with the same employer, and if the employer or administration pays all or a significant part of the wage or salary of the person on leave. Otherwise, such persons should be classified as unemployed or not economically active, depending upon their current availability for work and recent job search activity.

##### *Unpaid leave initiated by the employer or administration*

5. (1) Persons on unpaid leave initiated by the employer or administration (including leave paid out of the government budget or social security funds) should be classified into labour force categories as follows:

- (a) Persons having an agreed date for return to work should be considered employed if the elapsed duration of their leave falls within a short time limit (e.g. one to three months) to be specified according to national circumstances. Such persons may be classified as a separate category among employed persons; they should be included among the underemployed if they satisfy the criteria of the definition of underemployment.
- (b) Persons who have an agreed date for return to work but whose elapsed duration of leave is longer than the specified short time limit, as well as persons who have no agreed date for return to work but who are expecting to return to their work in the near future, should be considered unemployed like other categories of non-employed persons, if they are currently available for work and have recently sought work. Such persons should also be considered unemployed if they are currently available for work but have not recently sought work for either of the following two reasons: (i) they expect to be recalled to work with their former employer; (ii) they have already found a new job. They should be considered not economically active if they have not recently sought work for other reasons or if they are not currently available for work.
- (c) Persons who neither have an agreed date for return to work nor expect to be recalled to their work in the near future should be considered unemployed like other categories of non-employed persons if they are currently available for work and have recently sought work. They should be considered not economically active if they are not currently available for work or if they have not recently sought work.

(2) The notion of expectation of returning to work "in the near future" should be specified in the light of the national circumstances and economic situation of each country, such as one to three months.

### **Persons on educational or training leave**

6. (1) Persons temporarily not at work on paid educational or training leave should be classified as employed provided they have an assurance of a return to work, and if the employer or administration pays all or a significant part of the wage or salary of the person on leave.

(2) Persons temporarily not at work on unpaid educational or training leave of a short duration (e.g. one to three months) to be specified according to national circumstances should be classified as employed provided they have an assurance of a return to work.

(3) Other persons not at work on educational or training leave should be classified as unemployed or not economically active depending upon their

current availability for work and recent job search activity.

