

European statistics

2007/0220(COD) - 19/11/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 599 votes to 24 with 14 abstentions, a legislative resolution, amending the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Statistics. The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Andreas **SCHWAB** (EPP-ED, DE), on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs.

The main amendments – adopted in 1st reading of the codecision procedure – are the result of a compromise between Parliament and Council. These are as follows:

Eurostat's professional independence: the definition of 'professional independence' is expanded to mean statistics must be developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner, particularly as regards the selection of techniques, definitions, methodologies and sources to be used, and the timing and content of all forms of dissemination, free from any pressures from political or interest groups or from Community and national authorities, without prejudice to institutional settings, such as Community or national institutional or budgetary provisions or definitions of statistical needs. The statistical principles set out in the definitions are further elaborated in the Code of Practice.

National Statistical Institutes and other national authorities : a national statistical authority is designated by each Member State as the body having the responsibility for coordinating all activities at national level for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics and thereby acting as the contact point for the Commission (Eurostat) on statistical matters (the NSI). The Commission (Eurostat) shall maintain and publish on its web site a list of NSIs and other national authorities responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics as designated by Member States.

Commission (Eurostat): the Community statistical authority (the Commission (Eurostat)) is designated by the Commission to develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics.

European Statistical System Committee: the European Statistical System (ESS) Committee shall provide professional guidance to the ESS for developing, producing and disseminating European Statistics in line with the statistical principles set out in the text. The ESS Committee shall be composed of the representatives of the NSIs (national specialists for statistics). It shall be chaired by the Commission (Eurostat). The ESS Committee shall be consulted by the Commission in regard to:

- (a) the measures which the Commission intends to take for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics, their justification on a cost effectiveness basis, the means and timetables for achieving them, the reporting burden on survey respondents;
- (b) proposed developments and priorities in the European Statistical Programme;
- (c) initiatives to bring into practice reprioritisation and reduction of response burden;
- (d) issues concerning statistical confidentiality;
- (e) the further development of the Code of Practice;

(f) any other question, in particular issues of methodology, arising from the establishment or implementation of statistical programmes that are raised by its Chair, either on its own initiative or at the request of a Member State.

European Statistics Code of Practice: a new article is inserted, stating that a European Statistics Code of Practice shall aim at ensuring public trust in European statistics by establishing how European Statistics are to be developed, produced and disseminated in conformity with the statistical principles and best international statistical practice. The Code of Practice has been established and shall be reviewed and updated as necessary by the ESS Committee. The Commission shall publish amendments thereto.

European Statistical Programme: the impact and cost effectiveness of the European Statistical Programme shall be assessed involving independent experts. The Programme shall lay down priorities concerning the need for information for the purpose of carrying out the tasks of the Community. Needs should be weighed against resources required at Community and national level to provide the required statistics, and also against the response burden and respondents' associated costs. The Commission shall introduce initiatives to set priorities and reduce the burden on respondents for all or part of the European Statistical Programme. The Commission shall submit the draft European Statistical Programme to the ESS Committee for prior examination.

European Approach to Statistics: in specific and duly justified cases and within the framework of the European Statistical Programme, the European Approach to Statistics aims at: i) maximising the availability of statistical aggregates at Community level and improving the timeliness of European Statistics; ii) reducing the response burden on the respondent and the burden on national authorities on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis.

Confidential data: confidential data obtained by the national authorities or the Commission (Eurostat) exclusively for the production of European Statistics shall be used exclusively for statistical purposes unless the statistical unit has unambiguously given its consent to their use for any other purposes. National authorities and the Commission (Eurostat) shall apply all necessary measures to ensure the harmonisation of principles and guidelines as regards the physical and logical protection of confidential data. Transmission of confidential data between an ESS authority that collected the data and an ESCB member may take place provided that this transmission is necessary for the efficient development, production and dissemination of European Statistics or for increasing the quality of European Statistics within the respective spheres of competence of the ESS and the ESCB, and that this necessity has been justified. Confidential data transmitted shall be used exclusively for statistical purposes and only accessible to staff working in statistical activities within their specific domain of work.