

Community statistics: 2003-2007 programme

2001/0281(COD) - 13/01/2009 - Follow-up document

This Commission staff working document contains the executive summary of the evaluation report on the Community statistical programme (CSP) 2003-2007 which was conducted over a period of 13 months, starting in October 2007. In March 2008, an interim evaluation report was submitted which presented facts and factual trends, but no evaluative conclusions. In the ensuing period, more qualitative information was gathered and processed. This whole process resulted in an evaluation report, of which this document is the executive summary.

The summary provides an overview of the main findings in relation to: (i) the relevance of the programme; (ii) progress of activities; (iii) user satisfaction and user needs; (iv) development of the European Statistical System (ESS) and subsidiarity; (v) staff and internal productivity; (vi) dialogue and interaction between users and partners; (vii) quality of products and services; and (viii) monitoring of implementation.

The evaluation also gives rise to the following main recommendations:

- **Link:** in order to improve the transparency of Eurostat's activities, and to ensure that the 5-year programme provides the necessary reference framework within which the various Eurostat units have to draw up the annual programmes, these annual programmes should refer explicitly to the 5-year programme. This explicit reference can be achieved by devising a hierarchy of objectives, i.e. by linking the key operational priorities from the annual programmes to the strategic objectives and titles in the 5-year programme. Moreover, the annual programmes should be used as a way to adapt to new developments in society which the 5-year programmes cannot anticipate and to cope with the resulting new statistical demands. The reasons for deviating from the 5-year programme should be clarified in explicit terms.
- **Monitoring:** overall monitoring of the 5-year programme can be achieved by establishing a closer link between the 5-year programme and the annual programmes, and subsequently by choosing /defining a few key indicators that provide information leading to the achievement of both the operational and the strategic objectives. A better streamlining of lower level monitoring initiatives can be achieved by defining clearer links and greater uniformity between the different operational parts of the organisation.
- **ESS - balancing demand and resources:** the report notes an increase in the demand for statistics from the Directorates-General (DGs). Despite all the efforts made to ensure efficiency and effectiveness on the providers' side, there is a limit to the possibilities on the supply side, where the situation is one of growing or increasingly sophisticated and complicated demand. This situation calls for either an increase in resources for the producers or a strategic rethink of demand - and probably aspects of both. There are a number of channels to guide a strategic rethinking of demand, including priority setting, simplification and burden reduction for existing demands and ex ante impact assessments for new demands.
- **Trust:** the DGs' confidence in Eurostat's ability to defend their needs vis-à-vis the National Statistics Institutes (NSIs), and - equally - the trust that the NSIs place in Eurostat to defend their aspirations vis-à-vis the DGs, must be intensively nurtured in the light of their common interest in quality statistics;
- **Enlargement:** investment in the integration of the new NSIs should be continued so as to ensure that the statistics from new Member States are complete and available to users in the (website) databases;

- **Quality:** the approach and methods used to measure quality should be more similar for all parts of Eurostat, and should be used throughout the entire Eurostat organisation. The development of a clear and coherent quality monitoring framework would be an appropriate next step.