Community statistical programme 2008-2012

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This document constitutes the interim report required by Decision No 1578/2007/EC. It summarises the Community Statistical Programme's (CSP's) main achievements, looks ahead to the second half of the CSP and deals with specific elements that have to be addressed in the report. It also presents recommendations for the future.

Main achievements of the CSP: the focus here is on the first two years of the programme. The CSP contains around 130 objectives, most of them multiannual and requiring steady implementation over the entire programme period. For each Title of the programme, many of the objectives (around 90 %) are on track and are likely to be achieved by the end of 2012 although resource constraints in the ESS may render this more difficult than expected. Some important objectives had already been met by the end of 2009 (establishment of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board, adoption of an energy statistics regulation, a more user-friendly Eurostat website). Objectives for which work has yet to begin include the development of indicators for analysing the performance of logistics and intermodal transport, the implementation of NACE rev2 in national accounts and the development of a methodology for assessing the quality of regional data.

In addition, the European Statistical System (ESS) demonstrated its capacity to deal with the statistical consequences of the financial crisis in the areas of macroeconomic and social statistics. Decisions on the statistical treatment of government interventions were issued and appropriate economic and labour market indicators were provided. The existing statistical indicators are being reviewed and several projects aiming to provide additional indicators for policymakers by making better use of existing data are in progress. Given that fewer resources will be available, an even stronger effort to harmonise methodology, concepts and definitions in many areas and to improve standardisation will be needed to meet all the objectives of the CSP by the end of 2012.

Key elements for the second half of the CSP: the report notes that Council Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics was adopted in 2009. It sets out principles enabling all the ESS members to produce and disseminate statistics more efficiently, lays down the structure of the ESS, provides a coordinating role in the statistical system for Eurostat at European level and for the National Statistical Institutes at national level, institutionalises collaborative networks and strengthens requirements for output quality.

Furthermore, a Communication on the production method of EU statistics (COM (2009)0404) was adopted by the Commission in August 2009 and aims to improve the efficiency of statistical production by changing the production method.

In order to bring the Greek statistical system into line with the EU requirements and ESS standards, the ESS will assist the Hellenic Statistical Authority in rebuilding the statistical system so that it is able to produce reliable statistical data, and this assistance will absorb a great deal of resources in the ESS.

Lastly, the process of subjecting all fields to a cost-effectiveness analysis has begun (e.g. development of summary information sheets, cost and burden measurement) but further efforts will be needed.

Specific aspects of reporting: the paper discusses the competitive effects on SMEs due to **reduction of administrative burden**. Some EUR 200-250 million can be ploughed back into business activities of

SMEs if the changes in EU legislation such as limiting the number of surveyed statistical products, increasing the thresholds for enterprises to report Intrastat data and eliminating certain variables reported in SBS are integrated into Member States practices.

On **financial burden-sharing between the EU and Member States budgets**, the paper states that the fact that between 60 % and 90 % of Member States'statistical work programmes relates to EU work programmes implies that there is a considerable degree of synergy between European and national statistical work programmes. If more precise estimations are to be produced, an appropriate information system on the costs borne by the EU and MS needs to be established.

Follow-up of previous recommendations: the recommendations from the previous evaluation are taken up by introducing mechanisms that will make it possible to link the CSP objectives with the annual work programmes in the planning and reporting processes, thus improving the monitoring of programme implementation.

- **Definition of new needs for statistical information:** new, more complex and timely data needs for policy purposes are likely to arise all the time, e.g. in connection with the Communication on GDP and beyond, the Commission's report on the measurement of economic performance and social progress, the need for more geo-referenced data, data on disability, indicators on consumer markets and in particular for monitoring detailed product prices on a yearly basis and the Europe 2020 strategy. In order to meet these needs a more integrated approach using multiple and combined data sources together with harmonisation of methodology, concepts and definitions will be required by the ESS.
- **Strengthen partnership in the ESS**: adaptation of the annual planning process and programmes will be needed as well as evaluation of the objectives in the CSP. The setting up of more and different integrated cooperation models together with Member States will require greater interaction, increased use of ESS networks and sharing of tools for greater efficiency of the system.
- **Cost-burden analysis and re-prioritisation**: reporting on these aspects is required by the CSP. The results of existing cost and burden measurements need to be considered and further reflection is required on how to obtain homogeneous information on cost and burden from all Member States as well as on the use made of statistics. A conceptual approach to reprioritisation of activities should be developed based on available summary information sheets per legal act and a determined effort to implement it should be made.
- **Availability of resources for implementing the programme**: an appropriate balance between the objectives as set out in the CSP and the current deteriorating resource situation in many Member States' statistical offices should be considered at the level of the ESS. A strategic reflection on the objectives for the second half of the programme and additional reassessment of user needs is required at the level of the ESS aiming at setting strategic priorities and making statistics production more efficient.