Structural business statistics. Recast

2006/0020(COD) - 04/05/2011

The Commission presents a report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 58/97 and of Regulation (EC) No 295/2008 concerning structural business statistics (recast) which repealed and replaced Regulation No 58/97. The report has been prepared partly under the provisions of Article 14(1) of Regulation No 58/97 as regards final data for reference year 2007 and partly under the provisions of Article 13(1) of Regulation No 295/2008 as regards preliminary data for reference year 2008.

Generally, the aim of the report is to provide information on the actions undertaken by the European Commission to ensure that high quality European structural business statistics are made available to users, and also on the manner and extent to which each of the Member

States has implemented the SBS Regulations. Moreover, it provides information on the burden on businesses and the actions taken by Member States in order to reduce that burden.

Compliance: compliance with the SBS Regulation is evaluated on the basis of the punctuality of data transmitted by the Member States, and also on the completeness of the data and the number of versions needed before the final release. Overall, the compliance level for 2007 data has been increased relative to the compliance level recorded in the previous report. A full analysis of all compliance issues, in particular those related to comparability, will not be possible until the renewed quality reports are available in May 2011.

Punctuality has improved generally over the years. However, some countries continue to send their data with some delay, which has influenced the punctuality of the dissemination of EU aggregates. Compared with the previous report, the most notable improvements from the punctuality point of view were made by Belgium, Ireland, Greece and Slovenia. However, Belgium and Greece sent their data with some delay. First data for 2007 were provided by Malta with a major delay.

As far as the **completeness of the datasets** transmitted by the countries is concerned, when all datasets for the definitive series of Annexes I to IV provided by the EU-27 and Norway are taken together, they make up 90% of the required data. This represents a significant improvement in comparison with the situation described in the previous report provided to the European Parliament and to the Council in 2007, but it is still insufficient.

Several countries are taking action to improve **data availability**. Preliminary 2008 data were provided by most of the countries before the deadline set in the Regulation. A few countries sent their data with some delay, for instance around 20 days after the deadline in the case of Belgium and Italy, and with a delay of more than one month for Greece and Poland. In general, punctuality has not improved for these data sets compared to last year, but this situation was due to the fact that the 2008 reference year was affected by the implementation of NACE Rev.2. Overall, 94% of the required data is available.

Data for Annexes V to VII were still missing for some series. Overall, 73 % of the required data for financial annexes is available.

Eurostat has carried out actions in order to increase the level of compliance in two areas:

- a compliance report has been submitted to the SBS Steering Group twice yearly and to the Business Statistics Directors once a year. Letters from the Director-General of Eurostat to the Heads of National Statistical Institutes have also been used to address cases of serious non-compliance. In addition to

monitoring and reporting, bilateral contacts have been made in order to investigate and resolve shortcomings in compliance;

- Eurostat has tried to find ways to facilitate data transmission, e.g. by simplifying the data transmission formats and by streamlining the data requirements, especially with the new SBS Recast Regulation.

Further development: the European Statistical System is constantly looking to identify ways of dealing with new and emerging needs for statistics, whilst at the same time making great efforts to reduce both the burden on respondents and the costs of producing statistics.

Moreover, given the increasing importance of European statistics - at EU level - for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU policies, the Commission (Eurostat) has issued a Communication on the production method for EU statistics - a vision for the next decade. This Communication offers a vision for reforming the way in which European statistics are produced.

Lastly, the MEETS programme for the modernisation and better integration of enterprise and trade statistics is taking practical steps to implement this vision.