European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union (ESA 2010)

2010/0374(COD) - 19/05/2011 - European Central Bank: opinion, guideline, report

OPINION OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union.

On 3 February 2011, the ECB received a request from the Council of the European Union for an opinion on a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union.

The ECB welcomes the proposed regulation as an important step towards further improving the quality of European statistics, in particular national accounts, by bringing them into line with the changes in the economic and financial environment and methodological progress.

The ECB also welcomes the intended consistency of the statistical concepts and definitions described within the proposed regulation, among others, with the System of National Accounts (SNA 2008) adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

The ECB makes the following **specific observations**:

- the Commission, when exercising its delegated powers under the proposed regulation, should prepare the draft delegated acts in close cooperation with the ECB so as to ensure, inter alia, the consistency and quality of the data and minimising the reporting burden;
- further aligning the proposed definition of financial vehicle corporations engaged in securitisation transactions with Regulation ECB/2008/30 of 19 December 2008 concerning statistics on the assets and liabilities of financial vehicle corporations engaged in securitisation transactions;
- financial vehicle corporations engaged in securitisation transactions in any form cannot be treated as akin to captive financial institutions — in particular, they are not consolidated with the originator, irrespective of ‘independence’ criteria. They are classified as other financial intermediaries;
- FVCs should be treated as separate institutional units independently of criteria such as ‘degree of independence from its parent;
- without explaining the difference between covered bonds and asset-backed securities, it is unclear why the securitisation section refers to covered bonds. Alternatively, any reference to covered bonds could be deleted, since covered bonds are not linked to securitisation.

The ECB recalls that the ECOFIN Council endorsed in September 2000 the EMU Action Plan on Statistical Requirements and set the target time for quarterly integrated euro area accounts by institutional sector at t + 90 days after the reference quarter to meet the ECB’s monetary policy needs. This implied that Eurostat and the ECB would have to collect the respective national data at t + 82 days. Due to the envisaged schedule of the ECB Governing Council meetings in 2015 and 2016, a reduction in the time lag to t + 85 would suffice for 2015 to 2016. Accordingly, the ECB supports advancing the reporting deadlines for the quarterly sector accounts under the ESA transmission programme to **t + 85 days by 2014, aiming at t + 82 days by 2017** to support the compilation of full quarterly integrated euro area accounts at t + 90 days.

Furthermore, the ECB favours a consistent transmission deadline for all quarterly and annual national data regarding general government. The ECB supports advancing the reporting deadlines for the quarterly

government accounts under the ESA transmission programme and the EDP data to t + 85 by 2014 and aiming at t + 82 by 2017 to support the compilation of full quarterly integrated euro area accounts at t + 90.

Lastly, in order to meet the public and policy needs for the measurement of compensation per employee and per hour in the general government sector, focusing on a better understanding of wage dynamics and potential spillover effects between the public and private sectors, the ECB suggests including in Table 801 for the general government sector quarterly data on the number of employees and hours worked, with the compensation of employees in the general government sector already included in the transmission programme.