

# European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

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The Council adopted **conclusions** on EU statistics. These conclusions may be summarised as follows:

**EU Statistical Governance:** the Council welcomes Commission proposal for amending Regulation (EC) 223/2009 on European statistics, in view of reinforcing the governance framework especially regarding **professional independence of the national statistical institutes**. It also welcomes the **strengthening of the national statistical institutes' coordination role** which is key to ensuring the implementation of the Principles of the Code of Practice for European Statistics throughout the European Statistical System.

The Council considers that **Commitments on Confidence** in statistics are an important feature of the statistical governance and that these commitments must be rapidly implemented in all Member States, taking fully into account national specificities. The Council agrees with the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) in urging governments to acknowledge their share of responsibility in reinforcing professional independence and strengthening the credibility of European statistics.

**Quality assurance of key statistical output:** the Council welcomes the progress made in the implementation of a preventive approach to enhance the quality of excessive deficit procedure (EDP) statistics, in particular regarding upstream dialogue visits. It takes note that the delegated act sanctioning the **manipulation of EDP statistics** will enter into force in November 2012.

The Council awaits the conclusions of the Commission's **study on the suitability of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)** for Member States. The Council requests that Eurostat presents by early 2013 to the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) an interim report on **the impact of the new ESA 2010** on public finance statistics.

**The 2012 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU:** the Council welcomes the progress since 2011, and notes that the availability and quality of principal European economic indicators (PEEIs) generally have improved but that a harmonised indicator on house sales is not yet available. However, **the release dates still remain well behind the targets for national quarterly sector accounts and employment figures**.

The Council stresses the importance of (i) strengthening co-operation with partner countries and organisations in order to ensure the timely availability of the required data in all countries involved; (ii) for G20 aggregates fulfilling the data quality frameworks to be in place.

Eurostat and the ECB are called upon to provide an updated EFC Status Report on the fulfilment of the updated EMU statistical requirements in 2013.

**Scoreboard statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure:** the Council recalls the importance for the credibility of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure of having **timely statistics of the highest quality** for inclusion in the scoreboard and stresses the need for the Commission (Eurostat) to pursue all necessary initiatives to assure a reliable procedure for the completion of these statistics as well as a continuous improvement of the underlying statistical information. It invites the European Statistical System and the European System of Central Banks to continue to work together on improving the underlying statistics and to ensure comparability.

**The modernisation of the European Statistical System (ESS):** the Council recognises:

- **improvements in the efficiency of European statistics** are essential, and that this could be a good long-term strategic option, especially in combination with a well-functioning priority-setting and simplification strategy, while at the same time ensuring the high quality of statistics in all Member States and taking into account the cost-benefit principle;
- that prioritisation in the development and production of statistics based on a **strategic priority setting mechanism** together with modern methods of statistical production, as outlined in the [Commission's 2009 Communication](#) are important elements in the process of efficient use of resources and channelling them into priority areas.

Member States and the Commission are called upon to **secure resources and to enhance the collaboration within the ESS** based on a sound distribution of roles and tasks between its members, following cost-benefit analyses before implementation of major modernisation projects.

Lastly, the Council welcomes the fact that there has been follow-up on a number of aspects cited in the [Court of Auditors' Special Report No 12/2012](#) entitled "Did the Commission and Eurostat improve the process for producing reliable and credible European statistics?", including with the Commission decision on Eurostat of September 2012, the proposals for amending Regulation 223/2009, and the European Statistical Programme 2013-2017. The ongoing work on amending Regulation 223/2009 should also contribute to better implement the code of Practice.