

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

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The Council adopted **conclusions on EU statistics** as part of an annual review of statistical governance.

In its conclusions, the Council stressed that EU policy frameworks rely increasingly on the timely provision of high quality socio-economic statistics. These play an **important role in planning, decision-making and the monitoring of policy initiatives**.

The conclusions focus on the following:

EU Statistical Governance: the Council invited the Commission and Member States to pursue these efforts in order to enhance, wherever and as appropriate, shared standards of professional independence and good governance at all layers of the ESS. It stressed that there is a particular need to **secure the credibility of European statistics by strengthening the professional independence of Eurostat and of national statistical institutes**, in full compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice, and clarifying their coordinating role within their respective statistical systems.

Quality assurance of key statistical output: whilst welcoming the efforts made by Eurostat to further strengthen EDP verification procedures, the Council encouraged the Commission to continue work on this project to develop accrual-based European Public Sector Accounting Standards (EPSAS) applicable to public sector entities, while respecting subsidiarity and national competences and the proportion between potential costs and benefits.

The 2014 Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU: the Council endorsed the 2014 EFC Status Report and welcomed the progress since 2013 in terms of availability of **Principal European Economic Indicators** (PEEIs) generally. However, timeliness of the PEEIs remains similar to 2013, and a harmonised indicator on house sales (quarterly) is not yet fully available.

Furthermore, the Council took the view that the **provision of G20 aggregates**, in addition to quarterly GDP and monthly CPI, fulfilling the data quality frameworks in place, would be required.

Statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure and structural statistics: the Council welcomed progress towards the modernisation of the European statistical system (ESS) as well as the EU structural statistics. It recalled that the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure must rely upon **sound and harmonised official statistics**, including in the scoreboard. It also welcomed the development of an **action plan** for improving the quality and timeliness of statistics on inequality, poverty, income and social exclusion.

Efficiency and priority setting: the Council stressed that the long-term strategic modernisation goals have to be shared by the ESS partners, and be accomplished by short-term achievements in specific statistical areas, as identified in close cooperation between ESS members.

Whilst recognising that need to balance new statistical demands with efficiency gains and effective priority-setting, the Council welcomed the objectives of the **ESS Vision 2020** as a response to these

challenges. It encouraged the ESS to work on measures to implement the agreed Vision 2020 and called on the Member States and the **Commission to secure and prioritise resources**, while recognising that the resources available in Member States and the Commission to achieve this are limited.