

Community statistical programme 2008-2012

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The Council adopted a series of conclusions on the issue of Community statistics, they can be summarised as follows:

- it notes that while the statistical burden accounts for relatively small part of the total administrative burden, the overall statistical burden has continued to increase despite the initiatives launched in recent years in reviewing statistical priorities and reducing statistical requirements for areas which are now considered to be of lesser importance;
- it recalls the Council conclusions of 8 November 2005 which required putting reprioritisation into practice and recommended incorporating it into the forthcoming multiannual statistical programme for 2008-2012;
- it welcomes the strategic approach and work plan set out in the Commission Communication which combines concrete actions to simplify statistical requirements in specific areas, proposals for the application of various tools to reduce the respondent burden by changing the way certain statistics are produced, a wider use of modern information and communication technologies and a proposal for a systematic priority setting for major statistical projects and in the multi-annual statistical programme 2008-2012.
- fully supports the Commission's ambitious goals on the simplification of Intrastat, which will be a key factor in reaching the overall reduction in the statistical reporting burden; and in particular welcomes the twin-track approach, in which a further substantial progress on traditional simplification would be complemented by a switch to single-flow reporting in the medium-term. However, the Council stresses that the implementation of any other method that leads to a significant reduction in the statistical response burden, must not affect the availability, timeliness and quality of those national statistics that are crucial for European economic policy purposes, such as national accounts and the data on aggregate flows between the euro area and other EU Member States. It should also be accompanied with the necessary measures to ensure confidentiality when exchanging micro-data among the producers of official statistics in Europe. In parallel to this analysis, concrete progress in the short-term should be made on traditional simplification; and the Commission, together with Member States, should make progress in overcoming the current challenges related to Intrastat.