



Basic information	
<b>2007/0156(COD)</b> COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Decision	Procedure completed
Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013  <b>Subject</b>  3.45.20 Business statistics 6.20 Common commercial policy in general 8.60 European statistical legislation	






Key players				
European Parliament	<b>Committee responsible</b>		<b>Rapporteur</b>	<b>Appointed</b>
	<b>ECON</b>	Economic and Monetary Affairs	KONRAD Christoph (PPE-DE)	04/09/2007
	<b>Committee for opinion</b>		<b>Rapporteur for opinion</b>	<b>Appointed</b>
	<b>INTA</b>	International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>BUDG</b>	Budgets	STARKEVIČIŪTĖ Margarita (ALDE)	24/10/2007
	<b>ITRE</b>	Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Council of the European Union	<b>Council configuration</b>		<b>Meetings</b>
Agriculture and Fisheries		2904	2008-11-18	
European Commission	<b>Commission DG</b>		<b>Commissioner</b>	
	Eurostat - European statistics		ALMUNIA Joaquín	

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
		COM(2007)0433	Summary

19/07/2007	Legislative proposal published		
03/09/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
03/06/2008	Vote in committee, 1st reading		<a href="#">Summary</a>
09/06/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	<a href="#">A6-0240/2008</a>	
09/07/2008	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	<a href="#">T6-0343/2008</a>	<a href="#">Summary</a>
09/07/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/11/2008	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
16/12/2008	Final act signed		
16/12/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		
19/12/2008	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
<b>Procedure reference</b>	2007/0156(COD)
<b>Procedure type</b>	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
<b>Procedure subtype</b>	Legislation
<b>Legislative instrument</b>	Decision
<b>Legal basis</b>	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 285
<b>Stage reached in procedure</b>	Procedure completed
<b>Committee dossier</b>	ECON/6/52283

Documentation gateway				
<b>European Parliament</b>				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		<a href="#">PE402.742</a>	05/03/2008	
Amendments tabled in committee		<a href="#">PE404.682</a>	07/04/2008	
Committee opinion	<a href="#">BUDG</a>	<a href="#">PE400.623</a>	08/04/2008	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		<a href="#">A6-0240/2008</a>	09/06/2008	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		<a href="#">T6-0343/2008</a>	09/07/2008	<a href="#">Summary</a>
<b>Council of the EU</b>				
Document type	Reference	Date	Summary	
Draft final act	<a href="#">03663/2008/LEX</a>	16/12/2008		
<b>European Commission</b>				
Document type	Reference	Date	Summary	

Legislative proposal	<a href="#">COM(2007)0433</a> 	19/07/2007	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	<a href="#">SP(2008)4891</a>	27/08/2008	
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2010)0813</a> 	11/01/2011	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2011)0859</a> 	07/12/2011	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2012)0699</a> 	27/11/2012	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2014)0444</a> 	03/07/2014	<a href="#">Summary</a>

Additional information		
Source	Document	Date
National parliaments	IPEX	
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act
<a href="#">Decision 2008/1297</a> <a href="#">OJ L 340 19.12.2008, p. 0076</a> <span style="float: right;"><a href="#">Summary</a></span>

## Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

2007/0156(COD) - 19/07/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (the "MEETS Programme").

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: business and trade statistics are faced with major challenges in the coming years: the strong integration of world markets is changing the structure of the economy and also European integration is progressing further. Statistics have to react to these trends and have to describe new phenomena. At the same time, the administrative burden on businesses must be reduced. These two challenges are not contradictory to each other. The need for new types of indicators can go hand in hand with efforts to modernise the production system. New types of indicators providing the required information could be obtained by using new sources of information and by linking already existing types of business statistics without the necessity to increase the reporting burden on the enterprises. However, investment is needed to exploit the potential synergies efficiently, and this is the main reason for this programme. The programme has four general objectives, and a set of actions will be implemented under each objective.

The general objectives are as follows:

**Objective 1: to develop target sets of indicators and to review priorities.** Actions under this heading involve the development of new areas and the identification of areas of lesser importance. Target sets of indicators need to be defined and underpinned by methodological agreements, so that comparable data might be produced. Furthermore, a changing environment does not only create new requirements, but also the need for a permanent review of old requirements.

**Objective 2: to achieve a streamlined framework of business related statistics.** Actions under this heading include the development of statistics on enterprise groups, and European surveys to minimise the burden on business. The proposal states that efforts are needed to enforce the integration of concepts and methods in business statistics. In addition, the focus might shift from a national perspective to a European perspective. This integration will include: co-ordination of the legal acts, harmonisation of the methodologies, work on the further integration and linking of statistical classifications,

work on the further integration and linking of business registers and related sources, the appropriate inclusion of multinational enterprise groups into the business register and the set up of the reporting on multinational enterprise groups.

**Objective 3: to support the implementation of a more efficient way of collecting data.** Actions under this heading include making better use of data that already exist in the statistical system, including the possibility of estimates; making better use of data that already exist in the economy; and developing tools for the more efficient extraction, transmission and processing of data. By either integrating all collected data into a single system, or by techniques of micro-data linking, a much more effective use of already existing information will be possible. The second pillar of the reform of the production system is the support of the use of administrative data. Governments collect quite a number of data for all kinds of purposes, such as tax reasons, and labour market policy. It would be highly efficient if statistical offices did not need to collect the same data again. However, a considerable effort is needed to guarantee data quality, since the administrative data are often not available in the form needed. It is important, too, to ensure that data that is still required may be obtained easily from company accounts. The harmonisation of accounting standards will help to achieve this target. Lastly, standard estimation techniques have to be developed to lessen the burden on business wherever possible, e.g. these techniques could be applied to estimate the information needed for the SMEs, without burdening them. To provide comparable data, a set of standards and conventions is necessary.

**Objective 4: to modernise and simplify statistics on trade in goods between Member States ("Intrastat").** Actions under this heading include harmonisation of methods to improve quality under a simplified Intrastat system; better use of administrative data; and improving and facilitating the data exchange for Intrastat. Simplifications to the Intrastat system will continue to be carried out along traditional lines (thresholds, ICT improvements, nomenclatures etc.). Furthermore, the potential of switching to a single flow system will be investigated. This could reduce the burden considerably, while at the same time maintaining the most important information. To make sure that such a transition is carried out in the most effective way and that the quality of statistical information is ensured, a careful steering of this transition is needed. The effects of such a change and its full implementation in Member States should therefore also be one of the objectives of the new programme.

The MEETS Programme will start on 1 July 2008 and end on 31 December 2013.

The financial framework for the implementation of the programme for the period 2008-2013 is set at **EUR 42.50 million**.

## Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

2007/0156(COD) - 16/12/2008 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (the "MEETS Programme").

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision No 1297/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS).

CONTENT: having reached agreement with the Parliament at first reading, the Council adopted a Decision establishing a programme for the modernisation of European enterprise and trade statistics (MEETS).

The programme will commence on 1 January 2009 and end on 31 December 2013.

The general objectives of the MEETS Programme are as follows:

- to review priorities and develop target sets of indicators for new areas (objective 1);
- to achieve a streamlined framework for business-related statistics (objective 2);
- to support the implementation of a more efficient way of producing enterprise and trade statistics (objective 3);
- to modernise the data collection system on trade in goods between Member States (objective 4).

The Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council:

- by 31 December 2010, and thereafter on an annual basis until 2013, a report on the implementation of the MEETS Programme;
- by 31 July 2014, a final report on the implementation of the MEETS Programme. That report shall assess, in the light of the expenditure incurred by the Community, the benefits of the actions accruing to the Community, the Member States and providers and users of statistical information, to identify areas for potential improvement.

The financial envelope for the implementation of the MEETS Programme for the period **2009-2013** is set at **EUR 42 500 000**.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 08/01/2009.

## Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

2007/0156(COD) - 11/01/2011 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents a report on the implementation of Decision (EC) No 1297/2008/EC on a programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS).

The report documents the activities carried out by Member States under the MEETS Programme together with the Commission (Eurostat), with respect to the provisions of the MEETS Decision and the associated Commission Decisions on the annual work programmes for 2009 and 2010, both adopted in 2009. The MEETS project follows very closely the main orientations set out in the Commission's [Communication](#) to the European Parliament and the Council of 10 August 2009 on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade.

Since the adoption of Decision No 1297/2008/EC and the adoption of the first work programme in April 2009, more than 25 projects have been launched for the four MEETS objectives. **Major progress** has been made in setting up the collaborative networks that are undertaking activities in the following **six main areas**:

- consistency of concepts and methods,
- profiling large and complex multinational enterprise groups,
- microdata-linking and data warehousing in statistical production,
- linking micro-data on ICT usage,
- methodology for modern business statistics and
- the use of administrative and accounting data.

In addition, several projects were launched to support the development and implementation of the **EuroGroups Register** in the Member States. It should be mentioned, however, that Member States have a limited absorption capacity as regards the additional co-ordination activities involved in the networks.

All the studies that were carried out and finalised will be evaluated together with the main stakeholders from Commission services and Member States. Developed methodologies will be piloted. The identification of areas of lesser importance will be further integrated into the general overall strategy of Eurostat on priority setting. This strategy is based on the [Communication](#) on priority setting, simplification and reduction of response burden in the field of Community statistics.

Adequate EU **funding** has been guaranteed by two annual work programmes adopted by the Commission in order to help Member States to achieve the goals in respect of the reducing the burden on businesses and to help the European Statistical System in responding to new needs for statistical information. In total, EU funding amounted to around EUR 5 million and EUR 10 million for the 2009 and 2010 work programmes respectively, covering more than 25 projects. Grants, either through ESSnets or individual grants, were the most common instrument for financing the actions (around 90%). Thirty-one grants totalling around EUR 13.5m were co-financed and 13 external studies for a total of around EUR 1.5m were subcontracted. In addition, workshops and task forces were financed to develop the actions.

Owing to their complexity, all actions will be continued and more detailed information on the progress made will be provided in the annual reports, which will continue to be produced until 2013.

## Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

2007/0156(COD) - 09/07/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 664 votes to 10 with 15 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS). The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Christoph **KONRAD** (EPP-ED, DE), on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs. The amendments were the result of a compromise between Parliament and Council.

The main amendments - adopted under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure - were as follows:

**Duration:** the MEETS Programme shall start on 1 January 2009 and shall end on 31 December 2013.

**Objectives:** the Programme will aim to:

- review priorities and to develop target sets of indicators for new areas; (objective 1);
- achieve a streamlined framework of business related statistics; (objective 2);
- support the implementation of a more efficient way of producing enterprise and trade statistics; (objective 3);
- modernise the data collection system on trade in goods between Member States (Intrastat); (objective 4);

**Actions:** actions under objective 1 will include identifying areas of lesser importance and developing new areas. With regard to identifying areas of lesser importance, the amended Annex states that in a changing world, statistical needs will be reviewed periodically as not only new statistical needs emerge, but other needs become less important and even obsolete. Regular reviews of priorities will therefore be conducted in close cooperation with Member States in order to identify areas and characteristics which have lost priority and consequently can be deleted from the legal requirements. Those reviews, aiming to simplify statistical requirements and reduce the response burden, may require external studies to be launched by the Commission.

With regard to new areas, the Annex notes that in a changing economic environment, it is important to define priority areas for statistics, like trade in services, globalisation and entrepreneurship, and to agree at Community level on a target set of indicators for each of the priority areas. Those indicators need to be harmonised with international statistics to the extent possible. The statistics have to be compiled in an efficient way and need to

be comparable. European statistics must be modernised in strict accordance with the principle of coherence and comparability of data for the periods concerned. Work must therefore be carried out within the European Statistical System to achieve harmonised definitions of newly identified characteristics and indicators.

**Evaluation:** by 31 December 2010, and thereafter on an annual basis until 2013, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the implementation of the MEETS Programme.

## Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

2007/0156(COD) - 27/11/2012 - Follow-up document

In accordance with the requirements of Decision No 1297/2008/EC on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS), the Commission presents its **third annual report** on the implementation of the MEETS Programme.

It recalls that the emphasis in the first report was on the actions started and/or continued in the annual work programmes for 2009 and 2010. The second report covered the initial main results achieved, as well as the major initiatives covered by the annual work programme for 2011, which was adopted in 2010. For 2011, the level of implementation of MEETS operational credits was 97%.

This third report provides an overview of the progress made by the Member States and the Commission (Eurostat) in implementing the activities under the MEETS Programme during 2012. All MEETS activities are in line with the strategy set out in the [Communication of August 2009](#) from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade.

**Activities in 2011:** in 2011, consideration was given to streamlining the MEETS Programme as part of the wider discussion on negative priorities within the European Statistical System (ESS). This resulted in a number of MEETS actions being integrated.

The collaborative networks in the ESS, known as 'ESSnets', remain a major means of implementing the objectives of the MEETS Programme. ESSnets are a way to develop new projects where a few Member States interested in a specific field actively collaborate on common tasks and then disseminate the results to the non-participating Member States. This helps to harness synergies, save costs and share best practices, while developing specific actions that are beneficial for the ESS as a whole.

- All the ESSnets operating within the MEETS Programme were launched during the first three years of the Programme. The annual work programme for 2012 continued the actions started by these ESSnets for the modernisation of enterprise and trade statistics.
- In addition, further action was initiated in 2012 to help Member States achieve the goals of reducing the burden on businesses and, at the same time, enable the ESS to respond to new needs for statistical information.

**Budget:** in total, the EU budget for the 2012 work programme is set at nearly **EUR 9 million**, and it covers **17 annual actions**, plus the necessary technical and administrative support to implement the programme. Grants, either through ESSnets or in the form of individual grants (at 82%), remain the most common instrument for financing the actions.

The MEETS Decision details the actions that are to be financed during the period covered by the programme. This substantiates the relatively large number of initiatives undertaken in the first two years of the programme. However, one of the outcomes of the economic and financial crisis of 2008 was a **"saturation" of financing possibilities** in the NSIs, due to the lack of human resources.

Therefore, there was a need to streamline the programme by integrating certain initiatives and/or focusing them on the six main areas organised through ESSnets, which are: (i) consistency of concepts and methods; (ii) Euro Groups Register (EGR); (iii) profiling large and complex multinational enterprise groups; (iv) micro-data linking and data warehousing in statistical production; methodology for business statistics; and (v) the use of administrative and accounting data.

### Assessment:

- **The ESSnets, especially those that started in 2009 and early 2010, have done sterling work**, in particular on the EGR methodology, profiling and the use of administrative data. As far as the other main pillars of the MEETS programme (consistency of legal acts, data warehouse and data linking initiatives) are concerned, these activities are also now well on track. Whereas in 2011 they were still dealing with preparatory work, putting the basic infrastructure in place (launching ESSnets, multi-beneficiary grant agreements, etc.) and creating networks of national experts, in 2012, **they have already started to produce practical results**.
- In addition, **financing through individual grants** has continued, mainly in order to accompany the progress in methodology and to test certain methodological recommendations, but also to develop the tools to make extraction, transmission and processing of data more efficient. A number of results are already available, but most actions are still ongoing.

It is important to regard all actions as **inter-connected initiatives**, so as to ensure that the national procedures for the collection of enterprise and trade statistics become more efficient. This demanded a long-term commitment and constant monitoring.

The 2012 report is the last annual report of the MEETS programme. 2013 will be the last operational year of this programme. All actions will be finalised, and all of the concrete final results have to be available by 31 December 2013. The final report on the implementation of the MEETS programme to be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council by 31 July 2014 must therefore also include all of the actions and results of 2013. Furthermore, in the light of the expenditure incurred by the Community, the final report is required to assess the benefits of the actions that accrue to the Community, Member States and providers and users of statistical information, in order to identify areas for potential improvement.

# Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

2007/0156(COD) - 03/07/2014 - Follow-up document

The Commission presented its fourth and last report on the implementation of a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS).

Three reports have been published, covering the annual work programmes 2009 and 2010, 2011 and 2012. This report gives a final assessment of the implementation of the MEETS programme.

**Level of participation and financing:** the report notes that by the end of 2013, most projects had been finalised and most deliverables submitted. Over the period 2009-2013, the MEETS programme provided funding worth **EUR 42.5 million** to support development within several business and trade-related areas of statistics. The level of implementation of MEETS operational credits during that period was 87%.

Collaborative networks in the European Statistical System Networks (ESSnets), were a major means of implementing the objectives of the programme. In all, 23 out of 32 ESS members took part in at least one MEETS-financed ESSnet over the five years of the programme. Funding was also provided for individual grant agreements concluded with National Statistical Institutes (NSIs), and for some external studies carried out by contractors. By the end of 2013, 28 out of 32 members of the ESS had taken part in at least one of the individual grants of the MEETS programme.

**Implementation of objectives:** the MEETS programme was structured to achieve the following four main objectives, each of which included several projects:

## ***(1) Reviewing priorities and develop target sets of indicators for new areas:***

- In 2009, an external study was commissioned to evaluate the legal acts in statistical areas that were identified as needing revision.
- In 2010, the ESS Committee adopted a new strategy-driven approach. Areas of lesser importance in business and trade statistics were identified during the annual strategic review of Eurostat's priorities. Consequently, the action 'Identifying areas of lesser importance' was removed from the scope of the MEETS programme. The 2010 review resulted in the MEETS programme being streamlined, and several actions were merged.
- Following the streamlining of MEETS, further methodological work and the organisation of a pilot data collection were taken over by the 'ESSnet on profiling of large and complex multinational enterprise groups' as well as the 'ESSnet on measuring global value chains'.
- The joint Entrepreneurship Indicator Programme (EIP) was developed in cooperation with the OECD to underpin policies related to entrepreneurship with indicators describing the areas of 'access to finance', 'R&D', 'innovation and technology', 'capabilities/skills' and 'culture for entrepreneurship'.
- The inclusion of mandatory indicators for high-growth innovative enterprises in the legal framework of employer business demography is currently under development.

## ***(2) Achieving a streamlined framework of business-related statistics:***

- The ESSnet proposed revised draft definitions of the statistical units 'enterprise', 'enterprises group', 'kind-of-activity unit' and 'local kind-of-activity unit' together with operational rules and a data model to enforce a uniform implementation.
- Other results of this ESSnet are recommendations for a method to classify statistical units applied in a comparable manner over all statistical domains, and comparable breakdowns as well as a methodology for a frame population in business statistics.
- The aim of the EuroGroups Register (EGR) was to provide consistent, coordinated survey frames for producing quality statistics measuring globalisation, mainly for Foreign Affiliates Statistics and Foreign Direct Investments. In 2009, the ESSnet on EGR methodology set up EGR version 1.0 as well as the organisational network for data exchange between Eurostat and ESS members.
- The ESSnet on profiling of large and complex multinational enterprise groups developed a methodology and guidelines.
- Lastly, some methodologies for EU sampling schemes were developed for selected business statistics domains such as space-related activities including e.g. space transport, structural business statistics for enterprises with 250-499 employees, outward Foreign Affiliates Statistics, ICT investment and expenditure and culture statistics.

## ***(3) Supporting the implementation of a more efficient method of producing enterprise and trade statistics:***

- The work on 'data warehousing and data linking in the production of business statistics' was carried out by an ESSnet set up in 2010.
- In 2013, ESS members developed and compiled an extended set of indicators based on trade and business micro data.
- Based on the results of these actions, the 'ESSnet on measuring global value chains' was set up in 2011. The ESSnet further developed and implemented a redesigned survey on international sourcing followed by micro-data linking exercises with existing statistical data (structural business statistics, foreign trade, foreign affiliates statistics).
- The project 'linking data from ICT usage, innovation, structural business statistics and business registers' was conducted from 2011 to 2013.
- The 'ESSnet on the use of administrative and accounts data' was launched in 2009 and investigated practical issues regarding use of these data for business statistics purposes.

***(4) Modernising Intrastat:*** work focused on the harmonisation of methods to improve quality under a simplified Intrastat, the improvement and simplification of intra-EU trade statistics and the better use of administrative data — VAT (Value Added Tax) and VIES (Value Added Tax Information Exchange).

**Conclusions:** the benefits of the MEETS programme for the Union, Member States, providers and users of related statistics are **difficult to quantify**, as returns on investments will only materialise gradually over time. Without the MEETS programme, some Member States would have invested budget in the modernisation of business and trade statistics in an **uncoordinated way**. This would have produced results that would not have been comparable to those in other EU Member States, making aggregation to European aggregates problematic.

In the framework of the programmes, some new, more cost-effective data collection systems (by linking existing data and alternative ways of collecting data other than traditional surveys) were tested in a number of Member States with the aim of creating models applicable for all.

Lastly, as direct follow-up to the MEETS programme, Eurostat has launched a fundamental revision and integration of business-related statistics via a **common legal framework** for collecting, compiling, transmitting and disseminating statistics on the economic activities of the business sector, FRIBS.

As part of FRIBS, Eurostat's aim is to **reform Intrastat** by means of the so-called international trade package or Single Market Statistics (SIMSTAT). Special attention will be given to smaller EU Member States. This tackles the simplification of Intrastat and the quality of related statistical data.

## Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

2007/0156(COD) - 07/12/2011 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents a report on the implementation of Decision No 1297/2008/EC on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS), in accordance with its obligations under that Decision.

This report is the second such report to provide an overview of the progress made by the Member States and the Commission (Eurostat) in implementing the activities under the MEETS Programme since the previous reporting period. The emphasis in the first report was on the actions started and/or continued in the annual work programmes for 2009 and 2010. For these first two years, the level of implementation of MEETS operational credits was almost 80%. The principal explanation for this figure is the reduced ability of Member States to take part in EU projects after the economic and financial crisis of 2008.

This second report covers the initial main results achieved so far, as well as the major initiatives covered by the annual work programme for 2011, which was adopted in 2010.

**Activities:** the main pillars of the MEETS programme continue to be organised around the collaborative networks in the European Statistical System (ESS), known as 'ESSnets'. All of the eight planned ESSnets are now up and running, the last one having been launched in early 2011. As a result of the streamlining exercise, the 2011 work programme provides for a longer period of support to a number of these ESSnets in the form of multi-annual grants, in place of annual grants.

Funding has also been provided for the individual grant agreements concluded with National Statistical Institutes (NSIs), and a number of external studies were also contracted. Other projects are ongoing which have no financial implications or which are integrated into other activities.

In total, the EU budget for the 2011 work programme is set at a little over **EUR 11 million**, and it covers 19 annual actions plus the technical and administrative support needed to implement the programme. Grants, either through ESSnets or in the form of individual grants, remain the most common instrument for financing the actions (at around 90%).

The report discusses the initiatives and activities undertaken under the four main objectives. It notes that the MEETS Decision details the actions which are to be financed during the period covered by the programme. This justifies the relatively large number of initiatives undertaken in the first two years of the programme. However, one of the results of the economic and financial crisis of 2008 was a "saturation" of financing possibilities in the NSIs owing to the lack of human resources. Therefore, there was a need to streamline the programme by integrating certain initiatives and/or to focus them towards the six main areas organised through ESSnets: consistency of concepts and methods, EGR, profiling large and complex multinational enterprise groups, micro-data linking and data warehousing in statistical production, methodology for business statistics, and the use of administrative and accounting data.

The ESSnets that started in 2009 or early 2010 did a great deal of work, in particular on the EGR methodology, profiling and the use of administrative data. For the other main pillars of the MEETS programme (consistency of legal acts, data warehouse and data linking initiatives), the activities concerned preparatory work, putting the basic infrastructure in place (launching ESSnets, multi-beneficiary grant agreements, etc.) and creating networks of national experts.

In addition, financing via individual grants continued, mainly in order to accompany the progress in methodology and to test certain methodological recommendations, but also to develop tools for more efficient extraction, transmission and processing of data. A number of results are already available, but most actions are still ongoing.

It is important to regard all actions as inter-connected initiatives, so as to make the national procedures for the collection of enterprise and trade statistics more efficient. This requires a long-term commitment and constant monitoring. Further progress reports will therefore be provided in 2012 and 2013. The final evaluation will take place at the beginning of 2014.