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Identification number: 58750673040-07
Organization code: Dipar534738181

As a statistician I strongly support evidence-based policy making and preparing the ground for it continue to be an important goal also in EU2020 strategy.

Referring to the COMMISSION WORKING DOCUMENT CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE "EU 2020" STRATEGY, my contribution can be included in the discussion on the first two key drivers
Creating value by basing growth on knowledge and
Empowering people in inclusive societies.

The first point that I raise concerns the dissemination of statistical knowledge and the need to fill the gap between official data production Agencies and data end-users. It is well known that Statistical knowledge is a key asset, which determines success to complement policy documents and decisions with statistical information (for example, describing past and current tendencies in the economy, the society, etc.) and to set quantitative targets for policy itself. This knowledge is considered the effective exploitation to filling the gap between the Agencies in charge to produce official data and the data end-users as government, corporate professionals, Academia researchers, schools, students, private companies, journalists and citizens.

The high quality information needed in the process of decision and policy making can be achieved only by research and analysis of data sources, statistical inference, modeling and specialized software. Then, a methodologically and technically updated system of public statistics plays a key role in this process. Even if there is a lot of knowledge and expertise on these issues, they are heavily spread over NSIs and Universities, and make it crucial to build a platform or infrastructure which serves as a tool to share existing knowledge. A main hindrance for connecting the information on research in official statistics is language. Though many documents are available in English a vast body of knowledge is inaccessible because it is written in other languages. This is necessarily the case for application oriented research in the diverse countries of Europe. In addition the diverse repositories of the knowledge on research in official statistics are not connected organizationally and technically. There is no common entry point for this rich body of knowledge. It is a matter of fact, that knowledge is of limited value if it is not shared, especially in today's dynamic borderless society.

Then, there are other important themes where the role of Statistical knowledge and of statistical modelling, as Small Area Estimation techniques, is crucial. Coming to

the theme of poverty and living conditions, it is a matter of fact that having a job is probably the best safeguard against poverty and exclusion. But we agree that alone it does not secure a reduction in poverty levels or social inclusion. The underlying hypothesis is that different patterns of local welfare systems may influence levels of social cohesion and sustainability. Measuring this connection in different countries and regions would allow to individuate those welfare systems which most favour social cohesion and sustainability, thus guiding local governments towards the implementation of ad hoc programmes. But the process of measuring this connection is hungry of data on local situations, in other words relevant data to support evidence-based policy making must be referred to local government levels. Indeed, there are ad hoc indicators currently supplied by official statistics (EUROSTAT, OECD, etc), such as Eurostat Social Cohesion Indicators and OECD Social Cohesion and Inequality Indicators. Unfortunately, both the European System of Integrated Social Protection (ESSPROS) and the indicators are not always available at local government levels (NUTS 2, LAU 1 and LAU 2) and when they are available they are not always crossclassified by gender. For example, the at-risk-at-poverty-rate is classified by gender in each member state but is not jointly classified by gender and NUTS2 level of governance.

We note that too often many of the crucial indicators on poverty, deprivation and living conditions are not estimated at local geographical levels. This is due to the fact that lower geographies are not part of the design of current surveys on Income and Living Conditions in EU countries (EU-SILC) (unplanned domains). There are obvious budget constraints which limit the possibilities to collect ad hoc data and do not allow large sample sizes. So, it is very important to invest in statistical knowledge and to promote research in small area methodology. I envision that the most promising contributions will come from the usage of administrative data files in small area estimation and in statistical modelling of social indicators.

I must say that to adequately measure progress in areas such as living conditions and social cohesion (Lisbon European Council, March 2000), statistical methods for the treatment and analysis of survey data are needed.

Thanking the Directorate L and the Director Jean Michel Baer to giving the chance to participate in this consultation process,

With my best regards,

Monica Pratesi