

Scheveningen Memorandum  
Big Data and Official Statistics

The DGINS

CONSIDERING

1. Recent innovations in the information and communication technologies have been leading to an increasing degree of digitization of economies and societies at all levels that offer new opportunities for the compilation of statistics.
2. The use of Big Data for statistical purposes challenges the European Statistical System to effectively address a variety of issues.
3. The demand for timely and cost efficient production of high quality statistical data increases, as well the need for new solutions to declining response levels.
4. Official statistics should incorporate as much as possible all potential data sources, including Big Data, into their conceptual design.
5. The distinguishing aspect of many Big Data sources is that they are not confined to national borders and, as such, represent unique opportunities for collaboration at European level as well as on global level.
6. Many European initiatives have a link to Big Data, including the European Commission's ambition for developing a strategy for the European data value chain, the on-going EU Data Protection reform and the Horizon2020 program.
7. The implementation of new methods of production of European statistics represents an objective of the European Statistical Programme 2013-2017<sup>1</sup> and aims at efficiency gains and quality improvements, including increased timeliness.

---

<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 99/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2013 on the European statistical programme 2013-17, OJ L 39, 9.2.2013, p. 12–29

## The DGINS

1. Acknowledge that Big Data represent new opportunities and challenges for Official Statistics, and therefore encourage the European Statistical System and its partners to effectively examine the potential of Big Data sources in that regard.
2. Recognise that Big Data is a phenomenon which is impacting on many policy areas. It is therefore essential to develop an 'Official Statistics Big Data strategy' and to examine the place and the interdependencies of this strategy within the wider context of an overall government strategy at national as well as at EU level.
3. Recognise that the implications of Big Data for legislation especially with regard to data protection and personal rights (e.g. access to Big Data sources held by third parties) should be properly addressed as a matter of priority in a coordinated manner.
4. Note that several NSIs are currently initiating or considering different uses of Big Data in a national context. There is a momentum to share experiences obtained from concrete Big Data projects and to collaborate within the ESS and beyond, on a global level.
5. Recognise that developing the necessary capabilities and skills to effectively explore Big Data is essential for their integration into the European Statistical System. This requires systematic efforts like appropriate training courses and establishing dedicated communities including academics for sharing experiences and best practice.
6. Acknowledge that the multidisciplinary character of Big Data requires synergies and partnerships to be effectively built with experts and stakeholders from various domains including government, academics and owners of private data sources.
7. Acknowledge that the use of Big Data in the context of official statistics requires new developments in methodology, quality assessment and IT related issues. The European Statistical System should make a special effort to supports these developments.
8. Agree on the importance of following up the implementation of this memorandum by adopting an ESS action plan and roadmap by mid-2014 that should be further integrated into the Statistical Annual Work Programmes of Eurostat.