

# EUROSTAT – CODE OF PRACTICE COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES 2013



## Institutional environment

### Principle 1: Professional Independence

*Professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European Statistics.*

**Indicator 1.1:** The independence of the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating statistics is specified in law and assured for other statistical authorities.

In accordance with Regulation 223/2009 on European statistics ([European Statistical Law](#)), Eurostat ensures that European statistics are produced according to agreed rules and statistical principles. In particular, Eurostat is responsible for decisions on statistical methods, standards and procedures to be used for European statistics. These decisions may be incorporated into European legal acts which are adopted through a process involving consultation with national authorities, with other European Commission services, and with other EU institutions. A limited revision of the European Statistical Law is expected to be adopted by 2014 with a view to ensure an unconditional application of the principle of professional independence of Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes and other statistical authorities.

The [Commission Decision on Eurostat \(2012/504/EU\)](#) reinforces the professional independence with respect to Eurostat by referring in particular to the status and functional responsibilities of the Director General, notably in his capacity as Chief Statistician.

The Decision provides that the Director-General of Eurostat acts in an independent manner when carrying out statistical tasks, should neither seek nor take instructions from the Union institutions or bodies, from any government of a Member State, or from any other institution, body, office or entity.

According to the Article 4 of the Commission Decision of 17 September 2012 on Eurostat (2012/504/EU): "Eurostat shall develop, produce and disseminate European statistics in accordance with the statistical principles of professional independence, impartiality, objectivity, reliability, statistical confidentiality and cost-effectiveness as defined in Article 2 (1) of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 and as further elaborated in the European statistics Code of Practise."

According to the Article 6 of the Commission Decision of 17 September 2012 on Eurostat (2012/504/EU):

- "1. Eurostat shall be in charge of the development, production and dissemination of European statistics."  
"2. Eurostat shall ensure that European statistics are made accessible to all users in accordance with statistical principles, in particular the principles of professional independence, impartiality and statistical confidentiality."

Moreover, the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board ([ESGAB](#)) provides an independent overview of Code of Practice compliance in the European Statistical System. ESGAB is composed of seven members and Eurostat as an observer. ESGAB's work aims at enhancing professional independence, integrity and accountability of the European Statistical System as well as at enhancing quality of European statistics.

Eurostat decides on the content and timing of release of statistical information to the public.

<p><b>Indicator 1.2:</b> The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. They are of the highest professional calibre.</p>	<p>As a Director-General within the European Commission, the head of Eurostat ranks among the highest level of Commission staff.</p> <p>Under the Commission's personnel recruitment policy the procedure to appoint a Director-General can be carried out by selection following external and/or internal publication of the job or by transfer of a senior official from another job within the Commission. Selection is according to the Commission's guidelines on senior manager appointment procedures. The Commission policy is to appoint senior managers with the highest qualifications and merit and with a good track record in management at the appropriate level. Key requirements for a Director-General of Eurostat are high professional standing and credibility as Chief Statistician of the European Union, within the European and international statistical community.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.3:</b> The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have responsibility for ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner.</p>	<p>According to the Article 7 of the <a href="#">Commission Decision of 17 September 2012 on Eurostat (2012/504/EU)</a>: "With regard to European statistics, the Director-General of Eurostat shall have sole responsibility for deciding on processes, statistical methods, standards and procedures, or on the content and timing of statistical releases, in accordance with the European statistical programme and the annual work programme. When carrying out these statistical tasks, the Director-General of Eurostat shall act in an independent manner; he or she shall neither seek nor take instructions from the Union institutions or bodies, from any government of a Member State, or from any other institution, body, office or entity."</p>

<p><b>Indicator 1.4:</b> The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.</p>	<p>In the European Statistical System, standards, methods and procedures are defined and agreed through consultation with the National Statistical Institutes of Member States. Eurostat chairs the <a href="#">European Statistical System Committee</a>, which is composed of the Heads of Member States' National Statistical Institutes who are officially nominated as national coordinators of the statistical systems in Member States. This Committee provides professional guidance relating to the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. Quality is the main driver for decision making. Eurostat decides on the content and timing of release of statistical information to the public.</p> <p>According to the Article 8 of the <a href="#">Commission Decision of 17 September 2012 on Eurostat (2012/504/EU)</a>: "The Chief Statistician shall be in charge of the development, production and dissemination of European statistics within the Commission."</p> <p>According to the Article 7 of the <a href="#">Commission Decision of 17 September 2012 on Eurostat (2012/504/EU)</a>: "With regard to European statistics, the Director-General of Eurostat shall have sole responsibility for deciding on processes, statistical methods, standards and procedures, or on the content and timing of statistical releases, in accordance with the European statistical programme and the annual work programme. When carrying out these statistical tasks, the Director-General of Eurostat shall act in an independent manner; he or she shall neither seek nor take instructions from the Union institutions or bodies, from any government of a Member State, or from any other institution, body, office or entity."</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.5:</b> The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.</p>	<p>Eurostat prepares a European <a href="#">multi-annual statistical programme</a> for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics for a period of up to 5 years. This programme is adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.</p> <p>Under the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a>, Eurostat must present an intermediate progress report and a final evaluation report on the European statistical programme to the European Statistical System Committee and then to the European Parliament and to the Council.</p> <p>Also each year, before the end of May, Eurostat presents to the Member States a first draft of its annual work programme for the following year. Annual work programmes were also prepared for the Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS) for the budget years 2009-2013. As the MEETS programme ends in December 2013, the annual work programme for 2013 was the last one for MEETS. A final report on MEETS implementation will be transmitted to the European Parliament and Council by 31/07/2014.</p>

	The current annual and multi-annual work programmes are both published on <a href="#">Eurostat's website</a> .
<b>Indicator 1.6:</b> Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.	Statistical releases are published by Eurostat according to a pre-specified schedule and never include political statements. Statistics published by Eurostat, including online data as well as online or paper publications, are clearly distinguished by the Eurostat logo.
<b>Indicator 1.7:</b> The National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat and, where appropriate, other statistical authorities, comment publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of statistics as far as considered suitable.	Under Eurostat's <a href="#">Protocol on Impartial Access</a> to Eurostat Data for Users, Eurostat reserves the right to respond in an impartial manner to any misunderstandings or misleading interpretations of its outputs.
<b>Indicator 1.8:</b> The appointment of the heads of the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat and, where appropriate, of other statistical authorities, is based on professional competence only. The reasons on the basis of which the incumbency can be terminated are specified in the legal framework. These cannot include reasons compromising professional or scientific independence.	The current Director General was recruited through an external selection procedure. Eurostat high-level managers are often recruited through an external selection procedure. Removal of the Director-General from office is possible only by a decision of the Commission as the Appointing Authority and in accordance with the Staff Regulations.
<b>Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection</b>	

<i>Statistical authorities have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.</i>	
<b>Indicator 2.1:</b> The mandate of the statistical authorities to collect information for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics is specified in law.	<p>Under the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a> and <a href="#">Commission Decision on Eurostat (2012/504/EU)</a>, Eurostat is designated to develop, produce and disseminate European statistics, working as a partner with National Statistical Institutes and other national authorities within the European Statistical System. In practice, the contributions for European statistics are normally provided by Member States under the framework of the European multi-annual statistical programme, which is discussed first with the <a href="#">European Statistical System Committee</a> (ESSC) and then decided by the European Parliament and the Council. Eurostat is responsible for coordinating statistical activities at a European level, particularly in relation to data quality and minimising reporting burden. Under certain conditions, specified in the European Statistical Law, statistical collections can be carried out by Eurostat using sources that are already available or directly via a European survey.</p> <p>In accordance with Commission Decision on Eurostat, the Director-General is in charge of the development, production and dissemination of European statistics within the Commission and responsible for coordination of the development and production of other statistics.</p>
<b>Indicator 2.2:</b> The statistical authorities are allowed by law to use administrative data for statistical purposes.	<p>In accordance with the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a> and <a href="#">Article 9 of Commission Decision on Eurostat</a> and to reduce the burden on respondents, Eurostat has the right to access to administrative data sources within the European Commission and to integrate these administrative data with statistics to the extent that these data are relevant for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.</p> <p>Furthermore, Eurostat should be consulted on the initial design, development and discontinuation of administrative registers maintained by other Commission services.</p>
<b>Indicator 2.3:</b> On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authorities may compel response to statistical surveys.	<p>The type of statistical data which Member States must provide to the Commission is defined in EU legislation. If a Member State does not meet its legal obligations, Eurostat initiates <a href="#">infringement procedures</a> as a first step towards ensuring a compliance with EU law.</p> <p>Statistical legislation is decided by the European Parliament and by the Council on a proposal from the Commission. In addition, some statistical activities across the European Statistical System are defined by European Statistical System (ESS) agreements (as referred to in Article 14(1)(c) of the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a> and formerly known as 'gentlemen's agreements'). ESS agreements are mostly used as a way to pilot new statistical activities or to find ad hoc solutions. Under the European Statistical Law, such agreements must be in writing.</p>
<b>Principle 3 - Adequacy of Resources</b>	

*The resources available to statistical authorities are sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.*

<p><b>Indicator 3.1:</b> Staff, financial, and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current statistical needs.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">multi-annual work programme</a> establishes the financial envelope for European statistics for the period concerned. A key component of the preparation of the annual and multi-annual statistical programmes is an assessment of the resources required. In particular, the annual work programme contains information on the source of financial resources for new work. The annual programme is adopted by the Commission together with the corresponding financing decision. The multi-annual programme is approved by the European Parliament and the Council.</p> <p>A number of actions are under way that contribute to enhancing the quality of human resources, while facing the challenge of a decreasing number of staff during the period 2013-2017 in the context of the Commission-wide 5% staff cuts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews of the allocation of resources towards core statistical tasks and reduction of horizontal activities</li> <li>• Improved training provision for statistics</li> <li>• More regular programs of external recruitment of statistically qualified staff</li> <li>• Annual system of re-allocating a proportion of remaining jobs to areas with higher statistical priorities</li> <li>• Temporary secondment of staff by Eurostat and the National Statistical Institutes</li> <li>• Enhanced participation of Eurostat staff in European Statistical Training Programme</li> <li>• Further improvements in the management of statistical projects and processes that lead to efficiency gains.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator 3.2:</b> The scope, detail and cost of statistics are commensurate with needs.</p>	<p>The decisions regarding the scope and detail of European statistics are defined in the legislation passed for different statistical areas. The proposed legislation is first carefully prepared and discussed with the partners in the European Statistical System before being submitted to the <a href="#">European Statistical System Committee</a> (ESSC) for its opinion. The ESSC also gives its opinion on the Commission's annual statistical work programmes.</p> <p>An important input to the discussions on user needs comes from the <a href="#">European Statistical Advisory Committee</a>, comprising 24 members who represent users, respondents and other stakeholders of European Statistics. This committee plays an important role in ensuring that user requirements as well as the response burden on information providers and producers are taken into account in developing the statistical work programmes.</p> <p>Eurostat has established an annual priority setting mechanism that involves dialogues with the producers and users of statistics. This is based on a strategy driven approach that results in a list of negative priorities.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 3.3:</b> Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new statistics against their cost.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">European Statistical System Committee</a> assesses demands for new statistics, taking into account their priority with regard to policy needs, financial constraints and the expected burden on respondents.</p> <p>In accordance with <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a>, the impact and cost of European statistics are taken into account in an assessment of the statistical activities proposed in the multi-annual programme (ex-ante evaluation).</p> <p>In the preparation process leading to the adoption of legislative proposals in the field of statistics, roadmaps are prepared and submitted to the Commission central services in charge of impact assessment. For the <a href="#">multi-annual European Statistical Programme 2013-2017</a> a formal impact assessment was required for and submitted to the Impact Assessment Board of the Commission.</p> <p>The <a href="#">European Statistical Advisory Committee</a> (ESAC) is consulted at an early stage in the preparation of the European statistical programme about the proposed activities and in particular their relevance and their related costs. Eurostat must report annually how it has taken the ESAC opinion into account.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.4:</b> Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.</p>	<p>In order to enhance the communication with users, stakeholder dialogues at top management level have been introduced (ECB, EP and Commission DGs, including ECFIN, REGIO, AGRI and RTD).</p> <p>The multi-annual statistical programme defines the framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics for a period of up to 5 years. It is prepared in discussion with the users and identifies the priorities regarding the statistical needs at an EU level.</p> <p>The <a href="#">European Statistical Advisory Committee</a> (ESAC) is consulted at an early stage in the preparation of the European statistical programme about the proposed activities, including the balance regarding priorities and resources between the different statistical activities planned. Eurostat must report annually how it has taken the ESAC opinion into account. In</p>



addition, meetings with the policy Directorates General of the European Commission and with the European Central Bank provide an opportunity to assess the continuing need for specific European statistics. Furthermore, the need for specific European statistics is also assessed as part of Eurostat's internal evaluation of all its statistical processes.

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A process of priority setting has been established with the objective of ensuring that statistics are fit for purpose and in line with users' needs. It is based on systematic consultation of users at both national and Union levels and is discussed regularly in the [European Statistical System Committee](#).

#### **Principle 4: Commitment to quality**

*Statistical authorities are committed to quality. They systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality*

**Indicator 4.1:** Quality policy is defined and made available to the public. An organizational structure and tools are in place to deal with quality management.

Eurostat's mission is to be the leading provider of high-quality statistics on Europe and quality considerations play a central role with regard to Eurostat corporate management as well as day-to-day statistical operations. A Eurostat team deals with quality management issues relating to both Eurostat and the European Statistical System (ESS) and holds regular meetings with quality managers from National Statistical Institutes to discuss the development of quality management within the ESS. The team also implements quality assessments for Eurostat's statistical processes and outputs, based upon Total Quality Management principles. A dedicated section of the [Eurostat web page on quality](#) details all initiatives developed by Eurostat in this domain.

<p><b>Indicator 4.2:</b> Procedures are in place to plan and monitor the quality of the statistical production process.</p>	<p>Under <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a>, Member States must provide reports on the quality of the data transmitted. Using the quality reports received from Member States, Eurostat is required to publish the summary reports on the quality of European statistics, including details on the extent to which concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied within the European Statistical System.</p> <p>The quality of European statistics is described in the <a href="#">metadata files</a> (ESMS as user oriented quality report and ESQRS as producer oriented quality report), which accompany the data published by Eurostat. Statistical processes are in general documented using quality criteria and concepts related to the statistical production. More detailed documentation of the statistical production processes at Eurostat is available in the Euro Process Metadata Structure.</p> <p>In the European Statistical Law, there is a requirement for sectoral legislation to specify a common structure and frequency for the quality reports.</p> <p>Eurostat continues to work on the development of the concept of differentiated quality to better reflect fit for purpose statistics (labelling).</p>
<p><b>Indicator 4.3:</b> Product quality is regularly monitored, assessed with regard to possible trade-offs, and reported according to the quality criteria for European Statistics.</p>	<p>The first cycle of quality assessments took place between 2008-2012 when all Eurostat statistical processes and their outputs were analysed to identify areas for improvement and to highlight good practices. There are currently more than 130 statistical processes in Eurostat and around 35 of these were assessed each year. Two key outcomes of the assessment were the identification of improvements to the process and also of good practices to be shared with other production teams. A new quality assessment methodology is being tested in 2013. It is based on compliance with the Code of Practice, standardisation and integration.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 4.4:</b> There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using also external experts where appropriate.</p>	<p>The key statistical outputs are examined in detail as part of the implementation of Eurostat's quality assessments. External experts are systematically included in the evaluation of the multi-annual statistical programmes. External experts are also involved in assessments of statistical processes that demand considerable Eurostat resources. In the 2008-2012 cycle of quality assessments in Eurostat, over one third of the statistical processes involved an external expert. In the new quality assessment methodology, it is foreseen to consult external experts (IT, methodological....) when necessary.</p> <p>Since 2011, <a href="#">users' satisfaction surveys</a> have been conducted on an annual basis and the results are made public.</p> <p>The <a href="#">European Statistical Governance Advisory Board</a> provides a further external view of Eurostat's activities and</p>

examines quality issues.

### Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality

*The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes are absolutely guaranteed.*

<p><b>Indicator 5.1:</b> Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.</p>	<p>The rules for ensuring statistical confidentiality are clearly defined in the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a>.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 5.2:</b> Staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.</p>	<p>The staff regulations for all statutory staff include a commitment to confidentiality. In addition, special authorisation procedures apply for contractual workers who are required to work with confidential data.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 5.3:</b> Penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality.</p>	<p>Internal disciplinary procedures apply to cases of wilful breach of statistical confidentiality, which may lead to suspension or dismissal from office.</p> <p>Luxembourgish law also includes provision for financial penalties and imprisonment arising from a breach of confidentiality.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 5.4:</b> Guidelines and instructions are provided to staff on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. The confidentiality policy is made known to the public.</p>	<p>Eurostat has produced a comprehensive internal manual on the protection of confidential data. The European Statistical System Working Group on Statistical Confidentiality is ensuring coordination policy at EU level and its implementation. A glossary and a <a href="#">handbook</a> on statistical disclosure control explaining methods and providing guidance for their implementation are publicly available.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 5.5:</b> Physical, technological and organisational provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases.</p>	<p>In addition to technical measures to restrict access to secure data, specified data 'custodians' are responsible for access to particular secure data sets and no access is given for longer than one year without renewal. There is also a system in place to prevent access to secure databases when staff are reassigned to different functions.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 5.6:</b> Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.</p>	<p>External users are individually approved and sign agreements governing their access to microdata. For the most sensitive data, access is allowed only via a computer terminal in a secure environment. The microdata cannot be removed from this environment.</p>
<p><b>Principle 6: Impartiality and Objectivity</b>  <i>Statistical authorities develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.</i></p>	
<p><b>Indicator 6.1:</b> Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.</p>	<p>The principle of objectivity is defined in the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a> and guaranteed in <a href="#">Commission Decision on Eurostat</a> which refers to the obligation to develop, produce and disseminate statistics in accordance with the statistical principles of professional independence, impartiality, objectivity, reliability, statistical confidentiality and cost-effectiveness as defined in <a href="#">Article 2(1) of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009</a> and as further elaborated in the <a href="#">European Statistics Code of Practice</a>.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 6.2:</b> Choices of sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are informed by statistical considerations.</p>	<p>National statistical authorities decide the most appropriate data source to use for a statistical collection, unless a source is determined explicitly in European statistical legislation or in ESS agreements. Details of the data sources used are published as metadata on the Eurostat website and the extent to which a data source conforms to statistical requirements is described in the quality reports that national statistical authorities are required to submit for each statistical collection. Eurostat publishes a summary of the quality practices, highlighting where there are divergences from standard statistical concepts and definitions.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 6.3:</b> Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.</p>	<p>Eurostat has a standard procedure, accessible on its intranet site, for handling the discovery of errors in published statistics. Under this procedure, staff are requested to provide details of the error, an assessment of its impact on the published results and the actions taken to correct the error and prevent its reoccurrence. Collected information on the errors occurred is then reported to the management on a regular basis.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 6.4:</b> Information on the methods and procedures used is publicly available.</p>	<p>Information on Eurostat's methods and procedures is published on the Eurostat website in the form of standardised metadata (e.g. in the ESMS files), together with dedicated web pages and accompanying documents, including the European legal acts which regulate statistical requirements and methods in some domains. All information is regularly updated.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 6.5:</b> Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.</p>	<p>Eurostat <a href="#">announces</a> the timing of the main statistical releases in advance. For Euro-indicators, the provisional publication dates are announced up to 12 months ahead; the definitive dates are announced every Friday, for the following week. Indicative release dates for publications are also <a href="#">announced</a> up to 12 months ahead.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 6.6:</b> Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies.</p>	<p>Details on the way data revisions are made are described in the metadata published for each statistical collection, available on the Eurostat website. The <a href="#">ESS guidelines on revision policy for Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs)</a> endorsed by the ESSC on 9 February 2012 represent an important step towards the harmonisation of revision policies within the ESS and in Eurostat. A common revision policy for PEEIs will improve the quality and comparability of national macro-economic data as well as enhance the overall quality of European Union and euro area aggregates.</p> <p>In the area of national accounts, guidelines for major revisions have been developed by the <a href="#">Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments</a> statistics (CMFB). Member States are reminded of these obligations in meetings and bilateral contacts</p>
<p><b>Indicator 6.7:</b> All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that</p>	<p>In 2007 Eurostat adopted a <a href="#">Protocol on Impartial Access</a> to Eurostat Data for Users, which defines the procedures to ensure that data users have impartial access to European statistics. The Protocol describes Eurostat's policy on free data dissemination and the conditions under which data are made available to a limited number of individuals or organisations before being released to the public. Pre-release access is granted for quality assurance purposes and, where necessary, for informing the relevant European Commission departments and the European Central Bank. A signed agreement is required. Details of the pre-release arrangements for a particular dataset are given in the accompanying metadata on the Eurostat website.</p>

<p>leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.</p>	<p>All news releases are transmitted under embargo to the Cabinet of the Commissioner responsible for Eurostat (the Commissioner for Taxation, Customs Union, Audit and Anti-fraud) as well as to the spokespersons of the DG ESTAT Commissioner and of the DG ECFIN Commissioner, on the working day before publication, in order for them to prepare for questions from the media. Euro-indicator news releases are transmitted under embargo between half an hour and one hour before official release to accredited news agencies in Brussels.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 6.8:</b> Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.</p>	<p>Press conferences are not held on a regular basis and media contacts are managed by the press unit in Eurostat. A separation between technical statements made by Eurostat and political conclusions made by the spokesperson of the Commissioner is specified in the working arrangements with the Commissioner's office in Brussels and is applied in practice.</p>
<p><b>Statistical processes</b></p>	
<p><b>Principle 7: Sound Methodology</b>  <i>Sound methodology must underpin quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.</i></p>	
<p><b>Indicator 7.1:</b> The overall methodological framework used for European Statistics follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices.</p>	<p>Eurostat sets and promotes the use of standards and methods for the production of European statistics that are consistent with international standards and guidelines. The relevant standards and classifications to be used for statistical data collections are specified in statistical legislation or by ESS agreements.</p> <p>A number of methodological handbooks and guidelines are available for specific domains and are published on the Eurostat website.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 7.2:</b> Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority.</p>	<p>The relevant standards and classifications to be used for statistical data collections are specified in statistical legislation or by European Statistical System (ESS) agreements. The implementation of some broadly used classifications, like NACE, was followed up through close monitoring and frequent reporting to the <a href="#">European Statistical System Committee</a>. The <a href="#">metadata</a> files which accompany the data published by Eurostat, contain the descriptions of the concepts, definitions and classifications used by the national statistical authorities to compile the data. In addition, under the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a>, Member States must provide reports on the quality of the data transmitted which should indicate the concepts, definitions and classifications used.</p> <p>Using the quality reports received from Member States, Eurostat is required to publish a summary report on the quality of European statistics, including details on the extent to which concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied to data collections.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 7.3:</b> The business register and the frame for population surveys are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to ensure high quality.</p>	<p>In general, business and population registers are held and maintained by the Member States. The quality of these registers is the responsibility of the relevant national statistical authorities. Compliance with business register legislation is followed by Eurostat.</p> <p>In 2013 the European Statistical System launched an encompassing project to develop statistical business registers into a net of consistent and interoperable Business Registers so that their backbone function for the production of European businesses statistics is strengthened, both at country and European level.</p> <p>Eurostat hosts the central system for the <a href="#">Euro Groups Register</a>, established in 2009, which will become a tool for producing coordinated statistics on multinational groups in Europe. The Euro Groups Register network consists of a central system and the national registers of the 28 Member States and the 4 <a href="#">European Free Trade Association Countries</a>.</p>

<b>Indicator 7.4:</b> Detailed concordance exists between national classifications systems and the corresponding European systems.	It is the responsibility of National Statistical Institutes to ensure that their national systems for classifying data are consistent with the requirements of the European Statistical System, in particular those classification systems which are defined by EU legislation, covering e.g. economic activities, regions, and products. In some legal acts national versions of the classifications are allowed and should be submitted for the approval of Eurostat. Eurostat supports National Statistical Institutes in the harmonisation process.
<b>Indicator 7.5:</b> Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited.	For permanent officials, Eurostat recruits through open competitions organised by the <a href="#">European Personnel Selection Office</a> . Minimum educational requirements vary according to the position. In general, a university degree is required for all Administrator level positions. Relevant work experience may be required in some cases.  Open competitions for Administrators with a statistical or similar background are organised approximately every four to five years. For non-permanent staff, ad hoc recruitment of suitably qualified graduates, including professional statisticians is also possible.
<b>Indicator 7.6:</b> Statistical authorities implement a policy of continuous vocational training for their staff.	Within the framework of the needs of Eurostat and in line with the learning and development priorities of the Commission, Eurostat's learning and development team designs and implements a training policy to contribute to the competence development of Eurostat staff. Annually, every Eurostat employee should identify his/her training needs for the next year and agree with his/her line manager the training solutions.  Eurostat staff take part in training courses organised under the <a href="#">European Statistical Training Programme</a> . This programme is part of the European Statistical System – Learning and Development Framework and is managed by Eurostat. Through this programme, staff are also able to take part in European and international training courses at postgraduate level. Eurostat is actively involved in the international statistical world concerning methodological developments, including participation at conferences organised by the OECD, IMF, UN and the biennial World Statistics Congress of the International Statistical Institute.



<p><b>Indicator 7.7:</b> Co-operation with the scientific community is organised to improve methodology, the effectiveness of the methods implemented and to promote better tools when feasible.</p>	<p>Cooperation with the scientific community is fostered through the organisation of conferences, seminars, <a href="#">ESS net projects</a> and workshops in different statistical domains including quality and methodology. For example, since 2004 a <a href="#">biennial international quality conference</a> has been funded by Eurostat to share knowledge and good practices in relation to the quality of official statistics. In addition, a biennial international conference on new techniques and technologies is organised by Eurostat since 2009. The collaborative platform CROS offers a common place for researchers in statistics and ESS statisticians to disseminate information, share documents and participate in discussion fora.</p> <p>Similar conferences on quality issues have been organised with the countries outside the EU in order to promote the use of sound methodology and quality frameworks.</p>
<p><b>Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures</b>  <i>Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, must underpin quality statistics.</i></p>	
<p><b>Indicator 8.1:</b> When European Statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for the administrative purposes must be a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes.</p>	<p>National statistical authorities decide the most appropriate data source to use for a statistical collection, unless a source is determined explicitly in European statistical legislation or in ESS agreements. Details of the administrative data sources used are published as metadata on the Eurostat website. The extent to which an administrative data source conforms to statistical requirements is described in the quality reports that national statistical authorities are required to submit for each statistical collection. Eurostat then publishes on its website a summary of the quality practices, highlighting where there are divergences from standard statistical concepts and definitions.</p> <p>The quality of statistical collections that involve administrative data is analysed as part of Eurostat's quality assessments. Specific guidelines have been produced to help Eurostat production teams assess how well administrative data conform to statistical requirements. In the area of business statistics, work is also being conducted in the framework of the programme on Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS) by the ESSnet on use of <a href="#">Administrative and Accounts Data</a>.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 8.2:</b> In the case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection.</p>	<p>In line with the subsidiarity principle, only a small number of questionnaires used in European statistical surveys have been directly designed by Eurostat. For such questionnaires, it is standard practice to carry out pilot tests prior to implementation.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 8.3:</b> Survey designs, sample selections and estimation methods are well based and regularly reviewed and revised as required.</p>	<p>The design, selection and weighting of national statistical surveys are the responsibility of national statistical authorities. However, in order to ensure a degree of consistency in the design of national statistical surveys used for European statistics, statistical legislation may contain specific sample survey design or estimation requirements e.g. relating to the degree of accuracy required or to the weighting structure used for population estimates.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 8.4:</b> Data collection, data entry, and coding are routinely monitored and revised as required.</p>	<p>The organisation of data collection and data entry procedures at a national level are the responsibility of national statistical authorities.</p> <p>For the exchange of data among Member States and Eurostat, Eurostat has developed a data reception Single Entry Point (EDAMIS being its major component). This system exchanges data securely, receives encrypted data if necessary. A set of tables monitoring traffic and compliance is available. For unencrypted data basic/simple checking rules can be applied. The work is on-going to allow extensive data quality and compliance checking at data arrival in Eurostat. To improve quality and make easier its monitoring, a standard for exchange of aggregate data (SDMX) has been established. <a href="#">Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX)</a> describes aggregate data and normalises their exchange.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 8.5:</b> Appropriate editing and imputation methods are used and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required.</p>	<p>A conceptual framework for data validation including Member States and Eurostat is being developed at a strategic level by the ESS VIP Validation. This data validation framework is one of the results of the implementation of the Vision and ESS.VIP programme. Once the specifications are available they will be implemented by subject matter and IT. This includes methodology and implementation in cooperation with Member States and IT tools.</p> <p>Eurostat is also currently testing a new way of storing, transmitting and disseminating European statistical information using the <a href="#">Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX)</a> transmission standard (the Census Hub Project). 2011 population and housing data will be transmitted through the Census Hub by 31 March 2014.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 8.6:</b> Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent</p>	<p>Details on the way data revisions are made are described in the metadata published for each statistical collection, available on the Eurostat website. European Statistical System-wide guidelines on revisions policies are currently being prepared for endorsement by the ESS.</p>

procedures.	In the area of national accounts, <a href="#">guidelines</a> for major revisions have been developed by the <a href="#">Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments statistics (CMFB)</a> . CMFB regularly monitors their implementations and the ESF will decide on further cooperation in this area between the ESS and ESCB.
<b>Indicator 8.7:</b> Statistical authorities are involved in the design of administrative data in order to make administrative data more suitable for statistical purposes.	The majority of European statistics are published on the basis of national statistical collections, although National Statistical Institutes may incorporate suitable national administrative data. However, the direct use of administrative data by Eurostat is rare. The <a href="#">Commission Decision on Eurostat COM(2012/504/EU)</a> stipulates that Eurostat shall coordinate the development and production of statistics by other Commission services and optimise the use of existing information.
<b>Indicator 8.8:</b> Agreements are made with owners of administrative data which set out their shared commitment to the use of these data for statistical purposes.	The direct use of administrative data by Eurostat is rare. However, the <a href="#">Commission Decision on Eurostat COM(2012/504/EU)</a> allows Eurostat free access to data within the Commission services and <a href="#">Memoranda of Understanding</a> are being set up between Eurostat and those services.
<b>Indicator 8.9:</b> Statistical authorities co-operate with owners of administrative data in assuring data quality.	The direct use of administrative data by Eurostat is rare. However, the <a href="#">Commission Decision on Eurostat COM(2012/504/EU)</a> stipulates that Eurostat should provide guidance, appropriate training and expertise to other Commission services necessary for the production of statistics.
<p><b>Principle 9: Non-excessive Burden on Respondents</b></p> <p><i>The reporting burden is proportionate to the needs of the users and is not excessive for respondents. The statistical authorities monitor the response burden and sets targets for its reduction over time.</i></p>	

**Indicator 9.1:** The range and detail of European Statistics demands is limited to what is absolutely necessary.

Eurostat prepares an [Annual Work Programme](#) which takes into account the prioritized statistical needs of the European Commission, as well as financial constraints and the response burden. A review of the process for preparing the Annual Work Programmes was carried out in 2009. The main change introduced was the early involvement of the Commission Directorates-General (main users), the [European Statistical System Committee](#), Directors' Groups (representing producers) and the [European Statistical Advisory Committee](#) (representing the external user community), as part of the process to establish strategic priorities. On the basis of these strategic priorities the detailed Annual Work Programme is drafted and submitted to the European Statistical System Committee and the European Statistical Advisory Committee before the end of May each year.

To avoid duplication of surveys at European and international level, Eurostat co-operates closely with other bodies at international level. Where appropriate, joint collections are undertaken e.g. for the joint questionnaire on education statistics, involving the UNESCO Institute of Statistics and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The [regulation](#) concerning the procedures for the collection of statistics by the European Central Bank and the [European Statistical Law](#) emphasise close cooperation in the production of European statistics between the European System of Central Banks and the European Statistical System, in order to minimise the reporting burden and to guarantee the coherence necessary to produce European statistics. A [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between Eurostat and the Statistics Directorate General of the European Central Bank has been signed to reinforce these principles and a European Statistical Forum created to coordinate the production of European statistics within the two systems.

Furthermore, the reporting and frequency of European statistics were reviewed in a number of priority areas in line with the [Communication](#) on reduction of the response burden, simplification and priority-setting and the [Action Programme](#) for Reducing Administrative Burdens in the EU. These areas concern intra-EU trade (Intrastat), structural business statistics, industrial production (Prodcum), certain agriculture statistics (in particular, Crops statistics, Animal statistics and the Farm Structure Surveys), short-term statistics, information society, tourism, maritime and road transport statistics.

A strategy for modernising business statistics, of which the [Programme for Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics \(MEETS\)](#) and the Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics has been developed. The objective is increased relevance and reduction of burden. The strategy strongly promotes the use of administrative and existing data sources and finding more efficient ways of compiling and collecting data. For intra-EU trade (Intrastat), the need to reduce burden on respondents has been addressed in the Eurostat proposal called SIMSTAT (Single Market Statistics). The core of the SIMSTAT proposal is the exchange of micro-data on intra-EU trade between Member States. This will be tested within an ESS.VIP project.

	<p>In view of the results already achieved in the areas that have been identified as most burdensome, the focus has now shifted towards the modernisation of the whole production system. The more comprehensive and holistic strategy laid down in the "<a href="#">Communication on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade</a>" aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the production process. Eurostat is currently developing and testing methods and corresponding infrastructure that maximise the use of existing data (model based estimations, data matching) in order to meet the ever growing demand for more data while maintaining and possibly decreasing the current level of burden on respondents. The main examples of this approach are the ESS.VIP projects SIMSTAT, ESRs and ICT.</p> <p>Also, the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme has been agreed taking into account a good balance between user needs and respondent and NSI burden. Derogations up to 2020 may be granted on request to the NSI in order to allocate the implementation burden over more years.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 9.2:</b> The reporting burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations</p>	<p>In line with the subsidiarity principle, the design of national surveys is the responsibility of national statistical authorities.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 9.3:</b> The information sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used where possible to facilitate its return.</p>	<p>Eurostat does not collect data directly from businesses as this is the responsibility of the national statistical authorities. In 2009, a European level project to study the possibility of using accounting data for statistical purposes was carried out. Before more variables can be drawn directly from the accounts of businesses, further alignment of definitions in the statistical regulations is necessary. The results will be instrumental for the Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS), i.e. a cross-cutting framework regulation for the integration of all business related statistics. A draft Commission proposal is envisaged for 2015. Eurostat also provided financing under the Programme for Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS) for facilitating data transfer between respondents and National Statistical Institutes in the area of business statistics (national taxonomies, XBRL).</p>
<p><b>Indicator 9.4:</b> Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information.</p>	<p>Under the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a>, Eurostat has access to administrative data sources within the European Commission for the production of European statistics. Eurostat advocates the use of appropriate administrative data sources in its discussions with Member States, as part of the <a href="#">Eurostat vision</a> for the production of European statistics for the next decade.</p> <p>National statistical authorities decide on the most appropriate data sources for a statistical collection and Eurostat provides methodological (and in some cases financial) support to develop the use of administrative data sources.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 9.5:</b> Data sharing within statistical authorities is generalised in order to avoid multiplication of surveys.</p>	<p>The sharing of data is also a key element of the <a href="#">Eurostat vision</a> for the production of European statistics for the next decade. In this vision, the development of collaborative networks is proposed to create and exploit ways of sharing statistical data across the European Statistical System. In addition, Eurostat closely collaborates with international organisations with a view to jointly collect and/or share the data collected from National Statistical Institutes.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 9.6:</b> Statistical authorities promote measures that enable the linking of data sources in order to reduce reporting burden</p>	<p>Through feasibility studies, methodological work and case studies, Eurostat and the European Statistical System (ESS) are developing expertise in the domain of statistical matching and data linking. Methods are being tested and implemented at various levels. They will be supported by the development of a data warehousing approach at Eurostat and ESS level.</p>
<p><b>Principle 10: Cost Effectiveness</b> <i>Resources are used effectively.</i></p>	
<p><b>Indicator 10.1:</b> Internal and independent external measures monitor the statistical authority's use of resources.</p>	<p>Eurostat has an internal team to monitor and assess the way the human and financial resources are allocated. It periodically reviews individual staff performance. Internal controls have been designed to monitor the use of financial resources. The European Court of Auditors performs audits on Eurostat management. In addition, the financial and human resources of each statistical process are analysed as part of the Eurostat's quality assessments.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 10.2:</b> The productivity potential of information and communications technology is being optimised for data collection, processing and dissemination.</p>	<p>A review of the entire IT architecture across the statistical value chain (collection, processing, analysis, dissemination) is carried out approximately every 5 years. In 2009 Eurostat launched an initiative to reform the method of producing European statistics (<a href="#">Eurostat vision for the next decade</a>), which includes proposals to maximise the use of relevant new technologies to compile, process and disseminate statistics. An Enterprise Architecture has been designed and is increasingly showing effects on rationalisation and integration of statistical business processes.</p> <p>The Eurostat website uses a wide range of web technologies to deliver information to users, and to notify users about new information.</p> <p>Within the ESS, sharing data validation services and standards has been identified to be an appropriate and logical step towards further optimisation of data production. In 2011, Eurostat initiated the organisation to support shared data validation services in the ESS.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 10.3:</b> Proactive efforts are made to improve the statistical potential of administrative data and to limit recourse to direct surveys.</p>	<p>The comprehensive strategy laid down in the "<a href="#">Communication on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade</a>" aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the production process. The implementation of this vision is currently supported by a number of specific projects including among others the improved use of administrative data.</p> <p>A strategy for modernising business statistics, of which the <a href="#">Programme for Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS)</a> is part, has been developed. The objective is increased relevance and reduction of burden. The strategy strongly promotes the use of administrative and existing data sources and finding more efficient ways of compiling and collecting data. Building upon and integrating the various MEETS results, work is underway on a Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS), i.e. a cross-cutting framework regulation for the integration of all business related statistics. A draft Commission proposal is envisaged for 2015.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 10.4:</b> Statistical authorities promote and implement standardized solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency.</p>	<p>Eurostat has launched an initiative aiming at the rationalisation of EU production processes at ESS level. The corresponding architecture, including business cases, principles, governance and roadmap will be developed. At Eurostat level, IT policy limits the number of IT applications.</p> <p>Within the ESS, sharing data validation services and standards has been identified to be an appropriate and logical step towards further optimisation of data production. In 2011, Eurostat initiated the organisation to support shared data validation services in the ESS.</p> <p>Statistical production processes are increasingly automated following a standardised approach across statistical domains.</p> <p>Using the Enterprise Architecture approach at Eurostat for the documentation of existing business processes will help to optimise these processes in terms of productivity and security. The optimisation concerns both human resources and technology needed to drive the process.</p>
<p><b>Principle 11: Relevance</b>  <i>European Statistics meet the needs of users.</i></p>	

<p><b>Indicator 11.1:</b> Processes are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and consider their emerging needs and priorities.</p>	<p>Eurostat consults users on their needs at different organisational levels - strategic and operational. At the strategic level, Eurostat prepares the <a href="#">annual and multiannual work programmes</a> based on the current and future requirements of the policy divisions of the European Commission and based on the input of the <a href="#">European Statistical Advisory Committee</a> and stakeholder dialogues.</p> <p>At the operational level, each statistical production unit is responsible for establishing and maintaining contacts with its data users. This may be carried out through regular meetings (e.g. Working Groups, meetings with other Commission DGs) or through special user satisfaction surveys. Activities involving users are analysed as part of Eurostat's quality assessments, and where necessary improvements are implemented by the production units with help from other Eurostat units if needed.</p> <p>Eurostat also carries out general <a href="#">user satisfaction surveys</a> to obtain better knowledge about users, their needs and their satisfaction with the services which Eurostat provides. The most recent survey took place in 2013.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 11.2:</b> Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme.</p>	<p>A review of the process for preparing the <a href="#">Annual Work Programmes</a> was carried out in 2009. The main change introduced was the early involvement of the Commission Directorates-General (main users), the <a href="#">European Statistical System Committee</a>, Directors' Groups (representing producers) and the <a href="#">European Statistical Advisory Committee</a> (representing the external user community) as part of the process to establish strategic priorities. In addition, Eurostat has signed <a href="#">Memoranda of understanding</a> or Service Level Agreements with its key users.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 11.3:</b> User satisfaction is monitored on a regular basis and is systematically followed up.</p>	<p>Since 2007, Eurostat has been carrying out general <a href="#">user satisfaction surveys</a> every two years and, since 2011, they are carried out on a yearly basis. The findings are published on Eurostat's website. User satisfaction surveys are undertaken in specific statistical domains as part of Eurostat's quality assessments.</p>



<p><b>Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability</b>  <i>European Statistics accurately and reliably portray reality.</i></p>	
<p><b>Indicator 12.1:</b> Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated.</p>	<p>The statistics collected by Eurostat from national data providers are validated by the relevant statistical production teams to check that the data have plausible values and are consistent with other available data. National data providers are asked to correct or explain data inconsistencies. The validation procedures are regularly reviewed and updated if required as part of Eurostat's quality assessments. Under the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a>, national data providers must provide reports on the quality of the data they transmit to Eurostat. This information is used by Eurostat to compile summary reports on the quality of the European statistics.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 12.2:</b> Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented according to the European standards</p>	<p>National data providers are required to report on the accuracy of the data they transmit, in the form of metadata and as part of national quality reports. The metadata are published on the Eurostat website and Eurostat uses the national quality reports to compile summary reports for the different data collections. If there is insufficient information on the sampling or non-sampling errors available from the national data providers, this will be identified for improvement in the relevant Eurostat summary report.</p> <p>Eurostat has published standards and guidelines for producing quality reports, which include details on the types of error that national data providers should include in their quality reports.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 12.3:</b> Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve statistical processes.</p>	<p>An analysis of the way in which data revisions are monitored and analysed is carried out with each statistical production team as part of the Eurostat's quality assessments. The assessment looks at the amount of data subject to revision, the impact of the revisions on the published results and the extent to which users are kept informed about revisions. Where necessary, improvements are identified and scheduled for implementation.</p> <p>The <a href="#">ESS guidelines on revision policy for Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs)</a> endorsed by the ESSC on 9 February 2012 represent an important step towards the harmonisation of revision policies within the ESS and in Eurostat. A common revision policy for PEEIs will improve the quality and comparability of national macro-economic data as well as enhance the overall quality of European Union and euro area aggregates.</p>

<b>Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality</b> <i>European Statistics are released in a timely and punctual manner.</i>	
<b>Indicator 13.1:</b> Timeliness meets European and other international release standards.	Details on the length of time between data publication and the reference period are published in the metadata on Eurostat's website. In addition, as part of the assessment of compliance with legal obligations relating to the transmission of national data, Eurostat carries out a comprehensive monitoring of the compliance achieved by Member States covering the major statistical areas.
<b>Indicator 13.2:</b> A standard daily time for the release of statistics is made public.	All news releases are published on the Eurostat's website at 11.00 am on the relevant day. All online data on the Eurostat website are updated at 11:00 and 23:00 every day.
<b>Indicator 13.3:</b> The periodicity of statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible.	The frequency of data collection and publication is stipulated in legislation or ESS agreements. User needs are taken into account when legislation and ESS agreements are developed.
<b>Indicator 13.4:</b> Divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set.	Eurostat announces any changes to the pre-announced release calendar for Euro-Indicators in advance. However, changes to the definitive release calendar are very rare, and an explanation is always given.
<b>Indicator 13.5:</b> Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate accuracy can be released when considered useful.	Flash estimates and other provisional results, based on early or incomplete data from Member States, are published for a number of statistical areas where this is considered by Eurostat to be sufficiently representative and useful to users.
<b>Principle 14: Coherence and comparability</b> <i>European Statistics are consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it is possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.</i>	
<b>Indicator 14.1:</b> Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (i.e. arithmetic and accounting identities observed).	In addition to the editing and imputation procedures that national statistical authorities apply to the national data collections, Eurostat production units check the internal coherence and consistency of the data received. These procedures are regularly reviewed and updated if required, as part of Eurostat's quality assessments.

<p><b>Indicator 14.2:</b> Statistics are comparable over a reasonable period of time.</p>	<p>The coherence and consistency checks applied to the data by Eurostat production teams include analyses of data over time. Comparability over time is assured by minimising the frequency of changes to standards, classifications and coding of variables. A trade-off between relevance and comparability over time is also considered.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 14.3:</b> Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources.</p>	<p>Eurostat's task is to provide the European Union with statistics at European level that enable comparisons between countries and regions to be made. Eurostat therefore promotes the use of common standards for European statistics. These are specified either in the relevant legislation for the statistical collections or in European Statistical System agreements.</p> <p>The extent to which common standards are implemented in different statistical areas is regularly analysed as part of Eurostat's quality assessments.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 14.4:</b> Statistics from the different sources and of different periodicity are compared and reconciled.</p>	<p>In addition to the internal coherency checks applied to the data received from national data providers, analyses to reconcile data from different sources are also carried out – for example the regular monitoring of consistency between balance of payments data and foreign trade statistics. BOP, GNI and GFS data are regularly cross-checked against main GDP aggregates and inconsistencies are clarified with Member States if necessary.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 14.5:</b> Cross-national comparability of the data is ensured within the European Statistical System through periodical exchanges between the European Statistical System and other statistical systems. Methodological studies are carried out in close co-operation between the Member States and Eurostat.</p>	<p>Eurostat develops and promotes common statistical standards and methods at an international level. There is a close coordination with the European System of Central Banks in the field of monetary and financial statistics, in addition to the statistical cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Division and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.</p> <p>The ESS classifications are developed in close collaboration with other international organisations (e.g. UNSD, UNESCO and ILO). Also, the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (<a href="#">SDMX</a>) standards are created and applied at international level.</p>

### Principle 15: Accessibility and Clarity

*European Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.*

**Indicator 15.1:** Statistics and the corresponding metadata are presented, and archived, in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.

Eurostat provides extensive information to help users to understand published statistics and to facilitate their appropriate interpretation. This information includes metadata and website pages. All information is available online.

The content and style of all information published by Eurostat is subject to guidelines to facilitate common practices.

European data, national data and metadata are available free of charge on the Eurostat's website. European Statistics are published in the form of multi-dimensional or two dimensional tables accessible via a standard data browser or via bulk download facilities.

<p><b>Indicator 15.2:</b> Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy.</p>	<p>All Eurostat information - statistics, metadata, other explanatory information and publications - are available online, on the Eurostat website. A strictly limited number of publications are also produced as paper publications.</p> <p>The Eurostat website uses a wide range of web technologies to deliver information to users, and to notify users about new information.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 15.3:</b> Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and the public is informed.</p>	<p>The data visualisation tools on the Eurostat website are designed to enable users to generate their own customised data extractions, and to bookmark these for future use. The external user support service assists users in the use of the website tools. Beyond this service Eurostat does not generally offer custom-designed data analysis. However, some results of tailor-made analyses are made available to users. Since Eurostat data are available for free re-use, customised data extractions and analyses can be freely offered by companies and other organisations.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 15.4:</b> Access to microdata is allowed for research purposes and is subject to specific rules or protocols.</p>	<p>Access to <a href="#">specific microdata sets</a> is granted to researchers under strict conditions laid down in the new <a href="#">Commission Regulation (EU) No 557/2013</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The researchers must belong to organisations recognized as research entities. The conditions to be fulfilled by research entities are laid down in Article 4 of the Regulation 557/2013;</li> <li>• The research project for which the microdata are requested must be accepted by the national statistical authorities which provided the data concerned. Among others the research proposal shall indicate in sufficient detail the legitimate purpose of the research, the explanation why this purpose can not be fulfilled using non confidential data, the datasets to be used and the methods of analysing them, the intended results to be published (Regulation 557/2013);</li> <li>• National statistical authorities can refuse to grant access to their microdata for a specific research project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator 15.5:</b> Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems.</p>	<p>The statistics released by Eurostat are documented using the <a href="#">Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure</a> (ESMS). This structure describes the concepts to be used for documenting statistical data and for providing summary information on their quality for users. In addition, producer oriented quality reports are more and more standardised using the ESQRS structure.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 15.6:</b> Users are kept informed about the methodology of statistical processes including the use of administrative data.</p>	<p>The principal way users are kept informed about the methodologies applied and the data quality is through the metadata published on the Eurostat website. The metadata structure identifies each of the European Statistical System quality criteria and specifies appropriate quality indicators to be included.</p> <p>In addition, the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a> requires Member States to produce quality reports on the data they transmit. Eurostat uses these quality reports to provide summary reports on the quality of European statistics, which are published on the Eurostat website.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 15.7:</b> Users are kept informed about the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the quality criteria for European Statistics.</p>	<p>The principal way users are kept informed about the quality of statistical outputs is through the metadata published on the Eurostat website. The metadata structure identifies each of the European Statistical System quality criteria and specifies appropriate quality indicators to be included.</p> <p>In addition, the <a href="#">European Statistical Law</a> requires Member States to produce quality reports on the data they transmit. Eurostat uses these quality reports to provide summary reports on the quality of European statistics, which are published on the Eurostat website.</p>