



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 31.7.2017  
C(2017) 5525 final

*Dear Chair,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for their Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European business statistics amending Regulation (EC) No 184/2005 and repealing 10 legal acts in the field of business statistics {COM(2017) 114 final}.*

*The proposed Regulation is expected to provide a common, integrated legal framework for European business statistics which should, amongst others, facilitate a better use of existing data sources and result in a reduction of the statistical burden on respondents when European Statistical System business statistics are compiled. The mandatory exchange of confidential data on intra-European Union exports collected from exporters is expected to contribute significantly to these objectives. Thanks to the data that are exchanged in this way, the receiving Member States will be able to reduce the number of importers from which they collect data. Exporters will be asked to provide little additional information but the proposed Regulation would also allow the number of exporters from which data are collected to be reduced. The use of the exchanged data is optional so as to allow each Member State to use the data according to their specificities and to be able to adjust their use over time. At an early stage, the availability of the exchanged data will facilitate the analysis and reduction of existing asymmetries.*

*Keeping the trust of businesses is of utmost importance to the Commission. Data will thus be exchanged only between national statistical authorities that are bound by the same legal confidentiality rules that currently apply to the Central Statistics Office, and the exchanged data can only be used for statistical purposes.*

<i>Mr John McGUINNESS T.D.</i>	<i>cc</i>	<i>Mr Seán Ó FEARGHAÍL T.D.</i>	<i>Senator Denis O'DONOVAN</i>
<i>Chairman of the</i>		<i>President of Dáil Éireann</i>	<i>President of Seanad Éireann</i>
<i>Joint Committee on Finance,</i>		<i>Houses of the Oireachtas</i>	<i>Houses of the Oireachtas</i>
<i>Public Expenditure and</i>		<i>Leinster House</i>	<i>Leinster House</i>
<i>Reform, and Taoiseach</i>		<i>Kildare Street</i>	<i>Kildare Street</i>
<i>Houses of the Oireachtas</i>		<i>IRL – DUBLIN 2</i>	<i>IRL – DUBLIN 2</i>
<i>Leinster House</i>			
<i>Kildare Street</i>			
<i>IE – DUBLIN 2</i>			

*In order to make use of the data, Member States will have to be compliant with the Information Technology Security Framework of the European Statistical System, based on ISO27000 and adapted to the specific circumstances of official statistics. In addition, exchanged confidential data will only be available to the national statistical authorities of those Member States to which the data relate. The exchanged data will only include the identity of the importer, and not of the exporter which provided the data.*

*The Commission hopes that these comments address the issues raised by the Houses of the Oireachtas and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julian King', with a large, stylized circular flourish at the end.

*Julian King  
Member of the Commission*