



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 20.1.2017
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Commission proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples {COM(2016) 551 final}.

The current system for producing European statistics on persons and households based on data at individual level collected from samples is made up of a number of separate domain-specific Regulations, which specify the exact topics to be covered and the technical requirements for the data collection (e.g. sample size, quality criteria and transmission requirements). There are currently five legal bases for conducting European social surveys, which relate, respectively, to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), the Adult Education Survey (AES), the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), and the Survey on Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) usage in households (ICT-HH). In addition, there are two European surveys that are conducted on the basis of an informal agreement only: the Household Budget Survey (HBS) and the Harmonised European Time Use Survey (HETUS).

The initiative aims above all to increase the relevance of European statistics for policy making purposes. The proposed Regulation should guarantee the comparability and coherence of the data in the long run. The system of European social surveys should be sufficiently robust and efficient, and should ensure that the high quality of statistics is maintained — which can be challenging given the continual change in this area of statistics: rapid innovation in methodologies and uses of information technologies, the availability of new data sources, the changing needs and expectations of data users and continued pressure on available resources.

As described in the Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal, while its initial implementation might increase costs, these costs, in particular field work costs, will be reduced in the medium and long term and largely compensate the initial investments. In relation to the EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), the proposal sets ambitious targets on timeliness and on the longitudinal component of the survey, which will

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significantly improve the relevance of the survey and reply to increasing and long-standing requests from the users.

The points made above are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senat and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen
Member of the Commission*