



Brussels, 26.01.2017  
C(2017) 263 final

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its Reasoned Opinion on the 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 Commission is pleased that the Riksdag supports the effort to ensure that official statistics provided within the EU are reliable, topical and of high quality. At the same time, however, the Commission has duly noted the Riksdag's concern that the proposal does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity and that some of its provisions go beyond what is necessary to achieve the deserved objectives. The initiative aims above all to increase the relevance of European statistics for policy making purposes. The proposed Regulation should guarantee the availability and comparability of the data in the long run and their internal consistency, hence the introduction of the consumption and time use domains, after a period of redesign and simplification.*

*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, changing needs and expectations of data users and continued pressure on available resources. Therefore, there is a need to foresee in the framework regulation a mechanism allowing for some limited flexibility.*

*Concerning the Harmonised European Time Use Survey (HETUS) and the Household Budget Survey (HBS), their inclusion in the proposal aims to improve the current situation in terms of consistency and availability in the longer run, taking due account of their required modernisation. The Impact Assessment revealed increased needs of harmonised data in the domains covered by those two data collections. In particular, there are requests for more precise estimations of the joint distribution of income, consumption and wealth, as well as on non-paid activities, such as social and cooperative activities.*

*Mr Urban AHLIN  
Speaker of the Riksdag  
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*Regarding the need to better specify the details of some elements of the data sets, the Commission invites the Riksdag to consider that this possibility is limited to the data related to (un)employment, for which it has been shown that this approach is needed in order to ensure the required comparability of these very important indicators across Member States.*

*The Commission underlines that the proposed regulation will not open the possibility for unforeseeable influence on the future shape and content of the data collection, as the proposal on the one hand fixes in the basic act those characteristics with major impact on the costs, such as precision requirements, periodicities, sample characteristics and data transmission deadlines; and, on the other hand, provides for flexibility to adaptations, keeping costs and burdens under strict control.*

*The proposal presents a balanced compromise between delegated and implementing acts; technical aspects ('how' to implement the proposal) are to be developed by implementing acts in close cooperation with the respective national experts while political issues ('what' to implement) is governed by the framework Regulation itself, with limited delegated powers to the Commission to adapt to social, economic and technological changes. The long-lasting experience of developing legislation in the statistical domain has shown a very high level of cooperation and agreement between the Commission and the Member States with nearly all the statistical proposals being adopted unanimously or with a very large majority. Statistical proposals of the Commission are exhaustively discussed at different expert levels: Task Forces, Working Groups, Directors' groups and in the European Statistical System Committee. The same way of working will be followed for the application of the provisions of the current proposal.*

*In relation to the eight year period covered by the multiannual rolling planning, the Commission would like to stress that the planning has been requested by the Member States to better schedule their work plan and anticipate resource needs. The rolling planning is a powerful tool to coordinate the seven data collections covered by the proposal, including the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) ad-hoc subjects which now are regulated under separated acts, and to avoid peaks and valleys on the workload; an eight year period offers the required stability while provisions are also foreseen in case there is a strong necessity to adapt the multiannual planning.*

*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 Riksdag and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen  
Member of the Commission*