

## PROTOCOL ON IMPARTIAL ACCESS TO EUROSTAT DATA FOR USERS

With the adoption of the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#), Eurostat has committed itself to an all-embracing approach towards high-quality statistics. The Code of Practice builds on relevant international standards and a common European Statistical System definition of quality in statistics. Its 15 principles target all relevant areas, ranging from the institutional environment, through the statistical production processes to our output: European statistics.

*In line with the Union legal framework and principle 6 (impartiality and objectivity) of the Code of Practice, Eurostat develops, produces and disseminates European statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.*

This protocol sets out how Eurostat fulfils its responsibilities in respect of impartial access to European statistics for users. It is addressed:

- *for information*, to users accessing our data, describing the rules in place to ensure impartial access;
- *for implementation*, to Eurostat staff, providing them with guidance for putting impartial access for users into practice;
- *for implementation*, to our partners in the production of European statistics, defining the scope of and procedures for our cooperation.

Observance of this protocol is promoted by the Director-General of Eurostat. Any non-compliance reported will be immediately followed up.

## 1. EUROSTAT FREE DISSEMINATION POLICY

*Dissemination of statistics in a format convenient for the widest range of users* Eurostat provides its data free of charge via the [Eurostat website](#) to facilitate access by a wide range of users and further processing of the information. A broad range of publications are available online; some titles are available in printed form either free of charge or for sale via the [European Union Bookshop](#). Generally, data and other content from Eurostat may be freely re-used, including re-use for commercial purposes, according to the conditions set out on the [Eurostat website](#).

*Custom-designed analyses and extractions are provided when feasible and made public* The results of work relating to European statistics requested by third parties are not made available exclusively to those third parties. Where possible they are included in the Eurostat dissemination online data. Where this is not possible, a description of the available statistical data is published on the Eurostat website. The available statistical data can be obtained on request through Eurostat user support in cooperation with the competent Eurostat production unit.

In the case of Eurostat trade statistics detailed data are made available on a restricted basis if required for the implementation of Article 207 of the [Treaty on the functioning of the European Union](#).

Prices and weights data to be used for the calculation of purchasing power parities can be made available in line with the procedure agreed with National Statistical Institutes which have provided the data.

*Micro-data access for scientific purposes* Confidential microdata are not disclosed by Eurostat. Access to confidential microdata for scientific purposes may be granted on the basis of [Commission Regulation 557/2013](#) and [Regulation 223/2009 of the European Parliament and the Council on European statistics](#). Further information is available on the [Eurostat website](#). Non-confidential microdata, where available, can be downloaded via the Eurostat website.

*No data without metadata* Eurostat disseminates its statistics with comprehensive reference metadata following the [Euro-SDMX metadata structure](#), comprising information inter alia on concepts and definitions, data coverage, periodicity, compilation practices and procedures, revisions, data quality as well as release policy. Where applicable, references to supplementary methodological documents or manuals are included.

The Eurostat reference metadata in the Eurostat standard format published on the website is supplemented by a database on [concepts and definitions](#) as well as a collection of [methodological reference documents](#). Other metadata (e.g. keywords, footnotes, or flags linked to a code list) are directly attached to a value in the Eurostat dissemination online data.

*Access for everyone to the same information at the same moment in time* Statistics are disseminated online on the Eurostat website as early as possible after they have been compiled.

*Statistics released according to a pre-announced schedule* Euro-indicators news releases are provisionally pre-announced in the Eurostat [release calendar](#) notifying releases up to 12 months ahead. A final calendar is issued each Friday for the following week<sup>1</sup>.

Eurostat news releases are issued at 11:00 CET on the Eurostat website and are sent directly by e-mail to journalists who have [subscribed to that service](#).

In addition publication dates are pre-announced for a number of other [electronic statistical publications](#).

*Statistical releases are objective and non-partisan* Eurostat releases are objective and free from political statements. Eurostat reserves the right to respond, in an impartial manner, to any misunderstandings or misleading interpretations of its outputs.

## 2. PRE-RELEASE ACCESS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND JOINT PRODUCTION OF STATISTICS

*Pre-release access for quality assurance purposes and for joint production of European statistics* In the production and dissemination of European statistics, Eurostat cooperates closely with its data producing partners in the [European Statistical System](#), other Commission departments, the Commission Joint Research Centres and European Agencies, the statistics divisions of the European Central Bank and in international organisations. For quality assurance purposes and where European statistics are produced jointly or for joint publications it is vital that results are checked and exchanged with the relevant statistical experts and data providers before any other access is granted.

All institutions and persons involved must agree to be bound by the same obligations that apply to Eurostat staff to ensure the impartiality of dissemination by respecting a Eurostat embargo and by ensuring that no data are communicated any further, i.e. either internally within the institution or externally, prior to official Eurostat release. Eurostat staff keep track of whom has been given access by Eurostat to what information and when.

## 3. PRE-RELEASE ACCESS FOR INFORMATION

*Pre-release access by Commission departments and the European Central Bank* Commission departments whose policies are based upon European statistics and the European Central Bank in order to carry out their tasks under the Treaty may have pre-release access to selected statistical releases under embargo after 16:00 CET of the working day before the release on a strictly regulated basis. The sole purpose is to allow those Commission departments and the European Central Bank to respond fully when questions arise at the time of release. Early access is subject to a signed agreement laying down the rules for dealing with data accessed prior to official release.

Information on this pre-release access, specifying the kind of data and

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP) the date is coordinated with DG ECFIN publishing the Alert Mechanism Report at the same time.

the period during which pre-release access is granted, is publicised on the Eurostat website under the [release policy section](#) of the Euro-SDMX metadata structure.

*Embargo procedures for Eurostat news releases*

Eurostat news releases are transmitted under embargo and for information to the Spokesperson and the Cabinet of the Commissioner responsible for Eurostat on the working day before publication, in order for them to be prepared for questions from the media. No public comment on the data issued in a news release is made by officials as long as these data are not accessible to all users.

*Embargo procedures for National Statistical Institutes*

Data releases may be transmitted under embargo to the National Statistical Institutes of Member States two hours before their official release.

*Embargo procedures for accredited news agencies*

Euro-indicator news releases are transmitted under embargo to accredited news agencies in Brussels one hour before official release with the exception of the flash estimates of HICP and GDP which are transmitted 30 minutes before official release.