



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EUROSTAT

Directorate C: Macro-economic statistics
Unit C-4: Price statistics. Purchasing Power Parities. Housing statistics

HICP Compliance Monitoring

Follow-up report

Austria

August 2021

Date of visit

- September 2017

CM report published ⁽¹⁾

- April 2019

Date of follow-up information

- August 2021

1. Requirements, recommendations and the progress made

- **Eurostat recommends reviewing and, if necessary, improving the weighting of telecom services in the light of the available information.**

This recommendation has been implemented.

Following the compliance monitoring report, the data provided by the national telecommunication regulator has been reviewed with a view to improve the weighting of ECOICOP group 08.3, which covers telecom services.

However, since this data source does not provide a distinction between private households and business consumers, it was not used to reassess the weight share of this ECOICOP group, which stands out as one of the lowest in the European Union, and to improve the weighting scheme within the ECOICOP group.

- **The price collection for rents is not in line with the requirements set out in Article 2 of Regulation No 2601/2000 as prices for Actual rentals for housing do not enter the HICP in the appropriate month ⁽²⁾.**

This requirement has been partly implemented.

As of January 2021, the price index covering ECOICOP class 04.1.1 on actual rentals paid by tenants, started to be compiled based on two subcomponents, one covering new/short-term (i.e. contracts with less than three years of duration) rents and another long-term rents (i.e. contracts with three or more years of duration). While the latter subcomponent continues using data taken from the quarterly micro census housing survey, the former, which accounts for one tenth of the current ECOICOP class weight, relies on web scraped data extracted from real estate portals. For new rents, Statistics Austria web scrapes listed rents so that prices enter in the compilation of the index in the month in which an offer first disappears from the website.

⁽¹⁾ The report is available on Eurostat's website:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/272892/272977/CM-Report-Austria-2019/>.

⁽²⁾ This requirement is currently covered by Article 8(2) of the Regulation (EU) 2020/1148 (HICP's implementing regulation).

However, for the long-term rents subcomponent, which accounts for nine tenths of the index, price changes enter into the HICP both smoothed and lagged from the information taken from the quarterly micro census housing survey. In this context, changes stemming from a tenancy or any other contractual update, which are expected to occur even in the long-term market segment, will not enter in the HICP in the month in which the change takes place.

2. Additional measures to improve the quality of the Austrian HICP

Following a change in the national legislation supporting the compilation of the HICP in December 2019, the number of regions in which prices are collected was revised from 20 to 19. This revision consisted in the inclusion of two of the biggest touristic regions in Austria (*Saalbach* and *Schladming*) and the exclusion of three regions that are considered no longer representative of household consumption expenditures.

Statistics Austria has been making an effort to diversify the data sources used in the compilation of the Austrian HICP. As of December 2019, Statistics Austria started to receive scanner data, which was used as an alternative source to traditional price collection during lockdown months in 2020 and 2021. In addition, Statistics Austria started to collect data using web scrapers to capture online price changes for clothing, telecom and, as mentioned above, rents. Statistics Austria plans to increase the number of web scrapers and the use of this price collection mode in the next coming years.

The replacement of traditional data sources, which are subject to strict plausibility controls and back checks, by more timely data sources, such as scanner and web scraped data, is likely to reduce the number and magnitude of revisions of provisional inflation figures, which are currently provided 45 days after the end of the reference month.

3. Conclusion

Eurostat takes good note of the actions implemented by the Statistics Austria to improve the quality of the Austrian HICP. However, Statistics Austria should continue to implement improvement measures, particularly those allowing for the completion of the requirements on the treatment of the index covering actual rentals, which have only been partly been achieved after the last compliance monitoring visit review.