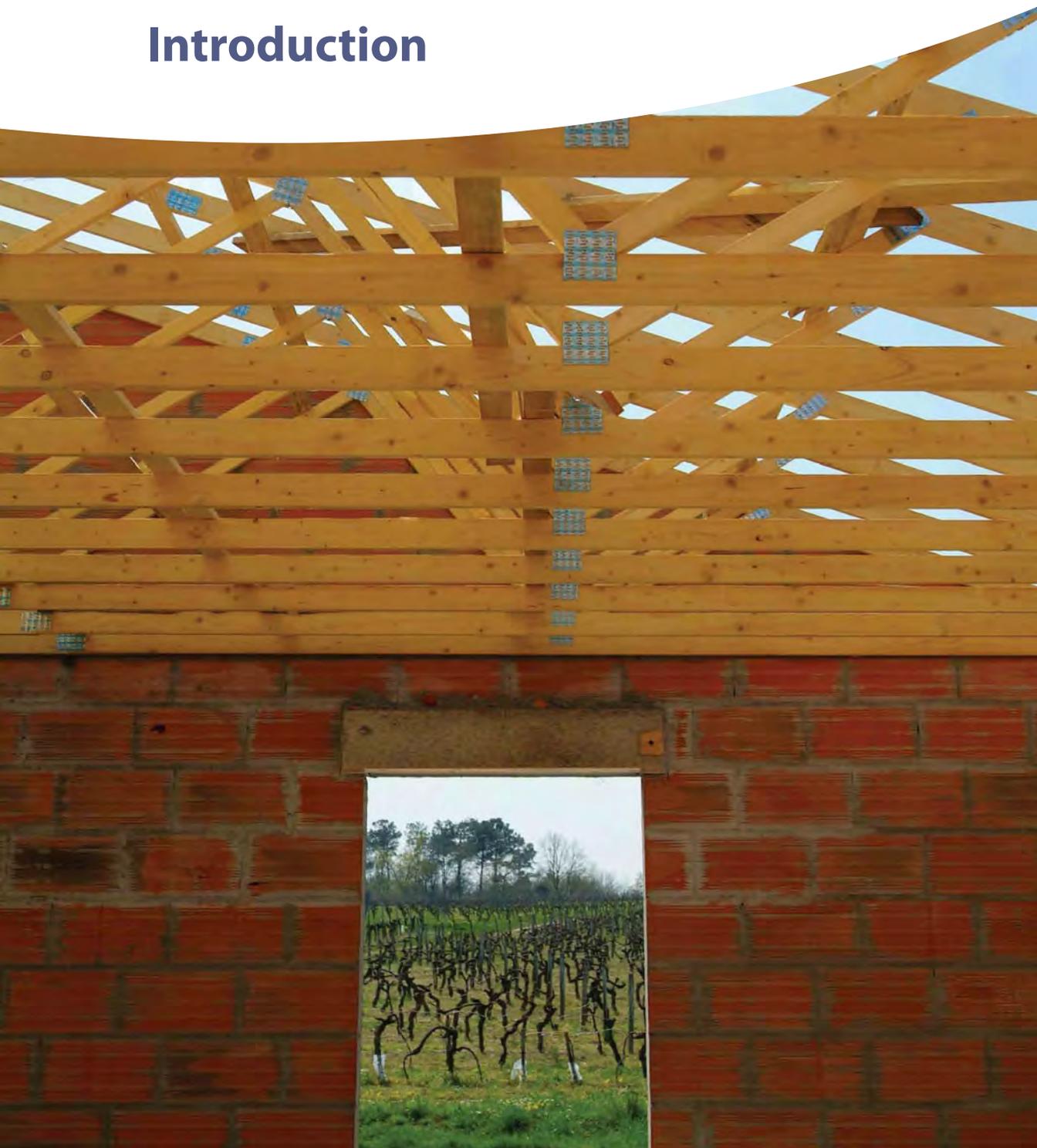


Introduction



The Eurostat yearbook

Europe in figures — *Eurostat yearbook 2012* provides users of official statistics with an overview of the wealth of information that is available on Eurostat's website and within its online databases. It belongs to a set of general compendium publications and, of these, it provides the most extensive set of analyses and detailed data. *Europe in figures* has been conceived as a publication that provides a balanced set of indicators, with a broad cross-section of information, covering all of the main areas in which official European statistics are available.

Different formats, their language versions and MS Excel files of the Eurostat yearbook

PDF file and printed book

The *Eurostat yearbook* is released as a PDF file and on paper in English.

The virtual Eurostat yearbook

The most up-to-date version in English is available on *Statistics Explained* (part of Eurostat's website) as an online publication, the *virtual Eurostat yearbook*. It is translated once a year into German and French. During the course of a year, the virtual English yearbook is gradually updated and therefore the virtual German and French yearbooks are sometimes not as up-to-date as the English one. The translations of the 2012 edition are foreseen to become gradually available on *Statistics Explained* by the end of September 2012. The three language versions of the *virtual Eurostat yearbook* are accessible through the short URLs:



http://bit.ly/Eurostat_yearbook;



<http://bit.ly/Eurostat-Jahrbuch>, and;



http://bit.ly/Annuaire_Eurostat.

MS Excel files of the yearbook

The MS Excel files of the tables, figures and maps are available on the Eurostat website within each *Statistics Explained* article.

Related Eurostat publications

Pocketbook Key figures on Europe

The pocketbook *Key figures on Europe* (2012 edition foreseen to be published in June 2012) is derived from the *Eurostat yearbook* and presents the core content of the *Eurostat yearbook*. It is available in English, German and French both as a PDF file and on paper.

Eurostat regional yearbook

The *Eurostat yearbook's* sister publication, the *Eurostat regional yearbook* (2011 edition published in December 2011) supplements the information provided for the EU-27 and the Member States in the *Eurostat yearbook* by providing data at a sub-national level to give an overview of key statistics that are available for the regions of Europe. The *Eurostat regional yearbook* is published in the same formats and language versions as the *Eurostat yearbook* (see above). The three language versions of the *virtual Eurostat regional yearbook* are accessible through the short URLs:



http://bit.ly/Eurostat_regional_yearbook;



http://bit.ly/Eurostat_Jahrbuch_der_Regionen, and;



http://bit.ly/Annuaire_regional_Eurostat.

Multilingual articles in *Statistics Explained*

A selection of *Eurostat yearbook* and *Eurostat regional yearbook* statistical articles will gradually become available by the end of June 2012 in *Statistics Explained* in 18 additional languages: Bulgarian, Spanish, Czech, Danish, Estonian, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Finnish and Swedish.

Structure of the publication

Europe in figures is divided into an introduction, 13 main chapters and a set of annexes. The main chapters contain data and/or background information relating to a very wide range of Eurostat data. After a brief introduction, each subchapter starts with a commentary on the main findings, continues with some details regarding data sources and data collection methods, and finishes with a section that details the context of the information presented. The core of each subchapter is a set of tables and figures that have been selected to illustrate the wide variety of data available for that particular topic; often these include information on how important benchmark indicators have developed during recent years within the European Union (EU), the euro area (EA) and the

Member States. Users will find a great deal more information when consulting Eurostat's website, which contains subject-specific publications and online databases. The publication closes with a set of annexes that contain details of classifications, a list of statistical symbols, abbreviations and acronyms, and a subject index.

Data extraction, updates and coverage

Data extraction

The statistical data presented in the yearbook were mainly extracted during September 2011 although some were extracted a few months later; for example, most of the data relating to government finances were extracted in April 2012. The accompanying text was drafted between September and November 2011 (and in April 2012 for government finances).

The collection, processing and subsequent release of data to the public (either online as a PDF or database files, or on paper) is a complex process that results in a certain amount of time elapsing; this can vary from a few weeks in the case of short-term monthly indicators to several years for complex, ad-hoc surveys. There is a release calendar, which provides details of the schedule for releasing euro-indicators (a collection of important monthly and quarterly indicators), available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/release_calendars/news_releases. For other data sets, the metadata provided on the Eurostat website gives information relating to the frequency of surveys and the time that may elapse before data is published/released.

Data updates

The Eurostat website is continuously being updated and so it is likely that fresher data will have become available since the data was extracted for this publication. It is possible to access the latest version of each data set through data codes that are provided as part of the source under each table, figure and map. A description on the use of the data codes is given somewhat later in 'A practical guide to accessing European statistics'/'Access to data'/'Eurostat



online data code(s) – easy access to the freshest data'. The yearbook's MS Excel files contain bookmarks to the specific, tailor-made extractions that were used to create each table, figure or map.

Spatial data coverage

The yearbook usually presents information for the EU-27 (the 27 Member States of the EU), the euro area (based on 17 members), as well as the individual Member States. The order of the Member States used in the yearbook generally follows their order of protocol; in other words, the alphabetical order of the countries' names in their respective original languages; in some of the tables or figures the data are ranked according to the values of a particular indicator.

The EU-27 and euro area (EA-17) aggregates are normally only provided when information for all of the countries is available, or if an estimate has been made for missing information. Any incomplete totals that are created are systematically footnoted. Time-series for these geographical aggregates are based on a consistent set of countries for the whole of the time period (unless otherwise indicated). In other words, although the EU only had 25 Member States since early 2004 and has only had 27 Member States since the start of 2007, the time-series for EU-27 refer to a sum or an average for all 27 countries for the whole of the period presented, as if all 27 Member States had been part of the EU in earlier periods. In a similar vein, the data for the euro area are consistently presented for the 17 members (as of January 2011), despite the later accessions of Greece, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta, Slovakia and most recently, Estonia, to the euro area. Unless

otherwise stated, the data for the euro area covers the 17 Member States that shared the euro as a common currency as of January 2011 (Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland).

When available, information is also presented for EFTA countries (including Iceland that is also a candidate country) and the candidate countries ⁽¹⁾ of Montenegro, Croatia ⁽²⁾, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ⁽³⁾ and Turkey, as well as for Japan and the United States. In the event that data for any of these non-member countries does not exist, then these have been excluded from tables and figures; however, the full set of 27 Member States is maintained in tables, with footnotes being added in figures for those Member States for which information is missing.

Temporal data coverage

In addition to presenting the data for the latest year (or reference period) available, the yearbook often presents earlier year(s) too in its tables and figures; this may be either one additional year, a couple of years or a full time-series covering a ten-year period. The interval between the years presented in tables and figures is often restricted to five or ten year comparisons in order to highlight slower, structural changes.

If data for a reference period are not available for a particular country, then efforts have been made to fill tables and figures with data for previous reference years (these exceptions are footnoted); generally, an effort has been made to go back at least two reference periods.

⁽¹⁾ As Serbia was granted candidate country status on 2 March 2012, it was not possible to include it in this edition.

⁽²⁾ The EU and Croatian leaders signed Croatia's EU Accession Treaty on 9 December 2011. Croatia is called thereafter an 'accessing country' (instead of a 'candidate country'). Subject to ratification of the Treaty by all the Member States and Croatia, Croatia will become the EU's 28th Member State on 1 July 2013.

⁽³⁾ The name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is shown in tables and figures in this publication as FYR of Macedonia – this does not pre-judge in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which is to be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place on this subject at the United Nations.



Eurostat – the statistical office of the European Union

Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union, situated in Luxembourg. Its task is to provide the EU with statistics at a European level that enable comparisons between countries and regions.

Eurostat's mission, structure, staff and budget

Eurostat's mission is *'to be the leading provider of high quality statistics on Europe'*.

As one of the Directorate-Generals of the European Commission, Eurostat is headed by a Director-General. Under him are seven Directors responsible for different areas of activity (Directorates as of January 2012):

- Cooperation in the European Statistical System; international cooperation; resources;
- Corporate statistical and IT services;
- National accounts, prices and key indicators;
- Government finance statistics (GFS);
- Sectoral and regional statistics;
- Social statistics;
- Global business statistics.

In 2011, Eurostat had around 880 persons working for it; of these some 74 % were civil servants or temporary agents, while contract agents and seconded national experts represented 19 % of the staff, leaving 7 % with other types of contract. Eurostat's executed budget amounted to EUR 85 million in 2011 (excluding costs of statutory staff and administrative expenses) of which around EUR 55 million was used for the implementation of the Community statistical programme 2008-2012, almost EUR 9 million was used for the implementation of the modernisation of European enterprise and trade statistics (MEETS), while EUR 21 million was sub-delegated to Eurostat by other Directorates-General.

European Statistical System (ESS)

Since the creation of a European statistical office in 1952, there has always been a realisation that the

planning and implementation of European policies must be based on reliable and comparable statistics. As a result, the European Statistical System (ESS) was built-up gradually to provide comparable statistics at EU-level.

The ESS is the partnership between the Union statistical authority, which is the European Commission (Eurostat), and the national statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. This partnership also includes the EEA and EFTA countries. Member States collect data and compile statistics for national and EU purposes. The ESS functions as a network in which Eurostat's role is to lead the way in the harmonisation of statistics in close cooperation with the national statistical authorities. ESS work concentrates mainly on EU policy areas – but, with the extension of EU policies, harmonisation has been extended to nearly all statistical fields.

The ESS also coordinates its work with candidate countries and at European level with other European Commission services, agencies and the ECB and international organisations such as OECD, the UN, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Legal framework and ESSC

Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European statistics established a new legal framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. The Regulation states that European statistics shall be developed in conformity with the statistical principles set out in Article 338 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union and further elaborated in the European Statistics Code of Practice, namely, that: *'the production of Union statistics shall conform to impartiality, reliability, objectivity, scientific independence, cost-effectiveness and statistical confidentiality; it shall not entail excessive burdens on economic operators'*.



Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 establishes the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC), which is at the heart of the ESS, stating the Committee ‘shall provide professional guidance to the ESS for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics’. The ESSC is chaired by the European Commission (Eurostat) and composed of representatives from the national statistical institutes of the Member States. The national statistical institutes of EEA and EFTA countries participate as observers, as may representatives of other European / international bodies, for example, the ECB, the OECD or UNECE.

Objectives and means

To meet the challenges associated with the adoption of the Regulation, Eurostat aims:

- to provide other European institutions and the governments of the Member States with the information needed to design, implement, monitor and evaluate Community policies;
- to disseminate statistics to the European public and enterprises and to all economic and social agents involved in decision-making;
- to implement a set of standards, methods and organisational structures which allow comparable, reliable and relevant statistics to be produced throughout the Union, in line with the principles of the European statistics Code of Practice;
- to improve the functioning of the ESS, to support the Member States, and to assist in the development of statistical systems on international level.

Eurostat and its partners in the ESS aim to provide relevant, impartial, reliable and comparable statistical data. Indeed, access to high-quality statistics and Eurostat’s obligation for trustworthiness is enshrined in law. European statistics should be provided to all types of users on the basis of equal opportunities, such that public administrations, researchers, trade unions, students, businesses and

non-governmental organisations (NGOs), among others, can access data freely and easily. Access to the most recent statistics, as well as an expanding archive of information, is guaranteed through free access to Eurostat databases on its website.

The data collected and reported to Eurostat have been agreed through a well-defined political process at the European level in which the Member States are deeply involved. Most data collections and statistics are based on European regulations that are legally binding. In order to be able to produce comparable statistics between countries concepts and definitions, as well as technical standards and infrastructures are needed. Indeed, this is one of Eurostat’s key roles – leading and facilitating these harmonisation and standardisation processes.

ESGAB and ESAC

In order to enhance accountability of the ESS, the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB, set up in 2008) prepares an annual report for the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Code of Practice by Eurostat and by the ESS as a whole. It is composed of seven independent members. ESGAB’s annual reports are available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/esgab>.

The European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC) is composed of 24 members representing users, respondents and other stakeholders of European statistics (including the scientific community, social partners and civil society), as well as institutional users (for example the European Council and the European Parliament). This committee is entrusted with ensuring that user requirements as well as the response burden on information providers and producers are taken into account when developing statistical programmes. For further information, please see: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/esac/introduction>.



A practical guide to accessing European statistics

The simplest way to access Eurostat's broad range of statistical information is through the Eurostat website (<http://ec.europa.eu>). Eurostat provides users with free access to its databases and all of its publications in PDF format via the Internet. The website is updated daily and gives access to the latest and most comprehensive statistical information available on the EU, its Member States, EFTA countries, and candidate countries.

For full access to all of the services available through Eurostat's website, it is recommended that users should take a few minutes to register from the homepage. Registration is free of charge and allows access to:

- tailor-made e-mail alerts providing information on new publications or statistics as soon as they are online;
- enhanced functionalities of the databases (for example, user are able to save data queries and make bulk downloads).

The information on Eurostat's website under the 'Statistics' tab that is always present near the top of each webpage provides links to:

- EU policy indicators (see the end of this introduction for more details);
- Statistics by theme, broken down into:
 - general and regional statistics;
 - economy and finance;
 - population and social conditions;
 - industry, trade and services;
 - agriculture and fisheries;
 - external trade;
 - transport;
 - environment and energy;
 - science and technology.

For each of these themes, the user is presented with a range of different sub-topics – for example, within the population and social conditions theme there are sub-topics for: population; health; education and training; labour market; income, social inclusion and living conditions; social protection; household budget surveys; crime and criminal justice; and

culture. These sub-topics are presented as hyperlinks that take the user to a dedicated section on the subject, with information generally presented for data (main tables and databases), legislation, methodology, publications and other background information.

Access to data

Data navigation tree

The majority of Eurostat's statistics may be accessed from the data navigation tree, at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database; alternatively, there is an icon at the right-hand end of the top menu bar  on most webpages that can be used to switch to the data navigation tree.

The data navigation tree is based on the statistical themes presented above and is collapsible and expandable. It has three main branches:

- Database by themes which contains the full range of public data available on the Eurostat website. These data are presented in multi-dimensional tables with selection features that allow tailor-made presentations and extractions. The interface for databases is called the Data Explorer (icon ) and this provides an intuitive way to select and organise information. Data can be downloaded (icon ) from the Data Explorer in various formats (XLS, CSV, HTML, PC AXIS, SPSS, TSV and PDF).
- Tables by themes which offers a selection of the most important Eurostat data in a user-friendly way. All data are presented in simple two- or three-dimensional tables, generally with European aggregates and data for the Member States on the y-axis and time on the x-axis. Tables can be viewed using an interface called TGM – tables, graphs and maps (icon ) – where data can be visualised as graphs or maps in addition to a standard, tabular presentation. Data can be downloaded (icon ) from TGM in various formats (XLS, HTML, XML and TSV).



- Tables on EU policy which also provide access to pre-defined tables; these have particular relevance for tracking the progress being made in relation to some of the important policy areas. This section of the website covers indicators in relation to Euro-indicators / Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs), Europe 2020 indicators, sustainable development indicators, globalisation indicators, structural (Lisbon) indicators, and employment and social policy indicators. The tools for viewing and extracting data are the same as those described above for tables by themes.

The data navigation tree also has two special branches, where new items or recently updated items (from all databases and tables) can be displayed according to a set of user preferences (criteria set by the user).

Eurostat online data code(s) – easy access to the freshest data

Eurostat online data codes, such as tps00001 and nama_gdp_c ⁽⁴⁾, allow the reader to easily access the most recent data on Eurostat's website. In this yearbook these online data codes are given as part of the source below each table and figure.

In the PDF version of this publication, the reader is led directly to the freshest data when clicking on the hyper-links that form part of each online data code. Readers of the paper version can access the freshest data by typing a standardised hyper-link into a web browser – http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=<data_code>&mode=view – where <data_code> is to be replaced by the online data code printed under the table or figure in question. The data is presented either in the TGM or the Data Explorer interface.

Online data codes can also be fed into the 'Search' function on Eurostat's website, which is found in

the upper-right corner of the Eurostat homepage, at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>.



The results from such a search present related dataset(s) and possibly publication(s) and metadata. By clicking on these hyper-links users are taken to product page(s) ⁽⁵⁾, which provide some background information about each dataset / publication or set of metadata. For example, it is possible to move directly to the data from the data product page by clicking the TGM or Data Explorer icons presented under the 'View table' sub-heading.

Note that the data on Eurostat's website is frequently updated.

Note also that the description above presents the situation as of the end of November 2011.

Statistics Explained

Statistics Explained is part of Eurostat's website – it provides easy access to Eurostat's statistical information. It can be accessed via a link on the right-hand side of Eurostat's homepage, or directly at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained.

Statistics Explained is a wiki-based system that presents statistical topics. Together, the articles make up an encyclopaedia of European statistics, which is completed by a statistical glossary that clarifies the terms used. In addition, numerous links are provided to the latest data and metadata and to further information, making *Statistics Explained* a portal for regular and occasional users alike.

At present *Statistics Explained* contains well over 500 statistical and background articles and some 1 200 glossary pages in English; their number is continuously growing. About 100 of these articles, the content of the *Eurostat yearbook* (by the end of September 2012) and *Eurostat regional yearbook* are available in French and German, and

⁽⁴⁾ There are two types of online data codes:

Tables (accessed using the TGM interface) have 8-character codes, which consist of 3 or 5 letters – the first of which is 't' – followed by 5 or 3 digits, e.g. tps00001 and tsdph220.

Databases (accessed using the Data Explorer interface) have codes that use an underscore '_' within the syntax of the code, e.g. nama_gdp_c and proj_08c2150p.

⁽⁵⁾ The product page can also be accessed by using a hyper-link, for example, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=<data_code>, where <data_code> is to be replaced by the online data code in question.



20 representative ones have been translated into 18 other EU languages. As a result, 570 articles in 20 languages besides English can be consulted.

Users can search for articles using navigational features in the left-hand menu. The top-right menu bar of *Statistics Explained* offers tools, among others, to print, forward, cite, blog or share content easily.

Country profiles interface

The *country profiles interface* offers the possibility to visualise key statistical indicators, of different countries and / or EU aggregates, in a user-friendly map-based presentation. The interface can be accessed via the following link: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/guip/introAction.do>.

In 2011, Eurostat developed its first mobile device version of the Country profiles interface. The app runs on iPhone/iPad and Android mobile devices. It can be downloaded from the Apple App Store (see <http://itunes.apple.com/en/app/country-profile/id490077702?mt=8>) and from Google Play store (previous Android market; see https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=eurostat.ec.europa.eu.country.profiles&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImV1cm9zdGF0LmVjLmV1cm9wYS5ldS5jb3VudHJ5LnByb2ZpbHMiXQ).

The application gives mobile access to key statistical data for the EU and its Member States, the euro area, EFTA countries, in many cases EU candidate countries and a few other countries in the world. The latest data available from Eurostat can be viewed in table, graph and map format. An update function allows downloading of data twice a day. The user interface is available in English, French and German.

Publications

Eurostat produces a variety of publications, which all are available on the Eurostat website in PDF format (except some compact guides), free of charge. As with the 'Statistics' tab for accessing data, there is a 'Publications' tab that is accessible from the top menu bar.

There are a variety of different types of publication, ranging from pocketbooks and news releases to more in-depth analyses in the form of statistical books and statistics in focus.

Eurostat's publications programme consists of the following collections:

News releases provide the most recent information, designed to be of interest for journalists and for a broad audience;

Statistical books are larger publications with statistical analysis and data;

Pocketbooks are free-of-charge publications aiming to give users a set of basic figures on a specific topic;

Statistics in focus are short publications providing the most recent statistical data and complementary statistical analysis;

Methodologies and working papers are technical publications for statistical experts working in a particular field;

Compact guides are leaflets offering basic figures and guidance on how to obtain more information from the Eurostat website.

Large amounts of Eurostat's information are also available in *Statistics Explained*, a user-friendly online publishing system using a wiki-like format (http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained).

Some Eurostat publications, including this publication, are also printed; these can be ordered from the website of the EU bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>).

Reference metadata

The ESMS (Euro SDMX Metadata Structure) is a format based on the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) Content Oriented Guidelines, which were adopted in January 2009 by seven international organisations at a worldwide level. The ESMS uses a subset of 21 cross domain concepts (plus sub-concepts) and is the new standard for reference metadata in the ESS. It puts emphasis on



quality-related information (containing concepts such as accuracy, comparability, coherence and timeliness).

Reference metadata may be accessed from the heading 'Metadata' which appears in the left-hand menu after selecting the 'Statistics' tab, or directly from the data navigation tree, where the following icon  is used to signify its availability, or through the interfaces for viewing databases and tables.

In addition, since 2011 there has been national reference metadata in ESMS format available within the data navigation tree for the harmonised indices of consumer prices (prc_hicp_esms). From the first quarter of 2012 more national ESMS files from other statistical domains will be made available.

Quality profiles

Quality profiles are user-oriented summaries of the main quality features of indicators. These have been introduced for some sets of indicators linking statistics to European policies (see later), for example for the Europe 2020 indicators and the sustainable development indicators (SDI).

Through these profiles Eurostat provides guidance for the use and analysis of the indicators as well as input to the selection processes of structural indicators. In line with the Eurostat quality concept, quality is defined along several dimensions. The quality profile aims at a quick overview on how far an indicator is deemed 'fit for use' with regard to its key objectives.

The Eurostat quality profile for Europe 2020 indicators covers the following quality dimensions: feasibility by looking at timeliness and coverage; technical soundness, comprising overall accuracy, comparability (over time and across countries). For each of these components a brief overall assessment (high/restricted) is provided, substantiated by further qualitative information, if considered useful.

For SDIs the quality profile includes information on timeliness, accuracy, comparability and relevance,

as well as information on how the indicator could be improved.

User support

Eurostat and the other members of the ESS have set up a system of user support centres – European Statistical Data Support (ESDS). These exist for nearly all of the EU's official languages and for a range of languages spoken in the EFTA, candidate and western Balkan countries.

In order to offer the best possible and personalised support, requests should, whenever possible, be addressed to the relevant language support centre. The mission of each centre is to provide free of charge additional help and guidance to users who are having difficulty in finding the statistical data they require. The contact information for the support centres is on the 'User support' tab on Eurostat's website (http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/help/user_support).

Eurostat's service for journalists

Statistics make news and they are essential to many reports, features and in-depth analyses. Printed media, as well as radio and television, use Eurostat data intensively. Eurostat's press office puts out user-friendly news releases on a key selection of data covering the EU, the euro area, the Member States and their partners. All Eurostat news releases are available free of charge on the Eurostat website at 11 a.m. (C.E.T.) on the day they are released. Around 200 news releases were published in 2011, of which approximately three quarters were based on monthly or quarterly euro-indicators; other releases covered major international events and important Eurostat publications.

Eurostat's press centre helps professional journalists find data on all kinds of topics. Journalists can contact media support for further information on news releases and other data (tel. (352) 4301-33408; e-mail: eurostat-mediasupport@ec.europa.eu).



Linking statistics to European policies

Effective economic and political decision-making depends on the regular supply of reliable information. Statistics are one of the principal sources of such information, providing quantitative support to the development and implementation of policies. Statistics are also a powerful tool for communicating with the general public.

Information needs for policy purposes require constant interaction between policymakers and statisticians: the former formulate their needs for data, and the latter attempt to adapt the statistical production system so as to fulfil those needs. In this way, policies can lead to improvements in statistical production, both in terms of enhancing the quality of existing indicators and of creating new ones.

Policymakers often require highly aggregated indicators which provide a synthetic and clear picture of the different phenomena in which they are interested. Statisticians therefore have to filter and aggregate basic, detailed data in order to increase data readability and extract information (or indicators).

Over recent years, a number of policies have substantially influenced Eurostat's priorities and activities:

- economic and monetary union (EMU) and the creation of the euro area (1999);
- the Lisbon strategy (2000, revised in 2005), including for example the open method of coordination on social inclusion and social protection;
- the EU's sustainable development strategy, EU SDS (2001, renewed in 2006);
- the Europe 2020 strategy (2010), the successor to the Lisbon strategy.

Economic and monetary union and the setting-up of the European Central Bank (ECB) required a broad range of infra-annual short-term statistics to measure economic and monetary developments within the euro area and to assist in the implementation of a common monetary policy. Effective monetary policy depends on timely, reliable and comprehensive economic statistics giving an

overview of the economic situation. These infra-annual short-term statistics are also needed for the assessment of the business cycle.

Europeans place a high value on their quality of life, including aspects such as a clean environment, social protection, prosperity and equity. In recent years the European Council has focused on a number of key areas intended to shape the future social, economic and environmental development of the EU. While Europe 2020 is the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for the next decade, the sustainable development strategy is concerned with improving the quality of life and well-being, both for current and future generations, through seeking a balance between economic development, social cohesion and protection of the environment.

Eurostat has responded to politicians needs in these areas by developing four sets of 'EU policy indicators' that may be accessed through dedicated sections on the Eurostat website either directly from the homepage or from the 'Statistics' tab that appears near the top of every webpage:

- Europe 2020 indicators;
- Euro-indicators and Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs);
- Sustainable development indicators;
- Employment and social policy and equality indicators.

Europe 2020 indicators

The Europe 2020 strategy designed as the successor to the Lisbon strategy was adopted by the European Council on 17 June 2010. It is the EU's common agenda for the next decade – it puts an emphasis on the need for a new growth path that can lead to a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy, a path that can overcome the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy, improve its competitiveness



and productivity and underpin a sustainable social market economy.

The key areas of the strategy where action is needed are limited to five headline targets on the EU level, which are being translated into national targets for each EU country, reflecting the specific situation of its economy. The European Commission adopted seven flagship initiatives in addition to the headline targets, in order to drive progress towards the Europe 2020 goals.

Eurostat provides the statistical support for measuring the progress towards the strategy objectives.

Employment:

- 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed.

R&D / innovation:

- 3 % of the EU's GDP (public and private combined) should be invested in R & D.

Climate change / energy:

- greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by at least 20 % compared with 1990;
- the share of renewable energy sources in final energy consumption should increase to 20 %;
- there should be a 20 % increase in energy efficiency.

Education:

- the share of early school leavers from education and training should be under 10 %;
- at least 40 % of 30-34 year olds should have completed a tertiary (or equivalent) education.

Poverty and social exclusion:

- at least 20 million people should be lifted out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Europe 2020 strategy

The Europe 2020 strategy is part of the European semester (see MEMO/11/14 at <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/14>). This process of enhanced economic coordination was launched in the beginning of 2011. Under the new governance architecture the European Commission assesses each year the main economic challenges for the EU and identifies priority actions to address them. The Member States and the European Commission have first collective discussions at an EU level (on economic and budgetary policies) and then the national decisions follow.

The European Commission's assessment is presented in the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) (see: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/tools/monitoring/annual_growth_survey_2011/index_en.htm). The first AGS was published in January 2011.

To ensure each EU country implements the Europe 2020 strategy in a way that fits its particular situation, the five EU-level targets are being translated into national targets. Countries set their final national targets in National Reform Programmes (NRP) and their macro-economic policies to ensure balanced budgets and financial stability in Stability or Convergence Programmes (SCP) (see http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/sgp/convergence/programmes/2011_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/monitoring-progress/recommendations-2011/index_en.htm).



Based on the National Reform and Stability and Convergence Programmes, the Council concluded the first semester in July 2011 by agreeing on a set of country-specific recommendations, highlighting areas where Member States needed to take further action (see: COM(2011) 400 of 7.6.2011).

In March 2011, Eurostat organised an international conference on ‘statistics for policymakers: Europe 2020’. The aim of the conference was to bring together policymakers and statisticians in a dialogue on how to shape statistics that underpin policymaking. The conference underlined the importance of good interaction and understanding between policy makers and statisticians in order to be able to correctly measure the political targets set.

More information

More information regarding the Europe 2020 indicators may be found on the Eurostat website: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/europe_2020_indicators/headline_indicators.

For more information on this strategy, please refer to European Commission’s website, at: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm.

Euro-indicators / PEEIs

Since October 2001 the euro-indicators / PEEIs web pages have been a reference point for all users of official statistics dealing with short-term data.

Euro-indicators / PEEIs aim to supply business-cycle analysts, policymakers, media, researchers, students, and other interested users with a comprehensive, well structured and high quality set of information which is useful for their daily activities. The core of Euro-indicators / PEEIs comprises a set of statistical indicators giving an

accurate and as timely as possible overview of the economic evolution of the euro area, the EU, and the individual Member States. The Euro-indicators / PEEIs dedicated section contains the following additional products and services intended to assist in the understanding and analysis of data:

- selected Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs);
- background;
- Economic and Financial Committee Status Reports;
- news releases;
- data;
- publications;
- information relating to seminars / conferences.

Data

The data presented in Euro-indicators / PEEIs are built around a set of the most relevant statistics, called Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs), a list of which can be found in the European Commission’s Communication (2002) 661 ⁽⁶⁾. They are presented in three main parts:

- a selected Principal European Economic Indicators webpage (containing an overview on a set of 22 most relevant and timely short-term economic indicators for the euro area and the EU) directly accessible on the Euro-indicators / PEEIs homepage;
- Euro-indicators tables (included as the first branch of the ‘Tables on EU policy’ section of the data navigation tree as short-term indicators);
- European and national short-term statistics database (included as the first branch of the ‘Database by themes’ section of the data navigation tree – under the heading of ‘General and regional statistics’ – as European and national short term indicators – Euroind).

⁽⁶⁾ For more information: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52002DC0661:EN:NOT>.

European Union* Print

Euro Area**

	Release date		Unit	Reference period					
	latest	next		2010q4	2011q1	2011q2	2011q3	2011q4	2012q1
GDP in volume	06/06/2012	04/07/2012	% (Q/Q-1)	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.1	-0.3	0.0
			% (Q/Q-4)	2.0	2.6	1.8	1.3	0.3	0.3
Private final consumption in volume	06/06/2012	04/07/2012	% (Q/Q-1)	0.4	-0.1	-0.4	0.3	-0.5	0.0
			% (Q/Q-4)	1.1	0.7	0.6	0.2	-0.7	-0.1
Investments in volume	06/06/2012	04/07/2012	% (Q/Q-1)	-0.6	1.8	-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-1.4
			% (Q/Q-4)	1.7	3.8	1.1	0.6	0.4	-1.7
				2011m12	2012m1	2012m2	2012m3	2012m4	2012m5
External trade balance	15/06/2012	16/07/2012	mio euro	6855.6	5217.1	3857.3	3742.7	6205.9	(:)
Current account - Total	23/05/2012	21/06/2012	mio euro	21640	-10111	-5632	7543	(:)	(:)
				2011m12	2012m1	2012m2	2012m3	2012m4	2012m5
Inflation (HICP all items)	14/06/2012	29/06/2012	% (M/M-1)	0.3	-0.8	0.5	1.3	0.5	-0.1
			% (M/M-12)	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.4
				2011m12	2012m1	2012m2	2012m3	2012m4	2012m5
Unemployment rate - Total	01/06/2012	02/07/2012	%	10.7	10.8	10.9	11.0	11.0	(:)
Unemployment rate - 15-24 years	01/06/2012	02/07/2012	%	21.6	21.8	21.9	22.2	22.2	(:)
Unemployment rate - above 24 years	01/06/2012	02/07/2012	%	9.5	9.6	9.7	9.8	9.8	(:)
				2010q4	2011q1	2011q2	2011q3	2011q4	2012q1
Labour Cost Index	14/06/2012	13/09/2012	% (Q/Q-1)	0.5	1.1	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.3
			% (Q/Q-4)	1.6	2.5	3.3	2.5	2.8	2.0
Employment	15/06/2012	14/09/2012	% (Q/Q-1)	0.1	0.0	0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2
			% (Q/Q-4)	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.2	-0.2	-0.5
				2011m12	2012m1	2012m2	2012m3	2012m4	2012m5
Industrial producer prices	04/06/2012	03/07/2012	% (M/M-1)	-0.2	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.0	(:)
			% (M/M-12)	4.3	3.9	3.7	3.5	2.6	(:)

Both the main tables for Euro-indicators and the Euroind database are divided into the following eight domains:

- balance of payments;
- business and consumer surveys;
- consumer prices;
- external trade;
- industry, commerce and services;
- labour market;
- monetary and financial indicators;
- national accounts.

Publications and working papers

The main publication in this domain is called 'Eurostatistics'. It is a monthly release that presents

a synthetic picture of the macro-economic situation together with detailed statistical analysis of the latest economic events for the euro area, the EU, and the Member States. It is based on PEEIs, which are complemented by some business cycle indicators. The latest issue of 'Eurostatistics' is accessible from the homepage of the Euro-indicators / PEEIs dedicated section. Previous issues are also accessible – by selecting the 'publications' entry in the left-hand menu of the euro-indicators / PEEIs dedicated section and then clicking on the link to 'Official publications'. Under the same heading of 'publications', users may, for example, access a collection of 'selected readings' and 'working papers', containing both methodological and empirical studies on statistical activities and analyses of European data.



Quality reports

Since 2001, the Euroind database has been subject to monthly quality monitoring. The results of this assessment are presented in a detailed online publication called 'State of affairs', also accessible from the 'publications' link in the left-hand menu of the Euro-indicators / PEEIs dedicated section. A synthesis of the assessment is presented in another publication, entitled the 'Monitoring report', accessible from the same location.

Economic and Financial Committee Status Reports

PEEIs were designed together with timeliness targets. Since 2002, the progress achieved and the remaining challenges have been constantly monitored. Each year Eurostat, in cooperation with the European Central Bank, drafts a Status Report on Information Requirements in the European monetary union (EMU) which is first submitted to the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) and then to the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN). The EFC Status Reports from 2005 onwards can be found in the Euro-indicators / PEEIs dedicated section by selecting the 'PEEIs'

entry in the left-hand menu and then clicking on the link 'EFC Status Report'.

More information

It is possible to access Euro-indicators / PEEIs data directly via the Euro-indicators / PEEIs dedicated section at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/euroindicators>. It is also possible to contact the Euro-indicators team by e-mail at: ESTAT-EUROINDICATORS@ec.europa.eu.

Sustainable development indicators

The EU sustainable development strategy (EU SDS), adopted by the European Council in Gothenburg in June 2001, and renewed in June 2006, aims to continuously improve the quality of life, for both current and future generations, through reconciling economic development, social cohesion and protection of the environment. A set of sustainable development indicators (SDIs) has been developed to monitor progress in the implementation of the strategy. The indicators are organised within ten themes (and sub-themes) that reflect different political priorities (see first column of Table 2). The set of indicators has been built as a four-level pyramid.

Table 1: Framework for sustainable development indicators

Indicator level	Hierarchical framework	Indicator types
Level 1	Lead objectives	11 headline indicators are at the top of the pyramid. They are intended to monitor the 'overall objectives' of the strategy. They are well-known indicators with a high communication value. They are robust and available for most EU Member States for a period of at least five years.
Level 2	SDS priority objectives	The second level of the pyramid consists of ca. 30 indicators related to the operational objectives of the strategy. They are the lead indicators in their respective subthemes. They are robust and available for most EU Member States for a period of at least three years.
Level 3	Actions/explanatory variables	The third level consists of ca. 80 indicators related to actions outlined in the strategy or to other issues which are useful to analyse progress towards the SDS objectives. Breakdowns of level-1 or -2 indicators are usually also found at level 3.
Contextual indicators	Background	Contextual indicators are part of the SDI set, but they either do not monitor directly any of the strategy's objectives or they are not policy responsive. Generally they are difficult to interpret in a normative way. However, they provide valuable background information on issues having direct relevance for sustainable development policies and are useful for the analysis.

The distinction between the top three levels of indicators reflects the structure of the renewed strategy (overall lead objectives, operational priority objectives, and actions / explanatory variables) and also responds to different kinds of user needs. These three levels of the pyramid are complemented with contextual indicators, which do not monitor directly the strategy's objectives, but provide valuable background information for analysis. The SDI data set also describes indicators which are not yet fully developed but which will, in the future, be necessary to get a more complete picture of progress, differentiating between indicators

that are expected to become available within some years, with sufficient quality ('indicators under development'), and those to be developed in the longer term ('indicators to be developed').

The table below presents the situation as regards the progress made with respect to the headline indicators, as presented in the 2011 edition of the Eurostat monitoring report of the EU sustainable development strategy (the weather symbols reflect in most cases the progress towards the EU objectives or targets between 2000 and 2009-2010).

Table 2: Headline sustainable development indicators and progress being made within the EU

SDI theme	Headline indicator	EU-27 evaluation of change (since 2000)
Socioeconomic development	Real GDP per capita	
Climate change and energy	Greenhouse gas emissions	
	Consumption of renewables ⁽¹⁾	
Sustainable transport	Energy consumption of transport relative to GDP	
Sustainable consumption and production	Resource productivity	
Natural resources	Abundance of common birds ⁽²⁾	
	Conservation of fish stocks	
Public health	Life expectancy and healthy life years ⁽³⁾	
Social inclusion	Risk of poverty or social exclusion ⁽⁴⁾	
Demographic changes	Employment rate of older workers	
Global partnership	Official development assistance	
Good governance	[No headline indicator]	:



Clearly favourable change / on target path



Moderately unfavourable change / far from target path



No or moderately favourable change / close to target path



Clearly unfavourable change / moving away from target path

⁽¹⁾ From 2005.

⁽²⁾ Based on 19 Member States.

⁽³⁾ From 2002.

⁽⁴⁾ From 2006.

Source: Eurostat



More information

More information on the set of sustainable development indicators may be found on the Eurostat website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/sustainabledevelopment>, or by contacting: estat-sdi@ec.europa.eu. There is also a comprehensive publication on the subject, 'Sustainable development in the European Union: 2011 monitoring report of the EU sustainable development strategy', available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=KS-31-11-224&mode=view>.

Employment and social policy and equality indicators

This collection of indicators covers various aspects of employment and social policy and equality issues. The indicators are used to monitor and report upon progress being made as regards EU policies relating to:

- employment;
- social inclusion and social protection;
- education and training;
- information society;
- youth policy;
- equality issues.

European Employment Strategy

Since the launch of the European Employment Strategy (EES) in 1997 indicators have been used for the assessment of Member States' progress on implementing the employment guidelines that have been developed under the EES, and that are proposed by the European Commission and approved by the European Council. The guidelines were most recently revised in 2010 as part of the Europe 2020 strategy⁽⁷⁾. The EES seeks to create more and better jobs throughout the EU and encourages measures that are designed to meet three headline target objectives, namely, that:

- 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed;
- the share of early school leavers from education and training should be under 10 %; at least 40 %

- of 30-34 year olds should have completed a tertiary (or equivalent) education;
- at least 20 million people should be lifted out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Most of the indicators for monitoring and analysis of the employment guidelines are provided by Eurostat. For more information on the list of indicators as well as the EES, please refer to the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion website, at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=101&langId=en>.

Joint assessment framework

A joint assessment framework (JAF) for the employment guidelines within the context of the Europe 2020 strategy has been developed. Among other points this includes a quantitative monitoring of progress towards the relevant EU headline target and related national targets (see Europe 2020 indicators above). This aims to provide a quantitative tracking of progress with respect to these targets, as well as for the labour market participation and social inclusion of specific groups. The results should contribute to an 'employment performance monitor', an easy to communicate summary that can be used to identify at a glance the main challenges.

Open method of coordination on social inclusion and social protection

The Lisbon strategy gave rise to the open method of coordination (OMC) that provides a framework for political coordination (without legal constraints) in relation to social inclusion and social protection issues; this framework continues under the Europe 2020 strategy. The OMC is a flexible and decentralised method, which involves:

- agreeing on common objectives which set out high-level, shared goals to underpin the entire process;
- agreeing to a set of common indicators which show how progress towards these goals can be measured;

⁽⁷⁾ For more information see part II of: <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/Brochure%20Integrated%20Guidelines.pdf>.



- preparing national strategic reports, in which Member States set out how they will plan policies over an agreed period to meet the common objectives;
- evaluating these strategies jointly through the European Commission and the Member States.

Indicators that form part of the open method of coordination on social inclusion and social protection (OMC) can be accessed directly from the Eurostat website, through the left-hand menu of the dedicated section covering employment and social policy and equality indicators, that may be found by clicking on the 'Statistics' tab near the top of the screen on each webpage. The indicators are currently divided into four strands, covering:

- overarching indicators;
- indicators of the social inclusion strand;
- indicators of the pension strand;
- indicators of the health and long term care strand.

Common indicators allow a comparison of best practices to be made and also measure progress being made towards common objectives. For more information about the open method of coordination on social inclusion and social protection, please refer to the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion website, at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=753&langId=en>.

Education and training

To ensure their contribution to the Lisbon strategy, the ministers of education from the Member States adopted in 2001 a report on the future objectives of education and training systems agreeing for the first time on shared objectives to be achieved by 2010; a year later in 2002, a ten-year work programme was endorsed.

On 25 May 2007 the Council adopted conclusions on a coherent framework of 16 core indicators for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and methodology are available on the Eurostat website as part of the dedicated section covering employment and social policy and equality.

The programme was subsequently extended to cover the period through to 2020. The long-term

strategic objectives of EU education and training policies are:

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
- enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Five new goals have already been defined for 2020, through a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), by when:

- an average of at least 15 % of adults (aged 25-64) should participate in lifelong learning;
- the share of low-achieving 15-years olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15 %;
- the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40 %;
- the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10 %;
- at least 95 % of children between four years of age and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education.

For more information on these programmes, please refer to Directorate-General for Education and Culture website, at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm.

European Information Society for growth and employment

Within the context of the renewed Lisbon agenda, a strategic framework for a European information society for growth and employment (i2010) was launched. This was succeeded, in 2010, by the Digital Agenda for Europe, one of the seven flagship initiatives within the Europe 2020 strategy.

The benchmarking framework for measuring progress in relation to the i2010 strategy was set up and approved in April 2006; it contained a set of core indicators and provided for flexible modules on specific issues to be defined each year. On



9 November 2009 a new benchmarking initiative was endorsed, providing the conceptual framework for the collection of statistics and the development of a list of core indicators to cover the period through to 2015. For more information, please refer to: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/europe/i2010/docs/benchmarking/benchmarking_digital_europe_2011-2015.pdf.

Annual Community surveys on ICT usage in households and by individuals are a major source of information for the Digital Agenda scoreboard. The data presented on Eurostat's website as part of the dedicated section covering employment and social policy indicators is divided into four main themes:

- developments of broadband;
- advanced services;
- inclusion;
- public services.

For more information on the Digital Agenda and its scoreboard, please refer to the Directorate-General for Information Society website, at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/index_en.htm.

Youth policy

The EU's youth strategy (2010-2018) seeks to promote better educational and job opportunities for young people, as well as active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity. A list of EU Youth Indicators has been developed by an expert group. This contains a set of contextual indicators as well as more specific indicators.

Indicators have already been agreed in certain policy fields:

- education and training;
- employment and entrepreneurship;
- social inclusion;
- health and well-being.

New indicators have been proposed in fields where they do not currently exist or where no youth perspective is apparent:

- culture and creativity;
- youth participation;

- volunteering;
- youth and the world.

The indicators presented in the dedicated section on Youth on Eurostat's website are those based on data from Eurostat. Other indicators (for example from Eurobarometer surveys) are accessible from the youth domain of the website of the Directorate-General Education and Culture, as is more information on the EU's youth policy: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/overview_en.htm.

Equality

This final heading covers equality issues: although EU law prohibits discrimination in a number of areas, statistics show that various types of inequalities still exist. The Lisbon Treaty proposed taking action to combat discrimination based on gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. In some of these areas, it is difficult to gauge from statistics how far equality has been achieved, but for others information is being developed. Eurostat therefore intends to expand its collection of data in order to cover the different forms of equality as and when suitable indicators become available. At the time of writing, there are two main strands of equality indicators – those relating to gender issues and those relating to age issues. For the former, the information is split into the following headings:

- education;
- labour market;
- earnings and social inclusion;
- childcare;
- health.

A similar list is used to categorise the information that has been collected for age equality measures, although this does not include childcare, but is extended to cover the population and the use of information technology.