



## **68<sup>th</sup> ESGAB meeting**

**Wednesday, 24 June 2020**

Minutes

Virtual meeting

Doc ESGAB 2020/50

The Secretariat



24 June 2020

## Minutes

68<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB)

Expert Group X02147

24 June 2020

Virtual meeting

### **1. Welcome and adoption of the agenda**

The draft agenda (Doc. 2020/27) was adopted.

### **2. 2020 ESGAB Annual Report**

The Chair informed the ESGAB members that he presented the 2019 annual report to the Economic and Financial Committee – Sub-Committee on Statistics (EFC-SCS). The EFC-SCS expressed their wish to be briefed on the content of the 2020 Annual Report in advance of its publication. To this end, the Chair will present the draft report to the EFC-SCS in autumn. The Chair also confirmed the intention to publish the 2020 annual report in January 2021.

ESGAB members agreed on a new table of contents for the report, split into three chapters. The first chapter will focus on the ESS response to the coronavirus pandemic, taking into account what has been done so far and what could be the consequences for the ESS in terms of governance, followed by recommendations.

The second chapter will focus on the opportunities to strengthen the ESS and will be divided into three parts: new priorities for the European Commission and their impact on statistics, cooperation with ESAC; ESGAB recommendations. This chapter could also contain a box explaining the actions taken by the ESS after the latest three DGINS Conferences to implement the decisions taken.

Chapter three will analyse the challenges in implementing the Code of Practice (CoP) by the ESS. It will contain sections on the peer review exercise and on the appointment and dismissal of the Heads of NSIs, and will address the status of implementation of the improvement actions following previous ESGAB recommendations and the latest peer review exercise. The chapter will conclude with the ESGAB recommendations.

The allocation of tasks and deadlines have also been discussed and agreed by members.



### **3. European Data Strategy**

ESGAB discussed the European Data Strategy, based on the analysis by one member who also identified possible threats and opportunities for the ESS.

The European Data Strategy will make more data available for use in the economy and society. Its main goal is to create a single market for data, which will make the EU more competitive globally and will enable innovative processes, products and services. Several Directorates General of the Commission are involved in this project, including Eurostat.

One ESGAB member asked if Eurostat will be involved in the preparation of the Data Act, while another member underlined that it is crucial for Eurostat to participate from the very beginning to the work of implementation of the Strategy, so that the knowledge of the ESS is taken into account from the start.

Ms Kotzeva confirmed that Eurostat is working closely with DG CONNECT on the Data Act; however, the preparatory work is still at a very early stage. Eurostat currently focuses on another legislative act, scheduled for the end of 2020, regarding the governance of the common European Data Spaces.

ESGAB members decided to include in the annual report some information about the European Data Strategy, as well as about the new developments to be discussed by the ESS

### **4. Information from Eurostat on recent and future developments in the ESS**

Ms Kotzeva summarised the recent developments and the way forward concerning the ESS response to the Covid-19 outbreak. This crisis has brought new information demands and the ESS made all the efforts necessary to meet these expectations. For example, Eurostat published, with the cooperation of the NSIs, weekly death rates, going back 20 years, and several methodological notes with guidance on how to deal with the impact of the pandemic on statistics.

Ms Kotzeva explained that the period of recovery is starting and the ESS has to reflect on ways to anticipate data requirements and provide a swift ESS reply, and in this way, be even more relevant in the combat against the pandemic and its economic and social repercussions.

Ms Kotzeva also presented the 'Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context' and the Commission's Demography Report to which Eurostat had a major contribution.

ESGAB members welcomed these developments, stressing the importance of the Eurostat role in coordinating and stimulating the whole ESS to effectively perform its fundamental role in a so difficult moment.

Another ESGAB member recommended that the ESS find ways of communicating to the wide public the achievements accomplished under these very difficult circumstances. People should be made aware of the incredible efforts made by the ESS since the start of the outbreak. One



good occasion to deploy this communication campaign could be the World Statistics Day on 20 October.

Ms Kotzeva agreed with this idea and said that the ESS will reflect on the best ways to promote these achievements to the general public.

Ms Kotzeva also informed ESGAB on the time schedule for the forthcoming peer review exercise: Member States have been consulted on their availability and preferred dates and Eurostat is summarising the results. ESGAB will be informed in case of change in the planned timetable, as it may have an impact on the peer review of Eurostat to be conducted by ESGAB.

Ms Kotzeva also informed ESGAB that, as several Member States have introduced fiscal measures to support companies in overcoming the crisis, they are asking for guidance on how to record them in the government finance statistics. Eurostat provided methodological support from the start and will continue to cooperate closely with the NSIs.

ESGAB members asked for details on the revision of the SNA. Eurostat will send a progress report after the summer break.

## **5. Overview of the appointment and dismissal procedures of the Heads of NSIs**

ESGAB members agreed that an important part of maintaining the independence of the statistical system is the way in which the Heads of the NSIs are appointed and dismissed. In case there are problems, ESGAB, as a governance body, has to react in real time.

ESGAB members also discussed the available information (a summary of the provisions in national legislation) and agreed that they would need more concrete details that will enable them to analyse this topic and include it in the annual report.

It was agreed that Eurostat will send to ESGAB all available information on the number of the recently appointed and dismissed Heads of NSIs.

## **6. Eurostat's peer review**

ESGAB members agreed that Mr Priit Potisepp will edit the SAQ and adapt it to the needs of Eurostat, and then circulate the document to ESGAB members for comments. In the coming months, ESGAB will also discuss and agree on the list of stakeholders to be interviewed.

## **7. Next meeting**

The next ESGAB meeting will take place on 14 October.



## **List of participants**

### Members

Mr Enrico Giovannini (Chair)

Mr Algirdas Šemeta

Mr Kai Carstensen

Mr Priit Potisepp

Ms Mireille Elbaum

Ms Frances Ruane

Mr Bart de Moor

### Observers

Ms Mariana Kotzeva (Eurostat)

### Secretariat

Ms Delia Bistreanu