



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

**Monday, 21 February 2022**

Minutes

Virtual meeting

Doc ESGAB 2022/23

The Secretariat



21 February 2022

## Minutes

80th Meeting of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB)

Expert Group X02147

21 February 2022

Virtual meeting

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

The draft agenda (Doc. 2022/15) was adopted without amendments and the action points from the previous meeting were scrutinised to ensure all follow ups.

The ESGAB Chair proceeded with making relevant announcements. He informed the members that he has been invited to participate in the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) meeting, to be held on 14 March. The Chair will present the main findings of the ESGAB Annual Report 2021 and will answer questions posed by the MEPs.

The Chair informed the Board that the appointment of a new ESGAB member is proceeding in a timely manner. The EFC discussed this point in their meeting on 17 February and no objections were raised to the candidate proposed by ESGAB. Consequently, an official letter of endorsement will be sent by the EFC President to the President of ECOFIN.

The Chair will also present the ESGAB Annual Report 2021 to the Austrian Statistical Society on 4 March, which will constitute a good opportunity to increase the visibility of ESGAB. One member noted that ESGAB is not well known as an institution and this means that it cannot be easily found if there is a problem regarding statistical principles. Another member agreed and proposed that the issue of visibility of ESGAB be put on the agenda of a future ESGAB meeting for brainstorming on how to improve this visibility. The Chair underlined that it is important to find different means to promote the activity of ESGAB. To this end, he stated that in one of the future meetings there will be a discussion on how to attain this goal.

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

Eurostat informed the members of the outcome of the ESSC meeting held on 10-11 February. One of the items on the agenda was the progress report on the implementation of the 3rd round of ESS peer reviews and the overall feedback was positive. Since some of the visits were in



virtual format, the ESSC agreed to have minor adjustments for example on the presentation of recommendations, which can be done the week after the peer review visits. In the near future, the scheduled peer review visits will be physical.

Eurostat also informed that the Data Act will be adopted by the Commission on 23 February.

Eurostat attended the last EFC meeting where the appointment of a new ESGAB member was discussed. The point was adopted and now the official procedure is ongoing.

One ESGAB member enquired if there exists a text with the view of Eurostat on appropriate access by official statistics to privately-held data and which view Eurostat would like to have reflected in Regulation 223/2009. The member asked if it would be possible for Eurostat to send this text, if available, to the Board. Eurostat explained that it is still early, as for the moment they are assessing what needs to change in the Regulation. These issues will be discussed by the newly created PG Task Force and at the High-Level meeting, which will take place on 7-8 April, in Lyon. Consequently, more information will be available at the end of April.

The Chair asked if Eurostat will draft an assessment of the Data Act regarding possible consequences for official statistics and if it could be shared with ESGAB. Eurostat confirmed that it is working on an analysis, which could be sent to the Board, along with implications for the amendment of Regulation 223 in mid to late April.

The Chair raised the issue of the inclusion of owner-occupied housing in the HICP, and the challenges that this entails, which were discussed by the ESSC. Eurostat agreed that it will be challenging to find a way how to implement it. It noted that the proposal put forward by the ECB was valid, but it is not the only approach. A newly created Task Force will analyse all possible approaches and will make a sound methodological proposal.

In this context, one ESGAB member suggested to have in place more than one measure for a few years and then take a decision later on. Eurostat said that indeed, for the moment, no option is excluded.

One ESGAB member agreed that it was a good initiative to set up a Task Force and asked what was its composition and if it will hold consultations with experts who are non-statisticians and have an economics background. Eurostat informed that the Task Force will have members from 10 countries, the ECB, the IMF and the OECD, who are statistical experts from the areas of price statistics and national accounts. It noted that the composition of the Task Force is balanced, which will enable it to analyse the methodology from all angles.

The ESGAB member underlined that it is important that a very careful and open approach is followed in amending the methodology of the CPI, which is and will continue to be a very sensitive indicator. The member emphasized that it is important to make sure that the standard setting process is science based and to include economists along with statisticians in the process. It was further suggested to have an intensive communication outreach for the public, seek feedback and organise conferences in order to have public acceptance. Eurostat agreed with this approach.



One Board member asked about the state of play of the 2021 census round and if all data collections are completed. Eurostat said that all Member States have finished, except for Germany, Ireland and Hungary, who will be done in the first quarter of 2022. The data collected will be provided to Eurostat in two steps: microdata by the end of 2022 and all other census data by the end of March 2024.

The Chair informed the members on his intervention at the ESSC, where he presented the ESGAB 2021 Annual Report and recommendations. He explained that he put emphasis on the role of ESGAB as ‘watchdog’ and ‘guardian angel’ for the NSIs and invited Member States to contact ESGAB for any issues they might have. The report was very well received and the committee welcomed the recommendations. Eurostat confirmed that the ESSC appreciated the forward-looking aspect of ESGAB’s work and is working on an action plan in response to the recommendations.

The ESGAB Chair thanked Eurostat for their input and the interesting discussion.

The following sessions were held without the presence of the Eurostat observers.

### **3. Revision of Regulation 223/2009**

The ESGAB member in charge of drafting the issues paper regarding areas of potential amendment of Regulation 223 presented the paper and explained that it identified a number of issues that remained unsolved from previous amendments of the legislation as well as new issues that have become apparent in recent years and also proposed solutions to tackle these various issues.

The Chair thanked the members for their contributions so far and invited them to submit to him written comments on the paper by 5 March 2022. The comments will be shared with the member that drafted the paper and will then be discussed within a smaller group. This would be consistent with the acceleration under way of the schedule of work in this area that had been proposed in the December 2021 ESGAB meeting. This in turn would help provide inputs to those (ESSC, Eurostat) planning to prepare by the last quarter of 2022 the proposal for the amendment of Regulation 223.

The Chair draw the attention of the Board to a second paper to be drafted by ESGAB on the challenges faced by the ESS in a digital world. This paper should review in a forward-looking way the shortcomings of Regulation 223/2009 in this respect.

One ESGAB member said that the peer review of Eurostat already covers the main aspects and this could constitute a basis for discussion.

The Chair asked several ESGAB members to work on a first draft, which should be sent to him by 23 March 2022.



ESGAB members agreed that it would be extremely useful to learn what obstacles Eurostat and the ESS see in their work due to Regulation 223/2009. Consequently, the Chair of the Partnership Group and a senior manager of Eurostat will be invited to the next ESGAB meeting to discuss these issues.

#### **4. Next meetings**

The members agreed to fix the dates of all subsequent ESGAB meetings until the end of the year so they can block them in their agendas in advance. The exact dates of the meetings will be established based on a doodle poll.