

## **98<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**9 January 2024**

**14.45 – 18.00**

Meeting in Videoconference

## **Minutes of the meeting**

**Doc. ESGAB/2024(13)**

### **A.1- Welcome by the Chair - Adoption of the agenda**

The Chair welcomed Ms. Avis Benes, the new Head of Unit B.2 at Eurostat and the new back-up of the ESGAB Secretary.

Ms Avis Benes briefly introduced herself. She underlined the importance of keeping the proper distance between ESGAB and the Commission.

The Agenda was adopted without changes.

The Chair mentioned that:

- 31 peer Review Reports have been published to date. In the last two reports, the recommendations did not show any new topic that had not been covered in the 2023 Annual Report.
- The appointment procedure of the new chair of ESGAB is ongoing at the European Parliament with a hearing in the ECON committee of Mr. A. Camilleri planned in the coming days.
- The procedure for replacing Martine Durand is ongoing at the Council. The EFC subcommittee on statistics is currently also hearing potential candidates.

### **A.2 - Follow-up of action points of the previous meeting**

The Chair explained that:

- The draft annual report was sent to the publication office for proofreading. The Chair thanked all Members for their contributions over the last weeks and the Secretariat for its availability over the Christmas holidays.
- The draft press release was provided to the Members according to plan.

### **A.3 – Draft Press Release Annual Report 2023**

The draft press release was circulated to Members on 8 January. In the meantime, a Member had made comments and circulated an alternative text.

The Chair invited all Members to comment on the two versions of the draft press release, stressing that there was still the possibility of adopting the document by written procedure after the meeting. Discussion among Members on the two versions ensued.

After fruitful discussions, the Chair invited Members to read the draft press release again and provide comments and suggestions on the following day. The Chair would prepare a revised version by Monday 15 January and circulate it again for comments and approval.

### **A.4 – Next steps before publication of the Annual Report (when/what/ by whom)**

The Chair summarised the next steps as follows:

ESGAB should agree on the press release by 17 January.

In the meantime, the Secretariat will prepare the letters of transmittal to the Commission, the Council and the Parliament.

By the 15th, the Publications Office will provide its comments on the manuscript, which will be sent and distributed to all ESGAB.

By the 19th, the Members will examine the comments of the Publications Office.

A meeting is scheduled for the 23rd to formally adopt the final annual report and press release. The press release and executive summary will be sent to the translators shortly after the meeting.

It is planned to send the report to the Commission, the Council and the Parliament on 29 and 30 January.

The report will be published on the website on 31 January, together with the press release and the executive summary, and will then be sent to Members.

#### **A.5 – Dissemination of the Annual Report**

Regarding the distribution of the Annual Report, the Chair recalled that ESGAB has a list of addresses for the distribution of the Annual Report in its own name and using its own e-mail.

Already last year, ESGAB had started to collect addresses to which the 2023 annual report could be sent.

The Secretary reminded that ESGAB has to formally send the report to the Commission first, before Parliament and Council, as required by law. Regarding the lists, ESGAB had sent a letter to Eurostat asking if it would be possible to share its list of journalists and media with ESGAB.

This was not considered possible due to the data protection rules applicable to the Commission and other institutions, including ESGAB. The Secretariat has been in contact with the Data Protection Coordinator of Eurostat in order to proceed with the establishment of an ESGAB list of addresses for distribution of its products in accordance with these rules. To this end, the Secretariat will draft a privacy statement which will be published on the ESGAB website and/or sent to the recipients, journalists or contacts included in the ESGAB list.

ESGAB must also publish a record on its website. The European Commission itself has a register where it publishes all records of files subject to data protection rules. A record is a declaration that data controllers handle a list, file or database containing personal data relating to a certain category of persons.

A privacy statement and a record have been drafted and sent to the Eurostat Data Protection Coordinator for comments. They will be submitted to the ESGAB for approval at the 99th meeting scheduled for 22 January.

The ESGAB website will need to be slightly modified so that when people contact the ESGAB via the email address on the website, they agree to the privacy statement and the way we will handle the information relating to them.

As for the list itself, the ESGAB Secretariat has used the list of addresses used last year. The privacy statement will be sent to those contacts who are subject to the data protection rules.

The Secretary asked Members to provide any additional contacts who would potentially like to stay informed about ESGAB.

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its work.

One Member wanted to thank the Secretariat for the above very important institution-building efforts and said that it has taken a lot of work, but through this effort, ESGAB has done an important step towards affirming its independence as an institution. It is also a model for other ESGAB-like bodies.

The Chair stressed that it would of course be very helpful if Members could perhaps add some other names to the list. In addition, each ESGAB Member is free to forward the Annual Report to any direct contacts they have in their own name, under their own responsibility, once it is published on 31 January. The Chair also encouraged Members to make presentations.

The Chair will present the annual report to the ESSC on 8/9 February, hopefully with the new Chair.

There may still be an annual presentation to the European Parliament and the EFC Subcommittee on Statistics, and possibly to the Commissioner.

There are already plans to present it at the Quality and Statistics Conference in Portugal in June.

Members are invited to inform the Secretariat if they would like to present the report or write an article about it.

#### **A.6 – Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on 23 January via videoconference and will be dedicated to the final approval of the annual report, the press release, and the executive summary.

ESGAB will also invite Eurostat to present the follow-up of the peer review of Eurostat from 2021 and the improvement actions undertaken.

The Director General of Eurostat explained that this would not be possible at the next meeting due to conflicting arrangements. Therefore, it was suggested to postpone this discussion to another ESGAB meeting.

#### **A.7 – A.O.B**

N/A

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### **List of participants**

#### **Members**

Mr. Aurel Schubert (Chair)

Mr. Kai Carstensen  
Mrs. Daniela Cocchi  
Mr. Andreas Georgiou  
Mr. Pritt Potisepp  
Mr. Juan Manuel Rodriguez Poo

**Observers**

Mrs. Mariana Kotzeva

**Secretariat**

Mr Didier Lebrun  
Mrs. Avis Benes  
Mrs. Maria-Laura Bongoma