

### **Governments also have to commit themselves to the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice**

***While the recent revision of the Code is a step to the right direction, its implementation in the European Statistical System falls short of expectations. Above all, a stronger commitment from governments is needed in order for the Code to be fully implemented by all those involved in developing, producing and disseminating reliable official statistics.***

A number of aspects which have a strong impact on the professional independence of the National Statistical Institutes are in the hands of political decision makers. These include rules on the appointment and dismissal of the head of the statistical office or on resource allocation which depend on a variety of administrative and political circumstances in the different countries. However, the statistical offices alone are seen as being responsible for implementing the Code. Mr Johnny Åkerholm, the Chair of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB), concludes as follows: "The Code is an excellent tool to ensure high quality of statistics, but it does not reach out to those who decide about the institutional environment. This must change. Those who are responsible for ensuring solid institutional setting of the statistical offices and a mid-term financial perspective to secure investments in future developments must acknowledge their responsibility in strengthening the credibility of official statistics."

ESGAB's third annual report to the European Parliament and the Council focuses on three core principles of the code: professional independence, adequacy of resources and quality commitment. ESGAB endorses the recent revision of the Code of Practice and the measures put forward in the Communication towards robust quality management of European statistics COM(2011) 211. The report puts forward ten recommendations and takes a view on the implementation of improvement actions in individual countries. ESGAB reiterates the need to modernise the statistical legislation and to implement it in the spirit of the Code. ESGAB expects the Commission decision from 1997, which defines the role of Eurostat, to be updated as a priority. National statistical institutes are encouraged to increase collaboration at European level and to enhance dialogue with budgetary and policy decision makers. ESGAB also looks forward to the implementation of the quality management framework introduced in the revised Code of Practice and assesses its first three-year-term, which is coming to an end.

### **Further information**

The ESGAB 2011 report with a short executive summary is available on the ESGAB homepage (<http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>).

### **Contact for media assistance**

To arrange an interview with the ESGAB Chair, Mr Johnny Åkerholm, please contact the ESGAB secretariat: Heli Lehtimäki ([estat-esgab@ec.europa.eu](mailto:estat-esgab@ec.europa.eu)), tel. +352 4301-36484.

### **About ESGAB**

The European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) was established by the European Parliament and the Council in 2008 to provide an independent overview of the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice in the European Statistical System. ESGAB's work aims at enhancing professional independence, integrity and accountability of the European Statistical System, key elements of the code of practice, as well as enhancing the quality of European statistics.

ESGAB consists of seven members. Its tasks include the preparation of an annual report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the code of practice insofar as it relates to the Commission (Eurostat) and the European Statistical System as a whole. ESGAB also advises the Commission (Eurostat) on appropriate measures to facilitate the process.

### **Key concepts**

The **European Statistics Code of Practice** is based on 15 principles. Governance and statistical authorities in the European Union undertake to adhere to the principles of the code covering the institutional environment, statistical processes and outputs. A set of indicators of good practice for each principle provides a reference for reviewing the implementation of the code.

Code of practice: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/quality/documents/CoP\\_October\\_2011.pdf](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/quality/documents/CoP_October_2011.pdf)

The **European Statistical System (ESS)**: the partnership between the Union statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), and the national statistical institutes and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics (see [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/ess\\_eurostat/introduction](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/ess_eurostat/introduction)).