

## **THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM OF LATVIA: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

The national statistical system of Latvia may be classified as functionally centralised, with the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) acting as the principal executor and co-ordinator of the main statistical work. However, apart from the CSB, which is subordinated to the Ministry of Economics, institutions such as the Bank of Latvia, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Employment State Agency, the Citizenship and Migration Board, the Health Statistics and Medical Technologies State Agency and others are also involved in the production of official statistics.

The system of official statistics in Latvia is territorially decentralised, as apart from the central office (located in Riga, the capital city), the structure of CSB also includes the data collection and processing centres and information centres situated either in other cities under state jurisdiction<sup>1</sup> or in administrative districts. Several of the other institutions that produce official statistics have territorial organisational units engaged in statistics production.

The core document regulating official statistics and CSB activities is the Official Statistics Law. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1997, the Saeima (Parliament) adopted the Law with subsequent amendments. Regulation No.994 of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 30 November 2004 “Regulation of the Central Statistical Bureau” formulates the objectives of CSB activities, lays down its managerial functions, tasks and rights as well as its structure. On the 16<sup>th</sup> December of 1999 the Saeima adopted the Law on Population Census according to which population censuses in Latvia must be conducted not less than once in ten years.

Every year, in compliance with Article 4 and 5 of the Official Statistics Law, the State Programme of Statistical Information is published within the framework of Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers covering official statistics of the country (not only statistics compiled by the CSB but also by other institutions), its periodicity and the level of aggregation.

The CSB and other institutions involved in official statistics production follow in their practice the principles set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice.

The mission of the Central Statistical Bureau is to provide domestic and foreign data users with timely, accurate, complete, easily comprehensible and internationally comparable statistical information on the economic, demographic, social and environmental phenomena and processes in Latvia applying state-of-the-art information technology solutions and best experiences within the sector.

The execution of the basic functions of the Central Statistical Bureau, namely, the production of statistical information is implemented by five departments: the Price Statistics Department, the Agricultural and Environment Statistics Department, the Macroeconomic Statistics Department, the Social Statistics Department and the

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<sup>1</sup> Cities under state jurisdiction – cities which are physically situated in administrative districts but do not belong to administrative districts neither territorially nor de jure. They are independent and have the same status as administrative districts.

Business Statistics Department as well as two independent divisions - the Mathematical Support Division and the Statistical Methodology and Organisation Division. The Central Data Collection and Processing Centre and four regional data collection and processing centres of which three are located outside of Riga are responsible for data collection from respondents.

The support function in the CSB is implemented by four departments: the Administrative Department, the International Project Management and Finance Department, the Information, Publishing and Printing Department and the Informatics Department as well as several independent divisions.

The CSB acquires primary statistical information from respondents such as enterprises, organisations, the population and households by means of regular (annual, quarterly, monthly) surveys and one-off surveys. For the establishment of the range of respondents the sampling method is widely used. To collect data, the CSB makes use of various kinds of sectoral and inter-sectoral questionnaires: for example, in 2007 there are 28 monthly questionnaires, 22 quarterly, 6 semi-annual questionnaires, 59 annual questionnaires etc (altogether 143). Statistical information from the population is collected by means of interviewing individual persons. Every year the Interviewers Service conducts 12 surveys taking interviews from more than 50 thsd households.

For the implementation of statistical surveys and collection of data, information is increasingly drawn from the country's administrative registers, databases and information systems thus reducing the respondents' burden and acquiring additional options for data verification. Currently the CSB uses data from more than 95 administrative data sources such as the State Revenue Service, the Treasury, the Real Estate Cadastre Register of the State Land Service, the Population Register, the Bank of Latvia and the Financial and Market Commission as well as various ministries and institutions under their supervision.

The Integrated Statistical Data Management System (ISDMS) that was put into operation in 2002 is being continuously improved. This is a system based on metadata and standardisation of data processing procedures basically not requiring individual programming. At the end of 2006 this system covered processing of 72 statistical surveys.

A system of electronic statistical data collection (e-survey) has been set up within the ISDMS allowing the completion and submission of questionnaires on the Internet reducing in this way the costs of data collection and accelerating data processing. At the end of 2006 it was feasible by means of the e-survey system to fill-in 49 questionnaires and more than 5 thsd respondents (approximately 15% of the total number of respondents) had registered within this system.

In 2006, the System of Electronic Data Archiving was introduced into the Central Statistical Bureau, with CSB becoming the first operating state institution that has passed its electronic documentation for storage in a state depository.

The CSB implements the Law-defined tasks with the intermediation of its publications, the homepage and databases on the Internet (the total number of available indicators exceeds 2 millions). For the publication of key statistical

indicators and for informing the general society, the participation of representatives from mass media is actively sought by way of preparing press releases and organising press conferences. In 2006, 140 press releases were prepared and 4 press conferences organised.

The CSB provides data compilation services to individuals who need detailed and specific statistical information so this is a possibility for data users to acquire information not routinely published. In 2006 the CSB provided responses to 1772 requests for information.

Following EU accession, work on improving compliance of statistical indicators with EU requirements continues, with close attention paid to improving the quality, timeliness and reliability of statistical indicators. In 2006, compliance of Latvia's statistical indicators with EU requirements was on average 93%.

At the beginning of 2007 there were 508 staff positions within the CSB system; of these, 474 were filled. Nearly half (47%) of the staff positions are civil service posts.

In addition, there are 100 employees not on the regular staff such as interviewers, price collectors, technical staff and others, as well as experts employed periodically for a certain period of time to execute various international projects. 20% of the employees on the staff are working in the regional organisational units.

The CSB employees have a high level of education. As of the beginning of 2007, 72% of the employees in the CSB central office and 51% of the employees in the regional organisational units have higher education; 35 employees hold the master's degree and three have a doctoral degree.

According to the Official Statistics Law, the Central Statistical Bureau co-ordinates the flow of statistical information at the national level as well as the mutual harmonisation of the indicators to be included in state registers and other information systems and the activities of ministries and other state institutions and local governments regarding matters of statistics. This is carried out in the form of centralised supervision over the preparation of tools for statistical observation as well as annual registration of data collection surveys and questionnaires.

For more information visit our homepage: <http://www.csb.gov.lv/?lng=en>