

Annual Statistical Work Programme 2015

OVERALL PRIORITIES

1. POLITICAL AND LEGAL CONTEXT

The European statistics annual work programme for 2015 (hereinafter referred to as the AWP) was drawn up with the following priorities in mind:

Achievement of the objectives laid down in the *European statistical programme 2013-17*¹ and implementation of the *multiannual financial framework 2014-2020*.²

Supporting key policies of the Commission,³ given that when the AWP was drawn up, only political guidelines⁴ for 2015-2020 were available.

Supporting priorities highlighted in the Council conclusions⁵ on EU statistics of 7 November 2014, with particular reference to the economic governance in place in the euro area and in the EU.

Pursuit of actions launched by the *Communication on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade*⁶ and the *joint European Statistical System (ESS) strategy paper*⁷ which spells out the principles applying to the ESS in order to implement the Communication. The strategy paper was reviewed in 2014 to form an updated *ESS Vision 2020*,⁸ with an extended scope covering other key areas like users' needs, quality, data sources, processes, and dissemination and communication.

Implementing the *Commission's Communication to the EP and Council 'Towards robust quality management for European statistics'*,⁹ including a preventive approach to the verification of government finance statistics with a view to reinforcing economic governance. This will be one of the most important activities in 2015.

Implementing the *Europe 2020 strategy*¹⁰ on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the *GDP and beyond initiative*,¹¹ and the follow-up to the *Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report on the measurement of economic performance and social progress*¹² and the statistical aspects of the *Rio+20 Conference outcome document 'The future we want'*. These will continue to be a focus of the ESS in 2015 and beyond.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 99/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2013.

² http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/index_en.cfm.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_en.htm.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/about/juncker-commission/docs/pg_en.pdf.

⁵ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2013845%202014%20INIT>

⁶ Communication on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade, COM(2009) 404 final, 10.8.2009 (hereinafter referred to as the *Communication on the production method of EU statistics*).

⁷ Presented at the ESS Committee meeting on 20.5.2010 (doc. No ESSC/2010/05/6).

⁸ Agreed in the ESS Committee meeting on 15.05.2014 (doc No ESSC 2014/21/7a/EN).

⁹ COM(2011) 211 final.

¹⁰ Communication 'Europe 2020 — A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', COM(2010) 2020 final, 3.3.2010 (hereinafter referred to as the *Europe 2020 Strategy*).

¹¹ Communication of the Commission 'GDP and beyond — Measuring progress in a changing world', COM(2009) 433 final, 20.8.2009 (hereinafter referred to as the *Communication on GDP and beyond*).

¹² [Report on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, J.E. Stiglitz, A.Sen, J. -P. Fitoussi, 2009](#) (hereinafter referred to as the *Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report*).

Implementing the *Commission Decision (2012/504/EU)*¹³ on Eurostat, which defines the role and responsibilities of Eurostat within the internal organisation of the Commission, as regards the development, production and dissemination of statistics.

Compliance with the *Commission Decision of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents* and *Directive 2013/37/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 amending Directive 2003/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information*.

2. PRIORITIES FOR 2015

The AWP 2015 implements the European statistical programme (ESP) 2013-17.¹⁴ As a consequence, all the actions and outputs contained in the detailed description of planned activities will contribute to achieving the specific objectives of the ESP 2013-17, which are also the main priorities of the AWP 2015.

National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat will continue to face serious resource constraints in 2015. The reduced resources available for the production of statistics need to be balanced against the increasing need for European statistics (according to information collected in hearings with Commission DGs) to support new and existing European policies. This is why, as required by Article 6 of the Regulation establishing the European statistical programme 2013-17, 'Prioritisation shall contribute to the reduction of costs and burdens for new statistical requirements by reducing statistical requirements in existing domains of European statistics and shall be pursued in close cooperation with the Member States.' Prioritisation is conducted according to the priority-setting process of the ESS approved by the ESS Committee (ESSC) in November 2011¹⁵ and revised in November 2012¹⁶.

A more detailed description of the priorities reflecting the structure of the ESP (14 priority areas and detailed objectives) is provided below. The full description of planned activities and outputs of the AWP 2015 is presented in Annex IIIB.

QUALITY STATISTICAL INFORMATION TO SUPPORT EU POLICIES

This part of the work programme addresses Objectives 1 and 4 of the ESP.

Objective 1: Provide statistical information, in a timely manner, to support the development, monitoring and evaluation of the policies of the Union properly reflecting priorities, while keeping a balance between economic, social and environmental fields and serving the needs of the wide range of users of European statistics, including other decision-makers, researchers, businesses and European citizens in general, in a cost-effective manner without unnecessary duplication of effort.

Objective 4: Ensure that delivery of such statistics is kept consistent throughout the whole duration of the programme, provided that this does not interfere with the priority-setting mechanisms of the ESS.

¹³ Commission Decision (2012/504/EU) of 17 September 2012¹³ on Eurostat.

¹⁴ Regulation (EU) No 99/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2013.

¹⁵ Document No ESSC 2011/11/2b.

¹⁶ Document No ESSC 2012/15/5b/EN.

INDICATORS

1. Europe 2020

ESP detailed objective 1.1: *Provide high-quality statistical information, which should be available in a timely manner, to monitor the implementation of Europe 2020. New indicators shall, to the extent possible, be based on available statistical data. The objective will be implemented by the making available of:*

- *updated headline target indicators for Europe 2020 (in the areas of employment, research and development, innovation, energy/climate change, education, environment, social protection, social inclusion and poverty) on the Commission (Eurostat) website;*
- *statistics to support the monitoring of the implementation of Europe 2020 flagship initiatives;*
- *additional indicators as an input for the ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of the economic, social and environmental policies of the Union; and*
- *employment indicators distinguishing between part-time and full-time employment, as well as indicators on unemployment that take into account people in activation policies such as training.*

2015 priorities: The statistical measures underlying the Europe 2020 strategy for ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive’ growth and the measurement of progress, well-being and sustainable development will continue to challenge the capacity of the ESS to produce relevant statistics for the monitoring, development and evaluation of EU policies. Statistical indicators at European, national and regional levels have to be delivered by the ESS to support the monitoring of the Europe 2020 strategy, its headline targets and flagship initiatives. They cover in particular resource efficiency, sustainability, employment, research and development, innovation and digital agenda for Europe, energy, climate change, education, environment, social protection, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

In 2015, one of the top priorities of the ESS will be to contribute to the preparation of the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy. Indicators on material deprivation and learning mobility will be discussed and the indicators on resource efficiency will be further improved. Work on the ‘GDP and beyond’ road map will be developed as scheduled by the Sponsorship group on Measuring Progress, Well-being and Sustainable Development, further completing the indicators set on quality of life launched in 2013 with the results of the SILC ad hoc module on well-being.

2. Economic governance

ESP detailed objective 2.1: *Develop new and enhance existing statistical information relevant for Union decision-makers and the public at large in relation to the strengthened and integrated economic governance of the Union and the surveillance cycle integrating the Stability and Growth Pact and the economic policy. The objective will be implemented by:*

- *providing statistical input for the macroeconomic imbalances scoreboard and the underlying analysis;*
- *providing statistical input for an enhanced Stability and Growth Pact specifically aimed at the production and provision of high-quality statistics on public debt;*
- *developing and producing a set of indicators to measure competitiveness; and*
- *implementing a robust quality management in the production chain, also covering upstream public finance data and the underlying workflows in Member States, including ensuring a correct implementation of the Commission Delegated Decision 2012/678/EU.*

2015 priorities: The ESS will support the economic governance of the EU by providing even better statistical input for an enhanced Stability and Growth Pact, in particular for the European Semester. The main priorities during 2015 will entail verification of the correct implementation of ESA 2010, which has replaced ESA 1995 as from September 2014, and continued development of a robust quality monitoring system for statistics for the macroeconomic imbalances procedure. As regards government finance statistics, this verification will be based on the new versions of the Manual of Government Deficit and Debt and of Regulation 479, which is the regulation governing EDP (excessive deficit procedure) statistics. Following the planned adoption of the Commission Communication, 2015 could also see Eurostat taking the first effective steps in the European Public Sector Accounting Standards (EPSAS) project, thereby supporting the objective of Eurostat becoming the Commission’s hub for public accounting, which is the primary source of EDP

statistics. The first step should be setting out the principles, objectives and governance of the project, including by determining the most suitable and effective form for the standard-setting process.

ESP detailed objective 2.2: *Provide Union decision-makers with reliable statistics and indicators for administrative and regulatory purposes and for monitoring specific Union policy commitments. The objective will be implemented by:*

- *the definition of the scope of statistics for administrative and regulatory purposes and the agreement with users on such scope;*
- *the definition, as appropriate, implementation and explanation of a robust quality management framework for those indicators.*

2015 priorities: Efforts will be made to improve the quality of estimates of GNI through the lifting of GNI reservations during the course of 2015.

3. Economic globalisation

ESP detailed objective 3.1: *Enhance the indicators and statistical information available on economic globalisation and global value chains for Union decision-makers and the public at large. The objective will be implemented by:*

- *the updating of existing indicators on economic globalisation available on the Commission (Eurostat)'s website;*
- *the development of new indicators on global value chains, including flows of and dependency on natural resources;*
- *the analysis of the global value chains, possibly through appropriate input/output tables, and foreign trade and business statistics, including micro-data linking; and*
- *the examination of the need to reform the calculation and allocation of financial intermediation services.*

2015 priorities: Work will continue on further enhancing the indicators and statistical information available on economic globalisation and global value chains for EU decision-makers and the public at large, based on a manual for measuring global value chains and ESS experience gained on micro data linking. In addition, attention will be devoted to globalisation indicators coming from world input-output tables, like trade in value added and trade in employment. The EuroGroupRegister will be further strengthened to provide quality information for analysing the structure and competitiveness of the enterprises belonging to multinational groups, as it influences technological spillovers, access to international markets, scale economies, market power, managerial capacity and innovation.

ACCOUNTING FRAMEWORKS

4. Economic and social performance

ESP detailed objective 4.1: *Supplement measurement of economic performance by different dimensions of globalisation, the quality of life, access to goods and services, environmental sustainability, health, well-being, social cohesion and social inclusion. Develop a framework for the analysis of globalised production. The objective will be implemented by:*

- *the implementation and compilation of annual and quarterly national accounts as well as annual regional accounts in accordance with ESA;*
- *the production of indicators on income and consumption distribution across households (by reconciling national accounts aggregates with household survey data or administrative data);*
- *the compilation of timely and high-quality price statistics, notably the harmonised indices of consumer prices;*
- *the development of satellite accounts for new areas;*
- *the creation of a database for growth and productivity measurement, taking account of changes in productivity in the public sector as well as the private sector;*
- *the development of a conceptual framework for the analysis of globalised production;*
- *the development of a conceptual framework for the measurement of quality of life and well-being; and*
- *the alignment of the corresponding accounting and statistical concepts to the extent possible.*

ESP detailed objective 4.2: *Provide key macroeconomic and social indicators and Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs) as a coherent set of indicators addressing the Union and global statistical data requirements and adjust PEEIs to meet evolving users' needs. The objective will be implemented by:*

- *the coordinated development of the dashboards of key macroeconomic, social and sustainable development indicators;*
- *the availability of a harmonised methodology for key macroeconomic and social indicators and PEEIs;*
- *the enhancement of international comparability of indicators;*

- *the provision of improved tools to facilitate the interpretation and communication of indicators; and*
- *the availability of harmonised housing and related statistics for all Member States.*

2015 priorities: As the economic crisis has reinforced the need for a set of high-quality macroeconomic indicators, in order to better understand and analyse economic fluctuations and thereby facilitate the decision-making process, the improvement of these statistics, in particular in the context of the implementation of ESA 2010, will continue.

The economic crisis has also considerably reinforced the need for more timely social statistics, in particular on inequalities, poverty and social exclusion. Significant efforts will be made to improve the availability of data in these fields. The development of satellite accounts will allow for analyses linking the economic, social, environmental and globalisation aspects. Initial development of satellite accounts for health, education and social protection will be carried out in 2015. Eurostat will also contribute to the preparation of indicators for monitoring the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Environmental sustainability

ESP Detailed objective 5.1: *Provide environmental accounts and climate change-related statistics, taking into account international developments in this area. The objective will be implemented by:*

- *the development of a coherent system of environmental accounts as ‘satellite accounts’ to the main national accounts, providing information on atmospheric emissions, energy consumption, flows and reserves of material natural resources and water, trade in basic and in critical raw materials, environmental taxation and spending on environmental protection, possibly including green growth/procurement and by continuing to support the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and ecosystem services;*
- *the upgrading, development, production and dissemination of indicators that show secondary pressures, impacts of climate change, including on health, vulnerabilities and adaptation progress; and*
- *the development of a headline indicator measuring global environmental pressure.*

2015 priorities: In order to provide environmental accounts and climate change-related statistics taking into account international developments in this area, a new set of environmental account modules (energy accounts, environmental goods and services sector and environmental protection expenditure) has been adopted and 2015 will be the first reference year. Work on this subject will tie in with the revised European strategy of environmental economic accounts. An important focus of this activity will be the development of timely indicators derived from the accounts and the publication of analytical results based on the integrated economic-environment accounting framework.

DATA

6. Business

ESP Detailed objective 6.1: *Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of statistical production processes. Provide high-quality statistics on key areas where enterprises are the centre of interest, such as business statistics, short-term indicators, their investment in human capital and skills, international transactions, globalisation, internal market monitoring, R&D and innovation, and tourism. Special attention should be paid to the availability of data in high value-added industrial or services sectors, in particular in the green, digital or social economy (such as health and education).*

The objective will be implemented by:

- *the reuse of data available in the statistical system or in society, and the provision of a common infrastructure and of common tools;*
- *the provision of statistical information and indicators on business on an annual and infra-annual basis;*
- *the provision of statistical information describing the position of Europe in the world and the Union’s relationships with the rest of the world;*
- *the provision of statistical information for the analysis of global value chains and the development of the Euro Group Register as a backbone for collecting cross-domain information on globalisation;*
- *the rebalancing of statistical collections for trade in goods and trade in services with improved availability of data on services and actions to rebalance statistical information on services and goods;*
- *the development of internal market monitoring tools, such as the food price monitoring tool and related indicators;*

- the provision of statistics on key areas of innovation and R&D performance through extended use of patent registers and extended research and statistical use of individual micro-data;
- the provision of statistics on tourism supply and demand through optimised data collection and better integrated data from tourism with other domains; and
- the provision of statistics on resource use and resource efficiency based to the extent possible on existing data collection.

2015 priorities: Since there is strong demand for business statistics to support the decision-making process as well as to help European citizens and businesses to understand the impact of a large number of EU policies, the further establishment and implementation of quality and relevant business and trade statistics has been identified as a strategic priority for the ESS. In line with that, in 2015 work on the common Framework Regulation for Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS) aiming at improving the integration and consistency of European business statistics will continue. Further efforts will be made to enhance the coverage of statistics on the services sector as well as to continue to re-engineer the ESS production systems for business and trade statistics. Efforts will continue on aligning the statistical business data requirements with the existing and future requirements by business registers, tax data repositories and financial supervisors' data repositories.

7. People's Europe

ESP detailed objective 7.1: *Provide statistics on key areas of social policy where the citizen is the centre of interest, such as well-being, sustainability, social cohesion, poverty, inequalities, demographic challenges (in particular population ageing and migration), the labour market, education and training, including childhood education, adult learning, vocational training and learning mobility of young people, culture, physical activity, quality of life, safety, health, disability, consumption, free movement and the internal market, mobility of young people, technological innovation and new lifestyle choices. Those statistics shall be disaggregated by gender where appropriate, for groups that are of special interest to social policy makers. Priorities shall be set in accordance with Article 6.*

The objective will be implemented by:

- the putting in place of a consolidated basic infrastructure for European Social Statistics, including survey and administrative-based data collections and a common set of core variables;
- the development of core social surveys providing data (including micro-data) on persons and households streamlined and complemented by additional and less frequent micro-data collections;
- the development of statistics provided on education and training, including a rationalisation and modernisation of the Adult Education Survey ;
- the provision of statistics on inequalities of income, providing a comparable national headline indicator, as well as data on inequalities of access to basic goods and services;
- methodological work on physical activity and cultural statistics;
- the provision of statistics on safety from crime; health, as agreed under the framework Regulation (EC) No 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work; and disability;
- the implementation of actions of the work programme on mainstreaming of migration statistics;
- the provision of quality-of-life indicators to measure progress of societies; and
- the commencement of preparations of the next census round (scheduled for 2021).

2015 priorities: The modernisation of social statistics along the various strands promoted by the DGINS in Wiesbaden in 2011 will be pursued in 2015 to increase the efficiency of data production and to strengthen the capacity for reaction and adaptation. In this context, a proposal for coordinated social surveys will be developed, taking into account Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) review processes, other surveys such as Adult Education Survey (AES) or European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), and a strategy in order to allow the joint analysis of income, consumption and wealth distributions. The plan is to move towards a framework regulation for social surveys (micro-data collections), to facilitate the coordinated evolution of all these surveys.

Measures to facilitate access to and use of administrative data, including registers, will be developed in an ESS.VIP project, subject to approval in 2014.

A plan for the modernisation of population statistics will also be developed including a renewed strategy for population and housing censuses from 2020 and a more harmonised population

definition based on in-depth methodological work. 2015 will also be crucial for population statistics with the organisation of a Eurostat conference and the release of a flagship publication. In addition there will be preparatory work for the 2021 census round.

In order to respond to requests from major users, especially in a context of economic and social crisis, efforts will be engaged with the ESS in order to improve the timeliness of social data and to get regional poverty indicators.

The production and methodological development of high-quality data and of indicators in the context of the mid-term review of the 'Education and Training 2020' strategy and new requests in the area of health, including health and safety at work (statistics on accidents at work and occupational diseases) as well as social protection statistics and further developments in the area of gender-based violence will also be very high on the agenda.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Sponsorship Group on Measuring Progress, Well-being and Sustainable Development, the availability and quality of data on the different dimensions of quality of life will be further improved with the results of the SILC ad hoc module. Another Eurostat flagship publication will be devoted to this topic.

8. Geospatial, environmental, agricultural and other sectoral statistics

ESP detailed objective 8.1: *Support evidence-based policy-making by a more flexible and increased use of spatial information combined with social, economic and environmental statistical information. The objective will be implemented by:*

- the further development, maintenance and operation of the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE), established by Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, and in particular by the Union's geo-portal;
- the making available of a range of geographic information through cooperation with Union programmes for land use surveys and remote sensing; and
- the integration of statistical data when relevant, thus creating a multisource flexible infrastructure for the provision of targeted spatio-temporal analysis.

2015 priorities: In order to support evidence-based policy-making by more flexible and increased use of spatial information combined with social, economic and environmental statistical information, enhancing the role of the ESS in integrating geospatial and statistical data will continue to be a priority. Eurostat will actively support the functioning of a European branch of a UN initiative for Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) and make available a range of geographic information through cooperation with EU programmes such as the Copernicus Earth Observation programme.

ESP detailed objective 8.2: *Provide environmental statistics to support the policy-making process of the Union.*

The objective will be implemented by:

- A set of key environmental statistics on resources, such as on waste and recycling, water, raw materials deposits, ecosystems services and biodiversity at national and where possible regional level, and a set of key climate change related statistics to support mitigation and adaptation actions and policies at all relevant levels from local to Union level.

2015 priorities: In order to support evidence-based policy making especially in the area of circular economy, quality aspects and expanding the scope of waste statistics will continue to be a priority. Eurostat will in particular focus on further improving the quality, methodology and timeliness of municipal waste statistics and will continue to contribute to work in the areas of food waste. Eurostat will also continue to contribute to work in the area of ecosystem and biodiversity, including ecosystem accounting, and will continue to improve and streamline water statistics.

ESP detailed objective 8.3: *Provide energy and transport statistics to support the policies of the Union.*

The objective will be implemented by the production and dissemination of statistics on:

- renewable energy;
- energy savings/energy efficiency; and

- *transport safety, passenger mobility, road traffic measurement and intermodal freight transport.*

2015 priorities: Efforts will continue in 2015 to optimise and adapt energy statistics to provide statistical support to the Energy 2020 strategy. Very timely energy-related indicators will be developed. Cooperation with other organisations involved in the collection of energy statistics will be strengthened. A new legal act on electricity and natural gas price statistics will be drafted.

The ESS will continue to assess with statistics the progress towards meeting quantitative targets set in the 2011 White Paper on Transport related to energy consumption and emissions from different transport modes, as well as urban passenger mobility and modal shift indicators by distance classes for passenger and freight transport, without increasing the reporting burden. Intermodality indicators will also be produced.

ESP detailed objective 8.4: *Provide agriculture, fisheries and forestry statistics for the development and monitoring of the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies, reflecting key European strategic objectives related to sustainability as well as rural development by carrying out regular activities related to the development, production and dissemination of statistics. The objective will be implemented by:*

- *the review and simplification of the agricultural and fisheries data collection in line with the Common Agricultural Policy review post-2013 and the revised Common Fisheries Policy;*
- *the redesign of agricultural and fisheries data collection processes, in particular with the objective of improving quality and timeliness of the data provided;*
- *the thorough review of the land use/cover data management system and the elaboration and implementation of a new system on that basis;*
- *the implementation of the data collection system for coherent agri-environmental indicators, based on existing data where possible;*
- *the provision of appropriate breakdowns by region; and*
- *the implementation and dissemination of a set of key forestry data from Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting for Forestry, such as forest area, volume and value of standing timber and economic accounts for forestry and logging.*

2015 priorities: The 2015 LUCAS survey will be carried out in line with the EU strategy for land use/land cover. Resources will be dedicated to ensure the spatial and temporal comparability of the 2009, 2012 and 2015 LUCAS surveys. A range of indicators at regional level, such as regional accounts, labour market, rural development and maritime development as well as urban data will continue to be provided to support the reform of the EU cohesion policy.

The ESS will adapt the high-quality agriculture, fisheries and forestry statistics to specific needs stemming from the review of the Common Agricultural (CAP) and Fisheries (CFP) Policies. Actions in this respect may include the setting up of new legal frameworks and will take care of burden on respondents through rationalisation, simplification and optimisation of the data collection and validation processes and efficient use of existing data sources, especially administrative data, in close cooperation with DG AGRI and DG MARE. In particular, work towards creating a new legal base to make mandatory the provision of data on land prices and rents and for Supply Balance Sheets (SBS) on seven main grain products will be carried out. Additionally, major investigations will be made on how to implement data collection on eggs for consumption based on a harmonised methodology.

NEW METHODS OF PRODUCTION OF EUROPEAN STATISTICS

This part of the work programme addresses Objective 2 of the ESP: Implement new methods of production of European statistics aiming at efficiency gains and quality improvements.

9. ESS quality management

ESP detailed objective 9.1: *Implement a quality management system in the ESS based on the Code of Practice. Strengthen the sharing of good practices in the implementation of the Code of Practice and ensure that quality reporting is targeting different user needs. The objective will be implemented by:*

- the introduction of new monitoring mechanisms and a second round of peer reviews to assess compliance with the Code of Practice;
- the alignment of the quality assurance frameworks of the ESS and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB);
- the meeting of the needs of users for quality reporting; and
- the standardisation of quality reports in various statistical domains at Union level.

2015 priorities: Close cooperation with Member States will take place in the framework of the ESS Vision 2020, on enhancing quality management at the level of the ESS. Preparations for the 2016 Quality conference will start.

The peer reviews piloted in 2013 will continue to be carried out in 2015. The mid-term evaluation of the ESP 2013-17 will be launched.

10. Priority-setting and simplification

ESP detailed objective 10.1: Implement a priority-setting mechanism for the ESS in order to simplify reporting requirements and to adjust to new needs for statistics while taking into account the constraints on the producers, the response burden and the needs of users. The objective will be implemented by:

- the definition of priorities and the allocation of resources in accordance with those priorities;
- the definition of priorities for the ESS as part of the annual work programme referred to in Article 9;
- the taking into account of the results of user and producer consultations in the annual work programme; and
- the communication to users of the statistical areas to be simplified and of the data collection to be reduced/discontinued.

2015 priorities: The Commission's efforts will concentrate on ensuring that achievement of the objectives of the five-year programme is on track. Taking into account the persisting resource constraints throughout the ESS, this can only be realised by an assertive approach to priority-setting and simplification. Further analysis, discussions and decision-making on priority-setting will be based on the 'catalogue' of the ESS statistical products and related costs and merits.

11. Multipurpose statistics and efficiency gains in production

ESP detailed objective 11.1: Put in place gradually, taking into account costs generated in the ESS by implementation, an ESS business architecture allowing more integrated production of European statistics; harmonise and standardise statistical production methods and metadata; enhance the horizontal (across statistical domains) and vertical (across ESS partners) integration of statistical production processes in the ESS in respect of the principle of subsidiarity; use and integrate multiple data sources; produce multi-purpose statistics. Particular attention will be given to confidentiality issues that will arise with increased use, reuse and exchange of micro-data and administrative records. The objective will be implemented by:

- the greater use of appropriate administrative data in all statistical areas;
- the identification and use of new data sources for European statistics;
- the increased involvement of the Commission (Eurostat), and national statistical authorities in the design of administrative records;
- the wider use of statistical matching and data linking techniques for increasing the offer of European statistics;
- the use of the European approach to statistics for quick policy response in specific and duly justified cases;
- greater integration of European statistics production processes through ESS coordinated actions;
- further harmonisation of statistical concepts across statistical domains;
- the development and implementation of flexible IT reference infrastructure and technical standards for improving interoperability, sharing of data and metadata, and common data modelling;
- the use of standard IT tools across statistical business processes;
- the development of methodological standards in order to increase use and availability of harmonised methodologies (including mixed-mode approaches to data collection) and harmonised metadata;
- the strengthening of the role of statistical business registers as the place where the statistical units for all business-related statistics are maintained and used as a source for national accounts; and
- the improvement of the provision of metadata, namely background information on how data are collected, the quality of data and how to render data more readily understandable to users.

2015 priorities: The modernisation of statistical production will continue in 2015, based on the principles set out in the ESS Vision 2020, as adopted by the ESSC in May 2014, through the corresponding implementation strategy and roadmap. The implementation of the ESS.VIP portfolio, one of the main strategic priorities of 2015, will be aligned with the conclusions of the Task Force Vision 2.0 and take into account the evaluation of ongoing projects. These projects cover statistical

domains such as business registers, external trade, information society and the basic infrastructure (cross-cutting) elements needed for their implementation (including further progress towards building the foundations of a common platform for statistical production). The SIMSTAT project pilot phase will end by testing the technical feasibility of the exchange of micro-data on intra-EU trade. Eurostat will continue to coordinate work on Big Data for official statistics by implementing the recommendations of the Scheveningen Memorandum adopted in 2013 and the ESS action plan and roadmap adopted by the ESSC in September 2014.

ESS statistical and technical standards (for data, metadata, validation services ...) will be implemented in more and more statistical domains of European statistics. These standards as well as the shared services (in particular for data dissemination) will also be made available within the European Commission. New standards for the exchange of microdata will be further promoted and implemented, and analysis of registries with a view to storing metadata will start.

12. Dissemination and communication

ESP detailed objective 12.1: *Make the ESS the first data source on European statistics for all users and, in particular, for public and private decision-makers, by providing a high-quality statistical information service based on the principles of free and easy access to European statistics.*

Intensifying and extending the dialogue between users and producers of statistics to meet user needs for high-quality statistics. An early involvement of users in new developments is key to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the ESS.

Extend and rationalise the range of dissemination products to meet the needs of users using new technologies.

Set up a cost-efficient, integrated and secure infrastructure within the ESS for access to confidential data for scientific purposes. The objective will be implemented by:

- *the recognition of the ESS as the first reference point for users of European statistics;*
- *the putting in place of an integrated secure infrastructure for access to Union micro-data;*
- *the putting in place of a system to address users' requests for immediate access and advice in interpretation of statistical information;*
- *the adjustment of dissemination products to the users' needs using new technologies;*
- *an increased number of statistical outputs on cross-cutting issues;*
- *the increased use of new communication and dissemination technologies (e.g. SDMX-based);*
- *an increased offer of micro-data sets for statistical research purposes in accordance with Union and national law on data confidentiality;*
- *the preparation of data sets to facilitate the use of statistical data for educational and research purposes.*

2015 priorities: The new generation of the Eurostat website (Site 5) put in place in 2014 will be further enhanced and the development work on a major reengineering of the dissemination chain (linked to ESS.VIPs and cross-cutting work package on ESS data warehouse) will continue.

Efforts will continue in 2015 to ensure dissemination of statistical datasets available, via the EU Open Data Portal (<http://open-data.europa.eu>). Datasets will continue to be published in formats that are, as far as possible, open so as to promote the reuse of public sector information. Eurostat 'open data' will be promoted and supported and dissemination products and services like publications and user support will continue to be delivered, taking into account the priorities of Eurostat.

Efforts will continue in 2015 to ease secure exchange of EU data through the implementation of a framework for IT security within the ESS and access facilities in the Member States.

13. Training, innovation and research

ESP detailed objective 13.1: *Satisfy learning and development needs in the ESS based on a combination of training courses and learning and development opportunities.*

Improve the collaboration between ESS members for the transfer of knowledge and sharing and implementation of best practices and common innovative approaches in the production of statistics.

Organise the activities, participation and contribution of the research communities in the improvement of the statistical production chains and of the quality of official statistical information. The objective will be implemented by:

- *the development of a postgraduate degree (e.g. Master in Official Statistics);*
- *the provision of training programmes addressing the user's and other citizen's needs;*

- the wider application of results of research projects in statistical production and dissemination;
- the recognition of the ESS as a reference point for the statistical research communities;
- the extensive involvement of the research communities in research activities in official statistics; and
- the putting in place of adequate instruments for the exchange of practices and implementation of common solutions in the ESS.

2015 priorities: Work on the European Master of Official Statistics will continue in 2015, reinforcing cooperation between statistics and academia following the feasibility study. The NTTS 2015 conference will be organised.

The ‘statistical’ research projects launched under the research framework programme ‘Horizon 2020’ will be followed on a best effort basis.

PARTNERSHIP WITHIN THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND BEYOND

This part of the work programme addresses Objective 3 of the ESP: Strengthen the partnership within the ESS and beyond in order to further enhance its productivity and its leading role in official statistics worldwide.

14. Partnership

ESP detailed objective 14.1: *Implement the enhanced ESS governance framework. The objective will be implemented by the implementation of the revision of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 and Commission Decision 2012/504/EU of 17 September 2012 on Eurostat;*

ESP detailed objective 14.2: *Enhance the coordinating role of the Commission (Eurostat) as the European Union’s Statistical Office. The objective will be implemented by:*

- the association of the Commission (Eurostat) with all Commission initiatives with regard to statistical aspects at an early stage; and
- regular stakeholder dialogues at top management level.

ESP detailed objective 14.3: *Strengthen the cooperation with the ESCB and the European and international organisations involved in the production of data for statistical or administrative purposes through common projects and coordinated developments. Ensure consistency between Union and international standards. The objective will be implemented by:*

- implementing a common quality framework for the ESS and the ESCB;
- increasing involvement of the Commission (Eurostat) in international advisory groups;
- defining and implementing new ways of cooperation to ensure that statistical developments are well coordinated between international organisations and that work is allocated efficiently; and
- implementing the new United Nations System of National Accounts, ESA, the United Nations System of Environmental and Economic Accounts, the European Environmental Economic Accounts and the Balance of Payments manuals.

2015 priorities: In order to further enhance ESS productivity and its leading role in official statistics worldwide, strengthening of the partnership and governance within the ESS, as well as with European and international organisations involved in the production of data for statistical or administrative purposes, will remain a strategic priority. The ESS will also reinforce cooperation with the European System of Central Banks by furthering the work of the European Statistical Forum (ESF) and progressing on the agreed areas for common work between the two systems.

ESP detailed objective 14.4: *Promote and implement statistical advisory and statistical assistance activities in countries outside the Union in line with the priorities of the foreign policy of the Union, with particular emphasis on enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy. The objective will be implemented by:*

- exercising ESS leadership in the international arena;
- delivering data for Union foreign policy purposes;
- supporting Commission services for the implementation of development and international cooperation policies, in their relations with international organisations and in matters of common statistical interest with third-country regions or third countries;
- disseminating relevant statistical data to support the enlargement process and negotiations;
- minimising requests for derogations from new Member States leading to unavailability of data;
- establishing agreements and Memoranda of Understanding with third countries;

- *designing and implementing technical cooperation programmes;*
- *focusing technical assistance on data harmonisation and delivery; and*
- *improving cooperation and coordination activities among the members of the ESS.*

2015 priorities: In order to make sure that good-quality data are available for monitoring enlargement and European Neighbourhood policies, it will remain a strategic priority to measure the enlargement countries' compliance with European standards in the area of statistics and to support both the enlargement and the European Neighbourhood countries in their efforts to provide good-quality data in accordance with European standards. Moreover, Eurostat undertakes to provide statistical support to regional policy initiatives in Enlargement countries such as the South Eastern Europe Strategy SEE 2020. Furthermore, to promote and implement statistical advisory and assistance activities in countries outside the EU and outside the enlargement and European Neighbourhood Countries, cooperation work will be restructured around the three main pillars: governance (Code of Practice, quality, etc.); generic tools; and facilitating regional cooperation.