



European Statistical
Advisory Committee

27th Meeting

19 October 2017

11.00-17.00

Main Hall

INE Head Office

Av. António José de Almeida

Lisbon

Minutes

ESAC Doc. 2017/46

Minutes of the 26th meeting of the European Statistical Advisory Committee
19 October 2017
11.00-17.00

Present:

Chair: Ineke Stoop

Members: Tasos Christofides, David Hand, Claudiu Herteliu, Asta Manninen, Biruta Sloka, Maria João Valente Rosa, Ildefonso Villán Criado, Maurizio Vichi, Thomas Wobben, Aurel Schubert, Michael Gold, Agnieszka Piasna, Ulrike Oschischnig, Maria Helena Figueira (replacing Mariana Kotzeva)

Observer Lars Svennebye (replacing Volker Täube)

Absent: Hugues Bayet, Alba Bosch Moline, Axel Börsch-Supan, Irena Kotowska, Ariane König Marko Kristof, Frances Ruane, Michael Smyth, Gabriella Vukovich,

Secretariat: Cristina Pereira de Sá, Stephen Clarke

1. Previous minutes for discussion and approval

Points were raised on three items in the previous minutes:

Eurostat was asked to keep ESAC informed of developments regarding work on the cost analysis project (item 3.7 of the minutes) (**Action: Eurostat**).

Regarding item 5 of the minutes about the user-friendly presentation of indicators, Eurostat stated that work is under way to provide a centralised point on indicators accessible from the Eurostat main webpage. This will contain horizontal information and guidance on indicators and will provide an overview of the main indicator sets available. Eurostat offered to make a presentation of the indicator sets when the developmental work has been completed (**Action: Eurostat**).

In relation to item 8.4 of the minutes about sharing electronic documents, the Chair stated that in order to avoid transmitting large files to members via email, plain text emails with web links would be used as far as possible (**Action: Secretariat**).

The minutes were then approved.

2. Adoption of agenda

The Chair presented the draft agenda and proposed to bring forward the item on European Statistics Day so that the text of the statement could be finalised for publication on the following day. The proposed agenda was then adopted.

3. European Statistics Day final statement

The text of the final statement proposed for the European Statistics Day conference was discussed and agreed. It will be prepared for distribution to participants at the end of the conference and will be published on the ESAC web pages (**Action: Secretariat**).

4. ESAC statement on ELSTAT

The statement prepared on ELSTAT was discussed and approved for publication on the ESAC web pages (**Action: Secretariat**).

5. Recent developments

Eurostat introduced the paper on recent developments (Doc. 2017/36), which aimed to update ESAC members in written form before the meeting in order to allow more time for discussion of other items during the meeting. There was a brief discussion on five of the items covered in the paper as follows:

5.1 European Statistical Programme (ESP) beyond 2020

Regarding the timetable for ESAC input into the ESP beyond 2020, Eurostat informed ESAC that the official consultation would take place in the first half of 2018.

ESAC members said it would be important to have, as soon as possible, the details of the policy options to be considered in the consultation. The consultation should make clear which activities are to be expanded and which are to be cut, with references to the statistical skills required in the future and to citizens as potential stakeholders.

Eurostat took note of ESAC's interest in contributing to the consultation and will send the Committee links to previous impact assessments as background information. In addition, Eurostat will consider how ESAC could further input into the consultation procedure and will provide ESAC with an ESS paper on "ESS priorities beyond 2020". (**Action: Eurostat**).

Four members agreed to collaborate on an ESAC paper on the consultation procedure, based on the ESS reflection paper, for discussion at the next meeting (**Action: David Hand, Asta Manninen, Thomas Wobben, Maria João Valente Rosa**).

5.2 Power from Statistics conference

Aurel Schubert provided feedback from the first day of the Power from Statistics conference which was held on 18-19 October in Brussels. He said there had been a rich discussion that emphasised the need to invest in basic skills and to link more with academia.

In a short exchange of views, members stressed that it is important to identify what the statistical need is and how the data will be used. Putting the data into context is also

important. While the use of short texts to describe statistical results may make communication easier, more detailed explanations, providing e.g. information on data sources and methodology, can help to reinforce trust in official statistics. The use of Twitter can alert users to the latest official statistics publications.

5.3 DGINS session on migration statistics

The members took note of the information provided about the statistical session and of action points presented in the Memorandum issued at the end of the session. The Chair welcomed the reference to the importance of cooperation with researchers in this field.

5.4 Cooperation between Eurostat and the Committee of the Regions

Mr Wobben commented that the CoR was keen to continue the cooperation with Eurostat on the development of a Massive Open Online Course with a focus on regional statistics. The work includes the creation of short educational videos and Mr Wobben offered to present one of these at the next ESAC meeting (**Action: Mr Wobben**).

5.5 Eurostat response to a draft ESAC paper on PRODCOM

Eurostat stated that the advice in the draft ESAC paper had been followed and the PRODCOM list is included in the Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS) without any change. Eurostat will keep ESAC informed of further developments in this area (**Action: Eurostat**).

6. Feedback on meetings attended by ESAC members

In addition to the written feedback which had been received (Doc. 2017/27) additional comments were provided by the ESAC representatives during the meeting.

6.1 DIGICOM Steering Group

Mr Vichi said that at the September meeting of the DIGICOM Steering Group there was a discussion of the general communication strategy between statistics stakeholders, to which ESAC should contribute e.g. through sessions at the CESS conference or in written papers. Mr Vichi will produce a draft paper on 'the strategy of communication with users of statistics in conjunction with all statistics stakeholders' for discussion at the next ESAC meeting (**Action: Mr Vichi**).

6.2 Directors of Social Statistics (DSS) meeting

Ms Piasna referred to a discussion at the October DSS meeting concerning the operationalisation and measurement of non-standard employment and suggested that this could be an interesting topic for ESAC to focus on, as there is currently no coherent theoretical approach to the topic. Ms Piasna offered to write a paper on this subject (**Action: Ms Piasna**).

Eurostat will provide Ms Piasna with details about the Eurostat unit that deals with non-standard employment issues (**Action: Eurostat**).

6.3 Business Statistics Directors' Group (BSDG) meeting

Ms Oschischnig attended the Business Directors' Group meeting in June where there was a presentation on the latest developments regarding the collaborative economy. At that meeting it was announced that a workshop on collaborative economies is planned in spring 2018, although the precise dates had not been decided.

ESAC asked if the date of the workshop on the collaborative economy is now known and if an ESAC member could take part. Eurostat will inform ESAC about the date of the workshop and will find out if it will be possible to fund the participation of a representative from the Committee (**Action: Eurostat**).

6.4 Directors of Macro-Economic Statistics (DMES) Group meeting

Mr Herteliu informed members that several items discussed at the last meeting are relevant to the work of ESAC but had been labelled as 'non-public', meaning he was not able to share the information on the early warning system (in relation to globalisation) and the treatment of pensions in ESA 2010.

Eurostat agreed to follow up ESAC's concern that its representative at the DMES meeting was not able to share with other ESAC members the outcome of the discussions classified as 'non-public' (**Action: Eurostat**).

7. Update of the 2018 meeting schedule

ESAC members were invited to confirm their participation in Directors' Group meetings between February and April 2018. Mr Vichi will attend the Directors' Group on Methodology meeting (13-14 February 2018) and Ms Piasna will attend the DSS meeting (1-2 March 2018) (**Action: Mr Vichi and Ms Piasna**).

None of the ESAC members present will be able to participate in the next DMES meeting (7-8 February) or in the Resource Directors' Group (19-20 April). The Secretariat will write to the members who were not present, to check if any of them will be able to represent the Committee at these two meetings (**Action: Secretariat**).

Mr Herteliu confirmed that he would attend the DMES meetings on 21-22 June and 18-19 December 2018.

8. ESAC draft paper on micro-macro data linking in relation to statistics on income, consumption and wealth

Mr Wobben introduced the draft paper (Doc. 2017/40) which had been prepared in collaboration with Aurel Schubert and Axel-Börsch Supan. The draft paper highlights the importance of linking micro and macro data in order to obtain more information at the local level on the impact of social and economic policies and developments.

Mr Schubert said that the European Central Bank (ECB) had established an Expert Group on Linking Macro and Micro data for the Household Sector, which aims first to understand the differences between macro and micro data on household wealth and then to develop distributional information within the household financial accounts.

Eurostat welcomed the draft paper and referred to methodological work which is under way in Eurostat to improve the coverage of statistics on income consumption and wealth. Some specific comments on the text of the draft paper were also made. The Secretariat will forward Eurostat's written comments to members (**Action: Secretariat**).

9. Statistical development, financing and collaboration in relation to geocoding

Eurostat described its paper (Doc. 2017/39) providing an overview of the current status of geocoding development and how it could be developed further. The Eurostat paper will form the basis of a broader paper by ESAC on how geocoding developments in National Statistical Institutes could be supported through co-funding initiatives, methodological development and collaboration.

In the discussion which followed, members highlighted the importance of having harmonised standards and concepts for geocoding and specific techniques for analysing spatial statistics. It was proposed that a survey on the state-of-the-art of geocoding and the construction of an interface for sharing geospatial data would be useful. Data security and existing legislation in this field were also highlighted as important issues to be taken into account.

The Chair invited Mr Wobben, Mr Vichi and Ms Manninen to prepare an ESAC paper on geocoding with the Eurostat document as a background paper. The ESAC paper could cover issues relating to open data, methodology, cooperation with Member States, data confidentiality and data comparability. It should clearly state the objective and the recommendations needed to help to achieve it (**Action: Mr Wobben, Mr Vichi and Ms Manninen**).

10. 7th Cohesion Report

Mr Wobben presented key findings from the 7th Cohesion Report, showing regional variations in a range of different policy areas. He also referred to the regional data held by

Eurostat, suggesting a future presentation of the Eurostat regional yearbook to ESAC would be very useful (**Action: Eurostat**).

Members were interested in exploring the regional data in more detail and it was agreed that time would be allocated to a more detailed discussion of a selection of regional statistics at the next ESAC meeting, with representatives from DG REGIO and the relevant Eurostat statistical unit invited to attend (**Action: Secretariat**).

11. 2018 Conference of European Statistics Stakeholders (CESS) and a future workshop

Members discussed possible dates and venues for the next CESS. It was agreed to propose that the German Statistical Society host the conference in Bamberg on 22-23 October 2018.

Mr Vichi invited each ESAC member to consider organising a session in the next CESS and to inform him and the ESAC Secretariat about possible topics by 16 January 2018 (**Action: ESAC Members**).

Ms Manninen informed members about the topics to be covered at the joint conference of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) and the OECD on 19-21 September 2018 entitled "Better Statistics for Better Lives". The topics are sustainability; well-being and quality of life; the future role of official statistics; communication and statistical literacy; and digitalisation and globalisation. Ms Manninen suggested it would be better if the topics in the CESS did not overlap with these. In addition it was proposed that ESAC participation at this IAOS-OECD conference should also be considered (**Action: Secretariat**).

Mr Vichi put forward a proposal for a future ESAC workshop on the theme of 'beyond 2020', which could explore how and which indicators can be used to describe society in the information age, with reference also to the SDG indicators. The provisional theme proposed was "New perspectives and priorities for EU 2030 Indicators", possibly scheduled on the day following the ESAC meeting in June. Mr. Vichi informed the members that ISTAT is willing to co-organize the workshop. There was general agreement for such a workshop to address future challenges, new data sources and the latest thinking on how society will develop. However, the organisation of a workshop will depend on sufficient resources available from Eurostat, details of which are not yet known. Members were asked to reflect further on the themes for future workshops (**Action: Eurostat, ESAC Members**).

Plans for future workshops will be discussed further at the next meeting (**Action: Secretariat**).

Mr Wobben informed members that the European Commission has set up a stakeholder forum for SDGs and he will send a link to the Secretariat to be circulated to members (**Action: Mr Wobben, Secretariat**).

12. Collaboration with ESGAB

Members discussed Doc. 2017/42 and agreed three areas on which to focus in 2018 with regard to collaboration with ESGAB: developing professional capacity; trust in statistics; and access to data. The Chair will contact the new ESGAB team in the new year regarding collaboration in these three areas (**Action: Chair**).

13. Meeting dates in 2018

It was agreed that the ESAC meetings will be scheduled as follows:

- 6 February Brussels
- 7 June to be confirmed (depending on financial resources available)
- 24 October Bamberg (back-to-back with CESS 2018 on 22-23 October, depending on financial resources available)

14. Forthcoming ESAC member appointments

The Secretariat informed members that three ESAC members have had their memberships renewed (Ms Vukovich, Mr Kristof and Mr Wobben) and that letters are being issued to the other institutions where renewals or replacements are required. It is expected that the names of the members to be appointed for the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2023 will be known by the end of November 2017.

The Chair announced that Ms Ruane, who is a member of the ESAC Executive Board, had just been approved by the European Parliament ECON Committee as a member of ESGAB from 2018. When the appointment is formally approved by the European Parliament this will mean that a new Executive Board member will need to be selected from ESAC members (**Action: Secretariat**).

15. Q2018 European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics

Members were informed about the Q2018 conference in Kraków on 26-29 June 2018. The ESAC Chair is on the Scientific Committee and Mr Christofides is on the Programming Committee. Financial support for members to attend is very limited; any member who is interested in taking an active role in the Q2018 conference, as a speaker, session chair or discussant should inform the Secretariat (**Action: ESAC Members**).

16. Conclusion of meeting

The Chair thanked members for their participation in the meeting and gave special thanks to Mr Schubert, as this was his last ESAC meeting.