



European Statistical
Advisory Committee

28th Meeting

Tuesday, 6 February 2018

09.00 – 16.00

**VML Salle 2
rue Van Maerlant, 2
1000 Brussels**

Draft minutes

ESAC Doc. 2018/10

Minutes of the 28th ESAC meeting

6 February 2018

09.00-15.45

Present:

Chair: Ineke Stoop

Members: Henning Ahnert (replacing Aurel Schubert), Tasos Christofides, Michael Gold, David Hand, Marko Kristof, Asta Manninen, Christian Moos (replacing Michael Smyth), Biruta Sloka, Maria João Valente Rosa, Ildefonso Villán Criado, Maurizio Vichi, Thomas Wobben, Michael Gold, Agnieszka Piasna, Mariana Kotzeva

Observer: Volker Täube

Other Participants: Eduardo Barredo Capelot (Eurostat), Krisztina Perlaky Toth (EESC), Igor Caldera (CoR) Günter Schäfer and Teodora Brandmüller (Eurostat) after 1.30 pm.
Laura De Dominicis (DG REGIO) after 1.30 pm.

Absent: Hugues Bayet, Alba Bosch Moline, Axel Börsch-Supan, Claudiu Herteliu, Irena Kotowska, Ariane König, Ulrike Oschischnig, Gabriella Vukovich

Secretariat: Stephen Clarke, Kirsi Mankki, Carine Malfroid

1. Welcome, adoption of agenda and outstanding action points from the previous minutes

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members and the other participants. The Chair also introduced Mr Barredo Capelot, the new Eurostat Director responsible for methodology and corporate statistical and IT services.

The agenda was adopted.

The Chair reminded members of outstanding action points from the minutes of the previous meeting:

- DIGICOM Steering Group (Item 6.1)

Mr Vichi will draft a paper on “The strategy of communication with users of statistics in conjunction with all statistics stakeholders”. Mr Hand volunteered to share the work with him. **(Action: Mr Vichi and Mr Hand)**

Members were invited to provide comments and input for this draft paper to Mr Vichi. **(Action: Members)**

- Paper on the operationalisation and measurement of non-standard employment (Item 6.2)

At the previous meeting Ms Piasna offered to write a paper on the operationalisation and measurement of non-standard employment. As her term in ESAC will end on 31 March 2018 she will not be present at the ESAC meeting in June. She will therefore liaise with her successor about this paper, which could also be considered for a session in the CESS 2018. **(Action: Ms Piasna)**

2. Appointment of an Executive Board member

Mr Christofides volunteered to replace Ms Ruane in the ESAC Executive Board. He was elected unanimously for a term of 2.5 years, starting from 6 February 2018. **(Action: Mr Christofides)**

3. Recent developments

Eurostat referred to the documents under this item circulated to members prior to the meeting.

3.1. Implementation of the ESS Vision 2020 – with a focus on Big Data

Eurostat informed ESAC that Doc. 2017/52 summarises the work of the ESS on Big Data, which started in 2013 and the first stage of which will be completed in 2018. The document will be presented to the DGINS in October in Romania.

In the discussion, members stated that the nature of Big Data changes very rapidly and expressed concerns that too much reliance on data gathered from private sources may cause comparability and sustainability problems in the future.

Eurostat took note of the comments and informed ESAC that the Directors-General of the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) of all Member States have signed a letter to the Commission regarding the need to raise and discuss the question on access to privately-held data for official statistics. Eurostat is examining the possibility of a public consultation on this issue and hopes to have a proposal by the end of April.

Eurostat agreed that statisticians needed to be involved at an early stage in the arrangements for accessing Big Data. The development work in Eurostat is being taken forward by Mr Barredo and will involve NSIs, Big Data companies and academics.

3.2. Revision of the Code of Practice

Eurostat informed ESAC about the work of High-level Group on Quality regarding the recent revision of the Code of Practice. The High-level Group is composed of several Director-Generals of NSIs whose main goal was to adapt the Code to the new reality and to take into account the amended Regulation No 223/2009 on European statistics, which emphasises the coordination role of the NSIs. The revised version of the Code was endorsed in November 2017 by the ESS Committee and is now in force. The next step for ESAC Doc. 2018/10

Status: Approved 16.04.2018

the High-level Group will be to discuss the methodology and timing of the next Peer Review exercise.

Mr Villán Criado said that non-official statistics of poor quality, produced or financed by EU Commission, can affect the credibility and the quality brand of European statistics. EUROSTAT should be empowered for providing guidelines and some form of quality control for those non-official statistics.

3.3. Review of ESS activities related to globalization

Members were informed about the cooperation between Eurostat and the ECB in the issues related to globalization and especially to the early warning system for detecting possible movements in key economic indicators. Many of first transactions and processes linked with multinational enterprises are first visible in the banking sector, whereas Eurostat is at the end of the chain with trade and GDP statistics. Therefore good cooperation with banks is important in order to follow the process and anticipate changes. A key issue is how the statistical community can collaborate when countries have different views on what is legally possible.

Mr Wobben stated that there is little data available on the effects of globalization at regional level. He asked Eurostat about current work on regional trade patterns and foreign direct investment and about the possibility of further funding for statistics in this area.

Eurostat stated that the influence of foreign direct investments and foreign trade of goods and services at the regional level needs to be addressed better in the future. Some issues related to data collection are already foreseen in the proposed framework regulation integrating business statistics (FRIBS), which is now in discussion at the Council. Eurostat is considering how to do more in this new area. Regarding funding, Eurostat requests funds from different Commission programmes for developing statistics; in this respect, requests to the Commission coming from outside the Commission are also helpful.

Ms Manninen referred to Urban Agenda for the EU 2016¹ and the need for better information from cities, urban areas and regions with regard to globalization, sustainable development and social inclusion.

3.4. Feedback from members representing ESAC at meetings

The Chair asked the secretariat to include a link to the agenda of the ESS Committee meetings on the feedback form relating to the ESSC meetings. **(Action: Secretariat)**

Mr Vichi reported back from the DIGICOM Steering Group (see section 1 above) and from the European Master in Official Statistics (EMOS) Board meeting of 1 December 2017. The third call for applications from universities to run EMOS-labelled Master programmes

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/
ESAC Doc. 2018/10

will be published in March. The sixth EMOS workshop will be organized on 6 March 2018, which Mr Vichi will attend.

3.5. Update of the 2018 meeting schedule

Members indicated which future meetings they would attend as ESAC representatives, based on the list issued before the meeting (Doc. 2018/03). An updated version of the list will be circulated to members. **(Action: Secretariat)**

Ms Kotowska has informed the Chair that she is not available for the Directors of Social Statistics (DSS) meeting on 1-2 March 2018. The Secretariat will ask for the invitation to be sent to Ms Piasna. **(Action: Ms Piasna, Secretariat)**

Members were informed that the possibility of financing the participation of an ESAC member in the collaborative economy workshop on 29-30 May will be examined. **(Action: Eurostat)**

The Chair will attend the European Conference on Quality of Official Statistics Q2018 on 26-29 June. Also Ms Sloka and Mr Vichi expressed interest in attending the conference and the Secretariat will check the budgetary possibilities for this. **(Action: Secretariat)**

It was proposed that Mr Vichi and Mr Hand could give a joint presentation on Big Data at the next meeting of the Heads of NSIs (DGINS). **(Action: Eurostat, Mr Vichi, Mr Hand)**

The name of the ESAC representative to attend the DSS meeting of October will be decided at the next ESAC meeting.

Mr Täube offered to attend the Microdata Access Network Group on 6 June **(Action: Secretariat)**

4. ESAC Opinion on the Draft Strategic Priorities for the European Statistics Annual Work Programme 2019

The Chair thanked Ms Manninen, Ms Oschischnig and the ECB for their detailed comments on specific areas included in ESAC Doc. 2018/04. Members were invited to make further comments for inclusion in the draft ESAC opinion.

Ms Valente Rosa stated that some important areas, like migration and statistical literacy are missing and volunteered to propose some text on these issues. Ms Piasna agreed to send text relating to the collaborative economy and the Chair will look at previous opinions to see if some earlier ESAC comments on social statistics could be reiterated. **(Action: Ms Valente Rosa, Ms Piasna, The Chair)**

Members were asked to send their comments to the secretariat by 9 February. The secretariat will collect the inputs and merge them into a final document, which will be circulated to members for comments by 16 February. The deadline for sending the opinion to Eurostat is 2 March 2018. **(Action: Members, Secretariat)**

5. Consultation on the European Statistical Programme (ESP) beyond 2020

The Chair thanked members who had contributed to the ESAC draft paper (Doc. 2017/56) and invited members to discuss the first draft.

Members discussed proposals to include in ESAC's response references to Smart Cities, sustainable development in the urban world, funding, conditionality, the measurement of performance, and how to engage non-users.

The Chair asked members present to send their comments on the draft document to Ms Manninen by 9 February who will collect them and send them to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will edit the document and send it to members for information only. The deadline to send the response to Eurostat is 15 February. **(Action: Mr Wobben, Ms Manninen, other Members, Mr Täube, Secretariat)**

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

ESAC members discussed the next steps to be taken regarding the ESAC draft paper (Doc. 2017/40) and Eurostat's response (Doc. 2017/49).

Mr Wobben proposed that ESAC come back to this issue after the summer, once the set of legislative proposals defining future EU spending programmes under the new Multiannual Financial Framework post-2020 are known.

Eurostat was asked to keep ESAC informed on progress made in this field especially regarding the legislative acts of the Multiannual Financial Framework. **(Action: Eurostat)**

The ESAC draft paper will be discussed further at the October meeting. **(Action: Secretariat)**

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

Ms Manninen, Mr Vichi and Mr Wobben introduced Doc. 2017/58, which contains a number of suggestions on how to make further progress with cooperation and collaboration in the field of geocoding.

Eurostat welcomed the document and agreed to provide a response to ESAC at the next meeting. **(Action: Eurostat)**

8. Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Wolfgang Petzold from the Committee of the Regions presented the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) about EU regions. The MOOC provides a low cost way of reaching out to a large online community with interactive participation. Mr Petzold described the structure

of the MOOC, as well as the professional background and country of the participants. The first MOOC in the Committee of the Regions was made available in 2015, with 8,500 participants and the third MOOC this year has over 12,000 participants registered. Around 10-15% of participants complete the 4-6 week course and the challenge is how to attract and retain more participants, e.g. with more interactive features.

Following the presentation, Mr Petzold answered questions concerning the gender balance of participants, differences in the use of online training in different countries, and the possibility of MOOCs in other languages and with subtitles.

It was agreed that the secretariat will send the slides to the ESAC members. **(Action: Secretariat)**

9. Regional statistics

Three videos on regional statistics produced in the framework of the DIGICOM project and the Eurostat Regional Yearbook were presented by Teodora Brandmüller and Günter Schäfer from Eurostat. Laura De Dominicis from DG REGIO then gave a presentation on regional data for Cohesion Policy purposes in DG REGIO. The presentations were followed by discussion and questions on these topics.

ESAC members emphasized the importance of using national languages in the educational videos and extending regional data to cover more statistical domains. The use of images without speech was also suggested for a multilingual environment.

Eurostat informed ESAC about the urban audit project, which continues to collect city statistics and to identify differences over time. Eurostat has signed agreements with 17 Member States and invited others to join on a voluntary basis. The data collection will cover a period of 24 months starting in spring 2018.

It was agreed that the secretariat will send the slides to the ESAC members. **(Action: Secretariat)**

10. Other ESAC activities

10.1. European Statistics Day and plans for 2018

ESAC members took note of the Doc. 2017/59 on ESD 2017. Mr Vichi stated that the key message to be sent to citizens and users of statistics should be agreed by ECB/Eurostat/ESAC. He agreed to draft the key messages for ESD 2018 for discussion at the ESSC meeting in May. **(Action: Mr Vichi)**

10.2. Reflection on possible topics for CESS 2018

ESAC noted that the date of CESS 2018 has been changed to 18-19 October 2018.

Mr Vichi announced that the following session proposals were made by members who will also organize the corresponding sessions:

- Protection of privacy in public surveys **(Action: Mr Christofides)**;
- Measurement of the digital economy and the new forms of work **(Action: Ms Piasna)**;
- Regional and Urban Statistics from the perspective of users and producers **(Action: Ms Manninen)**;
- Communication and dissemination strategy that satisfies users' needs **(Action: Mr Kristof)**;
- Statistical basic skills **(Action: Ms Valente Rosa)**

Mr Ahnert informed ESAC that the session proposed by the ECB could be one of the following:

- Links between balance of payment statistics and national accounts
- Vision of the future for statistics for financial accounts
- 20 years of statistics for single monetary policy in the euro area.

Mr Vichi said that FENStatS and DESTATIS will also propose sessions.

10.3. Update on proposed workshop

The date for the proposed ESAC workshop on “New perspectives and priorities for EU 2030 indicators” was set for 8 June, following the ESAC meeting on 7 June. Both events are planned to take place in Rome.

Mr Vichi proposed four topics and four plenary sessions for the workshop:

1. Role of big data and geospatial indicators in the definition of the Information Society;
2. Timely and meaningful indicators for describing and identifying new social groups: connections with SDGs indicators;
3. Selection and synthesis of indicators for Sustainable Development Goals: Methodologies and Applications;
4. New ways of communicating indicators.

Mr Hand was invited to be one of the speakers on Big Data. ESAC members were asked to send proposals for the topics of the seminar to Mr Vichi by the 9 February. **(Action: Members)**

Mr Vichi will draft a detailed programme for the workshop covering the content, speakers and rooms as soon as possible and before the end of February so that the workshop can be confirmed. **(Action: Mr Vichi)**

Eurostat informed ESAC that Ms Marleen de Smedt could help with the organization of the workshop together with Mr Vichi and the Chair. They will agree the programme for the workshop. **(Action: Chair, Mr Vichi, Ms de Smedt)**

10.4. Future workshops from 2019

At the last meeting, members were invited to reflect on themes for future workshops.

Mr Kristof proposed the state of play for the preparation and data collection of the next census. Mr Hand emphasized ethical issues, possibly jointly with ESGAB.

The Chair informed members that a proposal had been made to alternate CESS and workshops in different years and this would be an issue for further discussion in the future.

10.5. Collaboration with ESGAB

The Chair proposed that the new ESGAB Chair, Mr Enrico Giovannini be invited to the next ESAC meeting planned on 7 June 2018 in Rome. **(Action: Secretariat)**

10.6. AOB: ESAC appointments in 2019

The Chair announced that the nomination process of ESAC members appointed by the Commission will soon be launched. The 2nd term of Ms Kotowska and the Chair will end in 2019 and a renewal of their mandate is not possible.

The secretariat will write to the members eligible to stand for a second term (Ms Manninen, Mr Börsch-Supan, Ms Valente Rosa, Mr Cristofides and Mr Villan Criado) to ask if they are willing to stand. **(Action: Ms Manninen, Mr Börsch-Supan, Ms Valente Rosa, Mr Cristofides and Mr Villan Criado, Secretariat)**