



European Statistical
Advisory Committee

32nd Meeting

Thursday, 13 June 2019

09.30 – 17.00

JDE70

7th floor

**Committee of the Regions /
European Economic and Social Committee**

Rue Belliard 101

1040 Brussels

Minutes

ESAC Doc. 2019/26

Minutes of the 32nd ESAC meeting

13 June 2019

09.30-17.00

Present:

Acting Chair: Maurizio Vichi

Members: Axel Börsch-Supan, Michael Gold, David Hand, Claudiu Herteliu, Petra Lang, Matthieu Méaulle, Biruta Sloka, Maria João Valente Rosa, Petr Zahradník, Marie Bohata, Alessandro Bonnara, Audrone Jakaitiene, Sune Karlsson, Tonu Kollo, Peter Van der Heijden, Sophie Limpach

Observer: Lars Svennebye (replacing Volker Täube)

Other

Participants: Igor Caldera (CoR), Etienne Bassot, Wolfgang Hiller, Jutta Schulze-Hollmén (EPRS)

Absent: Thomas Wobben, Ariane König, Fulvio Martusciello, Gabriella Vukovich, Andras Math, Caroline Willeke

Secretariat: Delia Bistreanu, Cristina Pereira de Sá

1. Welcome and adoption of agenda

The Acting Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the new six ESAC members. He presented the Agenda, which was agreed by members.

The Acting Chair introduced Ms Sophie Limpach, the Eurostat Director responsible for Business statistics and gave a presentation of ESAC and its activity.

2. Presentation of Eurostat and the ESS

Ms Sophie Limpach gave a presentation of Eurostat and the European Statistical System (ESS). ESAC members were of the opinion that users might be confused by Eurostat's policy of publishing different release calendars for their data. Eurostat was asked to reflect on ways to change this practice, have a consolidated version, which can be filtered by users for all news releases and other publications, or to better explain the differences between the various release calendars.

A special section on experimental statistics was introduced two years ago on Eurostat's website. ESAC members believe that it would be useful to know the feedback from users regarding this experimental statistics section.

ESAC members find it difficult to navigate the Eurostat website and retrieve data. They suggested that improvements could be added, having in mind those persons who are not frequent users of the website.

ESAC members believe that language can be a barrier when trying to communicate statistics to users, as not everybody speaks English. Eurostat explained that they are tackling this problem by using infographics, which can be translated into national languages. NSIs should also act as re-layers of information in their respective countries.

3. Presentation of the activities of the European Parliament Research Service (DG EPRS)

Four members of the European Parliament Research Service gave a presentation on its activities. Following a question from an ESAC member, they explained that the EPRS draws inspiration from the Bundestag.

The EPRS's approach is to have an open publications policy, in order to gain a wider audience, while giving the option to MEPs to ask confidential questions, which may not be of interest to the general public.

Also, most of the EPRS publications are digital, as they are trying to reduce their paper publications to a minimum.

4. Recent developments (ESAC Doc. 2019/18)

Eurostat briefed ESAC on recent developments as follows:

4.1. Bucharest Memorandum on Trusted Smart Statistics (TSS)

On 16 May, the ESSC discussed the Trusted Smart Statistics Strategy and Roadmap to enable the European Statistical System (ESS) to shape the future of European official statistics in a datafied society and economy.

The aim of the document is to give strategic orientation, define the principles of Trusted Smart Statistics, and prioritise actions promoting and preparing the ESS for using new data sources within the context of European statistics.

The document should be further translated into a number of concrete actions that will be embedded in the multi annual action plan implementing the European Statistics Program 2021-27 (ESP). The consolidated multi annual plan will be submitted to the ESSC in February 2020.

4.2. Conclusions of the Workshop on collaborative economies

Eurostat explained that there is a clear recognition that the ESS needs to act and coordinate its efforts to respond to increasing user demands for official statistics on collaborative economy.

The priority now is to find a definition of the collaborative economy (as a whole and at the level of the economic activities it has an impact on) in order to arrive at comparable data across the EU.

However, it was stressed that the work should be prioritised and that a pragmatic approach should be taken, thereby allowing for concrete results in the short term, starting with short-stay accommodation followed by transport and other services (platform work).

The next steps will be discussed in the Partnership Group (September 2019) and presented to the European Statistical System Committee (October 2019).

4.3. Work programme 2020

ESAC issued an opinion on the Work Programme 2020 (ESAC Doc.2019/03). Eurostat explained that they are currently consulting all stakeholders (users, producers, other DGs) and a follow-up paper will be distributed this fall.

5. Feedback from members representing ESAC in Directors' Groups and in other meetings:

Ms Sloka participated in the meeting of the Directors of Social Statistics on 23-24 May, where discussions revolved around the use of administrative data for statistical analysis.

Mr David Hand explained that the UK launched a project titled Administrative Data Research Network to access data, but encountered many obstacles due to confidentiality issues. Issues linked to the size of the data sets were also mentioned. It could be useful for Eurostat to get in touch with the people who overcame these obstacles and learn from their experience.

6. Update of the 2019 meeting schedule (ESAC Doc. 2019/20)

Mr Zahradník will attend the meeting of the Business Statistics Directors' Group on 26-27 June 2019. (Action: Mr Zahradník, Eurostat)

Ms Valente Rosa will attend the meeting of the Directors of Social Statistics on 27-28 June 2019. (Action: Ms Valente Rosa, Eurostat)

Ms Biruta Sloka will attend the meeting of DIME & ITDG Directors' Group on Methodology on 2-3 July 2019. (Action: Ms Sloka, Eurostat)

Mr Herteliu will attend the meeting of the Directors of Social Statistics on 1-2 October 2019. (Action: Mr Herteliu, Eurostat)

Mr Vichi will attend the DGINS and ESSC meetings on 9-11 October, in Bratislava. (Action: Mr Vichi, Eurostat)

Ms Biruta Sloka will attend the meeting of the Directors of Social Statistics on 5-6 December 2019. (Action: Ms Sloka, Eurostat)

Ms Petra Lang will attend the meeting of the Business Statistics Directors' Group on 11-12 December 2019. (Action: Ms Lang, Eurostat)

Mr Petr Zahradník will attend the meeting of the Directors of Macroeconomic Statistics on 18-19 December 2019. (Action: Mr Zahradník, Eurostat)

7. The use of population registers for sample drawing for large cross-European scientific surveys (ESAC Doc. 2019/21)

Mr Börsch-Supan has drafted a paper on the use of population registers for sample drawing for large cross-European scientific surveys. He explained the background of the initiative and reminded that access to population registers varies a lot: in ten member states the registers are generally accessible, in 12 countries they are accessible for some, in nine countries the registers exist but are not accessible and some countries do not have central or local population registers.

Members discussed the initiative. It was stated that the issue is controversial, in particular because of legal constraints both at European and national level, and heterogeneous situations in different countries make it difficult to give access to sample frames for the moment. One solution would be to create a 'white list' that will be constantly updated, containing projects that are funded by the EU.

Mr Börsch-Supan will revise the document on the basis of the comments made by members. The document, together with an one-page opinion, will be resubmitted to ESAC for its next meeting in October.

8. An overview of national user councils (ESAC Doc. 2019/22)

ESAC members discussed the overview and were of the opinion that it should be restructured, making it easier to see the common points and the differences between the national users' councils. The Acting Chair underlined the need to connect ESAC with the other national user bodies, in order to better identify the needs of users.

7. Other ESAC activities

- **Collaboration with ESGAB (ESAC Doc. 2019/08)**

The Committee discussed different forms of collaboration with ESGAB and concluded that a dialogue with ESGAB could be organised next year, possibly on establishing quality standards for developing, producing and disseminating trusted smart statistics. ESAC will discuss this point again at the October meeting.

- **Appointment of an Executive Board member**

ESAC members decided to extend Mr Maurizio Vichi's role as Acting Chair of ESAC and Ms Maria João Valente Rosa's mandate in the Executive Board.

An Executive Board member, Coordinator for Seminar and Research Activities, will be appointed at the next meeting. Members were encouraged to stand as candidates.

- **Possible contribution of ESAC to the Task Force Peer reviews**

In order to take an informed decision if and where ESAC could contribute to the work on peer reviews, ESAC asked Eurostat to present the work planned for the future peer review exercise at the October meeting.

- **CESS 2020**

The CESS2020 conference will be organised in Prague. Members were invited to reflect on possible sessions or roundtables to be organised during the CESS conference.

- **European Statistics Day 2019**

In order to celebrate the European Statistics Day, the next ESAC meeting could be organised in Paris, in partnership with the ESSEC University. Mr Vichi and Ms Valente Rosa will work on a draft ESD declaration, to be circulated to members for comments.