

This article is part of an [online publication](#) presenting the results of the [European Commission](#) programme 'Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics', or MEETS for short, which ran from 2009 to 2013 with the objectives of adjusting European business statistics to new needs and reducing the burden on [enterprises](#).

Business and trade statistics are facing major challenges: the world economy has become more integrated, and statistics have to respond by adequately reflecting the new phenomena. At the same time there is strong pressure to cut red tape and reduce the burden on business. New ways of producing business statistics, taking advantage of technological progress, need to be explored.

To address this, the [European Parliament](#) and the [Council](#) adopted the MEETS programme in December 2008. The programme, which ran over a period of five years from 2009 to 2013, helped to adapt business statistics to new needs and also adjusted the statistical production systems to reduce the burden on [enterprises](#). It provided substantial financial resources - an overall amount of 42.5 million euros - to support development in several areas in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) Member States and [EFTA](#) Member States.

The strategy was fully in line with the vision of European statistics for the next decade as defined in [Communication COM\(2009\) 404](#) on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade; its legal basis is [Decision 1297/2008/EC](#) of 16 December 2008 on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS).

Objectives and work programmes

The programme contributed to achieving the following general objectives:

(1) Review priorities and develop target sets of indicators for new areas

was about identifying and deciding on which new areas to describe and reviewing old requirements affected by changing economic structures.

(2) Achieve a streamlined framework for business-related statistics

was about integration of different areas of business statistics, including coordination of legal acts, harmonisation of methodologies and linking and harmonising statistical classifications and business registers with related sources. The objective also required the inclusion of multinational groups and data collection on such groups.

(3) Support the implementation of a more efficient way of producing enterprise and trade statistics

was about integration of data collection and data processing. The objective was to more effectively use existing data through integrating data already collected into a single system or by using microdata linking techniques. Additionally, efforts were directed at increasing the use of administrative data and taking advantage of the harmonisation of accounting standards.

(4) Modernise Intrastat

was about improving the simplified Intrastat system through work on harmonising methods, enhancing the use of administrative data and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) improvements.

For all the objectives, broad actions have been defined in the legal basis. They were implemented through annual work programmes adopted by the Commission after consultation of the relevant technical bodies.

For more information on the annual work programmes see:

- [Commission Decision](#) of 25 October 2012 on the annual work programme for 2013 for the implementation of Decision 1297/2008/EC on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS);
- [Commission Decision](#) of 28 October 2011 on the annual work programme for 2012 for the implementation of Decision 1297/2008/EC on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS);
- [Commission Decision](#) of 26 November 2010 on the annual work programme for 2011 for the implementation of Decision 1297/2008/EC on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS);
- [Commission Decision](#) of 30 November 2009 on the annual work programme for 2010 for the implementation of Decision 1297/2008/EC on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS);
- [Commission Decision](#) of 24 April 2009 on the annual work programme for 2009 for the implementation of Decision 1297/2008/EC on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS).

MEETS – part of an overall strategy

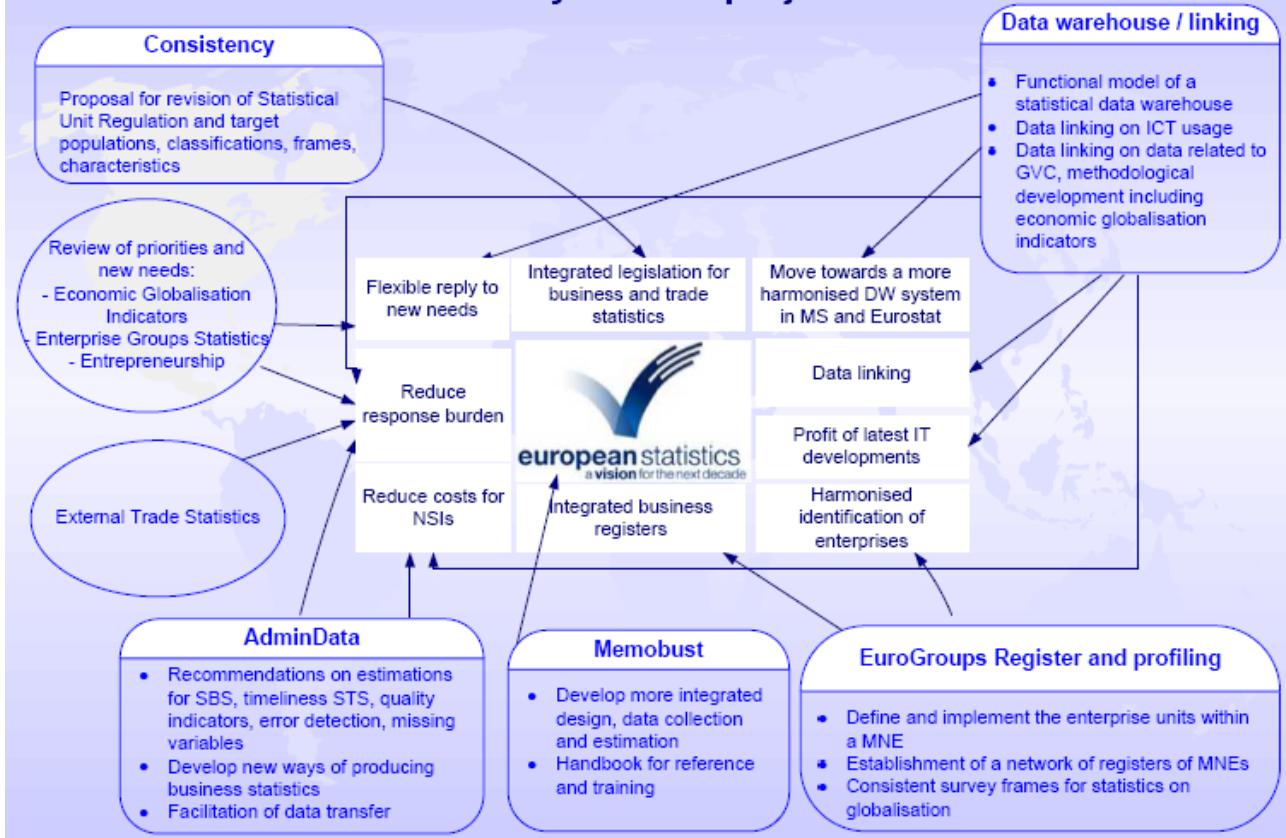
The 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the production methods of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade' provides a comprehensive and holistic approach to changing the way European statistics are produced. The objective is to increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the system and to ensure that new user demands can be met in the future. It describes the fundamental dilemma posed by increasing demands, resource constraints and the need to reduce burden on respondents. It also calls for close cooperation within the [European statistical system \(ESS\)](#) to achieve the necessary efficiency gains.

The MEETS programme is the application of this vision to the area of business and trade statistics. ESSnets are a way to develop new projects where a few Member States interested in a specific domain actively collaborate on a common task and then disseminate the results to those not participating. This helps to harness synergies, to save costs and to share best practice while developing specific actions beneficial for the whole of the ESS. ESSnets have been set up for the main projects:

- Consistency of concepts and methods for business and trade-related statistics;
- Use of [administrative data](#), data warehouse and linking;
- Methodology for modern business statistics

These projects are described in more detail below. The following figure shows the main links between the MEETS programme and the 'Vision':

Main links between the key MEETS-projects and the vision



Main projects

Consistency of concepts and methods for business and trade-related statistics

Business statistics are compiled in accordance with EU legislation, which has developed over the years and is not necessarily consistent in terms of concepts, scope, definitions, methodology, etc. The European Statistical System Networks (ESSnet) on Consistency analysed the possible lack of consistency of concepts and methods of business and trade related statistics.

The ESSnet provided revised definitions of the statistical units enterprise, enterprise group, kind-of-activity and local kind-of-activity unit together with operational rules and a data model to enforce uniform implementation. The drafts are being fine-tuned by a Task Force on Statistical Units launched by Eurostat in 2013 and a study was done on the impact on the implementation of the revised definition of enterprises in business statistics. Further testing of the methodology was done in 2014. Further deliverables of the ESSnet were recommendations for a method to classify statistical units, applied in a comparable manner over all statistical domains, comparable breakdowns as well as a methodology for a frame population in business statistics. In addition, the ESSnet provided recommendations for a system of variables with consistency and standardised terminology and definitions for all statistical domains including methodological guidelines.

The results will feed into the Framework Regulation Integrating Business and Trade Statistics (FRIBS), which will simplify and harmonise existing legislation.

For more information see:

- [Consistency on ESSnet portal](#)
- [External study on detail evaluation of the legal acts in the areas of statistics which were identified by member states as areas to revision](#)

EuroGroups register (EGR)

The aim of the EuroGroups Register is to provide consistent and coordinated survey frames for producing quality statistics measuring globalisation; mainly for Foreign Affiliates Statistics (FATS) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

In 2009 the ESSnet on EGR methodology set up EGR version 1.0 and the organisational network for data exchange between Eurostat and ESS.

For more information see the [EGR article](#) , as well as:

- [ESSnet - EGR](#) ;
- [ESSnet - Profiling](#) ;
- [EuroGroups Register](#) (dedicated website);

Use of existing data in the statistical system

The following MEETS projects under objective 3 dealt with data linking:

- Data warehousing and data linking in statistical data production (ESSnet). The aim of the ESSnet was to define a functional model for a data warehouse to serve as the basis for assessing all issues raised in the ESSnet in a generic and standardised way.
- Linking of microdata on international sourcing (ESSnet and individual grants). The measurement and analysis of international sourcing and its consequences for European economies was one of the key objectives of this project. Another important objective was to develop a methodology for measuring the global value chain (GVC).
- Linking of microdata on international trade and business statistics. The main objective of the project was to develop indicators that combine variables from external trade and business statistics.
- Linking of microdata on ICT usage (ESSnet). This ESSnet addressed the development of a microdata linking approach to analyse the impact of ICT on the economic performance of enterprises. It also investigated in more detail how to adjust national survey strategies to optimise the results of microdata linking in the future.
- Methodology for modern business statistics - Memobust (ESSnet). The overall objective was to identify best practices and develop a common methodology and ESS guidelines for the efficient and integrated production of business statistics.

For more information see:

- [ESSnet - Data Warehouse](#) (data warehousing and data linking on ESSnet portal);
- [ESSnet - Memobust](#) (methodology for modern business statistics).

Use of data already existing in the economy

The following activities under objective 3 aimed to improve the use of existing data in the economy:

- ESSnet on the use of administrative and accounts data for business statistics (ESSnet AdminData): its main objective was to investigate the possibilities of making wider use of administrative data for business statistics, to make good practices available to NSIs and to prepare some recommendations in this area. The ESSnet focused on the common problems arising from the use of different data sources for producing business statistics.
- Individual grants to national statistical institutes for the use of administrative data: the aim was to support national statistical institutes in implementing more efficient ways of producing enterprise statistics and in improving the quality of statistical data.
- Facilitation of data transfer from enterprises to national statistical institutes: grants were provided to national statistical institutes to introduce data collection systems that could simplify the reporting burden on businesses and to continue investigating the possibilities of using XBRL for statistical purposes.

For more information see:

- [ESSnet - AdminData](#) (use of administrative and accounts data for business statistics);

- [Admin Data Wiktionary - The Use Of Administrative And Accounts Data For Business Statistics](#) .

Modernisation of international trade statistics

The following projects aimed to meet objective 4 of the MEETS programme:

- Harmonising methods to improve quality in [intra-EU](#) trade statistics (procurement and individual grants). The aim was to improve the quality of Intrastat data by defining a list of quality items and precise quality requirements and by providing recommendations.
- Better use of administrative data in Intrastat (individual grants). Support was provided for Member State actions to increase and improve the use of administrative data for the compilation of Intrastat data resulting in better data quality while reducing the response burden for enterprises.
- Development of tools and methods for data exchange (former XT-NET) (procurement and individual grants). The objective of the project was to consolidate and further develop tools and standards in order to facilitate the supply of data on multinational enterprises and improve data quality to enable automated data exchange among Member States and Eurostat.
- Improvement of data exchange systems in external trade statistics (procurement).

Results

The results of the MEETS programme were achieved by numerous deliverables of the participating National Statistical Institutes (NSIs). For a detailed overview please click [here](#) .

= See also

- [MEETS programme - results](#) (online publication)

Dedicated section

- [Structural business statistics](#)

Publications

- [External study on detail evaluation of the legal acts in the areas of statistics which were identified by member states as areas to revision](#)

Legislation

- [Communication COM\(2009\) 404](#) on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade
- [Decision 1297/2008/EC](#) of 16 December 2008 on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS)
- [MEETS project overview, key results and follow-up](#) (downloadable Word document)
- [Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics \(MEETS\)](#)
- [Report COM\(2010\) 813](#) on the implementation of Decision 1297/2008/EC of 16 December 2008 on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS)

External links

- [Cros portal](#)
- [EuroGroups Register website](#)