



European
Statistical
Governance
Advisory
Board

PRESS RELEASE

10 November 2014

Peer review confirms that Eurostat is a well-run statistical office, but it can do better

The European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) recommends ways to improve Eurostat's compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice. The Board's latest annual report comes at a time when European statistics are increasingly being used as evidence for policymaking purposes as well as providing performance indicators which may automatically trigger financial consequences for the EU Member States. As statistics attract more political attention, those who produce them must be better equipped to cope with the effects. In the words of the ESGAB Chair, Thomas Wieser: 'Transparency and compliance with the Code of Practice is statisticians' best protection against growing political pressures.'

ESGAB's annual report this year focuses entirely on Eurostat, the European Union's statistical office. A peer review carried out by ESGAB has found that Eurostat's strengths lie in the legal instruments which generally have been reinforced in the spirit of the European Statistics Code of Practice, with commitment to quality, methodology and a highly qualified workforce.

The report includes recommendations addressing four main areas: legislation underpinning procedures for appointment and dismissal of senior management and implementation of legislative architecture; coherence of European statistics; dissemination and communication; and coordination. Eurostat will now take action to bring about improvement and develop roadmaps based on the recommendations it has agreed to implement.

ESGAB has recommended that the appointment of Directors-General of Eurostat should in future be anchored in law and based on open competition, but Eurostat's views diverge from ESGAB's assessment. The European Commission in this regard is similar to many administrations and civil service statutes in the Member States and, while acknowledging the present institutional constraints, ESGAB would expect it to set a good example in terms of Code compliance.

Independent peer reviews designed to assess compliance of the European Statistical System (ESS) with the Code of Practice at national level are being carried out in 32 countries (EU Member States and EFTA-EEA countries), for the second time since the Code of Practice was established in 2005. These peer reviews aim at enhancing the credibility of the ESS, strengthening its capacity to produce European statistics as well as reassuring stakeholders about the quality of European statistics and the trustworthiness of the ESS.

ESGAB's sixth annual report to the European Parliament and the Council includes a 4-page executive summary with recommendations for improved compliance with the Code, an overview of Eurostat's strengths and pertinent issues for Eurostat's attention.





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Further information

The 2014 report with a short executive summary is available on ESGAB's homepage (<http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>).

Contact for media assistance

To arrange an interview with the ESGAB Chair, Mr Thomas Wieser, please contact the ESGAB Secretariat: Heli Lehtimäki (estat-esgab@ec.europa.eu), tel. +352 4301-36484.

About ESGAB

The European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) was established by the European Parliament and the Council in 2008 to provide an independent overview of the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice in the European Statistical System (ESS). ESGAB's work aims at enhancing the European Statistical System's professional independence, integrity and accountability, key elements of the Code of Practice, as well as improving the quality of European statistics.

ESGAB consists of seven members. Its tasks include the preparation of an annual report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Code of Practice insofar as it relates to the Commission (Eurostat) and the ESS as a whole. ESGAB also advises the Commission (Eurostat) on appropriate measures to facilitate the process.

Key concepts

The **European Statistics Code of Practice** is based on 15 principles. Governance bodies and statistical authorities in the European Union undertake to adhere to the principles of the Code covering the institutional environment, statistical processes and outputs. A set of indicators of good practice for each principle provides a reference for reviewing the implementation of the Code.

Code of Practice: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/quality/documents/CoP_October_2011.pdf

European Statistical System (ESS): a partnership between the European Union's statistical authority, namely the Commission (Eurostat), and the national statistical institutes and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics (see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/ess_eurostat/introduction).

