

## **The European Statistics Code of Practice - a key tool for building public trust in official statistics**

In its 2017 report the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) urges more to be done by European statistical authorities to ensure the public at large are aware of the high standards in place for European statistics. Such awareness-raising is essential in the face of conflicting or erroneous data from a range of non-official sources.

*“Statistics from unreliable or biased sources can be easily spread through social media to promote specific interests and to mislead the public. So it is crucial that citizens are aware that the European statistics published by Eurostat and national statistical authorities are underpinned by the European Statistics Code of Practice, which promotes professional independence, objectivity and impartiality”* says Martti Hetemäki, Chair of ESGAB.

ESGAB welcomes the efforts being made in Eurostat and across the European Statistical System as a whole to implement actions to improve compliance with the Code of Practice, and is pleased that a revision to the Code of Practice is now planned. This revision, which ESGAB has been strongly recommending for several years, is expected to take into account the use of new data sources, a revised legal framework and the lessons learned from the peer reviews in 2013-2015.

In this year's report ESGAB also makes a number of recommendations regarding the use of data from private data sources, the role of national statistical institutes in coordinating other national authorities responsible for the production of European statistics, and the development of a methodology for calculating the cost of European statistics.

### **Further information**

The 2017 report is available on ESGAB's homepage (<http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>).

### **Contact for media assistance**

To arrange an interview with the ESGAB Chair, Mr Martti Hetemäki, please contact the ESGAB Secretariat: Steve Clarke ([estat-esgab@ec.europa.eu](mailto:estat-esgab@ec.europa.eu)), tel. +352 4301-32527.

### **About ESGAB**

ESGAB<sup>1</sup> provides an independent overview of the implementation of the Code of Practice. It seeks to enhance the professional independence, integrity and accountability of the European Statistical System, key elements of the Code, and the quality of European statistics. Its tasks include the preparation of an annual report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Code by Eurostat and the European Statistical System as a whole. ESGAB also advises the Commission (Eurostat) on appropriate measures to facilitate implementation.

The **European Statistical System**<sup>2</sup> (ESS) is a partnership between the European Union's statistical authority, i.e. the Commission (Eurostat), and the national statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities (ONAs) responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.

### **European Statistics Code of Practice (the Code)**

The European Statistics Code of Practice<sup>3</sup> sets the standards for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. It builds on a common definition of quality in statistics used in the European Statistical System. The Code is a self-regulatory instrument containing 15 principles which address the institutional environment in which national and EU statistical authorities operate, and the production and dissemination of European statistics. Its implementation is supported by a set of indicators of good practice for each principle.

### **Peer reviews**

Peer reviews<sup>4</sup> are part of the European Statistical System strategy to implement the Code of Practice. The objective is to enhance the integrity, independence and accountability of ESS statistical authorities. The first round of peer reviews was carried out in 2006-2008, followed by a second round in 2013-2015. Both rounds cover all EU Member States and EFTA countries. The European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) carried out a peer review of Eurostat using the methodology developed for National Statistical Institute peer reviews with some adaptations reflecting Eurostat's specific characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-statistical-system/overview>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/european-statistics-code-of-practice>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/peer-reviews>.