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The European Statistical System adapts innovatively to COVID-19 crisis and new European policies

In its 2020 Annual Report, the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) looks at the response of the European Statistical System (ESS) to the crisis triggered by the COVID-19, as well as at the new challenges linked to new European policies, especially the European Green Deal, digitisation and the reorientation of the European Semester to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

“The ESS faced a double challenge with COVID-19: the need to significantly adjust well-established statistical operations, due to the lockdowns, while at the same time the need to provide new data sets and indicators that can monitor the resultant economic, social and environmental phenomena” says Enrico Giovannini, Chair of ESGAB. “Eurostat and the National Statistical Institutes adapted very well by quickly implementing innovative actions that ensured continued production and dissemination of European statistics. The methods that the ESS deployed, such as access to new data sources and the production of new indicators, should be consolidated and continued even after the crisis is over, to the benefit of both users and respondents”.

The 2020 ESGAB Annual Report highlights the challenges the ESS has to face to respond to the new questions raised by the crisis. These challenges concern the timeliness and comparability of key economic and social indicators, as well as the development of the new data and indicators needed for an adequate assessment of the effects of the crisis in the gender, intergenerational, social and health domains.

The Report also analyses the new initiatives adopted by the European Commission that will have significant impact on the future of the ESS, such as the European Green Deal, the European Data Strategy and the new European Semester. These initiatives will require the development of new sets of statistics and indicators, to both design and evaluate policies at European, national and local levels. ESGAB provides its perspective and makes recommendations, where appropriate, on how the ESS should respond to make statistics able to underpin those policy initiatives. In this context, ESGAB recommends that the ESS develop a medium-term Statistical Action Plan that could be supported through a special financing line of the Next Generation EU initiative, both at EU and national levels.

The third round of peer reviews on the compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP) starts in 2021 and covers national statistical systems of the EU, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and Eurostat. ESGAB welcomes this new round, as the peer



reviews allow the members of the ESS to strengthen their alignment with the principles of the CoP and to identify opportunities for improvement.

The Board makes 13 new recommendations on the follow-up of the COVID-19 crisis, emerging challenges for the ESS, several aspects of governance, and the third round of peer reviews.

Attachment: Annual Report 2020 executive summary and recommendations

Further information

The 2020 Report is available on ESGAB's homepage (<http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>).

Contact for media assistance

To arrange an interview with the ESGAB Chair, please contact the ESGAB Secretariat at estat-esgab@ec.europa.eu.

About ESGAB

ESGAB¹ 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**² (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 Practice³ 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 16 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 reviews⁴ 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

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>.

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

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

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/w eb/quality/peer-review s>.



statistical authorities. The first round of peer reviews was carried out in 2006-2008, followed by a second round in 2013-2015. Both rounds covered all EU Member States and EFTA countries. The European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) carried out the peer review of Eurostat using the methodology developed for National Statistical Institute peer reviews with some adaptations, reflecting Eurostat's specific characteristics. The European Statistical System is preparing the third round of peer reviews, which will take place in 2021-2023.