

Peer review report
on the compliance with the Code of Practice
and the coordination role of the
National Statistical Institute in Turkey

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List of abbreviations

CATI	Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview
CB	Central Bank
CoP	Code of Practice
ESS	European Statistical System
EU	European Union
e-VT	automatic electronic collection of enterprise data
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MS	Member State
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NSS	National Statistical System
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
ONAs	Other National Authorities
OSP	Official Statistics Programme
PR	Peer Review
TurkStat	Turkish Statistical Institute
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

1. Executive summary

The history of Turkish statistics goes back as far as the Ottoman Empire, when starting from the 14th century information on the population and the land was collected. The first population census was carried out in the 19th century, and in 1926 the Central Statistical Department, the modern day predecessor of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), was established. TurkStat was established in its current statutory form by the Statistics Law of Turkey No. 5429 of 2005 (Statistics Law), which describes it as a scientifically and technically autonomous institution. In 2011 TurkStat was designated as a subsidiary institution under the Ministry of Development.

The Statistics Law regulates the compilation and implementation of the Official Statistics Programme (OSP) in accordance with designated statistical principles, which broadly replicate the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP). It also regulates the composition, role and frequency of meetings of the Statistical Council. The Statistics Law also prescribes the position and role of the President of TurkStat, the structure and the main tasks of each department of the Institute as well as the structure of the regional offices.

TurkStat has one central office in Ankara and 26 regional offices. Approximately three quarters of the total staff of 3,893 in November 2015 are working in the regional offices, with the majority of them classed as temporary employees who are primarily engaged in data collection. TurkStat is assigned a very clear mandate in the Statistics Law to coordinate the OSP. The coordination task is a significant challenge as close to 60% of the statistical sub subjects (179 of 298) covered in the OSP are undertaken by, or involve a significant contribution from other institutions.

Overall, the Peer Review team concluded that TurkStat is highly compliant with the CoP and compares favourably with other National Statistical Institutes in this respect. The two Other National Authorities (ONAs) examined as part of the Review also exhibited very good levels of compliance. However, it would appear from comments made during the course of the Peer Review visit that compliance throughout the wider National Statistical System (NSS) is somewhat variable and that some institutions fall short in regard to the level of their compliance. TurkStat is enabled under the Statistics Law to coordinate the implementation of the OSP and has developed a number of effective strategies to implement its mandate. Nevertheless, a number of challenges need to be overcome in order to improve the level of coordination.

The Peer Review team identified a number of strengths of TurkStat in regard to its compliance with the CoP. These include: the comprehensive nature of the Statistics Law and its close alignment with the CoP; the deep understanding and acceptance of the statistical principles embedded in the culture of TurkStat at all levels; the high quality of TurkStat's staff - 80% of its 1,733 permanent staff have a university qualification and 431 of these are classified as "TurkStat experts"; and the high professional reputation that TurkStat enjoys among its main users.

With the possible exception of a relative lack of progress in the use of administrative data for statistical purposes, the Peer Review team concluded that TurkStat is highly compliant with the CoP. However, the Peer Review team identified a number of other issues and challenges that if addressed would, in its opinion, improve or enhance the level of compliance with the CoP. These issues and challenges, together with appropriate recommendations, are discussed under the following three headings:

- Strengthening the Institutional Environment and Coordination;
- Developing Quality Procedures; and
- Improving Services to Users.

The recommendations put forward by the Peer Review team are listed below. In most cases they are addressed to TurkStat but in some instances they are addressed to the Statistical Council

and/or “the relevant national authorities”. In these latter cases it is assumed that TurkStat will take the initiative in getting a suitable response from these authorities.

Recommendations

Strengthening the Institutional Environment and Coordination

Access to administrative data

1. TurkStat and the Statistical Council should endeavour to have the outstanding legal obstacles to allowing full access to administrative data and registers addressed as a matter of the highest priority. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.2)

Institutional independence of TurkStat

2. TurkStat and the Statistical Council should endeavour to have TurkStat’s institutional status reviewed with the objective of adopting a form that strengthens its institutional status and emphasises its professional independence (and the public’s perception of same) within the Turkish public administration system. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1)
3. Greater transparency should apply in the appointment of the President of TurkStat, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that the appointment process has regard to professional competence only. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8)

Organisational capacity of TurkStat

4. The relevant national authorities should ensure that TurkStat and the Other National Authorities are provided with the necessary human resources to ensure that they can meet all priority national and international statistical needs, particularly those required to comply with European Union statistical acquis. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 3)
5. TurkStat should review on an ongoing basis its current organisational structure with a view to assessing whether it continues to be fit for purpose in meeting current and future statistical requirements, particularly having regard to rapidly changing statistical demands and the introduction of new statistical methodologies. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10)
6. TurkStat should develop a more explicit staff mobility programme in order to meet its business needs and the professional and managerial career development needs of its staff. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 3.1 and 7.6)

Coordination of the national statistical system

7. The relevant national authorities should review the role and functioning of the Statistical Council with a view to optimising its contribution to the coordination and governance of the national statistical system. (Coordination)
8. TurkStat and the Statistical Council should identify the staffing and other resources required for the implementation of the statistical projects included in the next five- year Official Statistics Programme (2017-2021) and should report annually on their availability

and adequacy. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10 and Coordination)

9. TurkStat should put in place mechanisms to actively promote greater skills transfer between it and the Other National Authorities in order to improve coordination and the quality of statistical work throughout the national statistical system. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10 and Coordination)

Developing quality procedures

10. TurkStat should further integrate and develop its quality procedures in the context of implementing a total quality management approach throughout the organisation. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4)
11. TurkStat should establish a quality audit function and introduce a systematic programme for regularly auditing its key statistical products. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.4)
12. TurkStat should publish Quality Reports relating to its statistical outputs in English on its website. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3 and 15.7)
13. TurkStat should ensure that the certification of statistics produced by the Other National Authorities, involving the awarding of the Quality Logo, is progressively and systematically rolled out as part of the implementation of the next Official Statistics Programme (2017-2021). (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4 and Coordination)
14. TurkStat, in conjunction with the relevant institutions, should resolve the quality problems with certain registers and administrative data sources that are restricting their use for statistical purposes. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9)

Improving the service to users

User needs and satisfaction

15. TurkStat should further develop its procedures for consulting regularly, and raising statistical awareness among, users and potential users of official statistics. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 11.1 and 11.3)
16. TurkStat should commission a comprehensive user satisfaction survey to determine and examine the extent to which users are satisfied with its products and trust its independence and impartiality. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 11.3)
17. TurkStat should adopt a more pro-active approach in communicating with the media, including the holding of more regular media briefing sessions on key outputs and developments. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 10 and 15)
18. TurkStat should engage more actively with appropriate educational and other stakeholders in promoting statistical literacy. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15)

Improved service to users

19. TurkStat should prepare and publish more analytical and user-focused reports based on its statistical outputs to meet the needs of users. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15)
20. TurkStat should develop its use of social media in the dissemination and communication of its statistical outputs and services. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15)
21. TurkStat should review the implementation of its Revisions Policy with a view to providing more retrospective data (i.e. back-casting) in order to meet the needs of users. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 14.2)

Access to microdata

22. TurkStat should introduce remote access facilities for researchers, who are permitted to use its anonymised microdata for research purposes. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4)
23. TurkStat should review the administrative arrangements for granting researchers access to anonymised microdata in order to ensure that they are flexible and kept to the minimum necessary for complying with legal requirements. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4)

Web accessibility

24. TurkStat should take the necessary measures to ensure that its website complies with the universal web content accessibility guidelines. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.2)

2. Introduction

This peer review report is part of a series of assessments, the objective of which is to evaluate the extent to which National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) of the enlargement countries comply with the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP). This series of assessments is based on a similar round of peer reviews carried out in EU Member States, and follows, as much as possible, the same methodology, slightly adapted to enlargement countries.

The CoP, which sets out a common quality framework for the ESS, was first adopted in 2005 by the Statistical Programme Committee and updated in 2011 by its successor, the European Statistical System Committee. The CoP — 15 principles and related indicators of good practice — covers the institutional environment, the statistical production process and the output of European statistics. The ESS is committed to fully complying with the CoP and is working towards its full implementation. Periodic assessments review progress towards reaching this goal.

The first round of peer reviews in the EU Member States in 2006–2008 was followed by a round of ‘light’ peer reviews and adapted global assessments in the enlargement countries in 2010–2012. The light peer reviews explored how the NSIs were progressing in implementing the parts of the CoP relating to the institutional environment and dissemination of statistics (principles 1–6 and 15). This resulted in reports for each reviewed NSI, available on the Eurostat website¹. These reports also include a set of improvement actions covering all the principles of the CoP; these formed the basis of the annual monitoring of the implementation of the CoP in the enlargement countries in the period 2011–2015.

In line with the reviews carried out in EU Member States in 2014–2015, the scope of this second round of peer reviews is broader: the assessment of CoP compliance covers all principles; the CoP compliance of selected other national producers of official statistics (as well as the NSI) in each country is assessed; and the way in which statistical authorities coordinate the production and dissemination of official statistics within their statistical systems is explored.

In order to gain an independent view, the peer review exercise has been externalised and an audit-like approach, where all the answers to the self-assessment questionnaires have to be supported by evidence, has been applied.

Each peer review in the enlargement countries is conducted by three reviewers and has four phases: completion of self-assessment questionnaires by a country; their assessment by Peer Reviewers; a peer review visit; and the preparation of reports on the outcomes.

To test and complete the methodology, it was piloted in Turkey in the autumn of 2015 – the present report is the result of the pilot. The peer review of Turkey was conducted by Mr Gerry O’Hanlon (leading expert), Ms Pilar Guzman (supporting expert) and Mr Ferenc Galik (representative of Eurostat), who conducted a peer review visit to Ankara on 3–6 November 2015.

This report focuses on compliance with the CoP and the coordination of official statistics within the Turkish Statistical System. The report highlights some of the strengths of Turkey in these contexts and contains recommendations for improvement. Improvement actions developed by TurkStat on the basis of this report will be published within the four-week period starting when the final report is sent to the NSI.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/enlargement-countries/publications/reports>

3. Brief description of the National Statistical System

History

The history of Turkish statistics goes back as far as the Ottoman Empire, when starting from the 14th century information on the population and the land was collected. The first population census was carried out in the 19th century, and in 1926 the Central Statistical Department, the modern day predecessor of TurkStat, was established. In parallel with the evolution of the different areas of the economy and society covered by statistics, the name of the institution has changed several times over the 20th century, until in 2005 it got its current name, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat). The last major reorganisation took place in 2012, when the current structure was put into place. TurkStat is in the process of building a new headquarters building in Ankara that is expected to be ready by 2017.

Legislation

TurkStat was established in its current statutory form by the Statistics Law of Turkey No. 5429 of 2005 (Statistics Law), which describes it as a scientifically and technically autonomous institution. According to Article 16 of the Statistics Law, TurkStat is organised under the Prime Ministry, although the Prime Minister may delegate his/her authorities regarding the management of TurkStat to a Minister of State. Pursuant to this provision, until the establishment of the 61st Government on July 6, 2011, TurkStat operated administratively under a Deputy Prime Minister or Minister of State. However, after the abolition of the Ministries of State on July 6, 2011, TurkStat was designated as a subsidiary institution under the Ministry of Development.

The Statistics Law regulates the compilation and implementation of the Official Statistics Programme (OSP) in accordance with designated statistical principles, which broadly replicate the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. It also regulates the composition, role and frequency of meetings of the Statistical Council. The Council is composed of high level representatives of the various national ministries and institutions and key users and other stakeholders, including: the public administration, the scientific community, business associations, the media and some other Non Governmental Organisations. It currently has a total of 41 members. The President of TurkStat, whose overall position and role is set down in the Law, acts as the chair of the Statistical Council. The Statistics Law also prescribes the structure and the main tasks of the advisory and supporting units of TurkStat, as well as the structure of the regional offices.

Mission and vision

The mission of TurkStat is to:

- produce and disseminate statistics which are qualified, timely, reliable, objective and consistent with international standards and respond to the requirements and priorities of national and international users; and
- provide co-ordination between the public institutions involved in the production of official statistics.

The vision is to establish a user focused and sustainable statistical system based on international standards.

Structure of the NSI and the NSS

TurkStat has a hierarchical structure, with 19 central departments organised under four vice presidents that are located in the headquarters in Ankara. Ten departments are responsible for statistical production, while the rest deal with coordination and supporting services. There are 26 regional offices of TurkStat (corresponding to NUTS II level regions), which are responsible mainly for data collection and fieldwork. Approximately three quarters of the total staff of 3,893 in November 2015 are working in the regional offices, with the majority of them classed as temporary employees who are primarily engaged in data collection. The National Statistical System of Turkey is coordinated by TurkStat. The main producers besides TurkStat are the Central Bank, the Treasury and the Ministry of Finance while the main providers are the institutions holding different registers. Coordination is facilitated through approximately 50 working groups at expert level, which are established by TurkStat and report to the Statistical Council.

Statistical programme

Statistical activities are defined and regulated by the OSP, which is prepared for a 5-year-period. The current OSP is the second 5-year programme and covers the period 2012-2016. It sets out 298 statistical activities to be undertaken to produce official statistics, and defines the basic principles and standards dealing with the production and dissemination of these statistics. Data identified by the OSP to be produced by TurkStat and the other institutions and organizations are considered to be official statistics. In developing the programme great care is taken to ensure that there is no duplication in statistical production between TurkStat and the other institutions. In compliance with the Statistics Law, TurkStat produces an Annual Monitoring Report on the implementation of the OSP, which is submitted to the Statistical Council and published. Statistical needs not foreseen at the launch of the 5-year programme, but required to be produced in the programme period, can be included in the OSP at one of the annual updating periods and thus become official statistics.

The OSP is drafted by TurkStat with the involvement of expert level working groups and then submitted to the Statistical Council for consideration and approval. The final draft is formally adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Statistical products

A consolidated annual release calendar covering all official statistics is produced and published by TurkStat on its website. First releases are published on the website in strict conformity with the calendar and there is absolutely no pre-release. Aggregated data and metadata, which are organised thematically on the website, are available free of charge either as predefined tables or by accessing the databases.

Researchers are granted access to microdata for scientific purpose after submission and approval of a research proposal. For data where the risk of disclosure of confidential data is high, data is accessed in one of the controlled Data Research Centres that TurkStat makes available for this purpose. In other cases anonymised datasets are distributed on CD.

4. Compliance with the Code of Practice and the Coordination role within the National Statistical System

4.1 Strengths of the National Statistical Institute in relation to its compliance with the Code of Practice and to its coordination role

The activities of TurkStat are fully covered by the provisions of the Statistics Law of Turkey No. 5429 of 2005 (Statistics Law). This framework legislation provides a comprehensive legal basis for the work of the whole Turkish Statistical System that is fully in line with the principles of the CoP. The legislation regulates not only the functioning of TurkStat but also that of the Statistical Council and the overall implementation by all institutions of the Official Statistics Programme. The high level of alignment between the Statistics Law and the CoP can be seen particularly in respect of the following principles: Principle 1, professional independence (Articles 3, 17, 22 and 23 of the Law), Principle 2, mandate for data collection (Articles 7-10, 53 and 54), Principle 5, statistical confidentiality (Articles 13-15) and Principle 6, impartiality (Articles 4 and 12). Indeed in order to emphasise the compliance of the legislative framework with the CoP, TurkStat has included, in the translation of the Code into Turkish, references to the articles of the Statistics Law that ensure that each principle is covered by the legislation. Since the production of public statistics in Turkey is almost completely covered by the OSP, it follows that the compliance of official statistics with the CoP is more than adequately covered by the comprehensive legal provisions of the Statistics Law. So, this legislation frame can be considered as one of the main strengths of the Turkish Statistical System in ensuring compliance with the CoP.

In addition to the legal provisions the Peer Review team is satisfied that there is a deep understanding and acceptance of the statistical principles embedded in the culture of TurkStat at all levels. This was evident from the team's many interactions with management and staff during the course of the Peer Review visit and from its examination of the comprehensive documentation provided. Furthermore, users and providers unanimously confirmed that TurkStat is held in high professional regard, particularly in respect of its independence, objectivity and focus on quality.

Moreover, TurkStat appears as a solid, well managed and highly professional institution that is very much committed to high quality statistical production and providing an excellent service to users. The Peer Review team found the senior management to be very transparent in their approach and very much open to innovation and change. The improvement that has taken place in TurkStat since the first peer review is noticeable, particularly in relation to its commitment to quality. A culture of quality has been promoted and a quality management structure is being developed. In addition, the standard of documentation is very high in TurkStat, both in terms of coverage and content. Detailed documentation is available on most statistical operations while a number of protocols and policies have been developed in relation *inter alia* to statistical confidentiality, dissemination and the provision of access to microdata by researchers. Overall, the Peer Review team formed the impression that the service to users has been considerably improved in recent years and this was confirmed by those users consulted during the Peer Review visit.

From its discussions with the main institutional users and producers of official statistics, the Peer Review team concluded that TurkStat is held in high regard for its professionalism and service within the Turkish public administration system. This is a most important asset, as it facilitates the implementation of the coordination task entrusted to TurkStat by the Statistics Law. The coordination task is a significant challenge as close to 60% of the statistical activities identified in the OSP are undertaken by, or involve a significant contribution from other institutions. The development of administrative data sources and registers for statistical purposes is another significant challenge that can benefit from TurkStat's high professional standing.

A further strength of TurkStat is the quality of its staff. Over 80% of its 1,733 permanent staff in November 2015 have a university qualification and 431 of these are classified as “TurkStat experts”. This qualification is awarded to the employees with a university background only after successfully passing a number of tests, among which an examination on general statistical knowledge and the completion of a thesis on a particular topic of interest to TurkStat. Two thirds of these highly qualified staff are located in the headquarters while the remainder are located in the regional offices where they oversee the data collection operations and deal with local users.

In addition, TurkStat has a permanent on-the-job training programme, run by the Research and Training Centre, for newly recruited staff. It also offers a training programme on official statistics to the producers of official statistics in other institutions. The junior staff interviewed on the occasion of the peer review agreed unanimously that this programme was very useful and efficiently run. An introduction to, and discussion of, the CoP is frequently included among the courses organised by the Centre.

The release calendar of statistics can also be mentioned as one of the strengths of the Turkish Statistical System. It is disseminated in December each year, and fixes the date of publication of all statistics included in the OSP to be published during the following year, irrespective of whether they are produced by TurkStat or by other public institutions. All the users interviewed during the Peer Review visit agreed that the compliance of TurkStat with the calendar is extremely good and that delays are most unusual. The performance of the ONAs is however considered to be more variable, ranging from very good to poor. An official procedure is in place to deal with cases of non-compliance including: pre-announcement of delays; technical explanation of the grounds for non-compliance with the calendar; and the setting of a new date for dissemination. TurkStat manages all aspects of the release calendar including notification of delays and this can also be seen as a strength in regard to the overall coordination of the dissemination of official statistics.

Finally in the context of strengths, pre-release is not allowed under the Statistics Law. Article 12 explicitly states that “*the statistical information compiled by the Institute cannot be given to any person or authority before this information is made open to the public*”.

Overall, the Peer Review team concluded that TurkStat is highly compliant with the CoP and compares favourably with other NSIs in this respect. The two ONAs examined as part of the Review also exhibited very good levels of compliance. However, it would appear from comments made during the course of the Peer Review visit that compliance throughout the wider National Statistical System is somewhat variable and that some institutions fall short in regard to the level of their compliance. TurkStat is enabled under the Statistics Law to coordinate the implementation of the OSP and has developed a number of effective strategies to implement its mandate. Nevertheless, a number of challenges need to be overcome in order to improve the level of coordination.

4.2 Issues and recommendations

With the possible exception of a relative lack of progress in the use of administrative data for statistical purposes, the Peer Review team concluded that TurkStat is highly compliant with the CoP. However, the Peer Review team identified a number of other issues and challenges that if addressed would, in its opinion, improve or enhance the level of compliance with the CoP. These issues and challenges, together with appropriate recommendations, are discussed below under the following three headings:

- Strengthening the Institutional Environment and Coordination;
- Developing Quality Procedures; and
- Improving Services to Users.

4.2.1 Strengthening the Institutional Environment and Coordination

Overall, there is a good institutional environment for official statistics in Turkey. This is mainly due to the clarity and comprehensiveness of the Statistics Law and the general acceptance of TurkStat as a professionally independent national statistical institute. The Peer Review team was however made aware of a conflict between the Statistics Law and other legal instruments in regard to access to administrative sources for statistical purposes. Furthermore, the Peer Reviewers consider that a number of issues should be addressed relating to: the perceived independence of TurkStat, its organisational capacity, and the coordination of the overall national statistical system.

Access to administrative data

On the surface, Articles 9 and 10 of the Statistics Law would appear to give full access to TurkStat to all administrative data and registers held by public institutions where such access is required for statistical purposes. However, the Peer Review team was informed during its visit that there are a number of key sources, such as in the taxation area, where this access is legally disputed. An example was given where the legislation governing the collection of data in the taxation area lists the institutions and persons to whom the confidential data may be released but TurkStat is not included in this list. Accordingly, the revenue authorities are reluctant to release the data to TurkStat on the grounds that any such release would be in conflict with the taxation law. The Peer Review team considers that legal conflicts of this nature, if left unresolved, mean that Turkey is *de facto* not complying with indicator 2.2 of the CoP. Both the Statistical Council and top management in TurkStat recognise the critical importance of ensuring full unrestricted access to administrative data for statistical purposes and are endeavouring to address the conflict as a matter of the highest priority. The Peer Review team welcomes and strongly supports these efforts.

In order to ensure full compliance with the CoP, the Peer Review team recommends that:

- 1. TurkStat and the Statistical Council should endeavour to have the outstanding legal obstacles to allowing full access to administrative data and registers addressed as a matter of the highest priority. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.2)**

Institutional independence of TurkStat

The Peer Review team was very impressed with the clarity of the Statistics Law of Turkey in regard to its stipulation of the professional independence of TurkStat and other institutions engaged in the production of official statistics. Article 17 of the Law states the following “*any outer instruction cannot be given to the staff of the institute and other implementing units in any case in regard to data sources, selection of statistical methods and procedures; form, content and time of dissemination; and observance of statistical confidentiality.*” This formulation is very clear and very much in line with the requirements of the CoP and international best practice.

However, despite the legislative provision and a firm indication from key stakeholders that they believe TurkStat to be independent in practice, the Peer Review team was concerned with a recent finding from a User Satisfaction Survey that only 56% of users could agree that it “was independent from external effects”. Indeed one third of the users surveyed considered that it was not independent. While the Peer Reviewers discuss other measures below, in the context of the service to users, to address these findings they also believe that they are sufficiently serious to warrant consideration in the context of strengthening the institutional status of TurkStat and its President.

For many years TurkStat reported to the Prime Ministry, which it is suggested added to its institutional status and also to it being perceived as an independent entity. However, since 2011 it is now a subsidiary institution of the Ministry of Development and, as such, does not have administrative or budgetary autonomy in the performance of its tasks. While there is no evidence or suggestion of interference etc., the lack of administrative and budgetary autonomy is a potential threat to the professional independence of TurkStat. It would also appear that this change may have resulted in some diminution in its influence and perceived independent status. A further factor is the fact that the President is not at the same level as an Under Secretary, who is the top public servant in a Ministry, and this may sometimes put him at a disadvantage in trying to influence top management in other Ministries and institutions on statistical matters. Some interlocutors suggested that a change in institutional status to that of an “associated institution”, as applies in the case of the Central Bank and some other agencies, might be the most effective means of improving the status of TurkStat. Associated institutions are established under a special law as separate public legal entities with administrative and budgetary autonomy. The special law also addresses the appointment, status and independence of the head of the associated institution. In view of the many similarities between the desirable organisational status of an NSI and that afforded to an associated institution, the Peer Review team is of the opinion that serious consideration should be given to establishing TurkStat as an associated institution.

The legal status and perceived independence of the President of TurkStat are key issues in promoting trust in the impartiality and independence of official statistics in Turkey. The provisions in the Statistics Law relating to the President are quite comprehensive and are generally well in line with the CoP and best practice internationally. However, the Peer Review team believes that the appointment process could be improved. This is set down in Article 23 of the Law as follows: *“In addition to general requirements specified in the Civil Servants’ Law no. 657 the followings are also required to be appointed as the President of the Institute; to graduate from the higher education institutions which provide at least four years education or from higher education institutions abroad whose academic equivalency to the aforementioned is approved by the Higher Education Board. The President is appointed by the decision of the Council of Ministers for a term of five year”*. The Peer Reviewers would raise two issues with this. First, the qualification standard is too broad and not specific enough for a position of this nature that requires both professional and managerial competences to a high degree. Secondly, there is no transparency around the appointment process as it is merely stated that *“the President is appointed by the decision of the Council of Ministers”*. The Peer Review team understands that this may be the procedure applying more generally to top level appointments in the public service. However, for a position such as President of TurkStat, where the professional independence of the office holder, and the public perception of same, is of paramount importance, a more transparent process should be considered. Such a process might include some or all of the following: publication of a detailed job specification and candidate requirements; public advertisement of the position; and use of an expert selection committee to recommend the most suitable candidate for appointment by the Council of Ministers.

Accordingly, in order to improve the organisational status and perceived professional independence of TurkStat, **the Peer review team recommends that:**

- 2. TurkStat and the Statistical Council should endeavour to have TurkStat’s institutional status reviewed with the objective of adopting a form that strengthens its institutional status and emphasises its professional independence (and the public’s perception of same) within the Turkish public administration system. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1)**

3. Greater transparency should apply in the appointment of the President of TurkStat, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that the appointment process has regard to professional competence only. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8)

Organisational capacity of TurkStat

As of November 2015, 3,893 are employed in TurkStat. Of these, over 2,000 are classed as temporary staff, who are predominantly engaged in data collection (e.g. as interviewers and enumerators) and located in the 26 regional offices that are spread throughout the country. Of the remaining staff, 1,733 are classified as permanent and they are split approximately half and half between the regional offices and the central office. The permanent staff are well educated with over 80% holding at least a basic university qualification.

The regional offices are mainly involved in the collection and initial examination of the basic data. They also engage with local users but it was pointed out that the needs of these users are usually satisfied through the centrally maintained databases and statistical outputs. Thus there is a clear divide between the regional and central offices in regard to staffing profiles and work areas. For example, with the exception of the 26 regional directors (i.e. one for each office) all the senior management staff are located in the central office. Furthermore, around two thirds of the highly skilled “TurkStat Expert” staff are also in the central office. The policy of TurkStat management is to locate more of its permanent staff in the central office while continuing to concentrate the temporary staff in the regional offices and this will add to the divide between the central and regional offices.

When compared with all NSIs in the ESS it may be seen that TurkStat is a relatively large and well resourced statistical organisation. However, when account is taken of the size of the country it must be concluded that Turkey devotes significantly fewer resources to official statistics in relative terms than most EU countries. In its most recent report² on the preparedness of Turkey to meet the requirements of EU membership, the Commission concluded that “*Turkey is moderately prepared in the area of statistics*”. The need for further efforts in the areas of macroeconomic and agricultural statistics was stressed. National users, who engaged with the Peer Review team, also pointed to the need for new or improved statistics in a number of areas. Accordingly, it is clear that additional resources (particularly skilled permanent resources) will be needed to address the new requirements.

TurkStat management pointed out that there are strict Government limits on the employment of permanent staff in the public service whereas additional temporary staff, particularly for employment in the regions, is easier to obtain. In the current organisational context prevailing in TurkStat there would therefore appear to be a mismatch between the availability of staffing resources and their location. The Peer Reviewers consider that there is a need for TurkStat management to address this issue as a strategic priority. On the one hand, it is imperative to obtain the right resources to meet new requirements while, on the other, it is necessary to review on an ongoing basis the overall office structure with a view to assessing the extent to which it continues to be fit for purpose in meeting current and future statistical demands in an effective manner. On the latter point the Peer Reviewers would point to the major changes that are taking place worldwide in data collection methodologies – away from direct surveys involving interviewers towards greater use of administrative data sources, telephone surveys and direct collection of data electronically. To the extent that the current TurkStat organisational structure would appear to be heavily influenced by the traditional direct survey approach, the implications of expected changes in methodology can therefore be expected to be significant, particularly in regard to the future role of the regional offices.

² http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/package/index_en.htm

In order to improve the availability of human resources and their deployment, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 4. The relevant national authorities should ensure that TurkStat and the Other National Authorities are provided with the necessary human resources to ensure that they can meet all priority national and international statistical needs, particularly those required to comply with the European Union statistical acquis (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 3)**
- 5. TurkStat should review on an ongoing basis its current organisational structure with a view to assessing whether it continues to be fit for purpose in meeting current and future statistical requirements, particularly having regard to rapidly changing statistical demands and the introduction of new statistical methodologies. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10)**

The Peer Review team was provided with an English version of the Human Resources Strategy for TurkStat and was surprised to note that there was not a stronger emphasis on an integrated recruitment and development strategy for staff to meet simultaneously business and staff career development needs. In particular, it noted the absence of a planned mobility policy for staff at the early and middle stages of their careers. The impact of this was confirmed during the session with ten junior staff when it was noted that almost all were in the same position for between five and ten years. TurkStat management confirmed that local managers were reluctant to release their experienced staff because of their fears regarding the loss of expert knowledge that they expected would ensue.

The Peer Review team considers that TurkStat should review this policy, particularly in the context of a more process based organisational structure being introduced. The latter involves more team based working with team members drawn from a number of different specialist areas. In the absence of a job rotation policy junior staff would therefore have limited opportunities to gain wider experience of the different aspects of statistical work. Aside from the demotivating effect this may have on some staff on a personal basis, it may also result in time in a scarcity of suitably experienced candidates to manage and coordinate the work of these teams.

Accordingly, in order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 6. TurkStat should develop a more explicit staff mobility programme in order to meet its business needs and the professional and managerial career development needs of its staff. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 3.1 and 7.6)**

Coordination of the national statistical system

The current Official Statistics Programme (2012-2016) is nearing completion and TurkStat and the Statistical Council are embarking on the preparation of the next programme, which will be the third such programme and will cover the years 2017 to 2021 inclusive. The Peer Review team considers that it would be opportune at this stage to consider the experience gained to-date in the coordination and direction of the national statistical system. Three issues, which the team believes should be addressed, are considered in the following paragraphs while a fourth, dealing with the promotion of the Quality Logo, is dealt with below under Developing Quality Procedures.

The first issue relates to the role, composition and functioning of the Statistical Council, which are clearly set down in the Statistics Law and the Regulation on the Statistical Council. The Peer Review team notes that there are currently 41 members of the Council, who are mostly very senior public servants (or their deputies), and that it meets usually just once a year to discharge its

formal responsibilities. Most of the preparatory work for the Council must therefore be undertaken by TurkStat in conjunction with around 50 working groups that it establishes and manages for this purpose. No dissatisfaction was expressed at the input of the Council and indeed the team was informed that having decisions etc. endorsed by a Council of this size and seniority was a positive factor in facilitating the implementation of the statistical programme. However, the Peer Review team considers that the actual amount of the high level engagement by the Council itself, and by individual Council members, with statistical matters must be fairly light given the size of the Council and the infrequency of its meetings. Many other countries have more active councils that provide independent strategic advice to the national statistical system and also perform certain governance functions such as monitoring compliance with the CoP and the quality of statistical outputs. How this might be achieved in Turkey is a matter for the relevant authorities to decide having regard to the national context. However, one suggestion worth considering might be for the Statistical Council to appoint a Bureau, consisting of a small number of its members, who would meet more regularly with a mandate to manage the agenda of the Council and to engage more actively with the statistical system on its behalf.

The second issue relates to the absence of information on the resources devoted to the implementation of the Statistical Programme throughout the national statistical system. In particular, the Peer Review team was unable to readily obtain information on the numbers and quality of staff deployed on statistical work in the Other National Authorities and on how they were organised (i.e. whether dedicated statistical units existed or not). This was surprising given the extent to which statistical work is undertaken outside TurkStat – in the current statistical programme 179 of the 298 statistical sub subjects are allocated to 68 different ministries and institutions. The Peer Review team believes that the availability of information on inputs, in particular staffing resources, is indispensable to the effective coordination and monitoring of the performance of the statistical system.

The third issue relates to the quality of the statistical resources available to the Other National Authorities. The Peer Review team was able to assess the situation directly in respect of two ONAs, namely, the Central Bank and the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs. In both cases it concluded that the statistical resource situation was satisfactory. The Central Bank has a large and highly skilled statistical department while the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs was among the first institutions to obtain the Quality Logo for its statistical outputs. On the basis of comments received during the course of the peer review visit it would appear, however, that the situation in these two institutions is not typical of that applying in most of the other ONAs. A number of users referred to the absence of skilled statistical resources in certain institutions to meet their needs while the slow progress in addressing quality problems with administrative data sources was attributed by some to a lack of understanding of the statistical issues. TurkStat provides training and support to address these problems. However, the Peer Review team was surprised to learn, for example, that there is no formal system in place to allow the secondment of skilled statistical staff from TurkStat to the ONAs on a targeted basis. Such an approach has been found to be highly effective in addressing skills shortages and in improving coordination in other countries.

Accordingly, in order to improve the coordination of the national statistical system, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 7. The relevant national authorities should review the role and functioning of the Statistical Council with a view to optimising its contribution to the coordination and governance of the national statistical system.(Coordination)**
- 8. TurkStat and the Statistical Council should identify the staffing and other resources required for the implementation of the statistical projects included in the next five-year Official Statistics Programme (2017-2021) and should report annually on their**

availability and adequacy. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10 and Coordination)

- 9. TurkStat should put in place mechanisms to actively promote greater skills transfer between it and the Other National Authorities in order to improve coordination and the quality of statistical work throughout the national statistical system. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10 and Coordination)**

4.2.2 Developing Quality Procedures

TurkStat demonstrates a clear commitment to quality. Many improvements in quality procedures have been introduced since the last peer review, and many others are in the process of being implemented. This focus by TurkStat on quality has been unanimously acknowledged by the users interviewed during the peer review, all of whom showed their appreciation for the recent improvements in the quality of the statistical production.

Among the developments worth mentioning are: the introduction of CATI for the purpose of controlling the quality of the field surveys; and the rapid deployment of a method for the automatic electronic collection of enterprise data, e-VT, which is currently covering a majority of businesses. Another important tool for quality control and quality improvement is the Production Process Calendar, which allows for the continuous monitoring of the 35 phases identified for the completion of a statistical product, starting from the beginning of the process and going up to the final stage of the dissemination of the data. These Production Process Calendars are published in the intranet web of TurkStat and periodically revised to allow for identified delays. This is apparently a most effective tool for organizing the production process and for keeping the different production units on schedule.

Some other interesting improvements are in the process of being implemented or extended to a wider range of statistical operations. One example is the Data Analysis Control Checklist for newly designed surveys. This checklist provides a systematic basis for checking all statistical activities over the complete survey cycle, from planning to dissemination, with the aim of capturing the critical points in the different stages of the survey process and checking quality issues. Also an interface tool for detecting outliers and other suspicious data, the Harzemli Data Analysis Programme, is being put into use in the editing and analysis of survey data.

TurkStat has made public its commitment to quality by producing a Quality Assurance Framework and disseminating it on the website. Also, producer oriented Quality Reports are produced by TurkStat and disseminated in the website about 45 days after the data are made public. These reports cover all the statistical operations that are covered in the European Statistical Programme, and follow the templates established by Eurostat. A number of user-oriented Quality Reports are also published.

Despite these impressive achievements an integrated total quality management approach has not yet been developed. Specifically, a systematic programme for undertaking quality reviews, with resultant quality reports specifying action plans for improvement, has yet to be introduced. Furthermore, the TurkStat organization chart does not include a specific unit dedicated to quality, and quality control is therefore carried out by different units, each of them responsible for one or several stages of the process. For example, the Metadata and Standards Department is responsible for total quality management, the subject matter departments are responsible for data quality, the Sampling and Analysis Techniques Department is responsible for data analysis methods and sampling techniques, the Coordination of Data Collection Department is responsible for the compliance with the timeliness of certain production processes of the field applications and the Dissemination and Communication Department is responsible for the compliance with the National Data Release Calendar. There is a Data Quality Control Board, set up under the Statistics

Law, which meets on a monthly basis, but apparently its supervisory and auditing role is still rather limited.

In order to further strengthen TurkStat's commitment to quality, particularly through the implementation of more integrated quality procedures, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 10. TurkStat should further integrate and develop its quality procedures in the context of implementing a total quality management approach throughout the organisation. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4)**
- 11. TurkStat should establish a quality audit function and introduce a systematic programme for regularly auditing its key statistical products. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.4)**

As mentioned above TurkStat produces and disseminates in the website a number of quality reports, among them forty producer-oriented quality reports covering all the statistical operations for which equivalent reports are published in EU Member States. These reports follow the pattern established by Eurostat, and consequently contain a considerable amount of information that can be relevant for the better understanding and handling of the data, such as the metadata, methodology or quality indicators (sampling and non-sampling errors, coverage etc.). Unfortunately in most cases they are published only in the Turkish language, without translation to English. However, user-oriented reports (metadata) are published both in Turkish and English. This fact deprives the non-Turkish speaking users of a significant insight into the main features of the statistical operation, which can be very helpful when dealing with the data and interpreting the results. The number of external users is likely to increase in the coming years in line with increased globalisation and Turkey's growing economic and demographic weight. Moreover, the Peer Review team has been informed that some of these reports have already been translated into English for the purpose of being sent to Eurostat. The peer review team suggests that TurkStat: a) disseminates in the website in both languages the quality reports that have been already translated into English; and b) devises a plan and a calendar for the future dissemination of all the quality reports in English.

In order to make TurkStat's quality reports more accessible to external users, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 12. TurkStat should publish Quality Reports relating to its statistical outputs in English on its website. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3 and 15.7)**

In order to improve the quality of the statistics produced by Other National Authorities within the Turkish Statistical System, TurkStat has developed a system of quality certification, the Quality Logo. At present the certification is not compulsory in that the ONAs are invited to apply for assessment on a voluntary basis. A standard questionnaire, including a number of issues related to quality, such as techniques applied in the different stages of the statistical process, or standards, definitions and classifications used, is completed by the applicant. The Quality Logo is awarded by TurkStat only when the answers are considered satisfactory. When some of the answers are not acceptable the ONA must implement the necessary changes in order to be granted the certificate. For the time being no quality checking of the final data is carried out.

This is an excellent instrument for strengthening the coordination of the Turkish Statistical System, as well as for achieving quality improvement in the ONAs. So far, just eight Quality Logos have been awarded and the certification process entailed additional work for both the ONAs and TurkStat. While several ONAs indicated to the Peer Review team their interest in achieving the Quality Logo, others were somewhat reticent because of the resources required to undertake the certification process. Furthermore, TurkStat indicated that it has limited resources available to devote to this project.

The Peer Review team considers that this quality tool should be enhanced as much as possible, and that all ONAs should be stimulated to apply for the Quality Logo. The Peer Review team considers that it should be a strategic objective of the next Official Statistics Programme to achieve full certification over the lifetime of the Programme and that the necessary resources should be allocated for this purpose.

Accordingly, in order to promote quality throughout the national statistical system and to improve coordination, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 13. TurkStat should ensure that the certification of statistics produced by the Other National Authorities, involving the awarding of the Quality Logo, is progressively and systematically rolled out as part of the implementation of the next Official Statistics Programme (2017-2021). (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4 and Coordination)**

Although the Turkish Statistical System is endowed with some very useful coordination devices, such as a unique identification number both for persons and for businesses, there are still problems in the use of some administrative sources for statistical purposes due to differences in standards, definitions and classifications. Such is, for instance, the case with some administrative records collected by the Social Security Institution.

With the administrative registers that are being implemented now ex-novo TurkStat is developing a very interesting culture aimed at avoiding these kind of problems: some of its staff participate in the implementation of the register from the very start of the operation, in order to ensure that the resulting register will be adequate for the statistical production and will conform with the standards, definitions and classifications used in official statistics. However, the problem persists with some of the existing registers. The Peer Review team considers that these problems should be addressed as a matter of some priority. Seconding a small number of qualified TurkStat staff to the relevant organisations for a short period of time might be considered as one way of advancing the project in a practical manner.

In order to improve the use of administrative sources for statistical purposes, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 14. TurkStat, in conjunction with the relevant institutions, should resolve the quality problems with certain registers and administrative data sources that are restricting their use for statistical purposes. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9)**

4.2.3 Improving Services to Users

User needs and satisfaction

The Peer Review team noted that there are a number of existing channels in place to monitor the needs of users and society in general. These include the Statistical Council and the wide range of working groups established by TurkStat to assist in the preparation and implementation of the statistical programmes. TurkStat also obtains valuable information from monitoring the usage of its website. As a general point, however, the Peer Reviewers consider that more should be done on a structured basis to consult with users (and potential users) to establish their needs and to promote the use of statistics.

Among its main institutional users, as well as among the scientific community and the media, TurkStat has a good reputation. It is considered to be professionally independent and its figures are treated as being reliable. However, this is not the case among the general population.

According to the results of a user satisfaction survey available on the website of TurkStat, there is an alarming proportion of respondents who do not trust the figures published. This is especially the case for key figures on inflation (nearly 40% do not trust them), unemployment (35%) and GDP (32%). This was a relatively small and voluntary survey confined to users of the website. There is no information available on the respondents in order to make an assessment of the extent to which the sample is representative of the wider community of users (not to mention the general public) – indeed, the level of trust could be significantly lower amongst non-users or infrequent users. Therefore the Peer Review team considers it desirable to conduct an independent and comprehensive user satisfaction survey to get a clearer picture of the extent to which users are satisfied with TurkStat’s products and trust its independence and impartiality and to probe the reasons for discontent and lack of trust.

Public perceptions of the reliability of statistics and trust in the statistical institutions are often influenced to a significant extent by the media. TurkStat has an active communications and dissemination department and press releases are produced for all important statistics, which include contact details for the responsible experts. Press conferences or media briefing sessions are, however, very rare, where questions and clarifications could be addressed at the point of release. In past years TurkStat organised some training courses directed towards the media on how to interpret statistics, but recently these courses have become rare. The Peer Review team considers it important that TurkStat makes more efforts in these areas and becomes more proactive in its management of public relations.

A number of stakeholders pointed to the fact that statistical literacy in Turkey is somewhat poor. The inability of the average citizen, and to a certain extent the media, to properly interpret the figures plays a part in the general distrust they display towards official statistics. TurkStat has commenced a number of initiatives to address some aspects of this in conjunction with educational stakeholders and the Peer Review team would encourage it to be more active in this regard.

In order to better meet users’ needs and improve their level of satisfaction, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 15. TurkStat should further develop its procedures for consulting regularly and raising statistical awareness among users and potential users of official statistics. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators 11.1 and 11.3)**
- 16. TurkStat should commission a comprehensive user satisfaction survey to determine and examine the extent to which users are satisfied with its products and trust its independence and impartiality. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 11.3)**
- 17. TurkStat should adopt a more pro-active approach in communicating with the media, including the holding of more regular media briefing sessions on key outputs and developments. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 10 and 15)**
- 18. TurkStat should engage more actively with appropriate educational and other stakeholders in promoting statistical literacy. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15)**

Improved service to users

The Peer Review team learned that although press releases of TurkStat are professionally designed and released according to a strictly followed release calendar, they generally do not make it easy for the untrained eye to draw the right conclusion. Some users pointed, for example, to a general lack of emphasis on breakdowns and sub-groupings that might help explain the

headline figure, such as an indication of the impact of inflation on people in the lowest quintile of the income distribution.

TurkStat has a minor presence on social media, having accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. The Facebook and Twitter accounts have been available in Turkish and English since 2007. The Facebook account is hardly ever used, while Twitter is used only for announcing when a press release is out with a link to the publication on TurkStat's website. The Youtube channel contains two old promotional videos. The Peer Review team feels this is an area with a lot of potential to be exploited with a view to promoting statistical products and services among younger users in particular. In this regard it welcomes the recent publication by TurkStat of a Social Media Policy Document in October 2015.

TurkStat has a sound revisions policy regulated by a directive on the principles and procedures regarding the revision of statistical data, and backed up by detailed guidelines in the form of a handbook to aid staff in what procedures to follow in case of a revision. During the meeting with users it was stated that in the case of a revision affecting a time series, where there is a need to have parallel series (with the series based on the new methodology going back at least three years or more), the back-casted data are not always provided. TurkStat indicated that the provision of back-casted data is covered in its revisions policy and that it is implemented in respect of all major revisions. However, to the extent that the current practice creates problems for certain studies and researchers it might be reviewed.

Accordingly, in order to be able to deliver an improved service to users, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 19. TurkStat should prepare and publish more analytical and user-focused reports based on its statistical outputs to meet the needs of users. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15)**
- 20. TurkStat should develop its use of social media in the dissemination and communication of its statistical outputs and services. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15)**
- 21. TurkStat should review the implementation of its Revisions Policy with a view to providing more retrospective data (i.e. back-casting) in order to meet the needs of users. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 14.2)**

Access to microdata

TurkStat provides access to anonymised microdata for researchers in special data research centres located in the headquarters in Ankara and in seven regional offices, based on well-defined rules. The capacity of the data centres seems to be sufficient to meet the current demand. However there is a clear need from the side of the researchers to have remote access to the microdata to save the time and resources needed for travel, which can be considerable given the size of the country.

TurkStat follows a strict protocol in determining whether or not to grant access following a written request from the researcher. The procedure takes about a week to complete, which is quite good relative to the experience in many other countries. However, a new request has to be submitted for each separate project. This does not seem to be efficient for some of the larger research institutes and universities where there can be multiple access requests of a similar nature to the same dataset. In these situations it might be preferable to establish protocols for granting more flexible access rights for these institutions.

Accordingly, in order to improve the conditions of access to microdata for scientific purposes, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 22. TurkStat should introduce remote access facilities for researchers, who are permitted to use its anonymised microdata for research purposes. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4)**
- 23. TurkStat should review the administrative arrangements for granting researchers access to anonymised microdata in order to ensure that they are flexible and kept to the minimum necessary for complying with legal requirements. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4)**

Web accessibility

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are a set of guidelines for making content accessible, primarily for people with disabilities, but also for all different platforms, including highly limited devices, such as mobile phones. Currently TurkStat's website does not contain these features.

In order to improve the accessibility of TurkStat's website, **the Peer Review team recommends that:**

- 24. TurkStat should take the necessary measures to ensure that its website complies with the universal web content accessibility guidelines. (European Statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.2)**

4.3 National Statistical Institute views where they diverge from peer reviewers' assessment

TurkStat would like to thank the peer reviewers for their thorough and professional work and for the constructive discussions during the peer review visit.

TurkStat welcomes the overall conclusions regarding the high level of compliance with the Code of Practice in Turkish Statistical Institute and also finds that the areas identified for further improvements are relevant.

TurkStat has a diverging view on recommendation 9:

9. TurkStat should put in place mechanisms to actively promote greater skills transfer between it and the Other National Authorities in order to improve coordination and the quality of statistical work throughout the national statistical system. (European Statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10 and Coordination)

The Turkish system of human resource management does not provide the possibility for experts to embark on this kind of secondment. However, TurkStat experts are assigned to other stakeholders as consultants in order to help establish the necessary systems and improve statistical procedures, in spite of limited human resources in each statistical domain. In addition, experts of other stakeholders are informed regularly through the Official Statistics Programme working groups. Training courses are held annually and staff of stakeholders are welcome to both the international trainings and the meetings of TurkStat. It is planned that these activities will increase in terms of quality and quantity within the period of the third Official Statistics Programme (2017-2021).

It is therefore considered that TurkStat has already put the necessary mechanisms into place in order to realise skills transfer to the Other National Authorities, within the boundaries of the Turkish system of human resource management.