



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EUROSTAT

Directorate A: Cooperation in the European Statistical System; international cooperation;  
resources

Task Force Integrated Planning

# **REPORT ON THE EUROSTAT 2016 USER SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR MEDIA**

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## **1. Background – about the survey**

Eurostat's mission is to be the leading provider of high quality statistics on Europe. In order to measure the degree to which it meets its obligations towards its users, in particular, media representatives, Eurostat carried out a media user satisfaction survey over the period April – May 2016. The survey aimed to obtain a better knowledge about press and media users, their needs and satisfaction with the service provided by Eurostat. It was the fourth time that a specific survey for media representatives was carried out, using the same methodology and with few changes in the questionnaire, to allow a comparison of the results with those from the previous surveys in 2013, 2014 and 2015. The changes in the questionnaire this time aimed at making the questionnaire more specific and shorter, in particular by simplifying the section on the data quality of individual statistical domains, for which too few replies were received in the past to draw meaningful conclusions.

The survey covered three main aspects:

- information on types of media users and their use of European statistics,
- trust and quality aspects,
- dissemination of statistics.

The survey was carried out online on Eurostat website. It was launched on 14 April and remained open until 23 May. Email invitations were sent to more than 1000 journalists registered on Eurostat Press Office's mailing list. A total of 67 replies were received, confirming a declining trend after 109 replies in 2013, 101 in 2014 and 78 in 2015. The number of replies has become so low that it is not possible to draw meaningful detailed conclusions but only very general conclusions. The main explanation for such a lower number of replies could be the frequency of the survey (yearly frequency may be too high). Eurostat tried to attract more participants by shortening the length of the questionnaire but without success. Eurostat will then reflect on this before organising the next survey.

The results were very similar to the previous ones. The main, positive change could be registered in the increased satisfaction with the access to the Eurostat website.

The results presented in this report constitute a summary of the findings, supported by graphs.

## **2. Main outcomes**

### General aspects

- The large majority of press and media representatives who took part in the survey came from the current EU member states (95.5%). When looking at a country level distribution, the biggest group of journalists came from Belgium (28.4%), followed by Germany (11.9%) and France and Italy (both at 7.5%). However, the prevalence of Belgium reflects not the nationality, but the fact that most are accredited to the Commission or other European institutions in Brussels to follow EU affairs. More EU

countries were represented than in 2014, 16 versus 9, even if the number of replies diminished.

- With regards to media channels, print media was found to be the most popular type with 41.8% of journalists working with it. It was followed more closely than in the past by news agency and online media with 38.8% and 37.3%, respectively.
- Respondents indicated that they mostly used “Economic and financial” data (86.6%). “Population and social conditions”, “General and regional statistics”, as well as “Industry trade and services ” and “International trade” were also all used by more than half of the respondents, with respective shares of 65.7%, 61.2% and of 52.2% for the last two ones. On the contrary, “Science and technology”, “Transport” and “Agriculture and fisheries”, were the least used but more than in 2015, with respective shares of 17.9%, 26.9% and 28.4%.
- In relation to Eurostat product usage among journalists, “News Releases” is again and even more than in previous years a clearly dominant product with 94% of journalists utilising it most frequently. Concerning the usage of the other products, it is worth noting that the second place is taken by a new product, the data and tables linked from the “News Releases”, which was requested by users in previous surveys and which is used by 59.7% of the respondents.
- Similarly as in previous years, European statistics was stated to be either “essential” or “important” for 80.6% of journalists and the remaining 19.4% used it as background information. Given the high level of importance attributed to European statistics, it comes as no surprise that statistics is used very frequently: almost half of those who completed the survey stated that they used European statistics on a weekly basis and more than a third utilised statistics in their day-to-day activities.

#### Quality aspects

- Users expressed a very high level of satisfaction with two aspects of the “News Releases” produced by Eurostat. 83.6% specified that the clarity of the releases was “very good” or “good” and a similar 83.4% did so for the range of topics covered. Only two respondents were not satisfied with their clarity and only one with the range of topics. Out of the original 67 responses only one participant stated to have no opinion on the second question.
- *Comparison with national statistical institutes and other institutions.* In general and as in previous years, participants saw the quality of European statistics being better or same as that of national statistical institutes or other providers of statistics. The percentage of journalists seeing Eurostat statistics better or same as that of NSIs was 94.8%, 92.6% when compared to other international organisations.

- *Trust.* Journalists continue to be extremely positive about the trust in European statistics with all of them stating they “trust statistics greatly” or “tend to trust them”, except for one respondent who did not give an opinion.

### Dissemination

- Journalists were very positive about the Euro-indicator Releases calendar, as in the past. 88.7% of participants stated the calendar was relevant and sufficient for their needs and none found the calendar irrelevant and/or insufficiently informative.
- Eurostat asked for the first time this year media users to give an opinion on its Press Office mailing list. 91% of the respondents affirmed to be registered to the mailing list and were then asked about the importance for them of the weekly calendar that is sent on Fridays. Respondents seem to appreciate the calendar, which a majority of them (54.1%) consider essential or important for their work. Only 11.5% think that the calendar is of minor importance.
- Eurostat launched a totally renewed website in December 2014 but in the previous survey, carried out early in 2015, no effect was visible on the satisfaction of media users with the easiness to access the statistics on Eurostat website. At that time we wondered whether this was not due to the fact that users needed more time to get familiar with the new website. It seems indeed to have been the case as this year the satisfaction of respondents with the access to statistics jumped by 17.5pp reaching 57.8%, the most notable change in all the results of the survey.
- Journalists were generally satisfied with the content of information on the Eurostat website, with percentages comparable to those of past surveys. 78.4% of respondents replied that the content was “very good” or “good”, 16.9% thought it was “satisfactory”, while only 4.6% saw it as “poor” or “very poor”.
- With regard to the use of media support, 9.0% of journalists would turn to it on a weekly basis, 11.9%, would do so monthly and 20.9% quarterly. Similar to the past, a striking rate of 90.4% of those who used it, said that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the support service they received.

## **3. Results of the USS 2015 for Media**

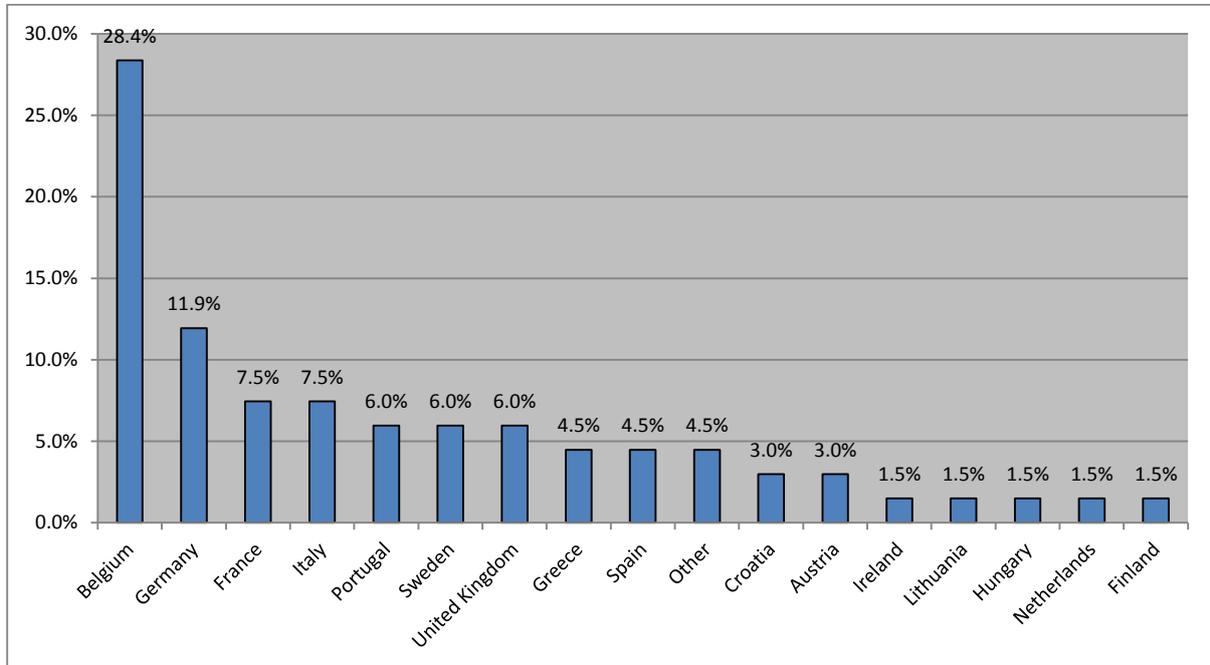
### **3.1 General information**

#### **3.1.1 Who uses Eurostat's European statistics?**

The large majority of press and media representatives who took part in the survey came as in the past from the current EU member states (95.5%). When looking at a country level distribution, the biggest group of journalists came from Belgium (28.4%), followed by Germany (11.9%) and France and Italy (both at 7.5%). A dominating number of Belgium based participants can be explained by the fact that many of them work with the European

Commission or other European institutions and, therefore, are employed in Brussels. It is interesting to note that even if the number of respondents was lower than in 2014, 67 versus 78, they came from a larger number of EU countries, 16 versus 9.

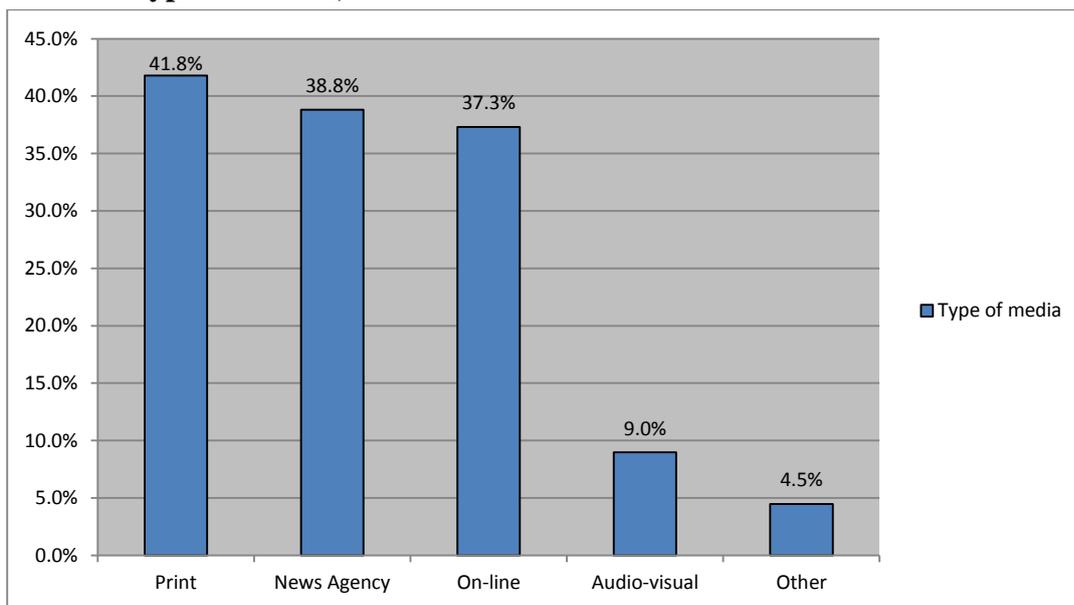
**Chart 1. Country of workplace, in %**



Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media

When asked about the type of media the respondents work with, printed channels appeared to be the most frequent (41.8%), followed more closely than in the past by news agency and online media with 38.8% and 37.3%, respectively.

**Chart 2. Types of media, in %**

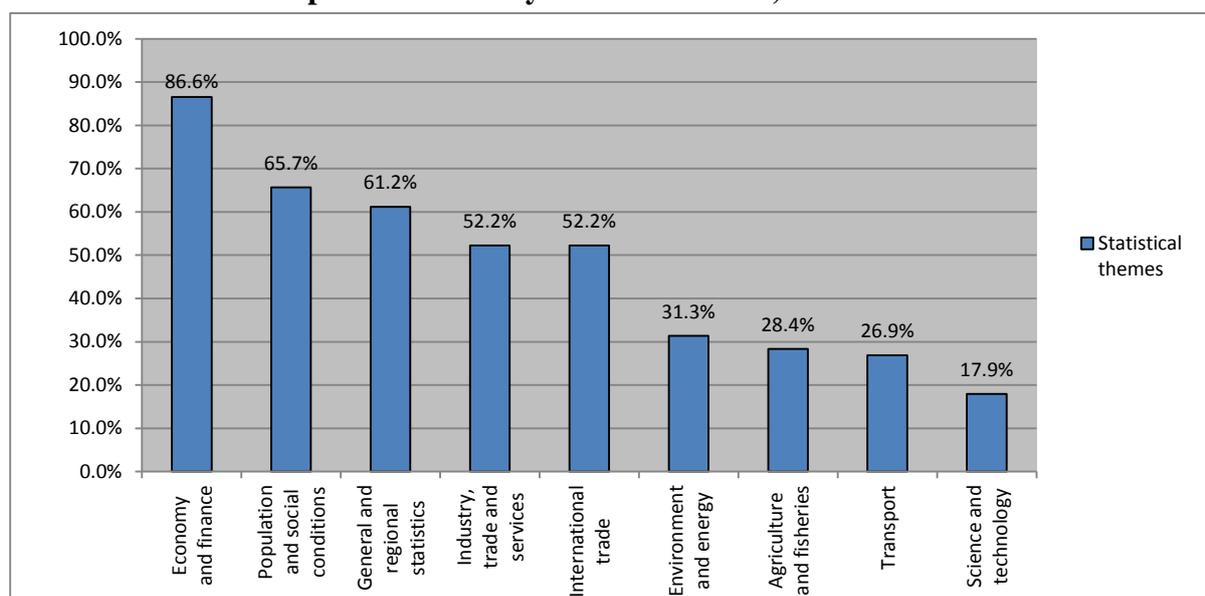


Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media

### 3.1.2 Which statistics?

Journalists were asked to identify the type of European statistics that they use for their work. As can be seen from Chart 3, “Economy and finance” is largely the most widely used category with 86.6% of respondents using the theme. “Population and social conditions”, “General and regional statistics”, as well as “Industry trade and services ” and “International trade” are among the remaining popular domains, all used by more than half of the respondents, with respective shares of 65.7%, 61.2% and of 52.2% for the last two ones. On average the respondents selected a bit more themes than in 2015, 4.22 compared to 3.86 and so the shares of the themes generally increased.

**Chart 3. Uses of European statistics by statistical theme, in %**

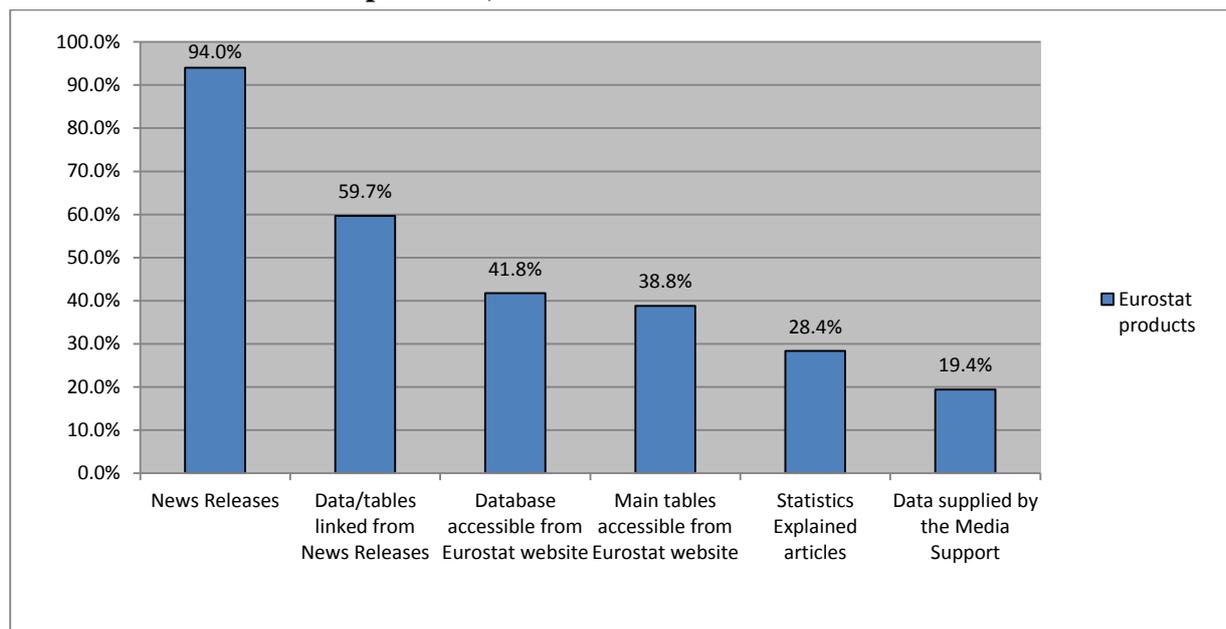


*Source: Eurostat 2065 user satisfaction survey for media*

Given that the nature of work performed by journalists differs from that undertaken by academics or business representatives, an attempt was made to identify which Eurostat products are of a particular interest to media. The results are presented in Chart 4.

As can be seen, “News Releases” is again and even more than in previous years a clearly dominant product with 94% of journalists utilising it most frequently. Concerning the usage of the other products, it is worth noting that the second place is taken by a new product, the data and tables linked from the “News Releases”, which was requested by users in previous surveys and which is used by 59.7% of the respondents.

**Chart 4. Uses of Eurostat products, in %**

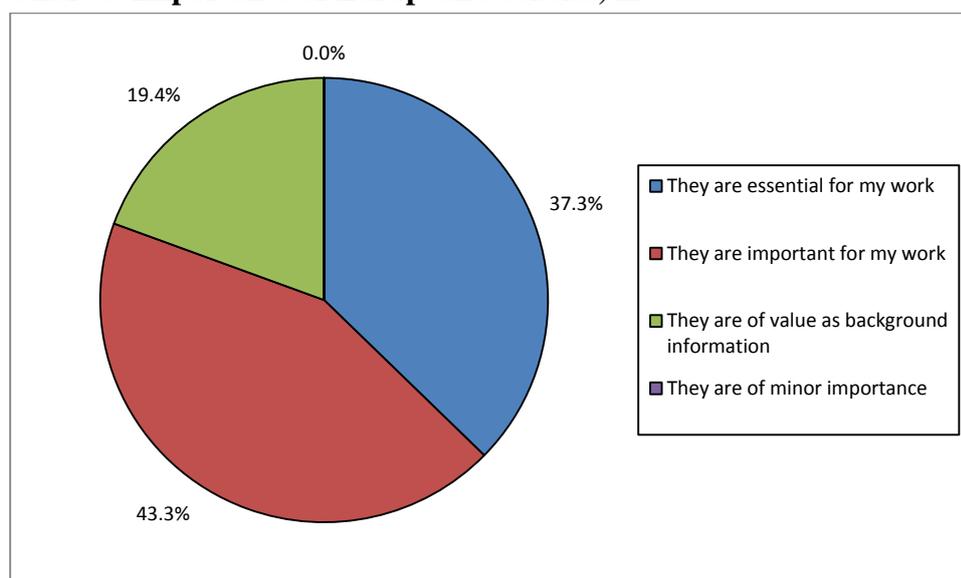


Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media

### 3.1.3 How important are European statistics?

When asked about the importance of European statistics to their work, 80.6% of journalists stated statistics were either “essential” or “important” for their work, a share similar to that of previous years. For the remaining 19.4% of participants statistics served as a background information.

**Chart 5. Importance of European statistics, in %**

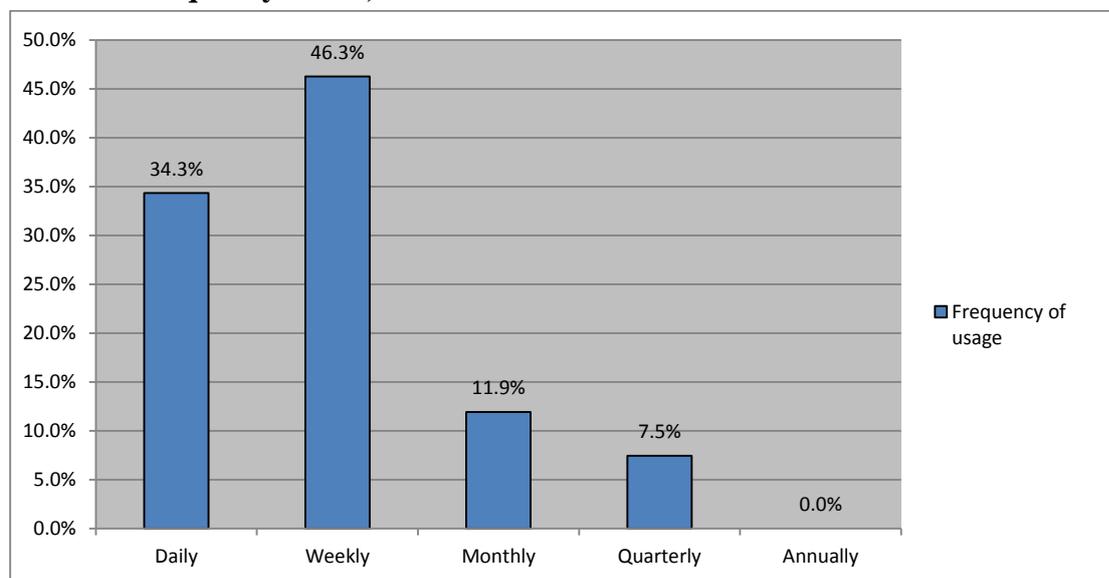


Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media

Knowing how important statistical information is for a number of respondents, its frequent use comes as no surprise. Almost half of those who completed the survey stated that they

used European statistics on a weekly basis and more than a third utilised statistics in their day-to-day activities. This time no one declared to use the statistics only annually.

**Chart 6. Frequency of use, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

### **3.2 Information on quality aspects**

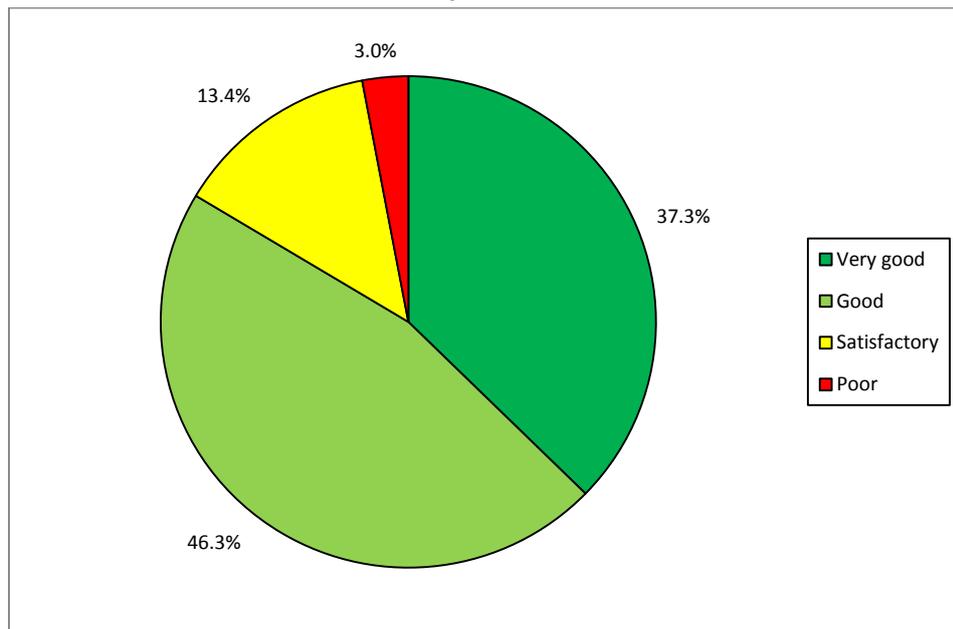
In accordance with Eurostat’s mission statement, quality considerations play a central role in both its corporate management and its day-to-day statistical operations. Thus, it is important to know how media users assess the quality of the European statistics produced and disseminated by Eurostat. This survey looked in particular to the quality of the "News Releases", as they are the product which is by far more used by media and press. The analysis was complemented by a question on trust and a comparison of European statistics in relation to national statistical institutes as well as other organisations.

#### **3.2.1 News Releases**

Keeping in mind that more than 90% of European journalists rely on Eurostat’s “News Releases”, it is important to know how satisfied media are with the information and quality of these releases. This year the survey focused on the clarity and on the range of topics covered by Eurostat "News Releases". Users were also given the option to provide suggestions for improving the news releases.

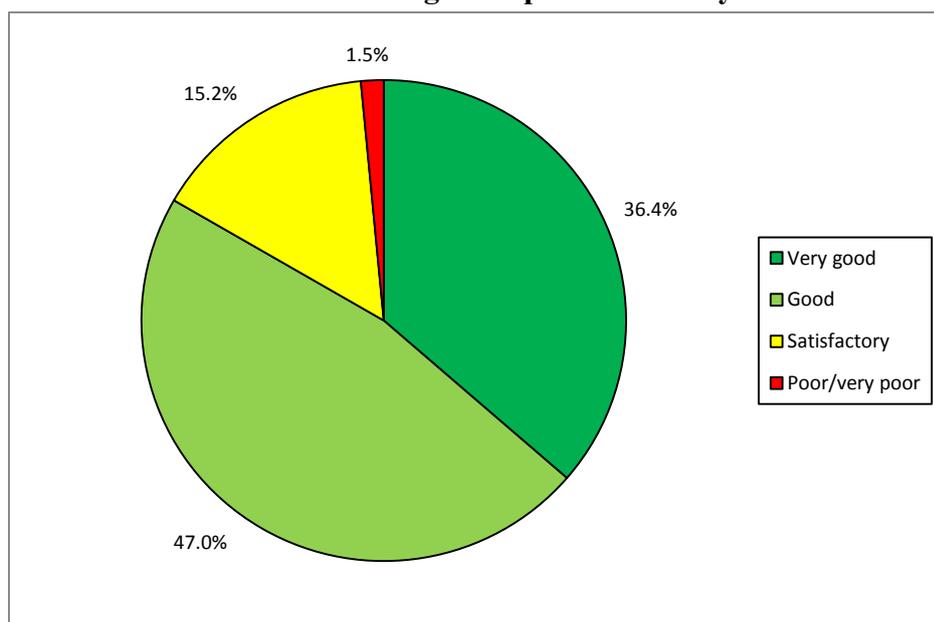
Users expressed a very high level of satisfaction with both aspects of the “News Releases” produced by Eurostat. 83.6% specified that the clarity of the releases was “very good” or “good” and a similar 83.4% did so for the range of topics covered. Only two respondents were not satisfied with their clarity and only one with the range of topics. Out of the original 67 responses only one participant stated to have no opinion on the second question.

**Chart 7. Assessment of the clarity of Eurostat's "News Releases", in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

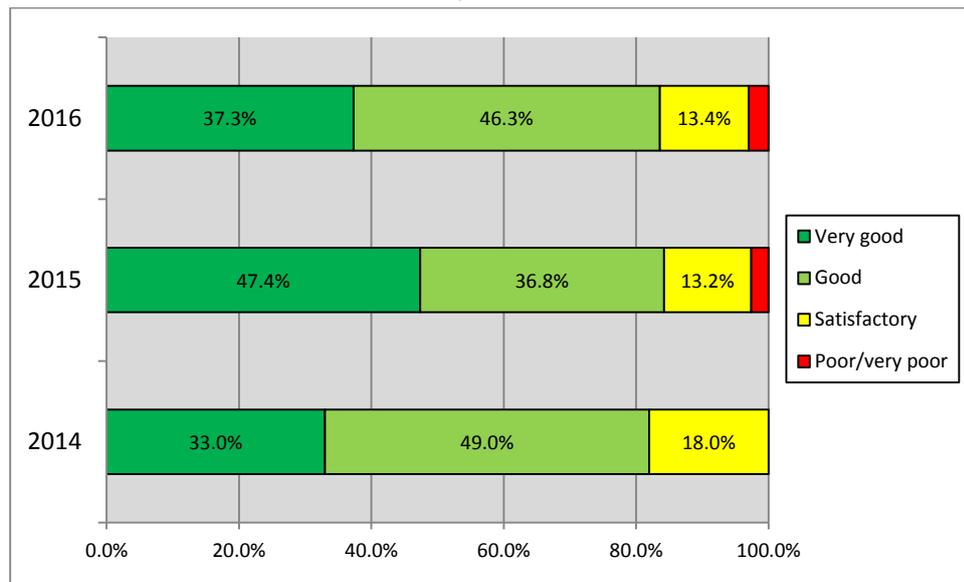
**Chart 8. Assessment of the range of topics covered by Eurostat's "News Releases", in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

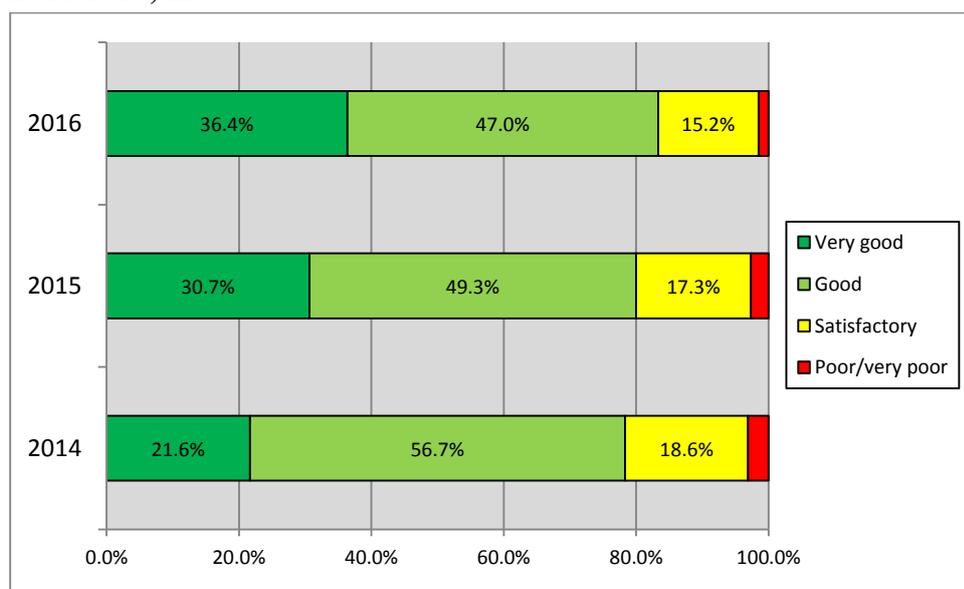
For both aspects of the news releases the total share of respondents who were satisfied remained stable compared with 2015. However, the percentage of “very good” answers decreased by 10.1pp for the clarity of the news releases, but remaining higher than in 2014, and increased by 5.7pp for their topics, making the satisfaction rates very similar for the two questions.

**Chart 9. Assessment of the clarity of Eurostat's "News Releases", 2014-2016, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2014, 2015 and 2016 user satisfaction surveys for media*

**Chart 10. Assessment of the range of topics covered by Eurostat's "News Releases", 2014-2016, in %**



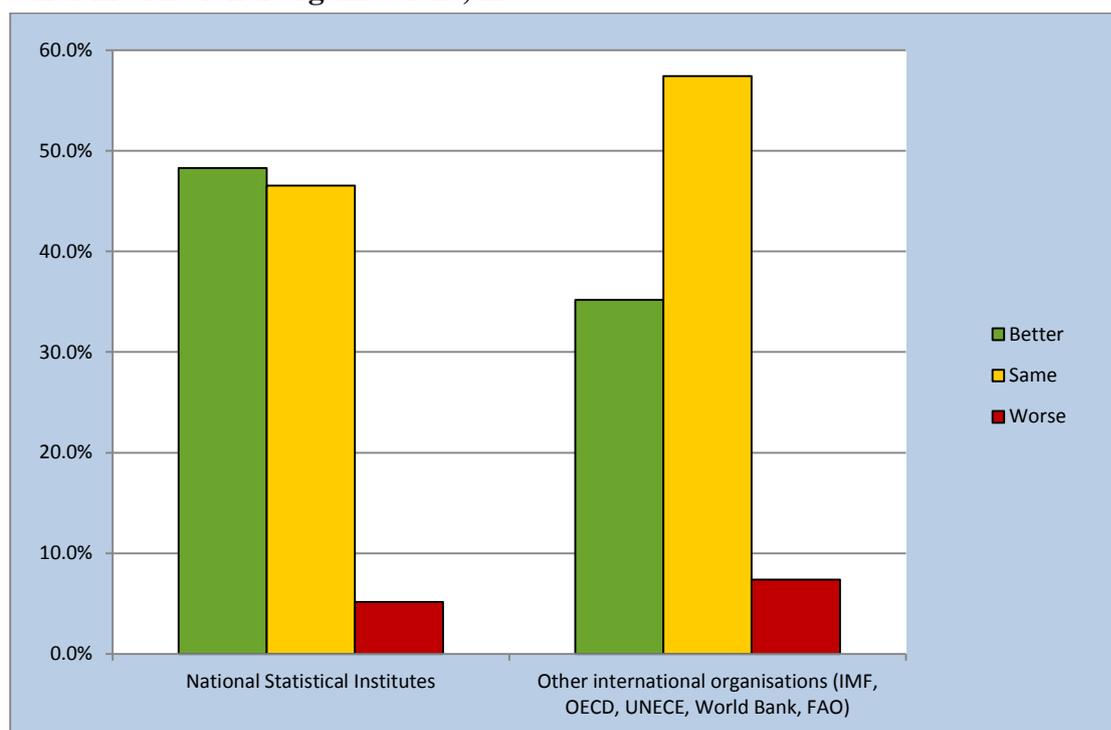
*Source: Eurostat 2014, 2015 and 2016 user satisfaction surveys for media*

A qualitative analysis of the comments supports these results. The feedback indicated that news releases were clear and interesting. The respondents made anyway some suggestions to further improve them. In particular one request was repeated to have more analysis together with the data. Such kind of analysis, however, cannot be performed by Eurostat because it is under the responsibility of other departments of the European Commission.

### 3.2.2 Comparison with other organisations

As part of the quality evaluation, journalists could also assess the quality of Eurostat data versus other statistical producers. In particular, comparison was made with national statistical institutes (NSIs) and with other international organisations (IMF, OECD, UNECE, World Bank and FAO).

**Chart 11. Quality of European statistics compared with those published by NSIs or other international organisations, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

In general and as in previous years participants saw the quality of European statistics being better or same as that of national statistical institutes or other providers of statistics. The percentage of journalists seeing Eurostat statistics better or same as that of NSIs was 94.8%, 92.6% when compared to other international organisations.

Among Eurostat's strong points, respondents mentioned accessibility, clarity, timeliness and regularity of statistics and releases and the quality of the user support service. A minor percentage, around 5% - 7%, perceived the quality as being worse. The few explanations given pointed to the difficulties to find data on the website or to identify data revisions. When comparing with NSIs, it appears from some comments that the respondents seem to be aware that the quality of Eurostat data depends on those of EU Member States.

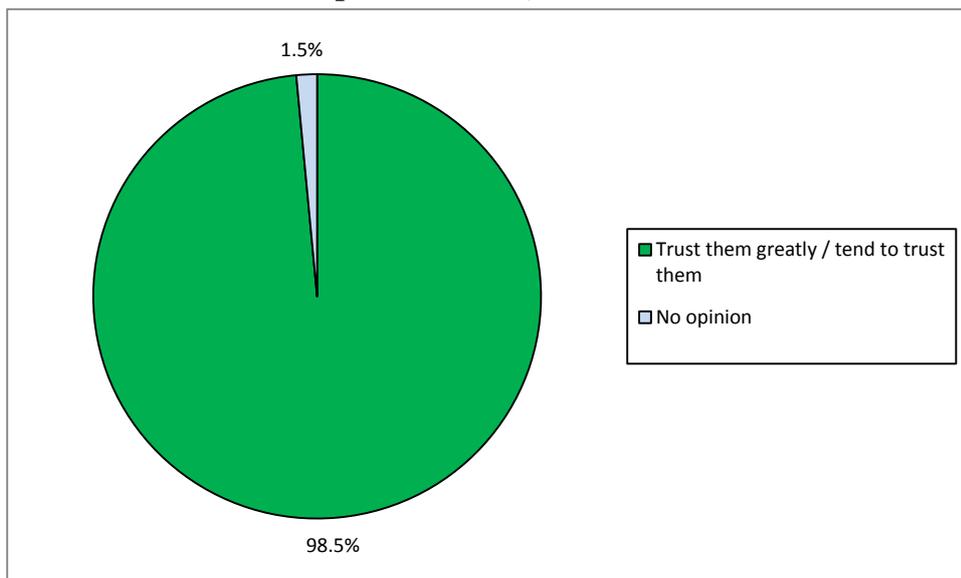
### 3.2.3 Trust

In a period when the role and functioning of the EU institutions persists being questioned, Eurostat was interested to know if journalists continued to trust European data. It is indeed

the case as the results were again extremely positive, with all of press and media stating they “trust statistics greatly” or “tend to trust them”, except for one respondent who did not give an opinion. Even on the assumption that users trust statistics that they work with, which could give some bias to their responses, the extremely high rate of positive answers that retains over time shows a very good and encouraging sign about the confidence of users in the statistics disseminated by Eurostat.

Here again respondents pointed out that the quality of Eurostat’s statistics depends on the quality of national data.

**Chart 12. Trust in European statistics, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

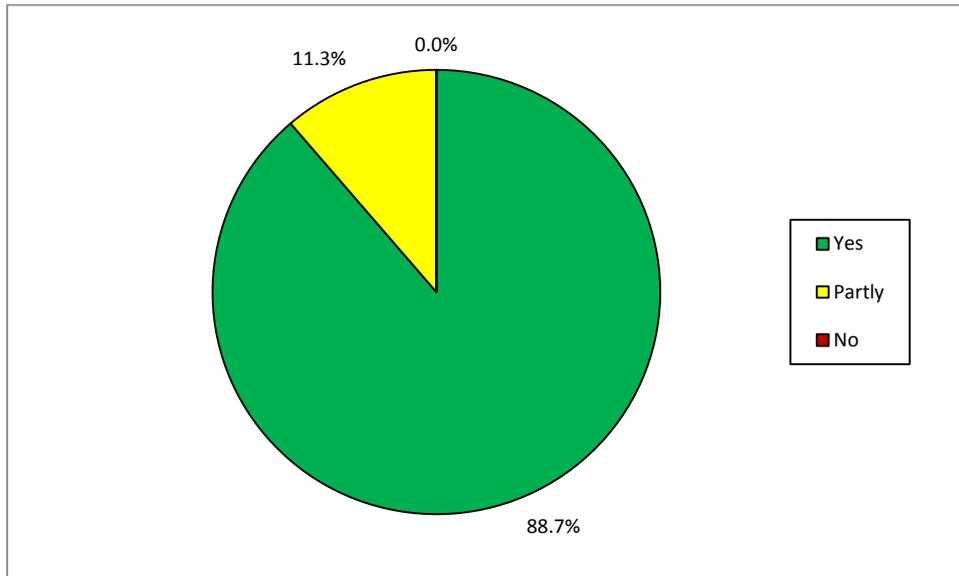
### **3.3 Information on dissemination aspects**

This section covers dissemination aspects of European statistics (Euro-indicator Releases calendar, Press Office mailing list, website design and access, media support services).

#### **3.3.1 Euro-indicator Releases calendar**

Journalists were also asked to evaluate the relevancy and sufficiency of information contained in the Euro-indicator Releases calendar. Again, the responses continue to be very positive, with 88.7% stating that the calendar is relevant and sufficient for their needs. Those who found the calendar “partly” relevant accounted for 11.3% of respondents, while none found it irrelevant and/or insufficiently informative.

**Chart 13. Assessment of the sufficiency and relevancy of information in the Euro-indicator Releases calendar, in %**

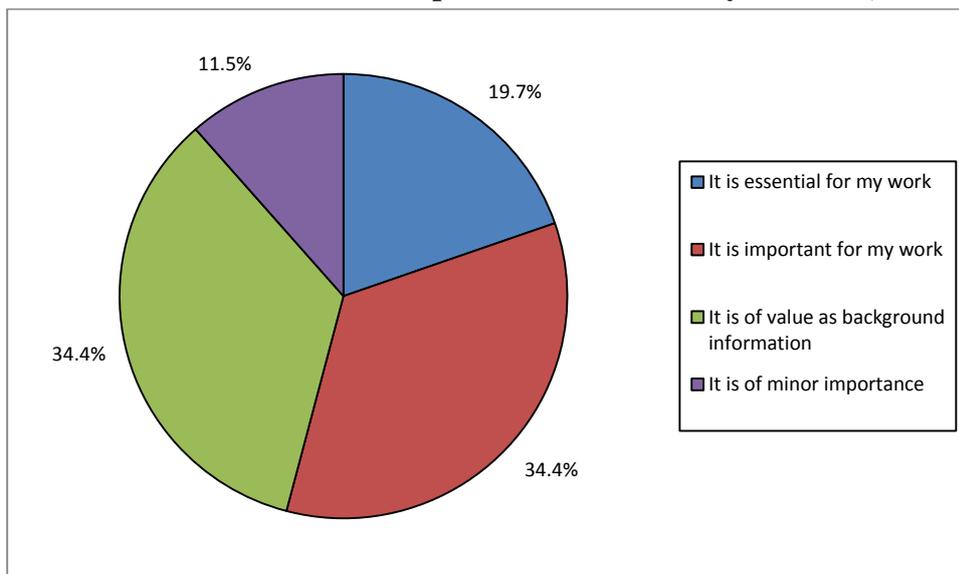


*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

### 3.3.2 Press Office mailing list

Eurostat asked for the first time this year users to give an opinion on its Press Office mailing list. 91% of the respondents affirmed to be registered to the mailing list and were then asked about the importance for them of the weekly calendar that is sent on Fridays. Respondents seem to appreciate the calendar, which a majority of them (54.1%) consider essential or important for their work. Only 11.5% think that the calendar is of minor importance.

**Chart 14. Assessment of the importance of the weekly calendar, in %**

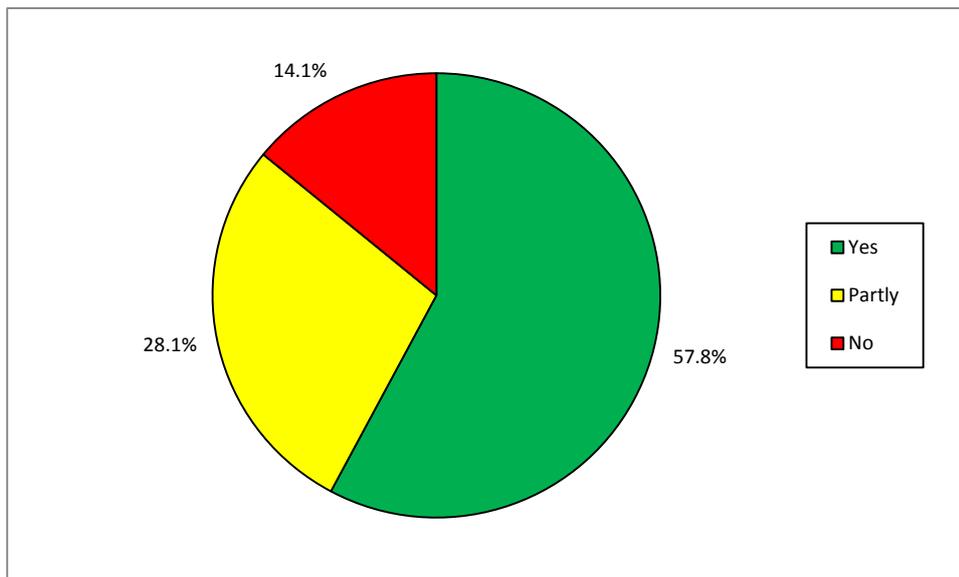


*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

### 3.3.3 Website design and access

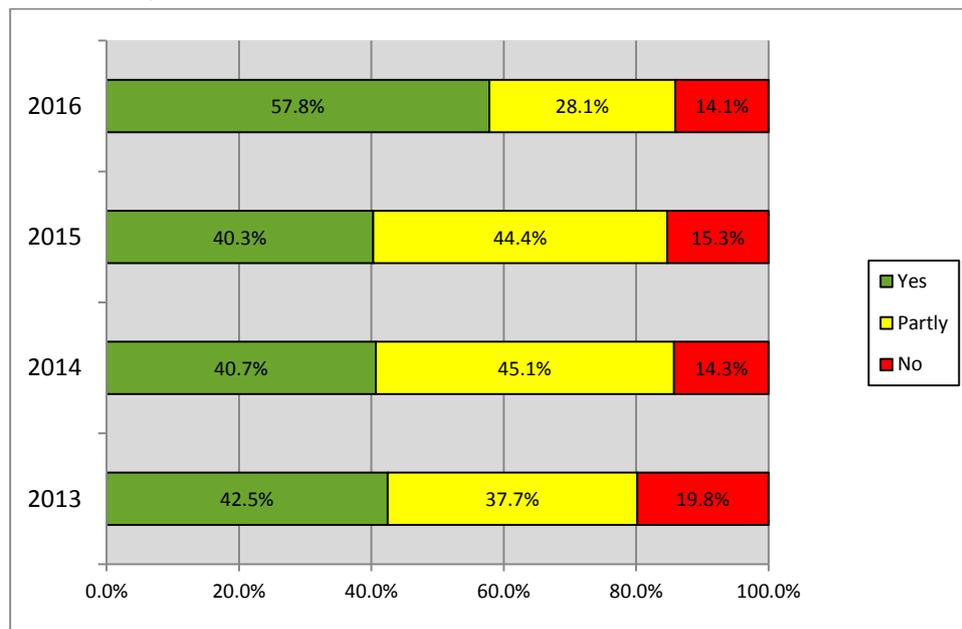
Eurostat launched a totally renewed website in December 2014 but in the previous survey, carried out early in 2015, no effect was visible on the satisfaction of media users with the easiness to access the statistics on Eurostat website. At that time we wondered whether this was not due to the fact that users needed more time to get familiar with the new website. It seems indeed to have been the case as this year the satisfaction of respondents with the access to statistics jumped by 17.5pp reaching 57.8%, the most notable change in all the results of the survey.

**Chart 15. Assessment of the easiness of access to European statistics on the website, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

**Chart 16. Assessment of the easiness of access to European statistics on the website, 2013-2016, in %**

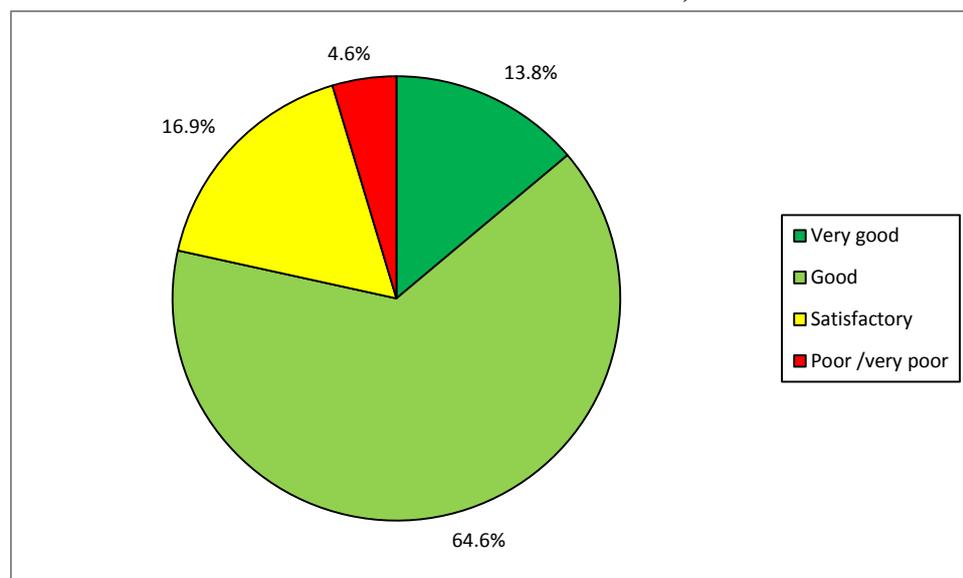


*Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 user satisfaction surveys for media*

Among those who were less happy with the access to the statistics, several pointed out that data are difficult to find. One respondent suggested to organise trainings for journalists.

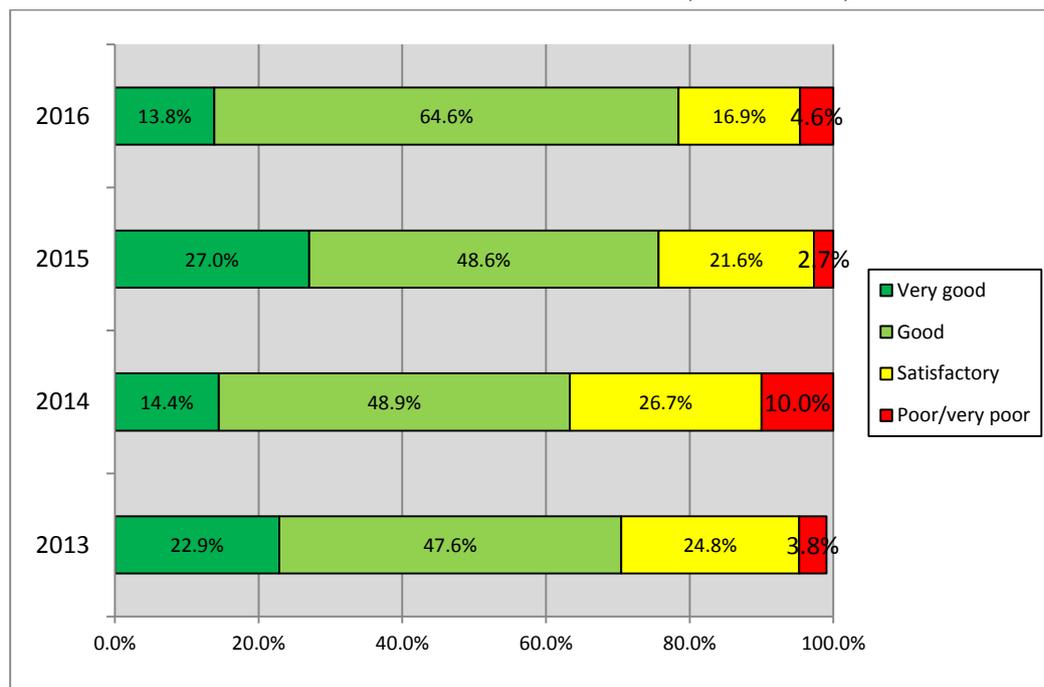
When asked then to assess the content of information on the Eurostat website in relation to their needs, journalists were generally satisfied, with percentages comparable to those of past surveys. It is worth considering that for this questions the satisfaction rate had already increased notably last year. 78.4% of respondents replied that the content was “very good” or “good”, 16.9% thought it was “satisfactory”, while only 4.6% saw it as “poor” or “very poor”.

**Chart 17. Assessment of Eurostat website content, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

**Chart 18. Assessment of Eurostat website content, 2013-2016, in %**



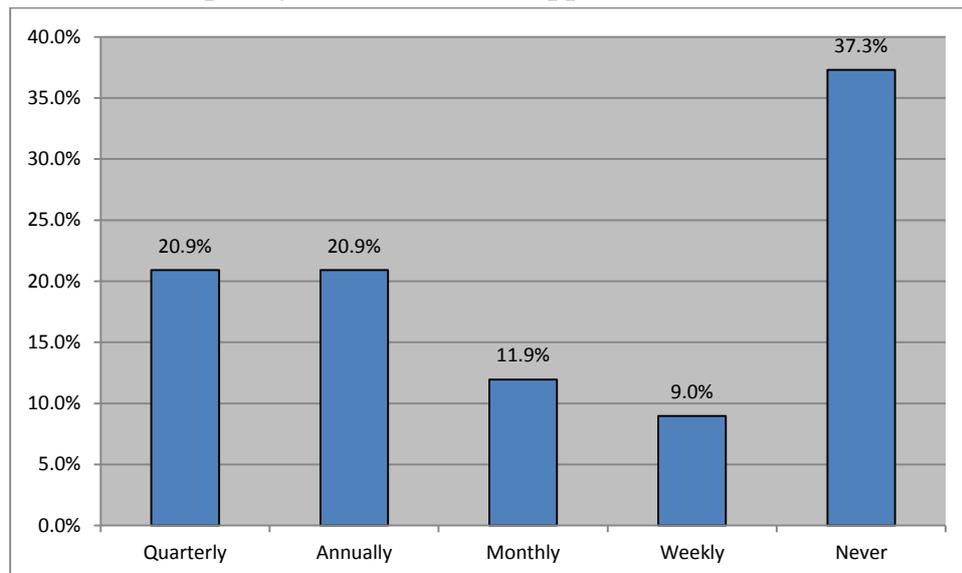
*Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 user satisfaction surveys for media*

### **3.3.4 Media support services**

In the survey, users also had the opportunity to express their opinion on the support services offered by Eurostat.

37.3% of the respondents said they never used media support services. The most frequent users, that utilised media support on a weekly basis, accounted for 9.0%. Less frequent users, who approached the support team monthly, quarterly or annually, fell into 11.9%, 20.9% and 20.9%, respectively.

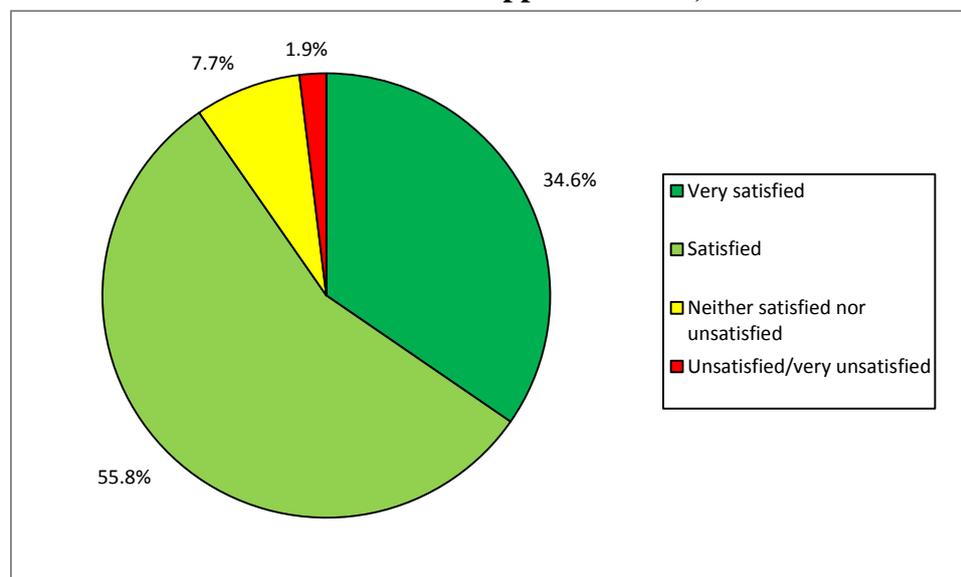
**Chart 19. Frequency of use of media support services, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

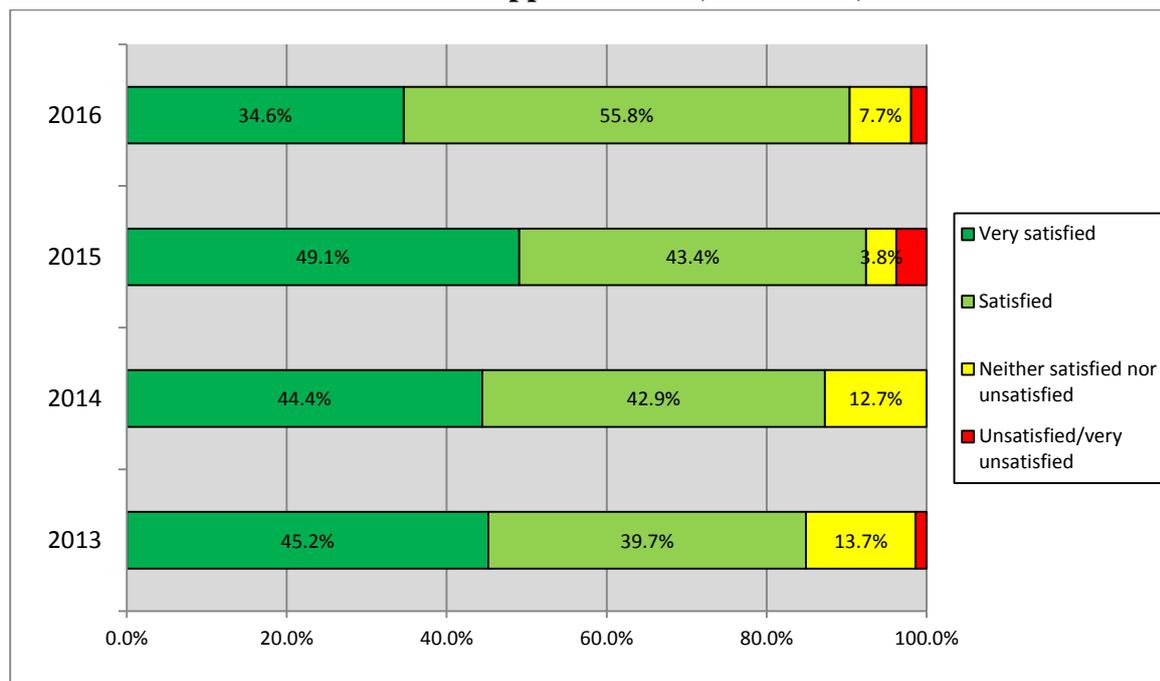
Journalists were also asked to evaluate how satisfied they were with the service provided by the media support. Leaving out those with no opinion or not aware of it, once again, as in past years, a striking rate of more than 90% of respondents said that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the support service they received. Only one respondent declared to be unsatisfied and it might have been a mistake as he/she added a positive comment.

**Chart 20. Satisfaction with media support services, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2016 user satisfaction survey for media*

**Chart 21. Satisfaction with media support services, 2013-2016, in %**



Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 user satisfaction surveys for media

#### **4. Messages from the users**

##### Suggestions for improvement of "News Releases":

- To provide more analysis together with the data.
- To put the variations from the past in the title.

##### Suggestions for improvement of the website:

- To make data easier to find, to improve search tools.
- To provide training for journalists.
- To better explain when there are differences with the figures published by national statistical institutes.