

PRESS RELEASE

10 February 2020

Recommendations to improve the European Statistical System in times of growing demand for high quality statistics

In its 2019 Annual Report, the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) analyses how national statistical systems implement the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP) and makes recommendations to ensure compliance of the European Statistical System with the CoP. In particular, the Report discusses the various ways in which ESGAB-like governance functions are carried out in Member States and the role played by users in the functioning of the national statistical systems, as well as the preparation of the next round of peer reviews, to evaluate the compliance of national statistical systems with the Code.

“The new political setting, with a new Commission that started its mandate last December, will bring a further acceleration in the demand for European statistics” says Enrico Giovannini, Chair of ESGAB, “and Eurostat and National Statistical Institutes must be ready to provide high quality statistical information, compliant with principles such as professional independence, impartiality and objectivity and relevance regarding the needs of users. To deliver on this goal, a strong European Statistical System that works well together is paramount and sound governance is a key element to ensure its good functioning. In order to guarantee that the ESS delivers timely and quality data, national statistical systems should be improved by strengthening the bodies that carry out ESGAB-like functions and developing further the relationships among National Statistical Institutes, users and other institutional stakeholders”.

The 2019 ESGAB Annual Report also looks at the challenges and opportunities arising from the next census round, to take place in 2021. The population and housing census is a major statistical exercise that constitutes a central pillar of official statistics in many countries and at European level. As such, it is vital that the census should be reliable and that users have confidence in its results. Given the importance of this exercise, ESGAB urges statistical authorities to prepare the next census also taking into account the lessons and wide exchange of good practice from the 2011 round.

ESGAB welcomes the efforts being made in Eurostat and across the European Statistical System as a whole to implement actions to improve compliance with the Code of Practice, in line with the previous ESGAB recommendations.

Notwithstanding these positive steps, the Board makes 14 new recommendations on governance issues, users’ needs, the next census exercise and the third round of peer reviews.

Attachment: Annual Report 2019 executive summary and recommendations

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Further information

The 2019 Report is available on ESGAB's homepage (<http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>).

Contact for media assistance

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

About ESGAB

ESGAB¹ provides an independent overview of the implementation of the Code of Practice. It seeks to enhance the professional independence, integrity and accountability of the European Statistical System, key elements of the Code, and the quality of European statistics. Its tasks include the preparation of an annual report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Code by Eurostat and the European Statistical System as a whole. ESGAB also advises the Commission (Eurostat) on appropriate measures to facilitate implementation.

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

European Statistics Code of Practice (the Code)

The European Statistics Code of Practice³ sets the standards for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. It builds on a common definition of quality in statistics used in the European Statistical System. The Code is a self-regulatory instrument containing 16 principles which address the institutional environment in which national and EU statistical authorities operate, and the production and dissemination of European statistics. Its implementation is supported by a set of indicators of good practice for each principle.

Peer reviews

Peer reviews⁴ are part of the European Statistical System strategy to implement the Code of Practice. The objective is to enhance the integrity, independence and accountability of ESS statistical authorities. The first round of peer reviews was carried out in 2006-2008, followed by a second round in 2013-2015. Both rounds cover all EU Member States and EFTA countries. The European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) carried out a peer review of Eurostat using the methodology developed for National Statistical Institute peer reviews with some adaptations reflecting Eurostat's specific characteristics. The European Statistical System is preparing third round of peer reviews, which will take place in 2021-2022.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>.

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

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

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