



## Important achievements during pandemic but big challenges ahead

### ESGAB publishes 18 recommendations for Eurostat

**Today, the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) published the results of its peer review of Eurostat including 18 concrete recommendations. It also urged EU policy makers to ensure that the independence and impartiality of European Statistics will not be compromised by the current threats to the rule of law in some Member States.**

This peer review of Eurostat, the third of its kind, reflects – in addition to an evaluation of the adherence to the European Statistics Code of Practice (ES CoP) – the need to rise to the new opportunities and challenges with a focus that is clearly put on adapting to the future.

*“Eurostat has made significant progress over a range of criteria that are relevant for the production of high-quality European statistics, especially as regards the ability to maintain regular statistical production and enhance the production of experimental statistics during the pandemic. This bears testimony to a substantial agility of Eurostat and of the whole European Statistical System”,* as the Chair of ESGAB, Aurel Schubert, summarised.

Accordingly, the emphasis of the present review has been mostly on how best to adapt to the new and emerging data landscape. Eurostat has progressed a lot in this regard but a number of additional initiatives would need to be taken.

ESGAB is of the opinion that Eurostat should be a role model in the ESS, extend its cooperation with users and partners, expand its production possibilities frontier, and be agile and proactive. ESGAB presents in this report 18 concrete recommendations to achieve those goals.

Governance is a crucial issue for the ESS, and ESGAB believes that in this area Eurostat has to be a role model for the system. For this, it should fully meet and even be more ambitious than the current requirements of the ES CoP, especially in the areas of independence and impartiality. *“This is especially important in the current climate – in which the rule of law and the values of the European Union are increasingly threatened in some countries – to prevent these tendencies from spilling over into statistics”,* as Aurel Schubert stressed.

An important precondition for expanding and modernising the products and services for users of statistics is to gain access, for statistical purposes, to new - “big” - data sources that are predominantly privately owned. ESGAB emphatically underlines the public interest of such access. Therefore, it is important for the upcoming EU Data Act to enable such access for all producers of European statistics.

Most of the necessary efforts to meet the challenges of the new world of data will require additional resources, both financial as well as human. ESGAB calls on EU policymakers at different levels to meet these needs in the interest of strengthening official statistics as a bulwark against disinformation, reducing the burden on enterprises of traditional data collection, making statistics more promptly available, and covering new areas of society by statistics.



*“Summing up, the system needs to build on its good performance during the recent epidemic episode. On the way forward, it is important to learn the lessons of what has worked well and what has worked less well during the crisis so as to be even better equipped to respond in a future case of extraordinary circumstances”,* concluded Aurel Schubert.

## Further information

The 2021 Report is available on [ESGAB's homepage](#).

## About ESGAB

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

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

The **European Statistics Code of Practice**<sup>3</sup> sets the standards for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. It builds on a common definition of quality in statistics used in the European Statistical System. The Code is a self-regulatory instrument containing 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 reviews<sup>4</sup> are part of the European Statistical System strategy to implement the Code of Practice. The objective is to enhance the integrity, independence and accountability of ESS statistical authorities. The first round of peer reviews was carried out in 2006-2008, followed by a second round in 2013-2015. Both rounds covered all EU Member States and EFTA countries. ESGAB carried out the peer review of Eurostat using the methodology developed for National Statistical Institute peer reviews with some adaptations, reflecting Eurostat's specific characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> [Introduction - ESGAB - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [European Statistical System \(ESS\) - European Statistical System \(ESS\) - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [European Statistics Code of Practice - Quality - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Peer reviews - Quality - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)