



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

REPORT

ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMME AND THE ACTIVITY OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE IN 2022

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CONTENTS

LIST OF BULGARIAN ABBREVIATIONS	3
LIST OF ENGLISH ABBREVIATIONS	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5
MAIN EVENTS IN 2022	6
1. INTRODUCING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2022	6
2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM, 2021 - 2027	7
2.1. GOAL 1: MODERN AND EFFECTIVE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM.....	7
2.2. GOAL 2: HIGH QUALITY AND CONFIDENCE IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS.....	8
2.3. GOAL 3: TRANSITION FROM STATISTICS TO VALUE-ADDED STATISTICS	12
2.4. GOAL 4: ACTIVE COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS	15
3. REPORT BY THEMATIC DOMAINS	19
3.1. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS	19
3.2. MACROECONOMIC STATISTICS.....	27
3.3. BUSINESS STATISTICS	29
3.4. STATISTICS ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES	35
3.5. MULTI-DOMAIN STATISTICS.....	38
3.6. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES, STATISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER ACTIVITIES	41
4. RESOURCE PROVISION.....	45
5. INTERNAL AUDIT AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL.....	49
6. UNFULFILLED ACTIVITIES.....	53
APPENDIX 1. INFORMATION ON THE NSI BUDGET FOR 2022.....	54
APPENDIX 2. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE NSI (AS OF DECEMBER,1 2022).....	56

LIST OF BULGARIAN ABBREVIATIONS

BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization
CA	Customs Agency
CCC	Central Census Commission
CP	Commercial property
EAMA	Executive Agency “Maritime administration”
EAVW	Executive Agency on vine and wine
EC	European Commission
ESA 2010	European System of Accounts 2010
ESS	European Statistical System
EU	European Union
ExEA	Executive Environment Agency
FMCS	Financial Management and Control system
GDEP	General Directorate Execution of Penalties
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HIAU	Head of Internal Audit unit
HICP	Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices
HO	Head Office
IAU	Internal Audit unit
ICT	Information and communications technology
INTRASTAT	Information system for Intra-Community trade in goods
IPA	Institute of Public Administration
IS	Information system
KAIS	Cadastral-Administrative Information System
MA	Ministry of Agriculture
ME	Ministry of Energy
MEW	Ministry of Environment and Water
MF	Ministry of Finance
MH	Ministry of Health
MI	Ministry of Interior
NEA	National Employment Agency
NRA	National Revenue Agency
NRPP	National register of populated places
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NSP	National Statistical Programme
NSS	National Statistical System
NSSI	National Social Security Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OP	Operational programme
PCHCRBA	Population Census and Housing Census in the Republic of Bulgaria Act
PPPs	Purchasing Power Parities
PR	Property registry
PRODCOM	Survey on output and sales of industrial products
PRODCOM.BG	Nomenclature of Industrial Production
RA	Registry Agency
R & D	Research and Development activity
RSO	Regional Statistical Office
RSU	Register of statistical units
SAR	State Agency for Refugees
SEDA	Sustainable Energy Development Agency
SSD	Statistical surveys Department
STS	Short-term Business Statistics
UN	United Nations
WG	Working group

LIST OF ENGLISH ABBREVIATIONS

CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews
CAWI	Computer-Assisted Web Interviews

ESTP	European Statistical Training Programme
FATS	Foreign Affiliates Trade Statistics
FRIBS	Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics
SAF	Spatial Adjustment Factor
SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange
VIES	VAT Information Exchange System

INTRODUCTION

The Report on implementation of the National Statistical Programme and the activity of the National Statistical Institute in 2022 is developed in compliance with Art. 9 (6) of the Law on Statistics.

The report is structured into six sections and presents the implementation of the tasks of the National Statistical Programme and the activities of the NSI and other Bodies of statistics in 2022.

The **first section** pays special attention to statistical surveys and activities performed for the first time in 2022.

The **second section** describes the results achieved on implementation of strategic goals laid down in the Strategy for Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021 - 2027.

The **third section** presents the implementation of activities on the production of statistical information in the different thematic areas - demographic and social statistics, macroeconomic statistics, business statistics, statistics on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, multi-domain statistics, information technologies, statistical infrastructure and other activities.

The **fourth section** presents the resources needed in order to implement the activities of the NSI in 2022.

The **fifth section** introduces the audit assignments performed by the Internal Audit Unit and the activities implemented by the Inspectorate and the Finance Controller in 2022.

The **sixth section** includes unfulfilled statistical surveys and activities due to objective reasons.

MAIN EVENTS IN 2022

- The NSI undertook a Peer review within the European Statistical System 2021 - 2023 (third round of Peer reviews).
- The NSI coordinates the activities of the Working Group on Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information at the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

1. INTRODUCING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2022

The National Statistical Institute:

- Published data from the first “Survey on gender-based violence“, conducted in the implementation of the Grant Agreement with the European Commission. The NSI provided comparable statistics at the European level on the prevalence of violence among women aged 18 - 74. The survey was carried out according to a uniform methodology using a harmonized tools, developed and approved by Eurostat in strict compliance with the requirements of national legislation of the countries;
- Published data on kindergartens and schools, based entirely on information from the administrative registers of the Ministry of Education and Science;
- Published quarterly data from conducted additional survey on social inclusion, living conditions and well-being to the “Household budget Survey”;
- Prepared and provided preliminary data to Eurostat in the field of annual business statistics at national level on the activity of enterprises in compliance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) № 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on European business statistics and repealing 10 legal acts in the field of business statistics and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) № 2020/1197 of 30 July 2020 laying down technical specifications and rules pursuant to Regulation (EU) № 2019/2152. With the entry into force of the new regulation, in addition to changing the methodology (new definitions of indicators, new groupings, new technical format for data transmission), the scope of economic activities was expanded by including sectors P, Q, R, groups 64.2, 64.3, 64.9 and sections 66 and 96 of Classification of economic activities (NACE.BG-2008), for which data should be provided to Eurostat;
- Prepared and provided to Eurostat data on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises for the reporting year 2022, using the SDMX standard for statistical data and metadata exchange;
- Used SIMS (Single Integrated Metadata Structure) standard to fill in and send to Eurostat metadata and quality report of survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises;
- Switched to use administrative sources - Property registry to Registry Agency and KAIS (Cadastral-Administrative Information System) in regular production of housing price indices and indicators on house sales;
- Published data on owner-occupied housing price indices and indicators on house sales - number of sales and value of sales;
- Developed and sent to Eurostat an additional table for Government expenditure, financed by the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility;
- Started work with the new Information system “Environmental Statistics”. Through it, in real time, the NSI implemented the introduction and verification of environmental reports. The system covers statistical surveys on environment conducted by NSI, which provide information for formation of the necessary indicators according to EU Regulations, as well as other indicators related to environmental accounts and its components and factors;

- Started early reporting of natural gas supply data to Eurostat in connection with the EC's REPowerEU plan in response to the difficulties and disruptions in the global energy market caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the urgent need to transform Europe's energy system by ceasing of the EU's dependence on Russian fossil fuels and dealing with the climate crisis;
- Published its own calculations for the balance of the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria based on spatial data from the current cadastral map of the country. The results are presented by territorial units for statistical purposes (NUTS) and administrative-territorial units;
- Established a Call center to serve users of statistical information;
- Started publishing interactive graphics to some of the data tables on the NSI's website.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM, 2021 - 2027

Main direction in the activity of the NSI in 2022 was the realization of horizontal and specific goals within the framework of the Strategy for Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021 - 2027.

2.1. Goal 1: Modern and effective National Statistical System

Activity 2.1.1. Providing conditions and resources for the sustainable and modern development of the NSS

In the period from March 28 to April 1, 2022, the third Peer review of the National Statistical System of Bulgaria within the framework of its membership in the European Statistical System was conducted hybrid. In addition to NSI, three other National Authorities were included in it - administrative structures to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment and Water and the National Social Security Institute. Among the topics discussed during the visit were: the quality and security of information in the NSI, aspects related to cooperation within the NSS, the use of new and administrative data sources, cooperation with different user groups and stakeholders.

Activity 2.1.2. Updating the legal framework

- Bill to amend and supplement of [Inter-Community Commodities Trade Statistics Act](#) (available only in Bulgarian):

At a meeting on April 20, 2022, the Council of Ministers approved a bill to amend and supplement of Inter-Community Commodities Trade Statistics Act. On April 27, with the decision of the Council of Ministers № 267/27.04.2022, the Council of Ministers submitted the bill for presentation and discussion in the National Assembly. The bill was allocated to the following committees: Committee on Budget and Finance (lead), Committee on Economic Policy and Innovation (participating), Committee on European Union Affairs (participating). On July 21, the bill was passed by the National Assembly in a second vote. The Act was promulgated in the State Gazette, № 61/02.08.2022 by Decree № 196 of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Activity 2.1.3. Development and implementation of new methods and technologies

In the field of demographic statistics, in 2022, in accordance with the requirements and recommendations of the EC, the paper questionnaires for the Adult Education survey in households were replaced by the use of electronic devices, and a special electronic application was created in order to collect information. With the use of new technologies, the processes of data collection and data processing were accelerated and facilitated, and better quality was ensured.

In 2022 the project for the development of the IS Consumer Prices finished successfully in order to add new functionalities and migration of the platform. In the field of housing price statistics,

the software for processing data in the field of housing price indices was updated as a functionality to include data from KAIS (Cadastral-Administrative Information System) was added.

In 2022, a Call center was established to serve users of statistical information. As a result of its implementation, the answers to the inquiries increased, as well as the information collected on the most frequently asked questions.

Activity 2.1.4. Use more administrative and new data sources

In order to create the necessary conditions for providing qualitative statistics on the indicators included in the Regulation for the implementation of Regulation (EC) 1338/2008 regarding statistics on non-financial indicators in the field of health statistics, during the year an Agreement on cooperation and strategic partnership was concluded between the NSI and the Bulgarian Dental Association. The available information, which is maintained in the National Register of the Bulgarian Dental Association, and the possibilities of its use for statistical purposes were studied.

In 2022, the NSI published statistics on kindergartens and schools, based entirely on information from the administrative registers of the Ministry of Education and Science.

By replacement the regular carried out until the previous year surveys on educational institutions with the use of administrative data, the quality of statistical information was increased and the respondents' burden was reduced.

In 2022, in the field of housing price statistics the NSI switched to use administrative sources (Property registry and KAIS (Cadastral-Administrative Information System)), in the regular production of data on housing price indices and indicators on house sales.

In 2022, the interaction with the institutions for the use of administrative data for the needs of production of statistical information on the environment and energy continued (MEW, ME, MA, State Agency "State Reserve and Wartime Stocks", ExEA, Executive Forest Agency, Executive Agency for exploration and maintenance of the Danube river, Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency, Public Procurement Agency, SEDA, CA, NRA, Directorate General "Civil Aviation Administration", National center for public health and analysis, National Institute of meteorology and hydrology).

The NSI made contacts, including meetings with administrations and organizations concerning the need for administrative data for the implementation of the new requirements of European environmental and energy legislation. The NSI held a meeting with SEDA with reference to the upcoming reporting of data on the production of solar photovoltaic energy by sectors, the consumption of solar photovoltaic energy from own production and the energy consumption by data centers according to the new requirements of Regulation (EC) 1099/2008 on energy statistics.

The NSI continued cooperation with the Energy Distribution Companies in order to provide information for solar photovoltaic manufacturers.

2.2. Goal 2: High quality and confidence in official statistics

Activity 2.2.1. Strengthening communication with stakeholders

In 2022, the NSI's statistical initiatives aimed at increasing the functional literacy of young people received a new impetus by conducting new initiatives - a National Essay competition, as well as quiz games.

82 students from 44 schools in 28 settlements took part in the Essay competition, announced on the occasion of the European Statistics Day. The topic on which students had to share their statements and support them with data was: "The importance of official statistics in today's world of information and misinformation".

The European Statistics competition for students was organized for the fifth time as all pre-pandemic activities were restored. For the first time, a public election was held for the representatives of Bulgaria in the European round of the Competition, where the conceptual project for a video of the participants was evaluated.

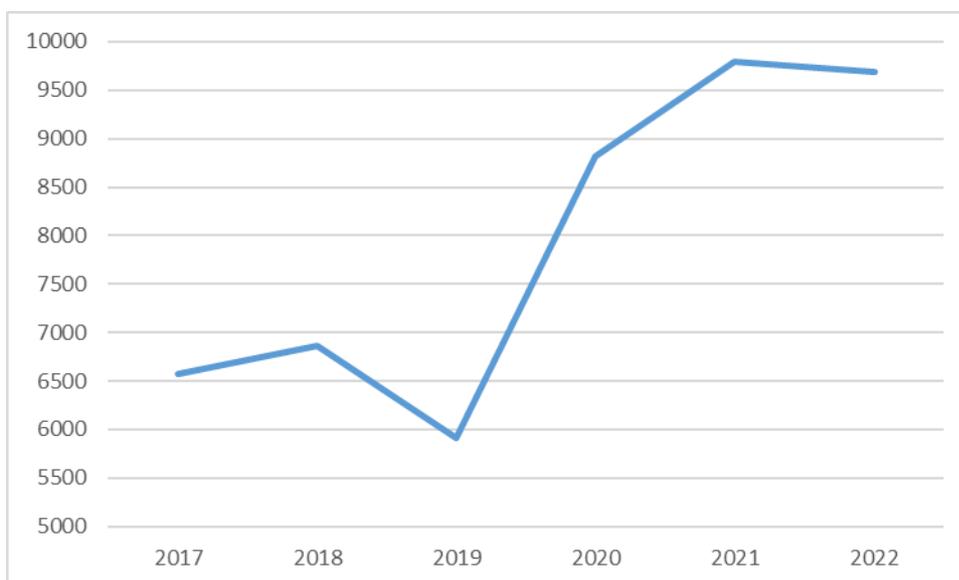
1,043 students from 406 teams and 101 educational institutions throughout the country took part in the competition. The Sofia team DATAPOWER from the National Trade and Banking High School took first place in the European round of the Competition in the 16 - 18 age group, and three other Bulgarian teams made it into the top 20 of the final ranking out of a total of 66 teams in Europe.

The participation of NSI in “Uzana Polyana Fest”, held from July 22 to 24, 2022 was a new initiative aimed at strengthening communication with stakeholders. The Festival was in the Uzana area in the Gabrovo Balkan. The theme of the fest was “Environment, climate change and the possibilities of adapting to it”. The NSI provided official statistical information on air pollution, waste, protected areas and other areas of social and economic life in Bulgaria. The competitions that the NSI conducts among secondary school students and undergraduates were also presented. Around 10,000 representatives from various regions of the country participated in the event, with international presence from the UK, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Italy and Ukraine. The NSI’s tent was visited by two thirds of the participants and high evaluations were shared for the work of the NSI as an institution that produces and provides quality and reliable statistical information for all spheres of social development and takes special care to increase the functional statistical literacy of young people. A special highlight in the holiday programme was the video presentation from the European Statistics competition for students, which brought the team DATAPOWER from the National Trade and Banking High School - Sofia first place in Europe this year.

The NSI’s participation in the “Uzana Polyana Fest” is a contribution to the deployment of initiatives for the deepening of the statistical culture of various stakeholders and demonstrates the commitment of the institution to continue being an organizational and methodical leader in the assimilation of statistical information. The NSI’s image as a highly responsible and youth-oriented institution was confirmed.

In 2022 the main channel for dissemination of statistical information and easy access to it was the NSI’s website. An average of 9,687 visits are registered on the NSI website per day.

FIG. 1. Visits to the NSI website on average per day



During the year 1 306 time series tables were updated, as well as the corresponding tables with the latest data and metadata in 47 statistical sections in Bulgarian and English. 522 press releases and 131 news were published in Bulgarian and English, as well as announcements for 72 competitions and one auction.

691 press releases with regional statistics were published.

The time series that generated the most interest and downloaded the most times during the year are in English and are from the areas:

- Consumer price indices (CPI, 1995 = 100);
- Gross Domestic Product;
- Foreign trade - Import and export price indices.

The Top 3 publications downloaded from the NSI’s website in digital format are:

- Classification of economic activities (NACE.BG-2008);
- Healthcare 2020;
- Road Traffic Accidents in the Republic of Bulgaria 2020.

The press releases that generated the greatest interest during the year were about inflation and consumer price indices, as well as the preliminary estimate for the number of the population of Bulgaria as of September 7, 2021.

Two new statistical headings with data and accompanying information were created on the site - “Balance on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria” and “Sustainable development goals 2030”.

For the first time, some indicators were published on: house sales and owner-occupied housing price indices under the heading Housing Price Statistics; summarized balance sheet and summarized balance sheet of funds for making payments under the heading Annual business statistics; monthly minimum wage as a proportion of average gross monthly wages and salaries under the heading Labour market; Eurostat flash estimates under the heading European Comparison Programme; gender-based violence main indicators under the heading Justice and crime.

During the year, the regular publication of statistical data related to the economic and social consequences of the spread of the Coronavirus under the heading “COVID-19” continued. The information is presented in tables and graphs.

This year the NSI published on the website “Census 2021” many news, documents and other information about the Population and housing census in the Republic of Bulgaria carried out in September 2021.

In 2022, more than 6,000 one-off requests for statistical information received by e-mail or at the NSI’s Reception were satisfied. Statistical information was periodically provided to users from the country (117) and abroad (1), who expressed a desire to receive the data from a certain survey immediately after their official announcement (Table 1).

Table 1. Requests for periodic provision of information

	(Number)
Requests from the country	126
with monthly data	83
with quarterly data	38
with annual data	5

The number of questionnaires for which information is collected and sent is over 67 from all statistical domains. In 2022 the NSI completed and sent 10 monthly, 6 quarterly and 7 annual questionnaires to international organizations.

In 2022, the interest in providing access to anonymized data from abroad increased. The NSI fulfilled 15 requests (6 from the country and 9 from abroad) according to the Rules for provision of anonymized individual data for scientific and research purposes.

The Bulgarian Center for Support of Users of European Statistical Information, which is part of the European network of consumer centers, continued its work in 2022. By September 30, 15 inquiries had been received. Of these, 3 of the inquiries are standard and 12 non-standard, the answers to which were provided after consultation with the Central Consumer Support Unit at Eurostat. Most inquiries were for data availability - 8 inquiries, followed by inquiries for data verification - 6, as well as one methodologic inquiry.

The NSI's experts also served 4 specialized e-mail addresses (mailboxes), created in order to help users.

Activity 2.2.2. Inclusion and active participation of the public

In the field of environmental and energy statistics in 2022 the NSI's experts took part in the evaluation during the second stage of the National round of the European Statistics competition for students in the field of energy statistics.

During the exhibition "Statistics for everyone" for the first time this year, the opinion of visitors was surveyed. 986 people participated in the survey. Its results outline the positive attitudes towards NSI and the official statistical information that the Institute provides. The NSI is highly trusted, as two thirds of the respondents convinced of the reliability and high quality of official statistics. 35% of respondents answered positively to the question "Do you know the products and services offered by NSI?". Over 70% of people who filled out the survey use statistical information in their daily lives, and 65.3% of them support the idea that statistics and working with data should be studied as an independent subject at school. Most of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the work of NSI, as well as with the initiatives aimed at secondary school students and undergraduates. People expressed opinions that it will be a good idea for the NSI to provide more free data, as well as to strengthen NSI's cooperation with other government institutions in order to reduce the administrative burden on businesses and citizens. The stakeholders are actively involved in the statistical process and by sharing their views on how they accept the different ways of presenting and providing the results of statistical surveys conducted by the NSI.

The User Satisfaction Survey with the products and services offered by NSI, as well as their quality, is carried out through a questionnaire and helps to evaluate the quality of service to users both online and at the NSI's Reception.

In 2022, the User satisfaction survey questionnaire, focusing on the quality of service and evaluation of statistical information dissemination methods, was completed by 237 respondents.

[User satisfaction survey results, 2021](#) are presented on the NSI's website.

Activity 2.2.3. Open quality management

Open quality management of the European statistics is a priority direction in the development of the ESS. Quality management of the European statistics requires all Member States to implement effectively the legislation in the field of statistics and principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

In 2022, the participation of the NSI and selected statistical authorities in the Third round of Peer reviews within the ESS finished.

The NSI continued to develop and to submit to Eurostat quality reports of statistical surveys in a

specified format.

In the field of education statistics, the NSI prepared a quality report on data from the continuing vocational training survey of the employees.

In the field of foreign trade statistics, jointly with Eurostat, quality reports were prepared on the data provided - aggregated and detailed monthly data on exports and imports of goods, as well as annual data on business characteristics of enterprises and by invoicing currency.

In the field of macroeconomic statistics, the quality report and the questionnaire on GNI were submitted to the EU on time.

In the field of energy statistics, a quality report on data of electricity and natural gas prices for household and final non-household customers and a quality report on all monthly and annual data reported according to Regulation (EC) 1099/2008 on energy statistics were prepared.

In 2022, in the field of environmental and energy statistics, the NSI resumed active work with SSD in the RSO. In June, a workshop “Environmental and energy statistics - current issues” was held with the involvement of the heads of SSD. The workshop was dedicated to data quality of the surveys as the aim was its improvement by increasing the expert capacity in SSD. In October, within the workshop a series of meetings were held with SSD experts in order to discuss and to provide methodological assistance by the experts of HO of the NSI on all environmental surveys. Similar workshops are planned for the surveys in the field of energy statistics.

In the field of R&D statistics, the NSI prepared and submitted to Eurostat a quality report on innovation data in 2020.

In the field of statistics on information society, the NSI prepared metadata and a quality report on the use of ICT and e-commerce in enterprises survey, using the SIMS standard for their completion and submission to Eurostat.

2.3. Goal 3: Transition from statistics to value-added statistics

Activity 2.3.1. Modern and effective communication

In 2022, the NSI continued and strengthened the good cooperation with national and regional media. During this period over 250 press releases with statistical information and 70 news topics from various national and international events were published on the NSI website. The NSI continued to send informational press releases to the press centers of ministries and other institutions, as well as the Bulgarian embassies abroad - a tradition that has lasted for more than 15 years.

In 2022, the focus of the NSI’s communication activities was placed on the 2021 Census as throughout the year an announcement of results from the biggest statistical survey was a priority. The campaign in its essence followed Communication strategy developed in 2019 on promotion of Census, its aims, essence and role to develop public policies.

Two press conferences were held - at the beginning of January when the preliminary estimates on number of population were announced, and on October 3 - for announcement of first final results. During the last three months of the year different breakdowns of results from the 2021 Census were presented as scheduled - socio-economic characteristics, ethnicity, religion, mother tongue, as well as results from two accompanying surveys - on reproductive attitudes and migration.

In November the NSI held a workshop for national and regional media as the NSI’s representatives announced the data on ethno-cultural characteristics of the population. The external experts analyzed the information for journalists.

No paid advertising campaign for the 2021 Census was planned for 2022, and therefore, after

October 3, new census data was released several times through press releases until the end of the year. The data from the 2021 Census was awaited by the media and generated huge interest among the public.

The NSI continued work on developed strategy for coverage of social networks - mainly Facebook and Instagram, as the main channels there were the institutional profiles of the NSI. Throughout the year the number of followers on the NSI Facebook page reached over 11,000.

In 2022, the NSI continued to use new technologies in order to optimize the dissemination of information produced. Along with customer service and the website, the main communication channels with users were Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Social networks were often used to inform the public and to get feedback on the announcement of the results from 2021 Census and other statistical data.

With the information campaign for the 2021 Census, the NSI's PR team won first place in the 2022 PR Prize competition in the Communication project in the public sector category. The competition was organized by the Bulgarian Public Relations Association, which annually honors the best achievements of PR specialists in Bulgaria. 78 communication projects, divided into 15 categories, participated in the competition. The jury of the competition was made up of PR practitioners and university professors, some of them also heads of professional organizations.

In 2022, the improvement of the system for dissemination of statistical information - IS "Infostat" continued. The specific enquiries processed through it in 2022 are 1010. The most used of the pre-defined applications are - "Main economic indicators of non-financial enterprises by statistical regions, districts and economic activities", "Main economic indicators of non-financial enterprises by regions, municipalities and groups of enterprises according to the number of persons employed in them", "Activity of accommodation facilities by statistical zones, statistical regions, regions and municipalities" ("Business Statistics") and "Average gross salary of employed persons by labour contract and by civil contract by economic activities (A21), regions and municipalities" ("Demographic and social statistics").

The scope of published statistical information in IS "Infostat" was expanded with the inclusion of data from the 2011 Census and the 2021 Census.

During the year 17 publications were published - printed (with electronic version on CD) and electronic (only on CD) with a total circulation of 31,500, and most editions are bilingual - in Bulgarian and English, with data at national and regional level from various statistical fields. The Statistical Yearbook 2021, the Statistical Reference Book 2022 cover statistical information in its entirety and are an invaluable guide for all users.

The press releases prepared by NSI periodically provide the state authorities and the public with data on key indicators for the country's development.

The NSI continued to publish on its website data and graphs related to the pandemic of COVID-19 worldwide in the specially created heading.

The access to 390 library units was provided in the NSI for users. The NSI Digital Library continued to hold a leading position on national scale in the field of creation, management and online dissemination of digital information resources. During the reporting period 23,017 user visits were registered. 491,787 searches of the library's digital resources were performed. 2,900,743 digital pages were read.

Activity 2.3.2. New, consumer-oriented statistical products and services

In 2022, the new Information system "Environmental Statistics" was put into operation. The system covers environmental surveys conducted by the NSI and facilitates data provision on environmental reports from the respondents and their subsequent verification by the SSD.

In order to assist respondents and to improve data quality, where necessary, the guidelines for reports on environmental and energy surveys are regularly reviewed and updated. The NSI regularly reviews and updates time series in relation to update methodology and/or new normative requirements.

In order to meet the new requirements of Regulation № 691/2011 on the European environmental economic accounts and Regulation № 1099/2008 on energy statistics, as well as to provide data related to the European Green Deal, the Energy Union and the Circular Economy, the NSI worked on two projects funded by the EC - “Improving data for circular economy - packaging waste and construction waste” and “Establishing access to geospatial data through linking geocoded and statistical data”. The NSI successfully completed work on Package 1 “Disaggregation of final energy consumption in transport” from “Energy statistics: support to the Energy Union and further disaggregation of final energy consumption” project. The NSI started work on Package 2 “Further Disaggregation of Solid Biofuels Data” of the same project. The NSI successfully completed work on the project “Mapping and Assessment for Integrated ecosystem Accounting (MAIA), Horizon 2020”.

The content of section “Statistics for everyone”, which provides an online learning opportunity for all users who wants to learn something new or expand his or her knowledge of statistics was supplemented with new materials in the subsection “Statistics in the classroom”.

In 2022, the NSI continued to enrich the collection of digital publications of Eurostat, adapted in Bulgarian. Along with the updating of the already published digital publications the latest edition - “Shedding light on energy in the EU - A guided tour of energy statistics” was presented to Bulgarian users.

The tradition of celebrating important dates and events through infographics and videos continued.

Activity 2.3.3. Easily accessible and understandable statistics

During the period August 31 - September 18, 2022, the NSI jointly with Sofia Municipality organized for the third time a statistical exhibition in the open-air gallery “City Garden” in front of the National Theater. This year the theme of the exhibition was “Statistics for everyone” and the capital city residents and guests of the city had the opportunity to see the modern face of NSI as a source of official data. The information panels, prepared in Bulgarian and English, familiarized users with the main communication channels of NSI, as well as with the initiatives to increase statistical literacy and culture of young people in Bulgaria. The international successes and awards won by Bulgarian secondary students and undergraduates in various statistics competitions were also presented.

In October, the exhibition was also presented in the city of Ruse.

The exhibition was accompanied by two additional initiatives - QR quiz “Scan and win!” and “Play with statistics!”. After scanning the QR code the quiz “Scan and win!” provided an opportunity to answer 5 questions related to the activities of NSI. The condition of the game “Play with the statistics!” was to take a selfie in front of the panel, or only the panel, which most closely corresponded to the choice of the visitors of the institution's information and communication means or statistical competitions.

The expansion of initiatives to increase the statistical literacy and culture of young people is a priority for NSI. In carrying out the activities to fulfill this goal, the institution interacts with partners from the state and local authorities, business organizations, educational and academic circles, the media and the non-governmental sector.

Activity 2.3.4. Conditions for active participation of the media

The media is a key stakeholder, an important partner and a major user of NSI data. Therefore, the institute relies on open, timely and effective communication with them. One of the main

policies in this regard, laid down in the European Statistics Code of Practice, is the equality of the media, together with all users, in the dissemination of statistical products and services. This means that the media are informed in advance when and what data will be published through the Release calendar for the results of statistical surveys of the NSI (Release calendar) announced at the beginning of the year, and receive the press releases always at the same time. This policy was strictly followed in 2022.

The media was a natural partner of the NSI in order to popularize the activities of the institution. During the year, the NSI held numerous meetings and answered their inquiries. The NSI established new contacts with new media, and journalists were introduced to the work of the institute and the importance of statistical information for society.

2.4. Goal 4: Active cooperation with national and international partners

Activity 2.4.1. Promoting partnerships at national level

In the field of environmental statistics, a joint working meeting was held with the participation of employees of NSI, the Bulgarian Industrial Association, MEW, ExEA, packaging waste recycling organizations and branch organizations. At the meeting some initiatives of CRIC (Bulgarian for “Circular economy”) and “Plastic Pact Bulgaria” in relation to packaging waste were presented and discussed. The methodology for calculating the share of recycled plastic packaging was also discussed, as well as methodological issues regarding the packaging placed on the market.

The NSI’s experts took part in the closing conference on the project of the Sustainable Energy Development Agency entitled “Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Sustainable Energy Development Agency (SEDA) to provide more and better services in the field of energy efficiency”.

Activity 2.4.2. Extension of international cooperation

In 2022, the activities in the field of international cooperation were again aimed at strengthening the authority of NSI as a responsible and active partner both at European level - within the European Statistical System, and at international level - in a number of international organizations, including the United Nations, OECD and BSEC.

Although the preparation and implementation of the Third round of Peer reviews was one of the highlights of NSI’s work in 2022, the Institute continued its active participation in all international forums and discussions concerning current challenges and opportunities for official statistics. This year, our country was once again represented in all three regular meetings of the Committee of the European Statistical System - in February and May in Luxembourg and in October in Oslo. Both high-level meetings within the framework of the French and Czech presidencies of the Council of the EU, respectively, were of great importance. Their topics were: “Transformation of the European Statistical System into a future-proof one” (7 - 8 April 2022, Lyon) in the context of the possible change of Regulation 223/2009 on European statistics in order to make this framework regulation more relevant to today’s digitized and data-driven world and “Statistics of the future: the new era of data science in official statistics” (26 - 27 September 2022, Prague) focusing on the following aspects: data processing and innovative methods; human resources and capacity building; strategic partnerships with academia and the private sector; change management. Immediately before the last meeting of the ESSC for the year, another meeting of the General Directors (DGINS) was traditionally held. The topic of the 2022 meeting was: “Innovation management in the ESS: from experimentation to production”.

In 2022, the NSI’s representatives continued their participation in the meetings of various working groups with a statistical focus (95 at European and 107 at national level). As usual, the international meetings of Council Working Party on Statistics were among those with particular importance. Unlike in 2021, these international meetings were predominantly attended and held

in Brussels, Belgium. For the four meetings in the period May - October, the NSI relied on the support of the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Bulgaria to the EU for the broadcast of a national representative to participate in the thematic discussions. Nevertheless, the NSI's experts continued to work from Sofia to prepare detailed positions, statements and comments on the items from the agenda and provided them to the Bulgarian diplomats in Brussels, so that the effective protection of the Bulgarian interest in the statistical sphere was guaranteed.

In the first half of 2022, France took over the Presidency of the Council of the EU.

During this time, the expert work on the following dossiers was completed within the EU Council:

- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on statistics on agricultural input and output (2021/0020/COD) - following the unanimous adoption of the compromise text also by the Standing Committee for Agricultural Statistics, the French Presidency was authorized to send a letter to the European Parliament for the adoption of the draft at first reading;
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) № 138/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards regional economic accounts for agriculture (2021/0031/COD) - after a successful final triologue, the institutions adopted the compromise text and the act was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 12.04.2022.

The NSI achieved its goals set at the beginning of the negotiations for both regulations.

From July until the end of 2022, the Czech Republic chaired the Presidency of the Council of the EU. Its work covered key dossiers such as the revision of the European System of National and Regional Accounts in the EU - ESA 2010 (2021/0407/COD), the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards introducing new environmental economic accounts modules and the Data Act (2022/0047/COD), where the EU Council Working Party on Telecommunications and the Information Society was leading, but it was also supported by other working groups, including the Working Party on Statistics.

In 2022, the NSI successfully completed 13 projects, financed by the European Commission and co-financed by the state budget. The projects were in the field of demographic and social statistics, business statistics and multi-sectoral statistics. During the year, the NSI applied, concluded and was about to sign contracts with the EC for 14 new projects, which are scheduled to be implemented in the period 2022 - 2024. The funding attracted by them is 475,000 Euros (nearly 950,000 BGN). The NSI worked both on projects funded by various EC programmes and on projects supported by other donors, such as the Financial Mechanism of the EEA, 2014 - 2021.

The NSI is also a partner in the implementation of projects under the IPA 2017 and 2019. Under IPA 2017 and the concluded consortium with GOPA Worldwide Consultants (lead partner), the NSI, Statistics Netherlands and Hungarian Central Statistical Office in the period 2019 - 2022, the NSI's experts carried out 8 attended or online expert missions and a number of activities in order to provide assistance to the statistical offices of the Republic of Kosovo, the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The NSI worked with the beneficiary countries in order to improve and to develop statistical activity in the following areas: business statistics (Business Register, Structural Business Statistics and Business Demography) and macroeconomic statistics (Purchasing Power Parities).

In the field of quality management, several expert missions and study visits were conducted aiming at training experts from the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Under IPA 2019, the NSI continued to work in the field of macroeconomic statistics with the Statistical Office of the Republic of Kosovo in cooperation and as part of a consortium with

GOPA Worldwide Consultants (lead partner), Statistics Netherlands and Statistics Finland. Two online expert missions were carried out, and one attended meeting was held in Kosovo in October. In December a three-day study visit on PPPs was also approved, involving experts from Kosovo and statisticians from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2022, under IPA 2019, the work began on the Agreement between the NSI of the Republic of Bulgaria and the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia. The main objective of the project is to support the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia through methodological and technical assistance in order to improve the quality and comparability of the harmonized indices of consumer prices and in the development of the housing prices indices. In the field of HICP, the first expert mission was carried out in the city of Skopje.

The participation of the NSI's experts in the expert missions and study visits is an important factor for the strengthening of bilateral cooperation.

In line with the cooperation with the UN Economic Commission for Europe, in June, the NSI's management participated in the 17th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians at the UN Economic Commission for Europe, which was held in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting was followed by the 19th meeting of the Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policies of the OECD, in which NSI is an associate member since 2019. The NSI's management also presented online the country at the 53rd session of the UN Statistical Commission, held in the period February 28 - March 4. The NSI's experts regularly participated in various workshops by invitation or organized by the UN.

In 2022, the NSI continued its membership in the International Statistical Institute.

In 2021, Bulgaria - in the face of the NSI - became the country coordinator of the activities within the Working Group on Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information at the BSEC. As a result of its ambitious programme and the results achieved in 2021, our country was invited to continue to chair the group in 2022. The NSI agreed to continue the implementation of the programme from the previous year by preparing specific proposals for specific statistical activities and international events, through which to give an additional impetus to the functioning of the organization. However, the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine caused a noticeable stagnation in the work of BSEC, which, until now, represents a significant challenge to the restoration of the work of the Working Group on Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information.

In 2022, the trainings under the European Statistics Training Programme were frozen due to NSI budget constraints. Online trainings were discontinued and the traditional attendance format was restored. Only one NSI's expert attended the course "Introduction to Statistical Production Using GIS" in Oslo, Norway.

During the reporting period, our country's full membership in the OECD became an important short-term and long-term priority for the institution. The NSI is the leading institution in the review under the Recommendation of the Council on Good Statistical Practice (OECD/LEGAL/0417), which, although largely based on the data provided by the NSI during the Third round of Peer reviews in the ESS, analyzes also in depth other topics of key importance to the production of qualitative statistics and the overall improvement of public confidence in them. In addition, as of 1 October 2022, NSI was identified as a partner institution in the preparation of self-assessments for 13 technical reviews under OECD legal instruments. In this context, the Institute continued to provide the necessary timely and reliable information to the Bulgarian authorities in order to conduct the reviews in question, by broadcasting two experts each to assist the relevant administrative structures directly in the preparation of the self-assessments.

The NSI successfully completed the project "New approaches to data generation for hard-to-

reach groups of the population at risk of violation of their rights”, funded by the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area 2014 - 2021 under the program “Local development, poverty reduction and enhanced inclusion of vulnerable groups”. The project was implemented in partnership with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Within the project some innovative methods and approaches for data collection were developed and adaptation of relevant indicators needed for the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at representatives of vulnerable groups.

Some analytical materials with the main results of the project were developed in the form of thematic publications, in which a more in-depth analysis of the state of children, Roma, people with disabilities and the elderly in the country was made. In addition, the territorial dimensions of vulnerability were studied by mapping key indicators by municipality, a review of selected indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals was made and a thematic guide on the use of data in the policy process was developed.

The main results of the project were presented at two online large-scale conferences, with participation of the representatives of the European Commission, international organizations, state and local authorities, the scientific community and non-governmental organizations.

All developed analytical materials, reports and publications were published on the dedicated [Project's site](#) and could be downloaded for free.

The partnership between the National Statistical Institute and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights was extremely successful and fruitful for both parties. The good relationship is expected to continue in the future with general participation in other joint projects.

The work on the project Real Estate Statistics financed by the EC completed. The project activities were successfully implemented as the production of housing price indices was improved by introducing new administrative data from KAIS (Cadastral-Administrative Information System), and based on the detailed study of the current state of the commercial real estate market in Bulgaria, the first steps were taken to data production in the field of commercial real estate statistics.

In December 2022, a workshop was held at the NSI with the participation of representatives of the Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kosovo and the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The participants were familiar with the entire process of collecting and validating consumer prices, surveys on capital goods and standard questionnaires with other input data for PPPs purposes. During the training, the partner countries became familiar with the method for calculating spatial adjustment factors at the NSI of Bulgaria. Both participating countries also gained knowledge of the application and the national practice of the host institutions concerning the survey on health care establishments.

Activity 2.4.3. Improving the scope of agreements and partnerships

The National Statistical Institute continued to pursue a consistent policy for the development of bilateral cooperation with the countries of the European Neighborhood Policy - Eastern Partnership, Southern Partnership and the countries from the Western Balkans.

The NSI has bilateral agreements on cooperation in the field of statistics with the Republic of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of North Macedonia, Palestine, Romania, Serbia. The Bulgarian side cooperates with these countries on the basis of three-year action plans. In 2022, the activities on the implementation of the plans continued, and two trainings in the field of demographic and social statistics and quality management were planned for the beginning of 2023. The NSI is in talks to sign a bilateral cooperation agreement with the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Argentina.

In 2022, the NSI received a letter from Eurostat with information on the launch of the procedure for calls for proposals for trainees under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 2019 (IPA

2019) under two invitations in Eurostat, EU Member States and EFTA countries. The internship periods are from January 9 to April 5, 2023 and from April 18 to July 15, 2023. The beneficiary countries under IPA 2019 are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Türkiye. The NSI applied and approved for the two periods a total of four trainees from the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Albania. The trainees will work in the area of “Use of multiple sources - administrative data, big data and geospatial data for the production of official statistics” and “Quality Management”.

In order to increase efficiency, to achieve optimal organization and coordination in the interaction between institutions and more effective implementation of certain functions and tasks the NSI, Bodies of Statistics and other state institutions continued their joint work. In 2022, eight new agreements on strategic cooperation and information exchange with central government authorities and non-governmental organizations were signed.

The NSI’s employees continued discussions and work on updating the Memorandum of cooperation between the NSI, the BNB and the MoF regarding the development, production and dissemination of data in the field of government finance statistics, as well as on a draft bilateral agreement between the NSI and the BNB for the purposes of cooperation, strategic partnership and data exchange regarding national accounts (financial and non-financial) and foreign trade in goods and services.

For the purposes of Census 2021, in order to validate the quality and accuracy of registered data on the presence of permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability, an Agreement on data processing was concluded with the National Expert Medical Commission.

In the field of health statistics, in order to prepare for fulfillment of our country’s obligations to European legislation and to reduce the administrative burden on respondents, an Agreement on cooperation and strategic partnership in exchange of information was signed between the National Statistical Institute and the Bulgarian Dental Association.

3. REPORT BY THEMATIC DOMAINS

3.1. Demographic and social statistics

Population and housing census in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2021

In fulfillment of Regulation (EC) № 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the Law on population and housing census in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2021, (prom., SG issue 20/08.03.2019, amended, SG issue 109/22.12.2020) (Population and housing census in the Republic of Bulgaria Act 2021), from 7 September to 10 October 2021, the 18th census was conducted in the country.

In 2022, the following activities were carried out:

- **Data input**

Data entry from paper census forms was carried out in the period October 2021 - May 2022. The input was carried out in IS “Census” by persons employed under the Law on contracts and obligations and was organized and coordinated in the Regional Statistical Offices.

- **Processing, validating, coding and editing census data**

In order to provide first preliminary data on the number of the population, distributed by region and by age, as well as to provide information on the housing fund in the country, the NSI carried out a preliminary estimation of the number of the population as of September 7, 2021. The estimation was developed on the basis of data on the number of electronically enumerated persons and dwellings, operational information from the summary lists of the enumerated objects

(buildings, dwellings and population) completed by the controllers, and an estimate of the expected number of enumerated objects for the partially or completely non-detour sections.

In order to validate the scope and quality of the enumerated objects - buildings, dwellings and population, the National Statistical Institute developed a Methodology on estimation of the scope of enumerated population and the accuracy of registration with information from administrative registers.

Data from ten registries maintained by different authorities was linked. Analysis was made, a unification, recoding of data from administrative sources were done in order to use them to assess the quality and the scope of census data.

The data from the two sample surveys on births and reproductive attitude of population and migration and migration behavior of population was processed, as well as from the two surveys to control the scope and quality of census data.

• Building and testing a reference infrastructure (Census Hub Project) in order to connect census data to CensusHub, an EC (Eurostat) technical solution for presenting census data to users

For the purposes of reporting census data and in implementation of Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/712 concerning the reference year and programme for statistical data and metadata for population and housing census, as provided for in Regulation (EC) № 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the National Statistical Institute must provide a reference infrastructure for census data storage of census data according to the content, scope and structure defined in the regulation, as well as create links between the National infrastructure and CensusHub.

For the implementation of this activity, the following activities were performed: a test server was created with MSSQL database server installed; the submitted nomenclatures for defined cubes were loaded; scripts were prepared to create the specified cubes and dimensions and link to the nomenclatures.

A scheme and methodology for linking the census data to the cubes is under development.

• Harmonized European Time Use Survey

The Harmonized European Time Use Survey is conducted in EU countries in order to measure the time which persons spend on different activities including paid labour and productivity of households; family care, personal care, voluntary work, social life, travel and leisure. The time use survey is conducted approximately once every ten years. In Bulgaria, the survey was conducted for the sixth time and is part of the Census 2021 programme.

The following activities were carried out during the conducting the survey:

- A nationally representative sample of 4,692 households selected;
- Selected interviewers and responsible persons for field work contracted under the Law on contracts and obligations;
- Developed software for data input of individuals and households (CAPI) and households dairies input (PAPI);
- Conducted training of trainers on organization and field work;
- Printed survey tools - households dairies and letters informing respondents about their rights under the General Data Protection Regulation;
- Field work (start - March 31, 2022, end - March 31, 2023).

• Publication and dissemination of Census 2021 data

A calendar for the publication of Census data and a list of standard statistical indicators were developed. The first Census results were published on 3 October 2022.

Demographic statistics

In the field of demographic statistics all statistical surveys included in the NSP were conducted according to schedule. The regular processing and production of data on birth, mortality, migration, marriages and divorces surveys provided the necessary information to calculate the number and structures of the population and the main demographic indicators, in accordance with the requirements of Regulation № 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European demographic statistics.

The data for the reference year 2021 was published and submitted to the EC in accordance with the deadlines set.

The work on the preparation and provision of data pursuant to Art. 5, 6 and 7 of Regulation № 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on “Statistics on permanent residence permits and permanent resident citizens from third countries” and “Data on returns” sourced by the Ministry of Interior continued.

The NSI continued to provide data to Eurostat under Article 4 for statistics on international protection, sourced by the SAR. From March 2022, in implementation of Council Directive 2001/55/EC on minimum standards for granting temporary protection, the NSI started to provide monthly data on persons granted temporary protection in the first instance and persons with temporary protection status, sourced by the SAR.

Concerning the spread of COVID-19 and the need for timely data on the mortality in the country, the NSI continued to publish the weekly data on mortality on the NSI’s website and quarterly press release on the total mortality as well as to provide weekly data on deaths to the EC.

In the field of population and demographic processes, the NSI prepared and provided data on questionnaires of the ILO, the World Health Organization, as well as on joint questionnaires of Eurostat and the UN.

In 2022, the project “Development of the Information System Demography by migrating the platform and adding new functionalities” was completed.

Labour market

In 2022, the implementation of the additional module to the Labour Force Survey - “Job skills” began, as well as the preparation for preparing for the implementation in 2023 of the additional eight-yearly variables on “Pensions and labour market participation”. The NSI completed activities for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households.

The NSI finished work on EC project “Labour Force survey - additional module 2021 Labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants”.

In the field of statistical information provided by enterprises on wages and labour costs the work on the regular annual and short-term surveys of employment and labour costs continued, as well as the regular receipt of information from the administrative register of insured persons by the NSSI, which contributes to improve the quality and completeness of the statistics on employees and average wage.

In its capacity as a Body of Statistics, **the National Employment Agency** as an institution - the main contractor of the state employment policy - collects, processes and disseminates data on the participants and the results of the implementation of measures laid down in it. The implementation of statistical activities in 2022 was based on the collection of register data

through two IS available to NEA - National database for labour market and ESF and Register of international labour migration and work permits of foreigners, as well as two national representative surveys on employers' attitudes in the country towards hiring a workforce with certain skills.

In 2022, the NEA successfully carried out the following activities:

- Participation in data provision for the preparation of Eurostat's project ESSPROS Unemployment benefits recipients. Annual data for 2021 on unemployed persons - recipients of periodic cash benefits on training, as well as benefits in kind related to increasing their professional qualifications or key competences, was provided to NSI in mid-June 2022;
- Participation of the NEA's experts in the WG on pilot data collection for unemployment benefits recipients. In 2022, a secure VPN channel was built for exchange of individual data between the NEA and the NSI;
- Preparation and provision of data on seasonal workers from third countries to NSI according to Regulation № 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on migration and international protection;
- Preparation and provision to MLSP (as contact point) of a set of 48 statistical reports on participants and paid out funds for labour market policies in 2021. The data are part of the Labour market policy (LMP) Database of the EC according to the Eurostat methodology and are in the process of validation by the Commission;
- Conducting two national representative surveys on employers' attitudes towards hiring a workforce with certain skills. The first wave was conducted in the period February - March, and the second - in September - October 2022. The results in the form of univariate and bivariate distributions by districts, economic activities and enterprise size were published on [the NEA's site](#) (in Bulgarian only);
- Regular weekly exchange of register aggregated data on newly registered unemployed persons and unemployed persons who have started work by districts;
- Submission of periodic reports on the number of received, approved and paid out employers' applications for compensation of workers and employees for whom a suspension of activity or reduced working hours has been implemented in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Following up and preparation of statistical reports on Ukrainian citizens registered in the labour offices and those who have started work with the status of temporary protection in connection with the increased wave of refugees from the war in Ukraine and the need for rapid labour integration of Ukrainian citizens who have sought protection. The data was also provided to NSI in order to supplement data provided in the survey Migration of Ukrainian refugees by Eurostat.

Education and lifelong learning

The regular surveys on tertiary education, Ph.D. students and vocational training in vocational training centers (VTC) were conducted according to deadlines set. In 2022, the surveys on pre-primary, basic and secondary education were carried out entirely on the basis of administrative registers of the Ministry of Education and Science. In accordance with the requirements of national and European legislation under Commission Regulation (EU) № 912/2013 on the production and development of statistics in the field of education and lifelong learning, data on financial and non-financial indicators in the field of education statistics was provided on joint questionnaires of Eurostat, OECD and UNESCO.

In 2022, the sixth wave of the continuing vocational training of employees survey (CVTS6) was successfully completed. The survey shall be carried out every four years in all EU Member states in order to obtain comparable statistical information on continuing vocational training in

enterprises. The main results were published on the NSI's website as mathematical-statistical methods were applied in order to estimate the missing data. Microdata arrays were provided and accepted by Eurostat.

In 2022 the household sample survey Adult Education Survey (AES2022) was carried out. The survey shall be carried out every six years in all EU Member States on a unified methodology. It is the main source of information on the situation and trends in lifelong learning, characteristics of education and training, educational experience, educational outcomes, barriers to participation. In order to improve data quality and to comply with the legal provisions governing the survey at the European level, the NSI switched to a new data collection method - from paper questionnaire to electronic survey application (CAWI method).

During the year, in relation to the need of the Ministry of Youth and Sports for adequate, timely and accurate statistical information for planning policies, the NSI conducted a one-time survey on the availability of gyms and suitable indoor sports facilities in kindergartens and schools.

Culture

All regular surveys in the field of culture (surveys on museums, performing arts, radio- and television programme activity, publishing activity) were carried out according to the announced deadlines and methodology based on the recommendations of UNESCO and Eurostat.

In 2022, the NSI prepared to conduct the survey on activity of community clubs. The survey shall be carried out every five years and provides data on the cultural and educational activities of the community clubs.

During the past year, specific UNESCO's questionnaires in the field of culture were completed.

Public health and healthy and safe working conditions

According to Regulation (EC) № 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics in the field of public health and healthy and safe working conditions, the NSI carried out regular statistical surveys qualitatively and on time providing information in the various fields of public health statistics.

In accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) № 328/2011, the individual data for 2020 on deaths and stillbirths for reasons at the level of the fourth sign of the International Classification of Diseases, X revision, was submitted and validated to European Commission. The NSI established the necessary organization to implement new classification codes in order to report deaths from COVID-19, as well as additional validation rules.

Data from joint questionnaires of Eurostat, OECD and World Health Organization on financial and non-financial indicators in the field of health statistics was provided. Within the survey System of health accounts, the NSI prepared data on health expenditure related to COVID-19.

In connection with the spread of COVID-19 this year, the increased demand for statistical information in the field of health statistics by government institutions, non-governmental organizations, research teams and citizens has remained. For this purpose, data and methodological explanations were prepared in time for all requests from users received by the NSI.

National Health Data and eHealth Directorate at the National Center for Public Health and Analysis at the Ministry of Health performed all statistical surveys and activities included in the NSP. As a body of statistics, it conducted the planned surveys on time and disseminated information on the main statistical indicators. The NCPH established necessary organization and provided information on the indicators included in the Regulation implementing Regulation (EC) 1338/2008 regarding statistics on non-financial indicators in the field of health statistics.

In implementation of the NSP 2022 under the survey "Accidents at work", **the National Social Security Institute** provided information on accidents at work registered in 2020. The data was

processed according to the methodology defined by the Statistical System “Accidents at work”, which includes all classifications and variables necessary to characterize the accidents at work. The methodology fully complies with the national legislation and ensures the application of the European statistics on accidents at work. An electronic information publication “Accidents at work - number, distribution and indicators 2020” by the National Social Security Institute was developed. The publication contains: data on the number, distribution and indicators on accidents at work for 2020; comparative tables on the number and indicators on accidents at work registered in 2018, 2019 and 2020; comparison with data for previous years, showing the trends of occupational injuries in the country. The data was published on the NSSI’s website under the section “Statistics”. The requirements of Commission Regulation (EU) 349/2011 of 11 April 2011 implementing Regulation (EC) № 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics in the field of public health and healthy and safe working conditions were met in relation to statistical data on accidents at work. Statistical information on accidents at work registered in 2020 was sent directly to Eurostat through the single entry point for exchange of statistical data e-Damis, which guarantees secure exchange and protection of data. An information on the scope and the number of insured persons for accidents at work, distributed by economic activities of the Classification of economic activities (NACE.BG-2008) was sent. The NSSI also submitted to Eurostat metadata on accidents at work through web application “ESS-Metadata Handler”. The statistical information on accidents at work for the period 2016 - 2020 was also sent to the International Labour Organization through NSI.

In implementation of the NSP 2022 under the survey “Occupational diseases”, the NSSI processed the information on the new cases of occupational diseases registered in 2020. Based on the data on cause of death provided by IS “Demography” of the NSI, the cases in which the person died in 2020 due to a recognized occupational disease in the past were also registered. The data was processed according to the methodology defined by the Statistical System “Occupational diseases”, which includes all the classifications and variables necessary to characterize the occupational disease. The methodology fully complies with national legislation and ensures the implementation of the Guide for the collection and provision of data on European statistics on occupational diseases (document version 14 of June 2022, Eurostat). The data was published on the NSSI’s website under the section “Statistics”. Data and metadata on occupational diseases were submitted directly to Eurostat electronically (e-Damis).

Incomes and living conditions

In 2022, the Household Budget Survey, which assesses household income, expenditure and consumption, was conducted according to the deadlines set in the National Statistical Programme.

In 2022, the NSI started work on the project “Income and Living Conditions (ILC) - Statistical Infrastructure under IESS - SILC 2022, module - Collection of annual data for 2021 and 2022”, implemented under a Grant agreement with the EC. A pilot data collection through a supplementary questionnaire on social inclusion, living conditions and well-being to the Household Budget Survey is part of project activities. The additional inquiry is an initiative of Eurostat and is conducted according to a uniform methodology within the European survey Infra-annual data collection on living conditions. The aim is to carry out quarterly monitoring of changes in the living conditions of households in the country as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide up-to-date information for harmonized European comparisons. The results of conducted surveys for the quarters of 2022 were published on the NSI’s website.

In 2022, the activities of project “Innovative tools and sources for diary-based surveys - Household Budget Survey - test and maintain” funded by the EC ended. Within the project, the documents for applications developed by the other (European) countries were studied, as well as the selection of a test web application and the analysis of the necessary actions to maintain the functional and technical specifications of the selected application. The necessary documents and

annexes were translated and adapted to the national Household Budget Survey, as new modules to the annex were developed. An application test documentation and system user guide were elaborated. After conducting tests and discussing the results, it was found that this platform is not applicable for the needs of the Household Budget Survey in the country. The team of experts involved in the project committed to creating a new platform in order to enter and to process survey data that uses a vocabulary of possible cost options, adhering to the nomenclature of the survey applied at the national level.

In 2022, the survey “Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC)” was carried out under the new Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples. In addition to the standard target variables, the survey included additional variables on government financial assistance from schemes related to the COVID-19 crisis in 2021. The variables of the 2022 Health module, aimed at collecting additional information on the financial burden related to the cost of medical and dental services, frequency of visits and consultations with a doctor and specialist, performing physical activities at work and outside of work, calculation of body mass index, were also included. A question was added for assessment of direct or indirect impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the respondents’ mental health. Register 2 included also questions from module 2022 related to children's health, remote learning at school due to COVID-19 and questions from the ad-hoc module Quality of life on well-being and involvement in social and cultural life.

The fieldwork was carried out between April and June 2022. The processing and analysis of the survey information were carried out according to the deadlines set in the NSP. Preliminary data with survey results was submitted to Eurostat in December 2022, in accordance with the new requirements on information timeliness.

In order to improve the scope and quality of income statistics in 2022, the use of NSSI’s data on the amount of pensions received, pension supplements and additional benefits and allowances by type and month from the Pension Register, as well as annual data on persons receiving benefits and allowances under the Social Insurance Code (Register of benefits). To supplement the missing information on income and to validate the data in the survey “Statistics on income and living conditions” data on insured persons was used from the NSSI, from the Social Assistance Agency - for persons receiving benefits, and from the NRA - for persons submitted an annual tax return.

Social protection

Pursuant to Regulation № 458/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European system of integrated social protection statistics in 2022, the completion of statistical data for 2020 under core system and module on pension beneficiaries ended. The core system contains data on revenues and expenditures by social protection schemes and by functions. The requirements of Commission Regulation № 110/2011 regarding the appropriate data transmission formats, the results, which shall to be transmitted and the quality measurement criteria for the ESSPROS module on net social protection benefits have been met. The source of data on social protection statistics are the information systems and registers of ministries and departments managing social protection schemes. The NSSI provided annual data on revenues and expenditures under schemes 01 to 06 (ESSPROS core system), as well as data on the number of pension beneficiaries divided by schemes, by type of pension and by sex, in accordance with the form for providing information on module on pension beneficiaries.

In September, early estimates were prepared and sent to Eurostat for the social protection expenditures incurred in the country by ESSPROS functions relevant for 2021. The submission of early estimates under the core system is a pilot submission and is not the subject of implementation of a specific Regulation - the estimates are sent voluntarily by the countries willing to participate.

In 2022, the activities of the project “European Integrated System of Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS) - Unemployment benefits recipients” were carried out under a Grant agreement with the EC. The main objective of the project is to build capacity for the preparation of statistical data on the benefits recipients and unemployment benefits in Bulgaria within the European System for Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS) according to the methodology proposed by Eurostat for the voluntary collection of this type of data. The available data from the register of unemployment benefits recipients to the NSSI and the register of persons registered in the Labour Offices to the NEA was processed together with experts from NSSI and NEA.

As a result of the activities carried out, data was sent on the number of periodical cash unemployment benefits recipients in Bulgaria, including unemployment benefits under Art. 54a, para. 1 of the Social Insurance Code and under Art. 230 and 231 of the Law on Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as scholarships, transport and accommodation expenses paid to unemployed persons participating in training for literacy, acquisition of professional qualification or key competences (for the duration of the training).

In accordance with the requirement to eliminate double counting of recipients of benefits/assistance falling under the unemployment function, the NSSI made vertical aggregation of data on unemployment benefits recipients and of data on “occupational allowance” recipients for the same reference period. The first type of data (unemployment benefits recipients) was administrated by NSSI, the second type of data (“occupational allowance” recipients) was administrated by NEA. The questionnaire on qualitative information of module was completed and sent to NSI. The data was sent to Eurostat and covers 2019 and 2020, showing the total number of recipients of at least one of the listed benefits during the year on the one hand and the average monthly number of benefits received during the period of reference year in total, by sex and by age group.

Crime and Justice

In 2022, a focus of work in the field of crime and justice statistics was to improve the quality of statistical information at national and European level. In this regard, the NSI’s experts took part in a series of training workshops on the topic “Problems in integrating information between the Information systems of Courts, Prosecution, MI and GDEP”, organized by the “Unified Information System for Combating Crime” Department at the Administration to the Prosecutor General.

In order to increase the quality of information provided within European and international questionnaires, additional methodological work was carried out and thematic interdepartmental meetings were held with the stakeholders in connection with the data on indicators in implementation of the following European directives transposed into Bulgarian legislation: Directive 2011/36/EU, Directive 2013/40/EU and Directive 2002/90/European Community.

In fulfillment of its commitments as a national coordinator in the field of crime and criminal justice, the NSI provided statistical information on:

- the joint UN/Eurostat questionnaire, which includes data from all stages of the criminal process, illegal migration, crimes related to attacks against information systems and regional data on crimes registered by the police, according to the definitions of the International Classification of Crimes for statistical purposes developed by UN;
- data on human traffic, in accordance with the definitions of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on preventing and combating human traffic and protecting its victims.

In 2022, the NSI conducted on time and in high quality regular statistical surveys on crimes, accused and convicted persons and the activities of local commissions for combating anti-social behavior by minors and adolescents.

3.2. Macroeconomic statistics

Annual financial accounts and Quarterly accounts

In 2022 the NSI compiled: annual and quarterly data on GDP and its components by output method, income method and expenditure method; national financial accounts; data on employment and man-hours worked; regional accounts; quarterly accounts by institutional sector.

In the field of non-financial national accounts, a methodological revision of indicators for 2007, 2008 and for the period 2018 - 2020 was carried out. In 2022, work continued on the development and improvement of national financial accounts. Pursuant to the Eurostat programme for data provision in the field of national accounts, data for 2021 was developed and submitted. The entire time series of data for the period 2006 - 2020 was revised.

In accordance with the Calendar presenting the results of the statistical surveys carried out by the National Statistical Institute in 2022, data and press releases on GDP and its components were prepared and published on the NSI's website and in IS "Infostat".

The NSI's experts participated in the preparation and coordination of positions in the field of statistics within the Interdepartmental ad-hoc working group for the development of positions for the meetings of the ECOFIN Council, the Economic and Financial Committee and the Economic Policy Committee, whose secretariat is at the MF.

Government Finance Statistics

Efforts in the field of Government Finance Statistics were focused on further methodological development and improving the quality of data.

The work on reporting the deficit and debt notification tables of the institutional sector "General Government" twice a year continued - preliminary and final data. According to the ESA 2010, data for 2021 as well as revised data for the period 2017 - 2021 have been provided.

Work continued on the development and publication of monthly, quarterly and annual data on the deficit of the EU Member States, based on the obligations under EU Directive 85/2011.

In accordance with the requirements for the provision of additional data on the basis of EU Directive 85/2011, the work on providing information on an annual basis on non-performing loans to the "General Government" sector continued; for the liabilities of public corporations and the participation of government in the capital of corporations as a percentage of GDP.

According to the Eurostat Programme for data provision in the field of government finance statistics, data was developed and provided according to ESA 2010:

- Table 2. Main macroeconomic indicators for the institutional sector "General government" for 2021, revised data for 2007 and 2008, as well as for the period 2017 - 2020;
- Table 9. Taxes and social contribution by type of taxes and by subsectors of "General government" for 2021, as well as revised data for 2007, 2008 and 2020;
- Table 25. Quarterly non-financial accounts of the institutional sector "General government" for 2021, revised data for 2007 and 2008, as well as for the period 2017 - 2020.

In accordance with the Calendar presenting the results of the statistical surveys carried out by the National Statistical Institute in 2022 data and press releases on the deficit and debt of the institutional sector "General Government" were prepared and published on the NSI's website.

Monitoring Own Resources

In 2022, a correction of data on GNI was made based on introduced EC reserves, routine revisions of input information for 2020 and methodological changes for the period 2018 - 2020. The NSI continued to develop data on the weighted average VAT rate.

In connection with the implementation of the own resources system (Decision of the Council of Ministers № 229 of 18.03.2021 determining responsible institutions in the Republic of Bulgaria for the implementation of the European Union's own resources system) as well as in fulfillment of the country's obligations under the implementation of the European Union's own resources system, the NSI provided data on the amount of plastic packaging placed on the market at the national level.

Consumer Prices

The main priority in the work was the conduction of monthly statistical surveys of consumer prices, which provided the necessary information for the calculation of consumer price indices and inflation. In 2022, the ICP weights were produced according to Eurostat's methodological recommendations on the construction of HICP weights in case of large changes in consumer expenditure.

The work on improving the methodology, construction and production of consumer price indices in connection with the harmonization with the European and international standards continued. In 2022, the sample of outlets was updated, the selection of goods and services included in the consumer basket was improved. The scope of some sub-indices was expanded, the system of statistical weights has been improved through the expanded use of information from additional sources.

In the field of consumer prices, the inventory of the sources and methods for production of the HICP, housing price indices and indicators on house sales, as well as the report on sources and methods used to collect information necessary for the calculation of purchasing power parities, were updated and sent to Eurostat.

In the field of housing statistics work continued on incorporating methodological improvements, optimizing data collection and production processes, and introducing new data sources. The sample quarterly statistical surveys used for production of housing price indices were discontinued at the end of 2021, and from 2022 the NSI switched to use a comprehensive administrative source - PR to the RA, supplemented with information from KAIS (Cadastral-Administrative Information System). The combined use of two administrative sources improved the quality and scope of the data and increased the reliability of the information collected.

From the beginning of 2022, the quarterly survey on brokers' and real estate agencies' brokerage fees for purchases and sales of residential real estate of households was improved. The successful implementation of these changes allowed from the beginning of 2022 to start publishing quarterly housing price indices occupied by their owners and additional indicators on house sales - number and value of sales.

The NSI continued its participation in the European Comparison Programme on PPPs, which is part of the current EC programme on statistics and is coordinated by Eurostat/OECD, as it achieved the goals set in the European work plan for calculation of PPPs. In 2022, the NSI conducted the planned five price surveys, two of which were on goods and services on harmonized European consumer baskets for the groups: E22-1 House and garden and E22-2 Transport, restaurants, hotels. Three specialized price surveys were conducted: "Health services in hospitals"; for housing rents in selected real estate agencies in the capital; for selected conditional construction sites. Additional national statistical information was prepared and sent to Eurostat in a timely manner.

In the field of consumer price, housing price and PPPs statistics in 2022, the NSI's experts actively participated in the work of the Eurostat WG on Price Statistics, Real Estate Statistics and Purchasing Power Parities, as well as in Eurostat video conferences on "Commercial Real Estate Statistics", "Commercial Real Estate Indicators" and "Harmonized Indices of Consumer Prices".

3.3. Business Statistics

Annual Business Statistics

All activities for conducting regular annual surveys and data production in the field of SBS, statistics of foreign affiliates (FATS), foreign direct investments, expenditure on acquisition of tangible fixed assets, statistics of financial and non-financial enterprises and annual specific surveys on economic activities, as well as monthly and annual survey on output and sales of industrial products (PRODCOM) were performed with high quality and on time.

In 2022, the NSI made an annual update of IS “Business Statistics” in relation to the requirements of European regulations in the field of business statistics and changes at the national level. Data on the newly created pension funds for making payments in 2021 and detailed data on local units (different addresses of business operations) were collected by using additional administrative sources.

The NSI prepared and submitted to Eurostat preliminary data for 2021 in the field of business statistics at national level on the activity of enterprises in implementation of the requirements of Regulation (EU) № 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on European business statistics and repealing 10 legal acts in the field of business statistics and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1197 of 30 July 2020 laying down technical specifications and arrangements pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2019/2152, as the scope of economic activities was expanded by including all market-oriented activities from sectors P, Q, R, groups 64.2, 64.3, 64.9 and sections 66 and 96 of the Classification of economic activities (NACE.BG-2008), for which data should be provided to Eurostat.

In 2022, in the field of annual PRODCOM survey, based on the updated questionnaires, changes in the methodology and in the information technology system for collecting and validating the input PRODCOM data, the necessary reliable and internationally comparable statistical information was provided, according to the new requirements of the Regulation (EU) № 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Preliminary annual PRODCOM data for 2021 at the levels of detail and technical format has been provided to Eurostat.

For data users in the field of PRODCOM statistics new statistical information was provided on the NSI’s website on the tollers’ production by product aggregates of CPA under the protection of statistical confidentiality.

In the field of monthly PRODCOM survey, the NSI continued work on improving the scope, accuracy and quality of primary statistical information collected through the IS “Business Cycles”.

In 2022, the NSI provided data for completing questionnaires to the OECD, to other international organizations, for national statistical publications, under concluded contracts, agreements and requests for statistical information in the specified areas.

The NSI’s experts took part in coordination procedures, consultations and online meetings organized by Eurostat in the following areas:

- Structural Business statistics;
- Statistics of foreign affiliates (FATS);
- Statistics on output and sales of industrial products (PRODCOM);
- Revision of Classification of economic activities (NACE Rev. 2).

The NSI continued to participate and to provide assistance in the activities of the Monitoring committee of OP “Innovation and Competitiveness” 2014 - 2020 and OP “Initiative for Small and Medium Enterprises” 2014 - 2020, as well as in the thematic working group on the development of the Programme for competitiveness and innovation in enterprises for the

programming period 2021 - 2027.

In 2022, the NSI finished work on the project “Global value chains - International Sourcing Survey” in the implementation of a Grant agreement with the EC in accordance with the revised methodology and tools of the module, which is included as a mandatory three-year survey in Regulation (EU) № 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Project data were processed and provided to Eurostat at the end of March 2022. A final methodological report on the project was also prepared and sent to Eurostat at the end of May 2022.

Short-term Business Statistics

In 2022 all regular NSP surveys (sales in industry, construction, trade and services; activities of non-financial enterprises; producer prices in industry and services; producer prices for major repairs and improvements of dwellings and residential buildings; expenditure on acquisition of tangible fixed assets; permitted and started new construction of buildings) were carried out with high quality and on time, in accordance with national and European legislation. All short-term indicators were calculated in accordance with the requirements of the STS regulations, as the same were published at national level and provided to Eurostat.

According to the Calendar presenting the results of the statistical surveys carried out by the National Statistical Institute in 2022 data on construction cost indices were prepared and published in Bulgarian and English in IS “Infostat”.

In 2022, the work on evaluation, improvement of the methodology, improvement of STS data quality and maintenance of comparability of time series continued. The samples were updated to ensure better representation and to reflect changes in the structure of non-financial enterprises. The metadata for all indicators on the Eurostat’s and on the NSI’s website were updated.

For another year, the NSI received from the NRA within the agreed deadlines monthly information on the submitted VAT returns, used to improve the quality and completeness of short-term statistical indicators in the field of trade and services. From 2022, the NSI started calculating the turnover and production indices for the section “Hotel industry” from data by the NRA.

The NSI continued work on adapting the national statistical production system to the requirements of the new Framework Regulation on the Integration of Business Statistics (FRIBS) in the field of STS. The production of a general index of turnover and output in services has begun. Files with a new structure were prepared and tested for sending to Eurostat.

In 2022, the NSI’s experts participated in the following activities:

- Online meeting on metadata requirements for 2021 organized by Eurostat;
- Online meeting on data requirements sent to Eurostat;
- Online meeting of a Working group on short-term business statistics, at which Bulgaria presented a presentation on trade deflators;
- Online meeting for experts on statistical data processing organized by the United Nations;
- Online meeting “Achievements in analysis of business production networks”;
- Online conference on “The Use of R in Official Business Statistics”;
- Participation in a workshop on “Statistical methods and tools for time series, seasonal adjustment and control over disclosure of statistical data”.

In 2022, the participation of the NSI’s experts in a working group, part of the Time Series Analysis Center of Excellence, continued.

Energy Statistics

All activities for conducting regular monthly, semi-annual and annual surveys and data production in the field of energy statistics were performed with high quality and on time.

In 2022, the experts in the field of energy statistics took part in coordination procedures and consultations under Council Regulation (EU) 2022/1369 of 5 August 2022 on coordinated demand-reduction measures for gas in order to reduce natural gas consumption in the period 1 August 2022 - 31 March 2023 with at least 15%. The NSI participated in the first mandatory early reporting (on October 15, 2022) for reporting periods August and September 2022. The NSI's experts participated in the revision of Energy performance of buildings Directive; revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive, in the preparation of a draft Regulation establishing a Social Climate Fund, of the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030, of the National Report on the State and Protection of the Environment in the Republic of Bulgaria and in the self-assessment with the legal instruments for alignment of the national legislation in connection with the preparation of an initial memorandum of Bulgaria for negotiations on the accession to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

In 2022 a meeting with SEDA's experts was held on the future reporting of solar PV production data by sector, consumption of solar PV energy from their production and energy consumption by data centers. The tools in the field of energy statistics in accordance with the sixth amendment of the Regulation on the statistics of the energy sector - Commission Regulation (EU) 2022/132 of 28 January 2022 was updated.

In order to reduce the respondents' burden, the interaction with the institutions for the use of administrative data for the needs of statistical information production on energy continued.

In 2022 in connection with the future monitoring of the Energy Union and the European Green Deal the NSI successfully completed the project "Energy statistics: support to the Energy Union and further disaggregation of final energy consumption" in its part on package № 1 "Disaggregation of the final energy consumption in transport". The main result of the activity is a set of disaggregated national data on final energy consumption in transport for 2019 and 2020, incl. data on passenger/freight transport, in the EU and outside the EU and by mode of vehicle. During the year the NSI started work on package № 2 "Further disaggregation of data on solid biofuels".

In the field of energy statistics, in 2022 the NSI's employees participated in work of the Eurostat WG "Energy Statistics" and the interdepartmental WG 14 "Energy".

Transport Statistics

In the field of transport statistics, the main priority in 2022 was to conduct all annual and short-term surveys included in the NSP. These were implemented with high quality and on time, in accordance with national and European legislation.

The collection, processing and transmission of rail transport data to Eurostat continued pursuant to the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2016/2032 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) № 91/2003 on rail transport statistics on data collection for cargo and passengers.

In the field of transport statistics, the NSI with the assistance of the statistical bodies **Directorate General "Civil Aviation Administration"** and the **Executive Agency "Maritime Administration"** at the Ministry of Transport and Communications conducted surveys in the field of air transport and activities of inland waterway and maritime ports. The beneficial cooperation between the NSI and the two agencies has led to increasing the quality of the received data through more detailed verification.

During the year the EAMA continued the work on the regular preparation and provision of statistical information on the activities of inland waterway and maritime ports. The collection and provision of statistics were carried out within the deadlines in accordance with the specific

nomenclatures and reporting forms provided for in Regulation (EU) № 974/2018 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2018 on statistics of goods transport by inland waterways and Directive 2009/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 May 2009 on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods and passengers by sea, and Commission Regulation (EC) № 1304/2007 of 7 November 2007 amending Council Directive 95/64/EC, Council Regulation (EC) № 1172/98, Regulations (EC) № 91/2003 and (EC) № 1365/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council with respect to the establishment of NST 2007 as the unique classification for transported goods in certain transport modes.

The information submitted by the ports and port terminals covers 100% of the activity of the maritime and inland waterway ports of the Republic of Bulgaria, related to cargo and passengers handling.

During the reporting year, the cooperation between the National Institute of Statistics of Romania and the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria continued in connection with the regular exchange of statistical information on transit transport of goods on inland waterways, used in statistical data production, provided to Eurostat.

The NSI continued to provide assistance to the Managing authority of OP “Transport and Transport Infrastructure” 2014 - 2020 on the provision of information on indicators for OPTTI results within the competence of the NSI, in accordance with the preliminary general condition 7 “Statistical Systems” of the Partnership Agreement. The NSI also took part in the WG for the preparation of OP “Transport Connectivity” 2021 - 2027.

Tourism Statistics

In 2022 the tasks of the NSI related to the organization and the conduction of statistical surveys providing regular statistical information on the development of tourism in the country regarding the travel of Bulgarians abroad and visits of foreigners to Bulgaria, the activities of accommodation, tourist trips and expenditures for tourism of the population and satellite accounts for tourism were implemented on time. All statistical surveys in the field of tourism were carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the World Tourism Organization and in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) № 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European tourism statistics, Commission Regulation (EU) № 1051/2011 implementing Regulation (EU) № 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European tourism statistics as regards the structure of quality reports and data transmission and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/1681 amending Regulation (EU) № 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European tourism statistics.

Until the end of March, the NSI continued to conduct a monthly “Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on business”, through which an information was collected on the state and the development of accommodation during the epidemic situation in the country. The data obtained from the specially organized surveys were presented in graphs and press releases.

The NSI’s experts took part in an online Eurostat’s workshop on tourism statistics and an online webinar “Validation of short-term accommodation data offered through online platforms”.

The NSI continued its participation in voluntary data reporting in connection with Eurostat’s initiative to collect additional data on nights spent in accommodation by Bulgarians and foreigners by country of citizenship by months. The aim of the initiative is to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on tourism, as well as the resumption of tourist travel by sharing “mirror” information on tourist flows between European countries. Data were collected and provided to Eurostat in accordance with Annex II to Regulation (EU) № 692/2011.

In 2022, the NSI continued and successfully finished work under Contract between the NSI and the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia within the IPA 2017 Multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme. In continuation of the project work in the field of

tourism statistics, five expert missions were carried out in the city of Skopje. The main goal of the expert missions was to support the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia through methodological and technical assistance in the development of main tables on tourism satellite accounts. The NSI assessed the available data sources for the compilation of tourism satellite accounts and studied their quality, after which procedures for their compilation were developed and the main pilot tables were prepared. As a result of the project, a “Guide for the development of tourism satellite accounts in the Republic of North Macedonia” and a Roadmap with recommendations for the future development of this field were presented to the State Statistical Office.

Business Register

In 2022, the Business Register continued to carry out the activities of maintaining and updating the Register of Statistical Units as the main source for creating frameworks for statistical surveys in the NSI, as well as in terms of compilation of consistent and comparable business statistics.

The main priority in 2022 for the Business Register was aimed at implementing the vision of the European Statistical System regarding the European System of Interoperable Statistical Business Registers, in implementation of Regulation (EU) № 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

During the year, the Business Register continued work on the development of a new Information system - IS “Statistical Business Register” as an integration with IS “Business Statistics” was developed in order to obtain annual statistical data from it.

In the past year, the NSI implemented integrations of the Information system of RSU with IS “Foreign Trade” and IS “Business Cycles” in order to obtain statistical data.

In order to maintain statistical units and their characteristics, the Business Register received daily data from the administrative sources Trade Register and Register of NPLE (non-profit legal entities) and Bulstat Register, and annually - monthly data on the number of insured persons from the Register of Insured Persons by the NSSI.

The register of statistical units continued to provide a full range of active statistical units “enterprises”, “local units” and “groups of enterprises”, as well as to record data on significant “units by the type of activity” and to provide conditions for sampling by definition criteria for monthly and quarterly statistical surveys.

The register of statistical units is used as the main source of information for the preparation of business demography of enterprises, which describes the life cycle of enterprises and presents data on the number of active enterprises, the number of newly born enterprises, the enterprise survival rates, the number of dead enterprises, as well as data on the change of their employment as of a certain moment.

The scope of RSU in relation to the different types of units - legal and statistical and due mandatory characteristics was studied. The NSI submitted completed questionnaires to Eurostat on the quality, metadata and development of RSU and questionnaires on metadata of business demography of enterprises and on registrations and bankruptcies.

The NSI’s employees participated in online meetings, written consultations and activities with experts from EU Member states related to economically significant cases and European profiling organized by Eurostat.

The NSI’s experts took part in Eurostat’s activities on profiling of multinational groups of enterprises as a profiler and partner country.

In 2022, the NSI participated in the following Eurostat working groups:

- “Business Demography” Working Group;

- “Business Registers and Statistical Units” Working Group;
- “Economically significant cases” Working group;
- “European profiling” Working group.

In 2022 the NSI continued to work on project “Regional business demography - Processing of regional annual data reflecting demographic events for enterprises” in implementation of a Grant Agreement with the European Commission.

Statistics on foreign trade in goods

In 2022, the main priority areas in the field of statistics on foreign trade in goods were: expanded use of administrative sources of information; providing timely and reliable statistical information and improving of data quality; adapting the national system for the production and dissemination of statistics on foreign trade in goods in accordance with the changed requirements of European legislation and users’ needs of foreign trade data; participation in the Eurostat’s work on the discussion of strategic issues concerning the future development of statistics on international trade in goods.

The NSI’s experts worked on the implementation of activities under the project “Development of the Information system “Foreign Trade” in order to add new functionalities and migration of the platform”.

The NSI took measures to make more complete use of the data collected by the **Customs Agency** from customs declarations. The NSI’s employees continued to use the simplified customs declarations issued in other countries received at the Customs Agency under the Uniform Permit for Simplified Procedures.

In 2022, the NSI continued to work on improving the quality of primary data declared by traders. The NSI’s experts made both direct contacts with the Intrastat operators and contacts with the National Revenue Agency. As a result some inaccuracies in submitted Intrastat declarations were corrected. Methodological assistance was also provided to the respondents in declaring data in specific cases, which contributed to facilitating the business in fulfilling its monthly obligations to submit Intrastat declarations.

In fulfilment of its obligations, the NSI determined the thresholds for declaration and the thresholds for statistical value under the Intrastat system for 2023, as well as the types of data - subject of declaration.

In order to facilitate the users of statistical information when publishing the new monthly data, the NSI continued to prepare and publish two press releases per month - on trade with third countries and on trade within the EU. The maintenance of the means for storage and dissemination of data on statistics on foreign trade in goods continued through the IS “Foreign Trade”, which gives to users direct access to more detailed data than those published in press releases.

In response to the emerging users’ needs in 2022, the NSI submitted to Eurostat additional data on business characteristics of enterprises, developed through wider and more efficient use of available data without increasing the respondents’ burden. Numerous responses to inquiries from various types of users of data on imports and exports of goods were also prepared. The obligations to the main users of data on foreign trade in goods - BNB, MEI, MA, Eurostat, UN and IMF on the production and provision of monthly detailed data and their updates - were implemented in a timely manner.

In 2022, the NSI’s experts contributed to the overall innovation activity in the field of statistics on foreign trade in goods at European level through their participation in Eurostat’s steering, target and working groups. One of the key directions in joint work of the NSI, the NRA and the CA was the active participation in integration of the provisions on trade with third countries and

the EU in the acts implementing the new Regulation on European business statistics. The experts from three institutions participated in preparing the answers to a number of Eurostat's questionnaires and written consultations.

The NSI's experts actively participated in the Eurostat's joint meetings of the Task Force on microdata exchange of statistics on foreign trade in goods and the Task Force on information technology at ESS.VIP, which ensure reliability and security of the future microdata exchange for dispatches between Member states.

In 2022 the NSI actively worked on project "Quality improvement of intra-EU trade data in the context of the micro-data exchange", aimed at reducing asymmetries in data collected.

The National Revenue Agency continued its efforts to improve the quality of data declared by Intrastat operators. The "Intrastat" Directorate controls the quality and reliability of the information collected on intra-Community trade in goods. In this regard, it continued its activity on comparisons of the declared data on the Intrastat system with the data available in other administrative sources: VAT Act and VIES. In order to improve the quality of collected data, the NRA deepened and expanded the activities for comparing the Intrastat data with the data available in the IS "Fiscal Control". Analyses and comparisons were made on a monthly basis on the main risk branches of goods with the data from the FC system.

The "Intrastat" Directorate maintains and updates the register of taxpayers under the Intrastat system on the basis of the declared VAT data. The employees of the "Intrastat" Directorate continued to work on improvement and development of the Information System Intrastat, which has a wide range of users: Intrastat operators and employees of the National Revenue Agency.

The number of registered Intrastat operators in 2022 reached 11 thousand persons, of which 7 thousand for intra-Union import and 4 thousand for intra-Union export.

3.4. Statistics on agriculture, forestry and fisheries

In 2022, the experts of the NSI and the **"Agrostatistics" Department - the Body of Statistics to the Ministry of agriculture**, took part in the discussions on the development of new and updating of existing legislation in the field of statistics on agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

The experts from both institutions participated actively in the preparation of statements and in the discussion of the legislation on the second framework Regulation in the field of statistics on agriculture - Regulation on statistics on agricultural input and output during the mandate of the French and Czech Presidencies.

After lengthy discussions in the WG "Statistics" of the Council, the new Regulation (EU) 2022/590 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards regional economic accounts for agriculture was adopted, the implementation of which is the responsibility of the NSI.

In 2022, the NSI's experts participated within the WG "Statistics" of the Council and in discussions on the draft regulation amending Regulation (EU) № 691/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European environmental economic accounts, a module of which are the European forest accounts.

In June 2022 within the Eurostat's Directors General Group on Agricultural Statistics (DGAS), the NSI's experts participated in the preparation of statements on the draft Regulation on European statistics on fisheries and repealing Regulations (EC) № 1921/2006, (EC) № 762/2008, (EC) № 216/2009, (EC) № 217/2009 and (EC) № 218/2009, as well as on the proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) № 691/2011 of the European Parliament and Council on European environmental economic accounts within the Eurostat's group of Directors of sectoral and environmental statistics and accounts (DIMESA) in October 2022.

In connection with the adoption of secondary legislation resulting from the upcoming entry into force of the Regulation on statistics on agricultural input and output, within the Eurostat's WG

“Accounts and prices in agriculture”, in April and October 2022 the NSI’s experts participated in the exchange of statements on the draft implementing Regulation in the field of statistics on agricultural prices.

Experts from the "Agrostatistics" department participated in the exchange of opinions on the draft regulations for implementation in the field of plant breeding, animal breeding, statistics of nutrients and plant protection products.

The experts from the "Agrostatistics" department participated in the exchange of opinions on development of the draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No. 1217/2009 of the Council regarding the conversion of the Farm Accountancy Data Network into a Farm Sustainability Data Network. They also prepared opinions for the Community for Farm Accountancy Data Network, for the Agricultural Finance (AGRIFIN) working group and for the Special Committee on Agriculture.

The experts of the NSI and the “Agrostatistics” Department took part in the Peer review of the NSS on issues related to the interaction between the NSI and the other statistical authorities. In implementation of the Peer review methodology, the “Agrostatistics” Department presented a completed self-assessment questionnaire and extensive documentation on the application of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

In implementation of the activities of the National Statistical Programme 2022, the “Agrostatistics” Department conducted 19 statistical surveys in the field of statistics on crop production, livestock breeding, fruit and vegetable processing, land use and farm incomes.

In the field of crop statistics the surveys’ results on sown/planted and harvested areas, average yields and production of field crops, vegetables, vineyards and fruit species - harvest 2021 were published. The surveys’ results on wheat and barley yields - harvest 2022, as well as surveys results on the activities of enterprises processing fruits and vegetables for 2021 were also published.

In 2022 a regular survey on land cover and land use in Bulgaria was conducted (BANSIK 2020) in particular for the agricultural areas, including the main agricultural crops.

In the field of statistics on livestock breeding the results from conducted as of November 1, 2021 survey on the number of farm animals in Bulgaria were published as the preparation for conducting the survey as of November 1, 2022 was completed. The surveys on poultry and beekeeping in Bulgaria in 2021 were carried out and the preparation for the survey on beekeeping in 2022 was carried out.

Information on the activities of slaughterhouses, dairies and hatcheries was collected on a monthly (for 2022) and annual basis.

In 2022, the activities on the census of agricultural holdings in Bulgaria, carried out in implementation of Regulation (EU) 2018/1091 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the Law on the census of agricultural holdings in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2020, were completed. The necessary reporting documents were prepared for Eurostat to complete the activities for conducting the census under Grant agreement No. 2019.0191. The data were validated by Eurostat and published on the Ministry of Agriculture website.

Through the Agricultural Accounting Information System an information was provided on farm incomes needed for management decision making at national level and for measuring the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on Bulgarian agriculture. During the year the individual farm data were validated by DG “Agriculture and Rural Development” at the European Commission for reporting year 2020. The data collection form was updated in its part for subsidies in implementation of Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/220. The individual farm data according to the selection plan reporting year 2021 were collected. For reporting year 2022 information is currently collected on farms not keeping accounts. The established information agricultural

accounting system for data entry, control, validation and result analysis at national and regional level was updated as a contract for out-of-warranty maintenance was concluded and it is in progress.

The activity implementation under the Eurostat Project Grant Agreement “Quality of the vineyard register - 2019_BG_QVR” continued. Together with the Executive Agency on Vine and Wine, the “Agrostatistics” Department implemented the activities for updating the vineyard register. The general goal of the project is to improve the quality of the vineyard register, which will lead to the fulfillment of the following specific goals: ensuring accessibility of the data in the register; improving the content of the vineyard register and its scope; improving the status of statistics on vineyards; facilitating data collection for the register and reducing the costs thereof; improving the quality of data management in the register. The activities for the preparation of terms of reference and documentation for conducting a public procurement for the development of an Information system for maintaining a new vineyard register have been completed. In September, a contract with the selected contractor for the public procurement was signed with the subject “Development and implementation of an Information system for servicing the activities of maintaining the vineyard register by EAVW”, as it is currently in the process of implementation.

In 2022 the section “Statistics” on the MA’s website continued to be updated. The Calendar presenting the results of the statistical surveys carried out by the National Statistical Institute by topics and dates, metadata and the methodologic notes on the agricultural surveys were also updated.

The “Agrostatistics” Department surveys’ results are published regularly in the specialized bulletins on the MA’s website, in the annual NSI’s editions - “Statistical yearbook”, “Statistical reference book”, in the electronic review of statistical information, in the spreadsheets of Eurostat and the Food and Agriculture Organization. The publication of information in an open format on the Open Data Portal continued.

In compliance with Bulgaria’s obligations arising from the legislation in force and agreements in the field of accounts and prices in agriculture and forestry in 2022, data were developed and sent to Eurostat:

- annual data on economic accounts for agriculture - second estimate of farm incomes for 2021, final data for 2021 and first estimate of farm incomes for 2022 pursuant to Regulation (EC) № 138/2004;
- annual data for the regional economic accounts for 2020 (NUTS1 and NUTS2);
- annual data for 2021 and quarterly and annual data (forecast) for 2022 on prices and price indices of output and input in agriculture in accordance with the current gentlemen’s agreement between Eurostat and the Member States;
- annual data for 2021 on the average price of agricultural land and rent in agriculture at national and regional level NUTS1 and NUTS2 according to the current agreement between Eurostat and 19 Member States;
- annual data for 2020 for the European Forest Accounts (EFA).

In 2022 in the field of economic accounts for agriculture, in accordance with the Eurostat’s programme, the inventory for their development for the reference year 2020 was updated.

In 2022, annual data for the agricultural sector (preliminary data and final data for 2021) and quarterly for 2022 (including flash estimates) were developed for non-financial national accounts in current and constant prices.

According to the Calendar presenting the results of the statistical surveys carried out by the National Statistical Institute in 2022, data and press releases on the economic accounts for

agriculture and the prices and indices in agriculture and forestry were prepared and published on the NSI's website and in the IS "Infostat".

According to the deadlines in the Editorial Plan for 2022, tables with data for publication in the printed and electronic editions of the NSI were prepared.

In 2022, the NSI's experts currently participated in the activities in order to improve the interaction within the National Statistical System and with other partner organizations. The NSI's employees participated in the work of the National Council for FADN, in the thematic working groups for the development of the Strategic plan for the development of agriculture and rural areas and the OP "Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture" for the programming period 2021 - 2027, as well as in the work of the monitoring committees of the two programmes for the programming period 2014 - 2020. The NSI took part in the activities of the interdepartmental WG 7 "Agriculture" and WG 8 "Fisheries".

In 2022, in connection with the reporting of data on indicators for sustainable development Agenda 2030, together with the "Agrostatistics" Department at the Ministry of Agriculture, the NSI developed and sent to the FAO data on indicators 2.4.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture.

3.5. Multi-Domain Statistics

Business trends

In 2022, with the financial assistance of the European Commission under the project "Business surveys and Consumer survey", the NSI continued to conduct all statistical surveys in the field of business trends under "The Joint Harmonized EU Programme of Business and Consumer surveys". The aim of this programme is to provide timely information for development of short-term forecasts in high quality for the development of business climate in Bulgaria.

Monthly business surveys in industry, construction, retail and the service sector shall collect information from the managers on their opinions on current or expected changes in a certain range of economic indicators assessing the current and future economic situation in the country. The information from them is extremely up-to-date, as the data are announced in the same month in which they are collected. The indicators from these surveys can be used as components of composite leading indicators for analysis and detection of turning points in the economic cycle.

The quarterly Consumer survey provided data on the trends in the development of public opinion on key economic processes and phenomena such as the general economic situation in the country, inflation, unemployment, savings, intentions with regard to major purchases on long-term use objects, and the purchase of a home or a car.

In 2022, the NSI's experts participated in online ESTP courses and in the regular meeting on business surveys and consumer survey of the European Commission.

Indicators for monitoring national and European policies

In 2022 the NSI continued the work on providing statistical data necessary for reporting the result indicators under the OP for the programming period 2014 - 2020.

The information published in IS "Monitorstat" was periodically updated with the latest data. The indicators on national and international strategies were simultaneously updated.

Environmental statistics and accounts

In 2022, all the activities of conducting regular statistical surveys and data production in the field of the environment were completed.

Main priority in the field of environmental statistics and accounts is the improvement of the methodology and the provision of reliable information on the state, types of pressure and the main trends of the impact of the economy on the environment.

In order to reduce the respondents' burden, the interaction with the institutions on the use of administrative data for the needs of the production of statistical information on the environment continued.

A review and update of the statistical forms for environmental surveys were carried out in order to achieve greater clarity and facilitation of their completion by respondents.

In 2022, the experts on environmental statistics participated in a number of coordination procedures and consultations at European and international level (for example, amending Regulation (EU) № 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts, Delegated Regulation on amending Annexes I to V to Regulation (EU) № 691/2011 on the European environmental economic accounts; global consultation on an international standard for the classification of economic activities, the self-assessment with the legal instruments for the compatibility of the national legislation in connection with the preparation of an initial memorandum of Bulgaria for negotiations on joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the exchange of opinions on the needs of the working group on sustainable development indicators and others). At national level, the NSI's experts participated in the consultations on the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030, the National report on the state and protection of the environment in the Republic of Bulgaria, Environmental assessment report on the National Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria, Environmental assessment report on the National Strategy on environment and Activity Plan to it and others.

In 2022, in the field of environmental statistics and accounts, in order to improve data quality and to assist respondents, a regular review and update, as necessary, of the instructions to the reports on environmental and energy surveys were carried out as well. A review and update of time series in connection with updating the methodology and/or new regulatory requirements are regularly carried out.

During the preparation of the national inventory in 2020, the implementation of the new methodology for calculating air emissions in accordance with the requirements of the Guidelines for the Inventory of Emissions of Harmful Substances (EMEP/CORINAIR 2019) continued. Based on the recommendations of the examining international team of experts, taking into account the specifics of key categories of production at national level, recalculations of some emissions for certain key years were performed.

The NSI successfully completed work in the field of ecosystem accounts and their services within the Horizon 2020 project "Mapping and assessment for integrated ecosystem accounting". The project "Improving data on the circular economy - packaging waste and construction waste" is also in the completion stage. In connection with the European Green Deal and the forthcoming amendments to Regulation 691/2011 on the European environmental economic accounts the NSI continued to work on project "Establishing access to geospatial data through linking geocoded and statistical data".

The NSI's experts participated in the Peer review of the European Statistical System on issues related to the quality of statistical information and work with the Bodies of Statistics.

In 2022, the NSI started to work under the new IS "Environmental Statistics" for entry, validation and processing of information from the environmental surveys conducted by the NSI.

In 2022 the participation of NSI's experts in Eurostat's group of Directors of sectoral and environmental statistics and accounts (DIMESA) continued, as well as in Eurostat's WG on Environmental Accounts, Eurostat's WG on Monetary Statistics and Environmental Accounts, Eurostat's WG on Waste Statistics, Eurostat's WG on Water Statistics.

The NSI's employees participated in the work of the interdepartmental WG for implementation of the activities set out in the Action Plan of the National Food Loss and Waste Reduction

Programme (2021 - 2026), the National report on the state and protection of the environment in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2020, the thematic WG for the development of OP “Environment” for the programming period 2021 - 2027, the WG 20 “Environment” and the Coordinating Council on a project under the Operational Programme for Good Governance “Development of a National Strategy for the Environment and an Action Plan to it”.

Housing statistics

The quarterly survey “Short-term statistics on residential buildings” was conducted within the set deadlines. Data on newly commissioned residential buildings and dwellings, demolished residential buildings and dwellings as well as quarterly press releases relating to them, were published on the dates announced in the Release Calendar.

The survey “Housing Fund”, which provided data on the housing fund in the country as of 31.12.2021, was conducted within the deadline. The data were published on the date announced in the Release Calendar.

Regional statistics and geographic information systems

In 2022, the work continued on the preparation and dissemination of statistics by regional breakdown. The data published in the electronic publication “Regions, districts and municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria” were presented at the lowest level in compliance with the methodologies of the surveys and the requirements for statistical confidentiality.

As part of the regional statistics produced by the NSI, the work on preparation and publication of a specialized statistical survey of crisis events for the needs of crisis management at national, regional and municipal levels continued. In 2022 an information under updated methodology was collected in line with the UN’s recommendations of the “Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework 2015 - 2030”.

Science, technology and innovation

In 2022 the production and dissemination of statistical data on R&D and innovation continued in accordance with Eurostat’s methodology and the requirements of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) № 995/2012 and Commission Regulation (EU) № 2020/1197.

The data produced from the regular statistical surveys on R&D for 2021 and innovation activity of enterprises in the period 2018 - 2020 were published on the NSI’s website as well as in the IS “Infostat” and sent to Eurostat within the set deadlines, of the necessary quality and in the required technical format (SDMX).

The necessary preparatory work for the statistical survey of the innovation activity of enterprises in the period 2020 - 2022 was carried out in fulfillment of the requirements of the new Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1092 of 30 June 2022 concerning data for the topic “Innovation”. A new statistical toolkit was developed in line with Eurostat’s harmonized questionnaire and methodology (CIS 2022) and the terms of reference for data processing of the survey was updated.

In 2022, the work on providing statistical data on R&D and innovation by indicators for monitoring and evaluation of European and national policies, such as the Europe 2020 Strategy and the National Development Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria “Bulgaria 2020” continued, as well as result indicators under OP “Innovation and Competitiveness 2014 - 2020” and “Science and Education for Smart Growth 2014 - 2020”.

The NSI’s experts participated in online meetings and written consultations with Eurostat on R&D statistics and innovation.

In 2022 the NSI’s experts joined the work of the thematic working group for the development of the Programme “Competitiveness and innovation in enterprises” and the Programme for Research, Innovation and Digitalization for Intelligent Transformation 2021 - 2027, as well as in

the commission for the development and implementation of innovations and the circular and bio-based economy. Their participation in the monitoring committees of OP “Innovation and Competitiveness 2014 - 2020” and “Science and Education for Smart Growth 2014 - 2020” continued as well as in Working group 16 “Education, mutual recognition of professional qualifications and scientific research” at the Ministry of education and sciences.

Information society

In the field of statistics on information society, in 2022 the NSI continued the work of conducting two regular annual statistical surveys on the ICT usage in households by individuals and in enterprises. In accordance with the need to provide data for monitoring of EU priority goals, during the last year a new topic - “ICT and the environment” was included in the surveys.

The statistical data on the usage of information and communication technologies and e-commerce in enterprises were collected and provided to Eurostat in accordance with the requirements of the Regulation (EU) 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European business statistics and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1190 concerning the data for the reference year 2022. The aggregated data obtained from the survey were sent to Eurostat under the SDMX standard for the exchange of statistical data and metadata.

The statistical data on the ICT usage in households and by individuals were collected and provided to Eurostat in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households and the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1223 concerning the data for reference year 2022. Key variables were updated and new e-governance indicators were included, as well as questions measuring the impact of ICT usage on the environment.

In 2022, the NSI’s experts participated in online meetings, coordination procedures and consultations with Eurostat on information society statistics.

In the past year, the experts in the field of information society statistics participated in the activities of the interdepartmental working groups for the preparation of participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21) and for the “European Semester” to the Working Group 31 “Europe 2020” in the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The involvement of experts in thematic group for the development of the Programme for Research, Innovation and Digitalization for Intelligent Transformation 2021 - 2027 continued.

3.6. Information and communication technologies, statistical infrastructure and other activities

Information and communication technologies

During the year the main priority was to activate the exploitation of new sources of digital data and to lay the foundations of reliable intelligent statistics to produce new statistical data in near real time with reliable algorithms; to facilitate users’ access to statistical data and their understanding, including by providing attractive and interactive visuals, more personalized services such as data on request and self-service analyses; to encourage partnerships with public and private data holders and with technology sector in order to facilitate access to data for statistical purposes, data integration from multiple sources and the usage of most modern technologies.

In 2022, a solution was implemented - “Delivery, implementation and maintenance of a solution for the protection of web applications”, which aims to increase the protection of NSI’s public services from malicious actions and attacks for compromising data and/or denial of services and ensuring stability, resilience and a highly functional and secure environment serving the IS of the NSI. A high degree of protection of the public web services of the National Statistical Institute

was achieved by building a secure perimeter for access to assets from the Internet space. The perimeter provides visibility into requests and the ability to control access at application level through content analysis and source reputation. The efficiency was increased and the maintenance of low risk levels continued by real-time tracking of early-stage attack attempts as well as logging of illegal actions against public web services provided by the NSI.

In 2022, the implementation of activities to provide data to Eurostat from the “Population and Housing census in the Republic of Bulgaria 2021” and a link with Eurostat’s CensusHub started.

In 2022, processing and analysis of administrative data from the “Population and Housing census of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021” campaign concerning the generation of analytical cubes according to previously stated criteria were carried out by the experts responsible for the population census.

In 2022, an analytical cube “Population” was created, as a result of processed administrative data from the “Population and Housing census of the Republic of Bulgaria” campaign in order to publish data on population.

In October, the NSI achieved a successful Eurostat ESS IT Security Assurance recertification in the field of microdata exchange.

The NSI successfully built, deployed, tested and switched to a production microdata exchange environment according to a certain schedule for the different phases. In order to maximize the protection of individual data during the microdata exchange for intra-Union trade, the NSI implemented connectivity with Eurostat and other members of the ESS through Eurostat’s secure network TESTA.

The digitization and the digitization of services, the implementation of the strategy on smart data, and the use of a machine-readable format in official statistics were also among the priorities.

The main priority was also to increase the capacity and level of reservation of IS through the use of effective means for storage and recovery of information systems and data from statistical surveys. The NSI implements reliable policies for reserving databases and components of information systems through specialized software and maintaining a library of archive media.

The established IS for identification, collection and dissemination of information in the NSI allow the accomplishment of the obligations of each official in the administration as he/she receives useful external information in a timely manner. The automation of the activities for monitoring the functioning of the technical infrastructure continued. Reliable and efficient operation of information systems and services provided was ensured. The Security Intelligence and Event Management (SIEM) gathering was done with new software solutions (Qradar and Guardium).

Axence nVision software was implemented, providing everything needed for protection and management of network systems and devices in the most efficient way.

Web-scraping tools for the purposes of the surveys in the NSI were developed and actual data collection using these methods started.

A new system for management and control of requests (NVision help desk) was implemented. The system guarantees timely information, a knowledge base for emerging cases, their solutions and response time.

In order to facilitate the respondents, the Support Center provided assistance on technical and/or methodological issues. In 2022, the scope of the Support Center was expanded.

The NSI maintained the National Register of populated places. In 2022, the NSI was in the process of developing a new National Register of populated places.

In 2022, a new IS “Consumer prices” was put into operation.

The National Statistical Institute published and updated “Dataset: Unified Classifier of Administrative-Territorial and Territorial Units” in open format on the Open data Portal. In 2022, the NSI continued to enrich the datasets on the new national open data publication portal as well: <https://data.egov.bg/>. The resources will be available in JSON-stat format and will be updated automatically.

The information system “Infostat” continued to develop as one of the main channels for providing statistical information. The data from the “Population and housing census of the Republic of Bulgaria” were also provided through IS “Infostat”. The possibility of quick and easy access to the constantly updated and enriched information in the system is one of its main advantages. During the year, the NSI’s experts strove to meet users’ expectations for accuracy and timeliness of the data provided.

The NSI’s website is not only the main channel for free dissemination of official statistical data, but also provides useful and well-structured up-to-date information on the activities of the institute in order to increase the statistical culture of users concerning the statistical surveys conducted by the NSI and data use.

In the field of information technology, the development of information systems in the various fields of statistics and the establishment of secure channels for data exchange within the National Statistical System continued.

In 2022, an internal audit was carried out according to the Integrated Management System, which integrates ISO 27001:2013 and the Quality Management System (QMS) according to ISO 9001:2015.

An external audit ISO 27001:2013 and QMS according to ISO 9001:2015 is to be carried out at the end of 2022.

The following trainings were conducted:

- Training of the employees at the HO and the RSOs to work with monitoring systems;
- Training of the employees at the HO and the RSOs on the topic: “Security standards, quality of information and protection of personal data”.

Development of statistical information systems

In 2022 the development and improvement of the developed in the NSI web-based applications for the needs of various statistical surveys continued: “Medical and health establishments and nurseries”, “Short-term statistics on residential buildings and housing fund”, “Income and living conditions statistics”, “Housing price index”, “Survey on prices of seeds and planting stock”, “Survey of Bulgarian and foreign citizens entering and leaving Bulgaria”, “Accommodation establishments”, “Survey on tourist trips”, “Consumer survey”, “Industrial products in kind - by nomenclature PRODCOM.BG-samples”, “Vocational Training of the employees in the enterprises”, “Prices of veterinary medical products”, “Prices of mineral fertilizers”, “Prices of plant protection products”, “Producer prices in agriculture”, “Producer prices of organic agricultural products and live animals”, “Prices of forages”, “Producer prices in forestry”, additional questionnaire for collecting and processing information to the “Household budget survey” - “Infra-annual data collection on living conditions” (IALC) and others. The development of web applications has facilitated and accelerated the work on data entry and control and shortened the deadlines for providing the resulting statistical data. The applications provide both an easy and convenient way to enter data, ongoing control during data entry, as well as general control of all entered data. Convenient reports were developed in the applications in order to monitor the status of the entered data, the number of respondents who replied, etc.

The applications are used both by the NSI, the RSOs and SSD employees and by the respondents.

The development and improvement of the developed desktop applications continued: “Trade deflators”, “Service deflators”, “Household Budget survey”, “Annual report of enterprises realizing forestry activity”, “Agricultural land prices and rent”, “Housing price indices and indicators”, “Prices CIF/FOB”, “Import and export price indices”, “Catalog of goods”, “Activity of insurance and reinsurance enterprises”, “Survey on economic accounts for agriculture”, “Annual report of agricultural holdings”, “Libraries”, “Museums”, “Performing arts - theatres”, “Radio programme activity”, “Television programme activity”, “Passenger bus transport”, annual information for “Vocational training in vocational training centers, vocational gymnasiums and vocational colleges” and others.

During the past year, the work on development of analytical outputs and specific analyzes for different statistical surveys continued using the statistical package SPSS Statistics Server (20.0) and SAS, which are the main analytical platform in the NSI.

In 2022, the work on the actual data collection continued with the developed web scraping tools for the purposes of price surveys in the NSI.

A new web application for the “Adult Education Survey of population aged 18 - 69 (AES)” was developed.

ICT infrastructure

In 2022, the main priority was the development of the information and technological infrastructure to achieve reliable operation of information systems and to ensure the continuity of services provided to respondents and users of statistical information.

The NSI maintains and develops a modern data center that meets the high requirements for storage and protection of data and information assets. In 2020 a Disaster Recovery Center was built in order to ensure the continuity of the processes in the NSI for the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information.

The NSI carried out continuous monitoring and maintenance of the operability of the technical means and information systems that build the information infrastructure.

Successful migration of virtualization and management systems to newer software versions was performed.

One of the highlights of the activity was the administration of the operating systems, the antivirus protection tools and the updating of the software used in the NSI.

Methodology, statistical metadata, classifications and standards

In 2022 the National Statistical Institute continued to work on the four-year ESSnet project “Trusted Smart Statistics - Web Intelligence Network”. The project is the result of the previous activities carried out in the period 2016 - 2020 in the course of the ESSnet on Big Data I and II projects aimed at multifunctional statistics based on a range of non-traditional data sources. The objective of the project is to contribute to the establishment of a Web Intelligence Network (WIN) in the ESS and beyond by using the services of Eurostat’s Web Intelligence Hub (WIH) and to integrate them into national statistical production systems. The main activities in which the NSI is an active partner in this innovative project are, as follows: to build WIN within the ESS and beyond by achieving competence related to WIH, targeted knowledge sharing, assistance to users and their active participation in the development of WIH; progress of WIH and implementation of the use cases: Online Job Advertisements (OJA) and Online Based Enterprise Characteristics (OBEC) in the statistical production stage; to explore the potential to extend WIH by using new data sources and use cases; to develop a methodology and quality assessment for the production of experimental statistics within WIH.

As a result of the project, the NSI plans to publish experimental, statistical indicators on job vacancies, characteristics of enterprises, the real estate market, prices of consumer goods and tourist services based on web data for Bulgaria.

In addition, the NSI continued to work for production of weekly experimental statistics on job vacancies by extracting information from the two largest online platforms for job search and supply in Bulgaria.

For the first time, a new headline “Experimental statistics” was created on the NSI’s website, in which experimental indicators from alternative data sources (administrative data and big data), their reference metadata and quality assessment reports will be published gradually.

In 2022, the NSI has explored possibilities of enriching traditional labour market statistics with administrative data. The study was successfully completed, with a written report and recommendations for reducing the respondents’ burden and improving the data quality of labour market in Bulgaria.

One of the main tasks in 2022 was to keep the statistical classifications up to date and to provide methodological assistance to users. In 2022, the NSI joined the discussions of the proposed new version of NACE Rev. 2.1, which was adopted and expected to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union by the end of 2022. A project of the structure of the new version of the Classification of economic activities (NACE.BG-2008) was developed and agreed at the NSI. The activity of coordinating the draft of the explanatory notes of NACE Rev. 2.1 and the first version of the structure of the new version of CPA 2.1 continued.

In order to facilitate the users to use the classifications, the employees continuously prepared statements on respondents’ inquiries, which are a tool for classifying statistical units for the correct interpretation of the Classification of Economic Activities, as well as they assisted statisticians in conducting statistical surveys and improved international comparability.

For the purposes of statistical processing and the continuation of time series on the basis of the changes occurred in the Combined Nomenclature 2023, transition code tables have been developed. For the purposes of the PRODCOM survey, the new version of the Nomenclature of Industrial Production - PRODPROM 2022, the list of Z Codes and the corresponding tables were developed. For the purposes of foreign trade statistics and IS INTRASTAT to the NRA, the self-explanatory texts of the Combined Nomenclature 2023 were updated annually.

In 2022, the activity of implementation the obligations as a data correspondent under the Special Data Dissemination Standard Plus (SDDS Plus) of the IMF to the BNB continued: maintaining data files, preparing the preliminary calendar, sending the data and the calendar, and coordinating the annual metadata certification.

The NSI continued its participation in maintaining the National Classification of Occupations and Positions 2011 and in updating the list of job titles and corresponding tables.

In 2022 new functionalities of IS “Statistical classifications” were expanded and implemented.

A “List of Standard Statistical Indicators for 2022” was prepared.

4. RESOURCE PROVISION

Staff

The National Statistical Institute consists of a Head Office and six Regional Statistical Offices. The Regional Statistical Offices perform the functions and tasks of the NSI for production and dissemination of statistical information at regional level. The Regional Statistical Offices are as follows: The RSO - Severozapad, The RSO - Sever, The RSO - Severoiztok, The RSO - Yugoiztok, The RSO - Yug, The RSO – Yugoiztok.

The structural units in the NSI's Head Office are organized into General administration and Specialized administration according to the Administration Act.

The total number of personnel within NSI as of December, 31, 2022 was 968, of which 321 employed at the Head office and 647 - at the RSOs. According to the Rules of Procedure of the NSI, the Head Office is organized into six directorates: "Business statistics" Directorate, "Demographic and Social statistics" Directorate, "Macroeconomic statistics" Directorate, "Multi-Domain Statistics and Users' services" Directorate, "Information systems and Infrastructure" Directorate, "General administration" Directorate and structures directly subordinated to the President of the NSI: "Security of Information, Information and communication technologies and DM" Division, "Inspectorate", Finance Controller, "Internal Audit" Unit, "International cooperation" Department and "Communication and Secretariat" Department. Five directorates are in the specialized administration and one directorate - in General administration.

The problem of providing adequate financial and human resources (Principle 3 of the European Statistics Code of Practice) is clearly identified in the Peer Review Report of the National Statistical System held this year.

The Peer Review team for Bulgaria has developed three recommendations - R6, R7 and R8, specifically concerning the financial and personnel provision of the NSI.

In its Peer review report the team pointed out: "The low wages within the state administration, in general, and the National Statistical Institute in particular, are a pervasive obstacle."

Conducting competitions for vacant positions

The policy on personnel recruitment is focused on replacement of retiring employees with young people with perspective thinking, who have just completed their tertiary education or continuing their education in Bulgarian universities.

In 2022, 81 vacancy competitions were held for the appointment of employees to vacant positions within NSI system. There were 37 competitions held in the NSI's Head Office and 44 in the RSOs. 62 competitions in the NSI ended with appointment of candidates.

2. Competitions

(Number)

Structures	Terminated competition	Terminated competitions due to lack of candidates	Terminated competitions due to non-admission of candidates	Competitions without ranking	Ranked competitions without appointment	Competitions with appointment
HO	2	5	1	3	2	24
RSO	3	0	0	2	1	38
NSI	5	5	1	5	3	62

It is noteworthy that the unsuccessful procedures, in which there are no candidates or the ranked candidates refuse to enter the job, prevail in the HO compared to the RSOs. This fact could be explained to some extent by the lower levels of unemployment in Sofia compared to other cities. On the other hand, some of the advertised positions require specific professional experience and knowledge that the applicants do not possess. Last but not least is the lower remuneration, which is offered for some of the positions compared to the same in other administrations or in the private sector.

Employed by age and education at the NSI

The structure of total NSI's staff by age groups and by education is presented in Tables 3 and 4, total for the NSI, including for NSI's Head Office and for RSOs.

3. Structure of the actually employed by age groups in the NSI

(Number)

Structures	Age category (years)					Total
	Up to 29	30 - 45	46 - 55	56 - 65	Over 65	
HO	10	104	102	53	0	269
RSO	17	214	213	167	3	614
NSI	27	318	315	220	3	883

Both for the HO and the RSOs the majority of employees are in the age group of 30 to 55 years. There was a decrease in employees over 65 within the NSI system compared to 2021 when they were 10. At the same time, in 2022 young people up to 29 years increased by only three numbers, which is indicative of the fact that work in the public administration is not attractive for this age group and it is necessary to undertake measures to attract young people.

4. Structure of those actually employed in the NSI by education

(Number)

Structures	Education degree						Total
	Doctor	Master	Bachelor	Professional bachelor	Secondary education	Primary education	
HO	13	223	22	3	8	0	269
RSO	2	392	115	24	81	0	614
NSI	15	615	137	27	89	0	883

The data show that 90% of NSI's employees have a tertiary education, as more than half have a Master's degree. Bachelors come in second place - 137 numbers. It should also be noted the positive trend that the number of employees with the education degree "Doctor" increased compared to 2021, when there were 10 for the whole NSI system. The number of employees with secondary education (in 2021 - 115 numbers) has also decreased.

5. Training of NSI employees in Bulgarian universities

(Number)

Type of education	NSI	HO	RSO
Doctor	5	3	2
Master	12	4	8
Bachelor	7	1	6
Total	24	8	16

Table. 5 shows the number of employees who are currently continuing their education in order to acquire a higher education degree.

In order to improve knowledge about the work of European institutions and to improve language skills, in the fields of macroeconomic statistics and statistics of agriculture, forestry and fisheries the NSI's employees participated in a course entitled: "Terminological English in European and International Affairs", organized by the Diplomatic Institute to the Minister of Foreign Affairs under OP "Good governance".

In order to increase professional competence in the field of consumer price statistics, the NSI's employees attended the training courses organized by IPA on the topics: "Analysis and visualization of databases - basic module", "E-document and e-signature (basic module)" and "Fundamentals of e-governance (basic module)".

In the field of energy statistics at national level, the NSI's experts took an active part in trainings organized by IPA on the topics: "Analysis and visualization of databases - basic and advanced modules", "Protection of personal data in a digital environment", "Organization of Webinars and Video Conferences", "Information and Media Literacy", "E-document and e-signature (basic module)", "Policy on smart specialization and its local implementation", "Tools for implementation of policies on research, innovation and technology transfer" and "Policies on research, innovation and technology".

At international level, in order to increase professional competence, the experts in the field of energy statistics participated in training courses and international conferences organized by Eurostat on the topics: "Energy statistics - advanced course", "Biomass and a fair transition", "The use of R in official statistics", as well as in the "IEA online training on statistics" organized by the International Energy Agency.

In order to increase digital competence in the field of agriculture, forestry and fisheries statistics, the NSI's employees attended the training courses organized by IPA on the topics: "Cyber hygiene when using e-mail", "Fundamentals of e-governance - basic module", "High Value Datasets", "Accessibility of administration for people with disabilities".

In the field of environmental statistics and accounts, in order to increase professional competence, the NSI's experts took part in trainings and conferences organized by IPA on the topics: "New technologies in governance - Internet of things", "Green administration", "Analysis and visualization of databases", "Digital Europe", as well as in international conferences on the topics: "Biomass and a fair transition", "The use of R in official statistics".

In 2022, the activities to improve working conditions continued. The NSI carried out ongoing and emergency repairs in order to eliminate the consequences of floods and torrential rain. The local air conditioning systems in the Head Office of the NSI were replaced.

In connection with the epidemiological situation of the staff, personal protective equipment was provided, incl. disinfectants and masks.

In order to optimize the costs, mini-procedures for selection of a contractor for supply of stationery and consumables were carried out.

The contracts with the operating companies were renewed under more favorable conditions for the NSI.

A procedure for leasing the departmental cafe for catering service at the premises of the Head Office was launched.

The NSI carried out insurance of the vehicle fleet.

The contract for cable TV and Internet was renewed at the NSI's recreation center in the Borovets resort.

All requirements for maintaining a strict fire protection order at the premises of the Head Office of the NSI and in the country according to the requirements of the regulatory documents were met. All prescriptions in this regard were fulfilled or postponed within the legally set deadlines.

Budget

The implementation of the NSI's budget 2022 is in compliance with the adopted Law on State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2022, Law on Population and Housing Census in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2021 and current adjustments made (Annex 1). As of 31.10.2022 the planned revenues are implemented according to the specified plan - 37%. The implementation of the total expenditure for the same period amounts to 80%, including current costs (wages, salaries and other payments to staff and maintenance) - 82%. The specified plan also includes the funds for 2021 Census.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL

The Internal Audit Unit performs internal audit of all structures, programmes, activities and processes in the NSI, including the second-level spending units in the NSI and/or the administrators of resources of the European Union.

For the period from January 2022 - January 2024 a Strategic plan for the activities of the IAU was prepared. An Annual Plan 2022 for the activity of Internal Audit Unit also was developed. All mandatory annexes required for the preparation of the Strategic and Annual plans were completed. A Training plan for internal auditors for 2022 was developed.

Within the specified period of the approved "Strategy on risk management", the head of IAU analyzed the risks and activities of the IAU and developed a risk register for the risk management 2022, as well as a Report on risk management 2021. The documents were submitted within the deadline and were approved by the President of the NSI.

Pursuant to Art. 12, para. 3 of the Law on Financial Management and Control in the Public Sector, the head of the IAU, in order to assist the President of the NSI, created an organization via e-mail to analyze and update risks and submit risk registers for 2022 and a report on risk management for 2021 from all directorates and structures in the Head office and RSOs of the NSI, for their publication on the intranet site of the NSI. Everything was carried out by the directors and heads of structures directly subordinated to the President. The documents were published on the NSI intranet site.

Within the statutory deadline, an Annual report on the activities of the IAU for 2021 was prepared and presented to the President of the NSI with a questionnaire attached to it for sending in compliance with Art. 40, para 4 of the Law on Internal Audit in the Public Sector. The documents were sent electronically to the Minister of Finance, in compliance with Article 40, Para 5 of the Law on Internal Audit in the Public Sector.

An inspection of the summary report and questionnaire on the state of the financial management and control systems in the NSI in 2021 was carried out, a statement was given and as a result of instructions from the MF, an order, organization and deadlines were established for filling in and sending the information on the FMCS for 2021.

According to the 2022 Annual Plan for the activities of the IAU, a total of 5 audit assignments were planned to be performed by two auditors of the IAU, of which 4 were for assurance and 1 for consultation. At present two audit assignments for assurance were implemented and completed. A final audit report № BO-14/14.06.2022 has been implemented for a completed audit assignment on the topic: Inspection, analysis and evaluation of activities to ensure network and information security at the National Statistical Institute, for the period from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021. All inspections on the priority objectives laid down were carried out as 4 recommendations were formulated and they were implemented. A final audit report № BO-

19/26.10.2022 is available for a completed audit assignment on the topic: Inspection, analysis and evaluation of the activities performed by the HR Department of the “General administration” Directorate in the NSI’s HO, for the period from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022. 22 recommendations were formulated, of which 17 recommendations are currently in process of implementation. The head of the HR Department prepared an Action plan for the implementation of the recommendations given, as it was approved by the President of the NSI. Currently, a third audit assignment in the field of specialized administration - statistical directorates is open for implementation. The aim of the audit assignment is to provide an independent and objective assessment to the top management of NSI for the compliance of statistical activities/processes with legislation, internal acts and contracts.

According to the 2022 approved Training plan of the IAU, the internal auditors have participated in a total of 8 trainings organized by the School of public finance and the IPA.

In 2022 the activity of **the Inspectorate** of the NSI was focused to the implementation of the objectives laid down in the Strategic Plan for the activity of the Inspectorate of the NSI for the period 2021 - 2025 and the 2022 Annual Plan for the activity of the Inspectorate of the NSI. Throughout the year, the Inspectorate’s efforts were aimed at increasing the quality and expanding the scope of administrative control over the activities of the general and specialized administration within the NSI structure.

In the implementation of the powers of the Inspectorate, the achievement of the following main objectives was of primary importance:

- To create optimal conditions for work of individual structural units in order to implement the state policy in the field of statistical activity;
- To implement timely and effective measures to limit the corruption risk within the NSI system;
- To create an environment supporting the compliance with laws, by-laws and internal departmental acts, rules and procedures, with a view to prevent violations and acts of corruption in the functioning of the administration;
- To increase the training and professional qualification of inspectors as a condition for the objectivity and impartiality of control activity.

The work of the inspectors was aimed at increasing the efficiency in planning and improving the organization, strict application of the regulatory requirements and compliance with the factors on which the optimization of work in the conditions of an epidemic situation in the country depends.

The realization of the objectives was determined by the performance of the following main tasks: carrying out *planned inspections* of activities and structural units within the NSI system; carrying out *unplanned inspections* based on received signals or by order of the President of the NSI; *permanent control* over individual structural units and processes. An administrative control over the implementation and compliance with the requirements of the legislation in the implementation of individual functions by the directorates of the general and specialized administration, as well as over the overall activity of the structures of the Head Office and the RSOs of the NSI was carried out. Serious attention was given to timely completion of the activities related to the conducted 2021 Census and the announcement of the results.

During the reporting period, the employees from the NSI’s Inspectorate carried out a total of 21 inspections, of which 3 planned and 18 unplanned.

In implementation of Annual Plan for the activities of the Inspectorate in 2022, the following three planned inspections were carried out: inspection and evaluation of the organization of the activity and compliance with the regulatory requirements when evaluating the implementation of the position by the employees of the Head Office and the RSOs of the NSI; verification of

compliance with the requirements for the collection, reporting, storage and publication of the declarations under the Law on Combating Corruption and Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property submitted by the employees of the Head Office and the RSOs of the NSI and inspection of the internal regulatory documents in the Head Office of NSI. In order to eliminate identified weaknesses and gaps, if necessary, recommendations were prepared to the heads of the inspected structures.

In 2022, the employees from the NSI's Inspectorate carried out a total of 18 unplanned inspections based on received signals and proposals related to the activities of the general and specialized administration. When examining the signals received containing allegations of violation of the legislation of civil service or the management style, the main efforts of the inspectors were aimed at fully clarifying the circumstances and facts of the case in order to prepare a comprehensive and objective statement, as well as recommendations for undertaking effective measures to solve the identified problem. Reports with the results of the inspections were prepared in a timely manner and submitted to the President of the NSI for approval. After the clarification of each individual case, responses were sent to the whistleblowers within the statutory deadlines.

In 2022 for the implementation of internal administrative control, the NSI's Inspectorate carried out 12 monthly inspections. As a result, monthly reports - statements containing the findings, analyzes and conclusions of the administrative control conducted were prepared and submitted to the President of the NSI for approval. The subject of the inspections included: the implementation of the resolutions of the NSI's top management; contracts concluded and executed during the month; the number of issued and executed/unexecuted orders of the NSI's top management; the realized international business trips of NSI's employees; the prepared reports from participation in international business trips and tasks arising from them for the NSI. The implementation of the decisions of the President's Council was carried out with particular importance. The implementation and reporting of the tasks assigned to the NSI's employees through AIS "Document Flow" was controlled. In 2022, a monthly control of the implementation of the tasks set out in the NSP and the Editorial Plan for 2022 was carried out. The timely implementation of the conducted statistical surveys and publications from the Release calendar for the results of statistical surveys of the NSI, as well as the issued publications was monitored.

In 2022, the NSI's Inspectorate carried out permanent control for the implementation of the provisions of the Law on Combating Corruption and Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property and the Ordinance on the organization and procedure for inspection of conflict of interest declarations. In the legally determined deadlines, the information from the declarations sent by NSI's employees under Art. 35, para. 1, item 2 and item 4 of the Law on Combating Corruption and Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property was processed, stored and published in compliance with the provisions of the Law on Personal Data Protection.

Inspections of the declared facts in the submitted declarations under Art. 35, para. 1, item 1 and item 3 of the Law on Combating Corruption and Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property by the newly appointed employees in the HO and the RSOs of the NSI were periodically carried out to establish incompatibility according to the requirements of the relevant legal acts.

The control activity of the NSI's Inspectorate was tailored both to the available personnel potential in the composition, the appointment of a new head of the NSI's Inspectorate, as well as to the *unplanned tasks* arising during the work, related to reports of admitted irregularities or by order of the President of the NSI. The specified circumstances did not negatively affect the performance of assigned tasks and the implementation of the powers of the NSI's Inspectorate in general.

For the period from 01.01.2022 to 28.10.2022, a total of 1,125 dossiers with documents were recorded and checked in the register of **the Financial Controller**, and a total of 1,125 checklists for commitment and expenditure were issued.

The proclamation of the Financial Controller on the proposals for commitment or expenditure was implemented within the deadlines set by the President of the NSI, described in the Internal Rules on implementation of ex-ante control of legality in the NSI.

During the past period, the Financial Controller often needed to request additional documents or information, as well as on the spot visit in order to optimize the control and to give an accurate and efficient statement in the checklist filled by him.

In the first half of 2022 the Financial Controller participated in the preparation of the summary questionnaire and the report on the status of the FMCS in the NSI in 2021.

In pursuance of the annual training plan for 2022, the Finance Controller participated in three trainings, conducted remotely by the School of Public Finance at the Ministry of Finance. In March, the Financial Controller participated in training on the topic: “Application of public procurement legislation”, held in the period from March 15 to March 16, 2022. In May, the Financial Controller took part in training on the topic: “COSO 2013 (Updated framework for internal control) - essence and application”, held in the period from May 11 to May 25, 2022. The Financial Controller participated also in training on the topic: “Planning of needs of public procurement. Public procurement schedule”, held in the period from June 23 to June 27, 2022. For the excellent results of the final tests and the successful completion of the trainings, the Financial Controller received certificates, provided to the employees of the “Human Resources” Department, General Administration Directorate at the NSI’s HO for storage and addition to the civil servant’s dossier.

During the period of ex-ante control for legality, no illegal actions were detected in the Head office of the NSI.

During the first months of 2022, the priority of **the Data Protection Officer** was to support the Peer review within the European Statistical System in March - April 2022 in order to achieve successful implementation. As a member of the specialized Working group for the preparation of the Peer review, created by order of the President of the NSI, the Data Protection Officer participated in the preparation of answers to the previously asked questions and in the English translation of the documents of the NSI on personal data protection of different categories of data subjects. References in English regarding NSI’s correspondence with the Commission for the Protection of Personal Data and mobile operators were prepared in connection with the methods of data collection from households and individuals using up-to-date communication data in the conditions of the sanitary crisis. During the Peer review, the Data Protection Officer participated in almost all meetings as a participant and as an observer.

In July 2022, a large-scale training of about 90 employees in managerial positions from the RSOs and the SSD (56 face-to-face and about 35 online) was conducted on the history, content and application of Bulgarian and European legislation in the field of personal data protection. In the first part of the training, detailed information on the rules and obligations of NSI’s employees, owners of information assets, having a role in decision-making related to the collection and processing of personal data was presented, and the second part was aimed at employees engaged in processing of personal data in the performance of their daily duties.

During the year, constant supervision for strict compliance with the requirements of the legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria and the law of the European Union in the field of personal data protection and ensuring the rights of data subjects was carried out, as well as for the principle of statistical secrecy, regulated in Regulation (EC) № 223/2009 on European statistics and the Law on Statistics.

6. UNFULFILLED ACTIVITIES

Against the background of the challenges related to the resource and financial provision of NSI's activities, the NSI's employees did not report unfulfilled statistical surveys and activities despite the constantly increasing requirements for statistics and the shortening deadlines for data production and transmission.

In the field of national accounts, some delay in data transmission was noted. In the fourth quarter of 2022, a restructure of the "Macroeconomic statistics" Directorate was carried out by establishing a new "Supply - Use Tables and Institutional National accounts" Department. The Department worked for the timely transmission of the required data with high quality. In general the restructure of the "Macroeconomic statistics" Directorate contributed to the better reorganization of the work of all Departments and qualitative and timely implementation of the NSI's commitments related to Bulgaria's obligations under the current European and national legislation and the implementation of the NSP.

Appendix 1. Information on the NSI budget for 2022

Indicators (in BGN)	Law on State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2022	Specified plan for the year as 31.12.2022	Report as of 31.12.2022	Implementation of the plan/ report (%) as of 31.12.2022
1	2	3	4	5
I. REVENUES - TOTAL	950 000	950 000	412 211	43
Own revenues	950 000	950 000	412 211	43
Non-tax revenues	950 000	950 000	412 211	43
Property revenues and incomes	950 000	950 000	505 267	53
- Net revenues from sales of services, goods and production	850 000	850 000	394 131	46
- Rental property revenues	100 000	100 000	111 136	111
State fees			120	
Fines, sanctions and penalties			2 037	
Other revenues				
Revenues from the sale of non-financial assets				
VAT paid			-95 213	
II. EXPENDITURES - TOTAL	28 603 500	35 351 768	34 878 998	99
Total expenditure	28 603 500	35 351 768	34 878 998	99
Current expenditure	25 119 500	31 302 383	31 024 394	99
Personnel	21 478 000	25 554 000	25 452 624	100
Salaries and remunerations to the personnel under the Labour Code and the Civil Service Act	15 151 000	14 962 246	14 939 666	100
Salaries and remunerations to the personnel under the Labour Code	1 869 500	1 789 246	1 767 328	99
Salaries and remunerations to the personnel under the Civil Service Act	13 281 500	13 173 000	13 172 338	100
Other salaries and payments to the personnel	1 550 300	5 469 197	5 399 160	99
Mandatory social security contributions from employers	4 776 700	5 122 557	5 113 798	100
Social insurance contributions from employers for the State Social Insurance (SSI)	2 876 100	3 080 981	3 079 840	100
Health insurance contributions from employers	1 191 600	1 293 200	1 290 010	100
Contributions to additional compulsory insurance from employers	709 000	748 376	743 948	99
Maintenance	3 478 500	5 464 300	5 288 306	97
Taxes paid, charges and administrative sanctions	115 000	236 083	236 083	100
Expenditure for membership contributions and participation in non- profit organizations and activities	48 000	48 000	47 381	99
Capital expenditure	3 484 000	4 049 385	3 854 604	95
Fundamental repair of tangible fixed assets	500 000	208 687	15 898	8

Indicators (in BGN)	Law on State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2022	Specified plan for the year as 31.12.2022	Report as of 31.12.2022	Implementation of the plan/ report (%) as of 31.12.2022
(Continued and end)				
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	413 000	1 092 298	1 090 807	100
Acquisition of intangible fixed assets	2 571 000	2 748 400	2 747 899	100
NATURAL INDICATORS				
Staff positions - total	968	968	883	
Average annual full-time positions - total	968	968	893	
Staff positions	968	968	883	
III. TRANSFERS	27 653 500	34 401 768	34 491 518	100
III. A. TRANSFERS (SUBSIDIES, CONTRIBUTIONS) BETWEEN CENTRAL/STATE BUDGET AND OTHER BUDGETS	28 153 500	34 901 768	34 867 690	100
Transfers (grants/contributions) from the central budget (Net) - Transfers (subsidies) from the central budget (+)	28 153 500	34 871 600	34 837 522	100
III. B. TRANSFERS BETWEEN BUDGET ACCOUNTS AND EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS/ACCOUNTS				
- Transfers received (+) - Transfers granted (-) - Transfer from MLSP under programmes of temporary employment (+/-)			0	
III. C. TRANSFERS BETWEEN BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS FOR EU FUNDS	-500 000	30 168 -500 000	30 168 -376 172	
III. D. TRANSFERS FOR ASSUMED INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS AND TAXES			7 714 127	
IV. BALANCING ITEM (+/-) (I - II + III)			24 731	
V. FINANCING OPERATIONS			24 731	

**Note: The specified plan also includes the funds under 2021 Census for this year in the amount of BGN and, accordingly, in the expenditure the amount of the actual expenses as of 31.12.2022.*

Appendix 2. Organizational chart of the NSI (as of December 1, 2022)

