



# BNSI's participation in European programmes and projects

Bulletin № 8, 2017

## European Commission's projects for providing expertise and technical assistance within the European Neighbours Policy

### *The second Twinning project with the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan ended*

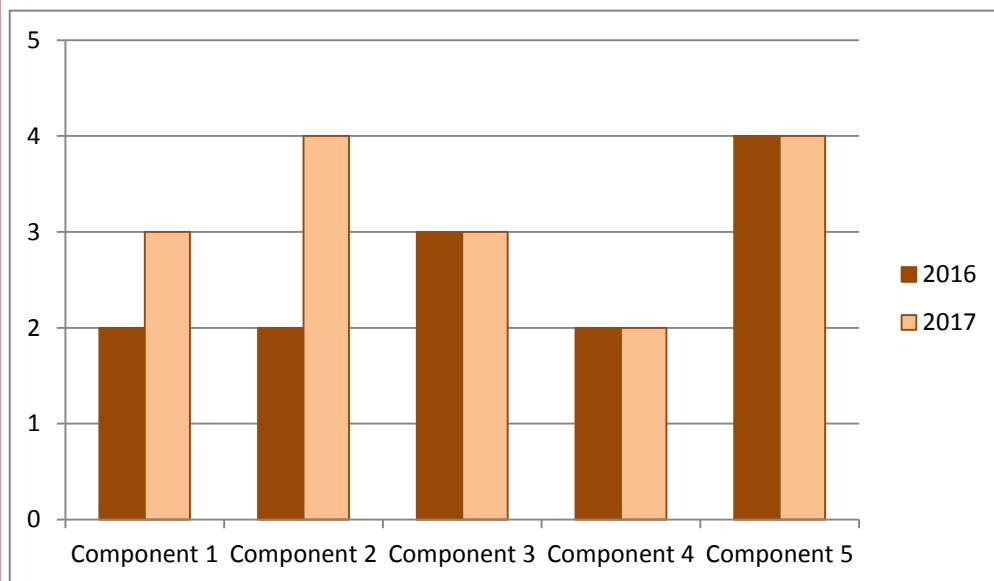


In 2017, the implementation of the second twinning project with the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan AZ/14/ENP/ST/32 'Support to the State Statistical Committee in harmonisation of the National Statistics System of the Republic of Azerbaijan in line with European standards', in which the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria participated as a junior partner of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (DESTATIS), continued successfully. The duration of the project was 25 months (23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 - 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017) and the total value was EUR 1 178 763.



During the year, 16 expert missions were carried out with the participation of 21 NSI experts on all five separate components :

1. Statistical Quality Management System
2. Geographical Information System (GIS)
3. Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC)
4. Statistics on disabled and invalid persons
5. Tourism statistics.



### *Study visit*

Within the project, in 2017 the BNSI hosted a five-day visit to train officials from the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The subject of the training was 'Modernization of the National Statistical System via institutional restructuring, sharing practice of Bulgaria'. The main objective of the visit was the familiarization of the experts with the institutional reform carried out at the BNSI in 2015 and its impact on the quality of statistical surveys in the territorial statistical offices and on the implementation of the ISO 9001: 2015 quality standard at the regional level.

### *Final conference*

The Twinning project ended in late November with a final conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, with a high appreciation for the work of Bulgarian experts on all five components. In the project the National Statistical Institute



of Bulgaria participated as a junior partner and the leading partner was the Federal Statistical Office of Germany.

The National Statistical Institute was represented by Mr. Sergey Tsvetarsky, President of the NSI, Mr. Bogdan Bogdanov, PhD - Deputy President and Ms. Kalina Kazandzhieva, Director of the Regional Statistical Office Yugoiztok. The representatives of all the countries involved in the Twinning project (Germany, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania) took part.

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The National Statistical Institute had a key role to play in order to achieve project objectives. Total of 14 experts worked on project management through participation in the work of Standing Monitoring Committee as well as on implementation of the tasks of all components in 32 missions. The BNSI hosted six study visits, including one high-level visit. BNSI's expert Mr. Arslan Ahmedov who was Resident twinning adviser in Baku, played key role.

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## Strengthening regional cooperation

### *Обучение на младши статистици от шест държави*

In 2017, the National Statistical Institute continued to implement successfully its Policy for development of cooperation with the European Neighborhood Policy - East countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). After last year's course entitled 'Introduction to the Theory and Organization of Statistical Surveys' which was attended by 12 young statisticians from the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, this year the geography of the participating countries was





expanded. Within the framework of the Programme 'Bulgarian Development Aid' of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, the NSI implemented a Training project for 24 young statisticians from the six countries. The funding of the course was entirely financed by the Bulgarian Development Aid.

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The Training programme was developed and implemented jointly by the National Statistical Institute and the Center for Statistical Studies of the University of National and World Economy (UNWE) - Sofia.

For four days the young statisticians had the opportunity to get acquainted with the theory of statistical surveys presented by Assoc. Prof. Alexander Naydenov at the Training Centre of the University of National and World Economy in the village of Ravda.

The remaining four days the NSI's experts presented their experience in the field of the practice of statistical surveys at the NSI Training Centre in Slivek, Lovech Region. Ms. Gergana Maeva, Ms. Svetoslava Filipovich, Mr. Rasim Ryustem, Ms. Zhana Geron, Ms. Elena Bakalova, Mr. Valentin Chavdarov and Ms. Galya Stateva presented their experience in the field of short-term and annual business statistics, statistics on income and living conditions, labour statistics, macroeconomic statistics and the usage of alternative data sources (Big Data). The variety of topics and the good lecture preparation created the necessary training atmosphere and active involvement of young statisticians.

At the end of the training activities, a round table was held on various topics of interest to young statisticians - National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria, trust in official statistics, opportunities for career development in statistical offices.

The course was closed by Mr. Bogdan Bogdanov, PhD, Deputy President of the NSI, who awarded certificates to all



participants, signed by Prof. Stati Statev, PhD, Rector of the University of National and World Economy, and by Mr. Sergey Tsvetarsky, President of the NSI.

All participants expressed their gratitude for the cordial welcome and interesting lectures as well as for the opportunity to get acquainted with Bulgaria during their visits to Nesebar, Burgas, Lovech, Troyan, Veliko Tarnovo and Sofia. They highly appreciated their opportunity to enrich their knowledge and to discover the beauty of Bulgarian nature and important moments of Bulgarian history. During the course, all trainees took part in a photo contest with the pictures taken during the training, in which they presented their impressions in an interesting way.

*„I wish success to all participants in their work as statisticians, as well as to be satisfied with themselves for working in an interesting area, offering many opportunities for development.“*

**Bogdan Bogdanov, PhD**  
Deputy President of the NSI

### ***Study visits of statisticians from Croatia and Macedonia***

During the year, **two study visits** were organized:

At the end of May, the NSI hosted a study visit to experts from the **Croatian** Statistical Office. The aim of the meeting was to present the Bulgarian experience in the field of e-census. Bulgarian experts introduced their Croatian colleagues to the preparation, organization and conducting of the e-census in 2011. The methodological and technical problems encountered in its implementation were presented. Issues related to the scope and quality of the information as well as the use of data from administrative registers was discussed.





Croatian colleagues put forward a number of practical questions on holding a 2011 Census in Bulgaria with a view to preparing the Croatian Statistical Office for the upcoming Census in 2021. The meeting was fruitful for both sides. Ideas and information were exchanged on the preparation of the Census to be held in Croatia and Bulgaria in 2021.

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In November, the NSI also hosted a study visit to experts from the statistical office of the former Yugoslav Republic of **Macedonia**. The purpose of the training was to acquaint the Macedonian statisticians with the National Statistical System of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian experience in the field of quality management at NSI. The training was conducted within the framework of the IPA 2014 Multilateral Co-operation Programme.

This visit made a significant contribution to strengthening good relations between the two statistical offices and is a prerequisite for further development of cooperation between them.



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## Participation in projects within transnational programmes

### *Project YOUMIG*

In 2017, the National Statistical Institute became a partner in the project 'Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration (YOUMIG)', which is realized by the Danube Transnational Programme (Interreg - Danube Transnational Programme - ERDF) and it is aimed at evaluation of youth migration and measurement of well-being of youth in the region.



The project started on 1.01.2017 with 30 months duration. YOUMIG partners are local government bodies, research institutes, universities and statistical offices of eight countries (Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Serbia). The project's lead partner is the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

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YOUMIG project aims to foster development at a local government level and make municipalities capable of tackling the challenges posed by youth migration through boosting migration data accuracy and knowledge exchanges on a transnational basis.

During the project:

- A conceptual approach to the analysis and measurement of migratory, demographic, labour market and human capital processes with a focus on youth migration in South-East Europe will be created;
  - Locality profiles for presenting trends and tendencies as well as projections for the future regarding youth migration will be developed;
  - A review of existing data systems will be performed and recommendations for more coherent, transnational indicators for statistics related to youth migration in South-East Europe will be made;
  - New data on youth emigration at the local level in the project countries will be collected and collations will be done;
  - A review of population projections to see how population and development may be affected by youth migration in the countries of South-East Europe will be made;
  - Interviews and focus groups with stakeholders and institutions in the field of youth migration will be conducted.
- YOUMIG is structured in six working packages (WPs): WP1: Management; WP2: Communication; WP3: Qualitative research - conceptual overview and fieldwork; WP4: Quantitative research (data and indicators, survey); WP5: Pilot actions (mini-projects for young migrants, establishing



a migration team within the municipality); WP6: Building strategies. The National Statistical Institute will take part in the activities of all work packages of the project.

The kick-off meeting of the project partners was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 in Budapest, Hungary. The main project activities and their implementation by the end of 2017 by work packages were discussed during the meeting. The National Statistical Institute was presented by members of project management team.

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The second meeting took place on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June in Belgrade, Serbia. It presented presentations on the progress of the project activities and discussions on the individual components.

The third project meeting was held in Regensburg, Germany, in the period 22 - 23 November 2017. During the meeting, the progress of implementation of project activities and the reporting of costs during the first six-month period were discussed.



### ***Project SMEInnoBoost***

The second project under transnational programmes under which the National Statistical Institute became a partner in 2017, is the SME Innovation Capacity Boost (SMEInnoBoost) project. This project is implemented within the framework of the transnational program 'Balkans - Mediterranean 2014 - 2020' (Interreg - Balkan-Mediterranean 2014 - 2020) and is aimed at enhancing the innovation potential of small and medium-sized enterprises in the region.

SMEInnoBoost started on 1.08.2017 and has a duration of 24 months.

The objective of the project is to boost the transnational innovation capacity of SMEs and to support



the creation of sustainable networking formations, including innovation clusters with other SMEs in the Balkan-Mediterranean region, in order to share know how and develop innovation through the creation of tripartite partnerships to provide SMEs with relevant data, tools and systems.

Partners of the project are the statistical offices of Bulgaria, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the National Association of Small and Medium Businesses, the Science and Technology Park of Crete at the Foundation for Research and Technology - Greece, the Institute of Information and Communication Technologies at BAS, Foundation for small and medium-sized enterprises - Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Regional Development Agency of the Korce, Albania; monitoring partners - the Software Engineering and Internet Technologies Laboratory at the University of Cyprus and the Innovation and Technological Development Fund of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Leading partner is the National Association of Small and Medium Business in Bulgaria.

The first meeting of the project partners took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017 in Sofia, Bulgaria. At the meeting, the working rules and main project activities were presented and discussed. Members of the project management team represented the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria.

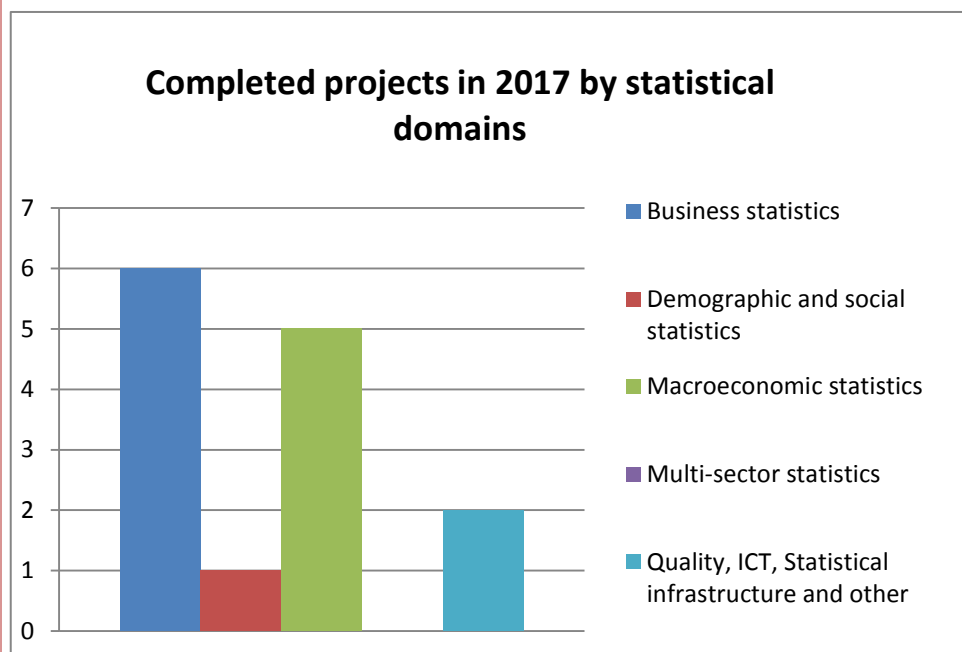
## Grand agreements of the European Commission, awarded to the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria

In 2017, BNSI successfully completed the implementation of 14 projects funded through grants from

Grant agreements of the European Commission



the European Commission and co-financed by the state budget in the field of macroeconomic statistics, demographic and social statistics, business statistics and multi-sector statistics. During the year, BNSI applied and concluded contracts with the European Commission for 22 new projects, which are expected to be implemented in the period 2017 - 2020. The projects are included in the Annual work programme on Eurostat for 2016 and they are pursuant to Regulation (EC) No. 99/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Statistics Programme for the period 2013 - 2017.

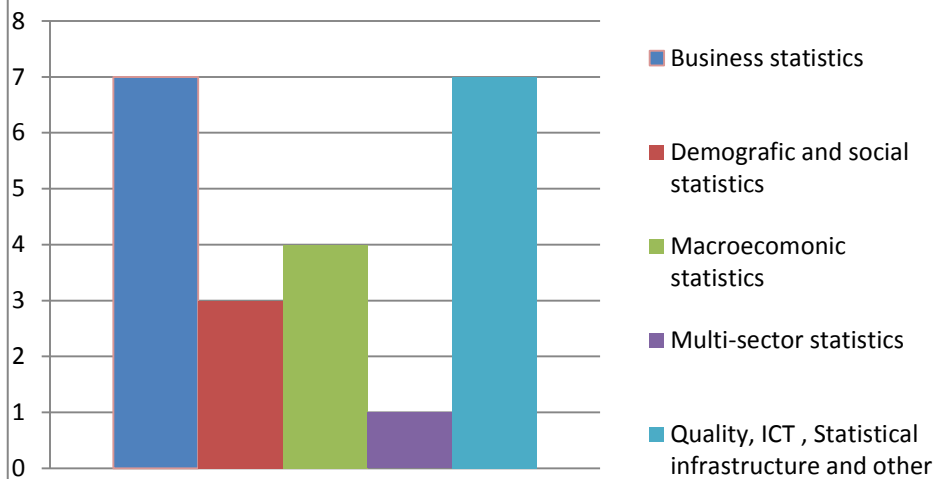


Grant agreements of

the European  
Commission



### Signed grant agreementst in 2017 by statistical domains



Summary table of BNSI's project funded under grants of the European Commission can be found at the following link:

<http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pages/International/TableGrantBG2018.pdf>

## Projects in the framework of European Statistical System Vision 2020



### *ESSnet project on Big Data*

In January 2017 the National Statistical Institute has started the 'Big Data Pilots - II' under the ESSnet project on Big Data according to a Grant agreement No. 11104.2016.010-2016.756 of the European Commission.

The overall objective of the project is to prepare the European Statistical System (ESS) for integration of Big Data sources into the production of official statistics. The





project has organised into different working packages (WPs) of selected Big Data sources. The specific objectives of the working packages are related to analysing the results obtained from Big Data sources; developing a methodology for using Big Data in statistical practice and measure the quality of collected data; identifying, defining and implementing IT infrastructure for processing and storing Big Data; legal issues related to access and use of Big Data sources within the ESS; exchange of information between the official statistical system and the scientific community.

The project duration is 17 months and BNSI is an active partner country in the **WP 2 'Webscraping/Enterprise Characteristics'**, **WP 8 'Methodology and quality'** and **WP 9 'Dissemination'**.

During the 2018 in Sofia will be held again a final workshop, which will be host by the BNSI.

### ***International conference on Big Data in Sofia***

The National Statistical Institute hosted and co-organised, together with Statistics Belgium, an international conference at which the results of the ESSnet Big Data project were presented. NSI President Sergey Tsvetarsky, Acting Director-General of Eurostat Mariana Kotzeva, Director-General of Statistics Netherlands Tjark Tjin-A-Tsoi, and project coordinator Peter Struijs participated in the event, which took place on 23 - 24 February 2017 in Sofia.



During the conference participants discussed the results of the different work packages included in the current first grant agreement (SGA-I) with all European participating countries, interested experts, representatives of Eurostat, the European Commission, international organisations, the scientific community, and businesses in Bulgaria.

The closing session of the seminar was devoted to a



broad discussion on the influence of Big Data on official statistics and the future of the European Statistical System. During the discussion the President of the NSI Sergey Tsvetarsky noted that many issues related to the implementation of Big Data in official statistics still remained unclear, adding that new legislation and improved access to data from all Big Data source owners would be needed.

Mariana Kotzeva, Acting Director-General of Eurostat, emphasized that discussions on the use of Big Data in official statistics should continue at a high level with regard to cross-cutting issues (legislation, data access, partnerships, results dissemination, etc.) and that future steps in establishing 'smart statistics' should be considered.



The Director General of Statistics Netherlands Tjark Tjin-A-Tsoi delivered a keynote speech on the topic 'Changing gears: NSIs in the age of Big data'. He opined that the use of Big Data in the statistical practice was still in the phase of research and development and that the results obtained so far were experimental products.

*'In the context of new data sources the job of a 'traditional statistician' would evolve to a more methodology-oriented one with a focus on quality assessment and validation. This will make statisticians' tasks more interesting and challenging and will increase NSI experts' motivation and skills.'*

**Sergey Tsvetarsky**

*President of the BNSI*

*'A change in thinking and human capital skills is a necessary precondition for the successful experiments with and implementation of Big Data.'*

**Mariana Kotzeva**

*Acting Director-General of Eurostat*

*'It is absolutely essential to combine traditional statistical surveys with Big*







*Data sources and administrative data, and the entire statistical community should be involved in the process.'*

**Tjark Tjin-A-Tsoi**

*Director General of Statistics Netherlands*

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