

STRATEGY

for Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria 2013 - 2017, amended by an extension until 2020

INTRODUCTION

The civil society, business circles, public administration, politicians and researchers expect quality statistical information that monitors the development of economic, social and demographic processes and assists in taking informed decisions. The modern statistics is oriented towards the changing needs of the society and strives to provide comparable and reliable data, responding to the strict requirements of confidentiality and information protection and produced according to the international standards.

The National Statistical System (NSS) of the Republic of Bulgaria carries out activities related to collecting, processing, analyzing and storing/archiving of statistical data, as well as activities related to provision and dissemination of official statistics. The National Statistical System consists of the National Statistical Institute and the Bodies of Statistics which are an integral part of the European Statistical System and the Bulgarian National Bank.

European statistics is developed, produced and disseminated by the European Statistical System (ESS) and by the European System of Central Banks on the basis of separate legal frameworks - Article 338 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 5 of Protocol 4 on the Statute the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) and the European Central Bank (ECB) respectively reflecting their respective governance structures.

The National Statistical Institute plays a leading methodological and coordinating role with regard to the Bodies of Statistics.

The mission of the NSS of the Republic of Bulgaria is to provide impartial, objective, timely and accurate information about the state and directions for development of economic, social, demographic and environmental field.

Vision for development of the NSS until 2020:

The National Statistical System to produce and provide to all user groups high quality statistical products and services, produced based on harmonized European methodologies and standards.

The mission and vision for development of the NSS will be accomplished by keeping the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics of the United Nations, as well as the principles, laid down in the European Statistics Code of Practice.

In order to reduce the reporting burden and to ensure coherence needed to produce European statistics, the NSIs and the Bodies of Statistics as part of the ESS and the BNB, as part of the ESCB, cooperate closely in accordance with the principles defined in Article 3a of Council Regulation (EC) No 2533/98 of 23 November 1998 concerning the collection of statistical information by the European Central Bank.

By 2020 a leading role in the activities of NSS will have the following principles:

- Professional independence;
- Impartiality and objectivity;
- Commitment for high quality;
- Strictly observing the statistical confidentiality;
- Adequacy of resources;
- Cost effectiveness;
- Active cooperation and coordination within NSS and ESS.

The main objective for development of the NSS is to improve the development, production and dissemination of quality statistical information about all user groups according to their information needs.

The Strategy is elaborated by NSI, in pursuance of Art.7, para.1, p. 3 of the Law on Statistics. The BNB as a member of the ESCB does not participate in the production of European statistics under Regulation No 223/2009, but as a member of the National Statistical System participates in the preparation of the Strategy with comments and suggestions.

The BNB takes part in the implementation of the Strategy, taking into account the legal framework for the functioning of the ESCB and in accordance with Recital 9 of the Preamble to Regulation No 223/2009 as well as in the implementation of its commitments with Memoranda (agreements) concluded with NSI and Bodies of Statistics

The proposed amendment, by extending the Strategy until 2020, is harmonized with the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 99/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the European statistical programme 2013-2017 by extending the programme until 2020 incorporating new statistical products in accordance with the ten policy priorities, complemented by investments in statistical infrastructure and new statistical sources (and therefore increased budget).

OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NSS, 2008 - 2012

The main objective of development of the NSS in the period 2008-2012 was to improve the development, production and dissemination of statistical information about all user groups by improving the institutional capacity of the system and speeded implementation of contemporary information and communication technologies under the conditions of Bulgaria's full EU membership.

The development of the National Statistical System in the period 2008-2012 required implementation of the following **main objectives**:

- Developing the methodology, enriching the contents of the existing statistical surveys and implementing new surveys and indicators in compliance with users' needs and priorities of the Community Statistical Programme, 2008-2012.
- Improving the production, dissemination and storage of statistical information.
- Improving the environment, information infrastructure and availability of resources in the NSS.

The general horizontal priorities in development of the NSS in the period 2008 - 2012 were:

- Reduction of respondents' burden.
- Improvement of statistical information quality.
- Improvement of storage and dissemination of statistical information.
- Accelerated implementation of new ICT and integration of IT activities.
- Development of human resources and improvement of working conditions.
- Development of European partnership and international cooperation.
- Achievement of more effective interaction and coordination within NSS.
- Promotion of confidence in official statistics.
- During the period 2008 -2012, in parallel with the general horizontal priorities for development of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics, specific priorities were implemented in the various thematic fields related to developing the methodology and enriching the contents of the existing statistical surveys and implementing new surveys (43 in total) and new statistical indicators.

For the first time in 2008, NSI introduced:

- a pilot survey on companies, providing business services;
- a survey on enterprises under foreign control (FATS);
- a specialized survey on Bulgarian and foreign citizens, going out and entering Bulgaria;
- a special survey on persons graduated in education-qualification degree "Ph.D.";
- quarterly flash estimates on GDP;
- quarterly non-financial national accounts for institutional sectors General Government and of the World;
- seasonally adjusted quarterly data on GDP, employment and hours worked;
- for the first time NSI announced data on government deficit/surplus and debt of General Government sector, after a mission and recommendations made by the Statistical Office of EC (Eurostat), NSI to be a leading and responsible institution for data in the field of government finance statistics;
- started to implement the new Classification of economic activities (NACE-2008) and new Classification of products by economic activity – 2008;
- survey on social protection of population "**European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics**" (ESSPROS) in compliance with Regulation (EC) No 458/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the next two Regulations.

For the first time in 2009, NSI introduced:

- an on-line **Information System “Business Statistics”** for submitting annual accounting reports and statistical references from non-financial enterprises;
- a threshold simplifying the declaration of transactions with low values in the foreign trade that led to reduction of response burden;
- a new user-friendly website enriched with new thematic fields and data for previous periods with explanatory and methodological notes (metadata) of statistical indicators with option to download tables and charts;
- a new type of services for users, namely a direct access via website to the foreign trade database with option to compile references and tables containing detailed information on import and export;
- started to elaborate quarterly information on demographic processes, the population number and structures in the current year, as well as elaborated and published tables of population mortality by causes of death;
- prepared a multivariate projection of population development until 2060, in total for the country and by districts until 2020, based on the harmonized Eurostat methodology;
- developed and published on a pilot basis health accounts data for the period 2003-2007, by which all health expenditures were evaluated, as well as data on tourism satellite accounts, aiming at evaluation of all expenditures made before, during and after the tourism trips;
- implemented the new Classification of economic activities NACE – 2008 for all economic indicators and aggregated levels of business statistics and recalculated all time series with monthly and quarterly indicators by sections, as of 2000 to the new basis for comparison in EC (2005=100);
- successfully implemented in real operation a new **Information System “Consumer Prices”** for collecting, processing, analyzing, storing and disseminating statistical information on consumer prices, which speed up and simplified the processes of data collection and processing.

For the first time in 2010 NSI:

- implemented jointly with the National Revenue Agency, a project **“Single Entry Point”** for submitting the annual activity reports of enterprises only to one of the institutions, allowing a significant reduction of administrative respondents’ burden;
- successfully implemented in a real operation a new **Information System “Producer Price Indices”** for collecting, processing, checking and providing statistical information on producer prices in industry and services, which accelerated and facilitated data processing;
- carried out a calendar and seasonally adjusted time series in the short-term business statistics (SBS), based on a harmonized European methodology with data

on industrial production, construction production and the turnover in retail trade in the period 2000-2010;

- made the first self-assessment on the quality of statistical information within the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics;
- Bulgaria started to submit to Eurostat quarterly data on transit transport by inland waterways as a result of the agreement on exchange of statistical data concluded between the National Institute of Statistics of Romania and the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria;
- Successfully conducted an ad hoc module “Reconciliation between work and family life” to the labour force survey according to the Commission Regulation (EC) 207/2008;
- published information on main results of the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions conducted by unified methodology in all European countries. The survey aims to establish a common framework for systematic production of data on income and living conditions as a basis for the estimation of structural indicators for a comparative analysis at EU level on distribution of income and manifestation of poverty and social exclusion;
- elaborated and implemented seasonal adjusted quarterly GDP data, in total and by component, in the period 1997-2010 and seasonal adjusted data on business surveys’ results;
- elaborated and implemented a comprehensive revision of GDP data and its components by three methods from 1995 (quarterly and annual data). Additional estimates for data exhaustiveness in the field of national accounts were improved and implemented based on the results of successfully accomplished Twining project “Sustainable Development of the National Statistical System”, Component 3 “Improvement of Data Quality in the Field of National Accounts”;
- elaborated an on-line calculator for estimation of personal inflation and loaded it on the website of the institute. The project was realized with the financial support of the Operational Programme “Administrative Capacity”, co-financed by EU through the European Social Fund;
- implemented a system for management of user inquiries, elaborated on the basis of the best practice for „Support Center” and „IT Service Management”. In this way the infrastructure of the Support Center of the whole institution was established.

For the first time in 2011 NSI:

- the consecutive Population and Housing Census was conducted in a combined manner– by enumerators (traditional census) and via Internet;
- introduced in operation a Call Center in RSO-Varna, allowing the conduction of internet based and telephone interviews, using contemporary ICT;
- created new sections on the NSI website – Europe 2020, Sustainable Development, Statistics of Enterprises, Social Inclusion and Living Conditions in response to the growing interest of the users;

- introduced free using of all specialized issues in PDF format, published on the website of the institute;
- ensured a free access of all users to a digital version of the full collection of the Statistics Journal from 1929 to the present day;
- introduced the final version of Classification of economic activities NACE – 2008 for GDP calculation and other indicators in the field of national accounts for the period 1995 – 2011 according to the requirements of Regulation (EC) 1893/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- successfully carried out the ad-hoc module “Employment of disabled people” to the labour force survey according to Commission Regulation (EU) 317/2010 and started to work on the module “Transition from work to retirement” according to Commission Regulation (EU) 249/2011;
- started to announce on a regular basis quarterly seasonally and calendar adjusted data on the turnover in transport, communication and services;
- commenced anonymised data provision for scientific purposes from European health interview survey, labour force survey, etc.;
- provided to all users a free access via NSI website to the main results from the Census 2011, as well as from all censuses conducted in Bulgaria from the beginning of last century to nowadays.

For the first time in 2012 NSI:

- implemented a new on-line **Information System “Short-term Business Statistics”**, which includes all monthly and quarterly surveys in the field of business statistics. The information system facilitated significantly the data transmission among the enterprises and NSI, created the possibility to link the microdata from different surveys and to analyze the results;
- introduced an on-line application for data provision of monthly business surveys in industry, construction, retail trade and service sector in order to study and elaborate quality short-term projections of the business climate development in Bulgaria;
- successfully carried out the surveys: “Production and Sales of Energy Products” and “Characteristics of the solar panels”;
- started preparation of a system of indicators for monitoring the progress of Bulgaria in implementing the European objectives, outlined in the Europa 2020 Strategy and the national objectives;
- undertook activities related to the implementation and application of a new International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) which facilitates the comparisons between education systems and indicators of the countries based on definitions unified and agreed at international level;
- successfully conducted the ad hoc module on Transition from Work to Retirement to the Labour force survey;
- for the first time published data on three new indicators from the Labour force survey aiming at deeper characterization of different categories of persons according to their link to the labour market;

- created a new section “Quality” on the website of the institute, consisting of the revised version of the European Statistical Code of Practice and main strategic and methodological documents related to quality assurance in the NSS;
- carried out the first internal quality audit of the statistical surveys
- the National Statistical Institute and the Bodies of Statistics made a self-assessment on the implementation stage of the Principles of the European Statistical Code of Practice, related to the statistical processes.

One of the first chapters closed during the negotiation process for the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union was Chapter 12 “Statistics”. An important condition for establishing the confidence in the official statistics is to adhere strictly the scientific principles and to keep the adopted international and European methodologies and standards, ensuring transparency in the production of statistical information, as well as implementing effective policy on dissemination of information and users’ services

The European legislation in the field of statistics has a wide coverage and includes more than 540 legal acts. Bulgaria, as EU member state, implements fully standardized and harmonized statistical methods, methodologies and standards.

The National Statistical Programme includes statistical surveys with established public significance, and more than 95% of them are in meeting the commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria to the EU. The results from statistical surveys are validated by Eurostat, which ensures that the produced and disseminated statistical information in Bulgaria meets the European criteria and standards for quality

Bulgaria is an example of best practice in the field of statistics, namely:

- the implemented Single Entry Point for simultaneous submission of tax and statistical information, realized based on the information system “Business Statistics”, established by NSI;
- introducing the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) in compliance with the unified methodology approved by Eurostat;
- the on-line Census 2011 in Bulgaria was pointed out as best practice in the annual report of the International Telecommunication Union
- implementation of electronic devices for price registration as regards provision of statistical information on detailed product prices in order to increase data quality and shorten the time registration of prices.

In order to reduce the respondents’ burden related to the obligations of business and nonprofit enterprises and organizations, households and citizens to provide primary statistical data, NSI works in several main directions:

- usage and application of contemporary ICT to facilitate the respondents;
- optimization of statistical instrumentarium;
- optimization of the process of statistical information production;
- wider use of administrative data sources.

NSI actively takes part in the activity of the European Statistical System and successfully conducts a development policy for regional and bilateral cooperation.

In April 2012, Bulgaria was elected as a new member of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations for the period of four years, starting as of 1 January 2013.

In 2011, Bulgaria applied for obtaining a status of regular observer in the meeting of Committee on Statistics of the OECD.

Priority tasks for development of European partnership and international cooperation are the active participation of NSI in the preparation and adoption of new European legislation in the field of statistics, exchange of best practice and experience with other statistical institutes.

NSI participates in the implementation of various European projects. In the period 2008-2012 NSI has signed over **100 (one hundred)** contracts for the implementation of projects, financed by EC. Eurostat policy is directed to more active involvement of national statistical institutes in ESSnet projects that aim at reducing the financial resources and implementing the project results and benefits in the whole ESS. Bulgaria takes part as a partner in three ESSnet projects in the field of tourism statistics, exchange of statistical data and metadata and geostatistics with coordinating countries Spain, Italy and Norway.

NSI ensures methodological, methodical and technical assistance through different instruments for cooperation. (Twinning projects with Azerbaijan, Kosovo, Macedonia, Ukraine, etc., TAIEX - Jordan).

NSI has established itself as a reliable partner after implementing successfully the two-years twinning project “Support to the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SSC) to reach European standards in national accounts, non-observed economy, business statistics and producer price index”, accomplished by a consortium between the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and NSI as a junior partner/leader of the twinning project.

The international projects implemented by the BNB in the field of statistics, which are within its competence in the period 2008-2012, are listed in the section “International relations and participation in the ESCB” of the semi-annual and annual reports of the BNB which have been adopted by the Governing Council of the BNB.

SWOT analysis

Internal factors	
Strong points	Weak points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborated strategy and vision for development of statistics in the period 2008 – 2012 • Reduced respondents’ burden • Improved quality of statistical information • Improved storage and dissemination of statistical information • Accelerated implementation of new ICT and integration of IT activities • Good European partnership and international cooperation • Measures undertaken for more effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient monitoring of the approved strategy • Incomplete implementation of new types of communication with users and respondents according to changes in the communication channels, data processing and storage • Insufficient implementation of an integrated approach and mixed-mode of information from different resources • Insufficient effective interaction and coordination within NSS

interaction and cooperation within NSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High confidence to the official statistics • Development of methodology and enriching the contents of the existing statistical surveys and implementing new surveys and statistical indicators • Development of human resources and improvement of working conditions • Opportunities for career development and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak participation of the representatives of academic society in the development of methodology of statistical surveys • Insufficient joint participation of NSI experts, Bodies of Statistics and university lecturers in scientific conferences • Outdated NSI organization structure, including at regional level
External factors	
Opportunities	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing objective, timely and reliable statistical information on economic, social and demographic development at national and regional level • Using new data sources and tools to improve production and increase the quality of statistical products and services • Strengthening professional and organizational capacity of the National Statistical System • Implementing innovative and effective information and communication technologies and e-services • Increasing the cost effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to cover the increasing needs of statistical information • Reducing the respondents' burden together with ensuring the quality of statistical information • Occurrence of so-called "competitors" of official statistics in producing the information • Globalisation and arising of new phenomena and processes • Measuring the effective use of natural and human capital • Insufficient ensured resources such as a quantity and quality loss of administrative capacity

INTERACTION, COORDINATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN NSS

In order to achieve greater consistency of activities and deadlines for production of statistical information, the NSI agreements with the Bodies of Statistics and other state institutions are updated - Memorandum of Cooperation between NSI, BNB and MF **on the basis of a Eurostat recommendation.**

In 2012 an interinstitutional working group was established, consisting of representatives from the three institutions working for the Memorandum of Cooperation.

In order to implement the Eurostat decisions on the quality management of statistical data for the purposes of government finance statistics and provision of reliable information from administrative sources, a Cooperation Agreement between NSI and the National Audit Office was signed in 2012.

NSI and the Bodies of Statistics jointly prepare and participate in European programmes and projects related to the development of statistical methods, elaboration of new statistical indicators and conduction of new surveys.

In order to achieve greater consistency of activities and deadlines for production of statistical information, the NSI agreements with the Bodies of Statistics and other state institutions are updated.

NSI takes active part in the work of different interinstitutional commissions and thematic working groups.

NSI participates in the interinstitutional working groups in order to prepare the strategic documents for structural and sectoral programmes of the European Commission until 2020.

In accordance with the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and the European Central Bank and according to the Law on the Bulgarian National Bank, the Bulgarian National Bank acts as a contact point with the ECB on the statistical information within its competence.

Given the fact that the NSI is a member of the ESS and the BNB – member of the ESCB, the two institutions within the Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics cooperate on the topics of mutual interest discussed by this Committee.

Demographic statistics

- Agreement between the Ministry of Interior (MI) and NSI regarding information exchange

NSI obtains data on all foreigners and EU citizens with residence status granted in the Republic of Bulgaria, which has not expired at the time of the sample recorded in the Unified Foreign Citizens Register" of the MI, necessary for the production of statistics on foreign migration.

- Agreement between NSI and the Ministry of Regional Development (MRD) regarding provision of current data exchange

NSI obtains data from registers at national level - National Database "Population", supported by Directorate General "Civil Registration and Administrative Services" (DG CRAS) at the MRD, needed to produce statistics on demographic events.

Population income and expenditures

- The National Social Security Institute (NSSI) provides to NSI information on the amount of pensions, supplements to the pensions and additional compensations and benefits by type and month from the Pension Register, as well as annual data on persons obtaining compensations and benefits according to the Social Insurance Code (register for compensations) for the purposes of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions.
- The National Revenue Agency (NRA) submits information on persons that provide annual tax declarations, as well as data on ensured persons in order to add and validate the missing information on income from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions, conducted in 2012.

Education, culture and information society

- NSI receives from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Finance (MF) data on public and private expenditures in the field of education.
- NSI obtains annual data on publishing activities in the country from the St. St. Cyril and Methodius National Library. Exhaustive information (database) on produced books and ongoing (periodical) editions, deposited in the National Library, is provided.

Health statistics

- NSI obtains information on “Accidents at work” registered by NSSI.
- The National Center of Public Health and Analysis (NCPHA) carries out statistical surveys on activities of health establishments and population morbidity of diseases with social significance.

Macroeconomic and business statistics

- Memorandum on cooperation between NSI, BNB and MF in the field of government finance statistics and financial national accounts.
- Agreement on cooperation and strategic partnership regarding information exchange between NSO and the National Audit Office for the purposes of data on deficit/surplus and debt in General Government sector in order to achieve optimal organization and coordination of the interaction between the two institutions.
- Agreement on information exchange between BNB and NSI in the field of macroeconomic and business statistics.
- Agreement on information exchange between NSI and NSSI. Significant emphasis is placed on coordination between both institutions in developing the methodology for calculation of pension rights in Bulgaria in pursuance of the introduction of the European System of National and Economic Accounts 2010.
- Agreement on cooperation and information exchange between NSI and the Customs Agency about import and export of goods from and to the Community and third countries.
- Guidelines for interaction between NSI and NRA as regards the operation of Intrastat system (intra-Community trade).
- Agreement between NSI and MI on data provision of passenger flows at borders by countries and by reasons for travelling.
- Agreement between NSI and the Registry Agency related to data provision from Trade Register and BULSTAT register.
- Agreement between NSO and NSSI on information provision from personal register of insured persons.

- Agreement between NSI and the National Employment Agency at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy as regards information provision on registered unemployed persons.

Statistics of agriculture, forestry and fishery

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Foods develops and disseminates statistical information on employment and land use, crops, livestock, incomes of farms, organic farming, as well as conduction of sample and exhaustive surveys of the agricultural holdings' structure.
- The main responsibilities of NSI are in the field of satellite accounts in agriculture and forestry, prices and indices in agriculture and statistics on development of rural areas.
- NSI carries out information exchange with the Executive Forestry Agency and the Executive Agency on Fishery and Aquaculture.

Environment statistics and environmental accounts

- The Ministry of Environment and Water (MEW) and the Executive Environment Agency coordinate the overall activity on development and monitoring of the implementation of policies and programmes in the field of environment and play a leading role in collecting, publishing and disseminating information on the environment status.
- MEW and NSI carry out development, production and dissemination of statistical information in the field of environment and water in pursuance with the existing European legislation and concluded agreement.

Transport statistics

NSI conducts statistical surveys in the field of transport based on the information exchange and close cooperation with:

- Directorate General “Civil Aviation Administration” at the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications (MTITC) as regards the activity on civil aviation in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Executive Agency “Maritime Transport” at the MTITC as regards the activities on maritime and river ports;
- National Agency “Road Infrastructure” - data on national road network by class and type of road surface.
- National Agency “Railway Infrastructure” - data on the length of the railway lines, in total for the country and by regions;
- Executive Agency “Automobile Administration” at the MTITC - data on licensed carriers of passengers and goods for national and international transportation; data on

the number of licensed taxi carriers and cars owned by them;

- Communication Regulation Commission - data on licensed operators, carrying out universal and non-universal postal services;
- MI, General Directorate National Police - data on road accidents, persons killed and injured; data on registered vehicles;
- MI, Communication and Information System Directorate - data on registered vehicles needed for conducting a sample survey of road freight transport.

PART I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CHALLENGES IN FRONT OF NSS

1.1. Legal and institutional framework

The statistical activity in the Republic of Bulgaria is regulated by the Law on Statistics (promulgated, State Gazette No 57/1999, last amended, State Gazette No 38/18.05.2012 in force from 1 July 2012, supplemented, State Gazette No 15/15.02.2013 in force from 1 January 2014), Article 42 of the Law on the Bulgarian National Bank, Law for Protection of Personal Data, Electronic Government Act and a significant number of EC Regulations in the field of statistics.

In pursuance of the law, the statistical activity in the Republic of Bulgaria is carried out by NSI, Bodies of Statistics and BNB.

NSI has a status of a state agency, which consists of Head Office and 6 Regional Statistical Offices, defined by Council of Ministers Decree No 272 of 8 October 2015, according to the the European Classification of Territorial Units for statistical purposes in Bulgaria (NUTS), approved by the President's of the NSI Order № ПД 07-24/17.01.2013, promulgated in State Gazette No 13/08.02.2013, in force from 12 February 2013 as follows:

1. The RSO - Severozapad with the center the city of Pleven;
2. The RSO - Sever with the center the city of Ruse;
3. The RSO - Severoiztok with the center the city of Varna;
4. The RSO - Jugoiztok with the center the city of Burgas;
5. The RSO - Jug with the center the city of Plovdiv;
6. The RSO - Jugozapad with the center Sofia-city.

The Bodies of Statistics are state bodies or structural units in ministries, institutions or other central or territorial bodies of the executive authorities, which carry out a statistical activity.

The Bodies of Statistics are defined as such and included within NSS by an Order of the Prime Minister, according to Art.3, para. 3 of the Law on Statistics and based on a joint proposal, made by the heads of respective institution and NSI President for a period of five years.

According to the Law on Statistics the National Statistical Council operates attached to NSI President. The Council is a consultative body and has a function to give opinions and recommendations on the Strategy for Development of NSS for each period of five years and

to discuss and support the implementation of the annual National Statistical Programme. The National Statistical Council consists of representatives of all Bodies of Statistics, BNB, academic society and different groups of respondents and users.

The Bulgarian National Bank, as a member of the ESCB, develops, produces and disseminates statistical information in accordance with Article 5 of Protocol No. 4 on the Statute of the ESCB and of the ECB and according to Article 42 of the Law on the BNB.

The relations between institutions within the National Statistical System should be based on contractual relations, taking into account the mutual interests and existing legal frameworks.

1.2. Challenges in front of NSS until 2020

Changes in economic, social sphere and environment require strengthening the significance and the role of the official statistics as follows:

- Orientation to changing public needs from statistical information.
- Production of statistical data with proved quality and according to the international standards regarding the provision of comparable and reliable data in compliance with the strict standards for confidentiality and protection of information
- Cost effectiveness.
- Improving the consistency and harmonization of statistical data among members of the NSS and streamlining of national processes to produce official statistics.
- Better use of existing data sources, as well as reducing administrative burden for respondents and statisticians.

Characterization of new phenomena and processes such as globalization, economy of knowledge, well-being and quality of life requires to implement an integrated approach and to combine information from different sources. Priority importance shall be given to the development of social statistics as regards the recommendations made in Europa 2020 Strategy and the Commission Communication on GDP and beyond - Measuring progress in a changing world. It is envisaged to improve the timeliness, to expand the opportunities for measuring the well-being and quality of life, to carry out activities included in the declaration, adopted in Malta, as regards migration, development of health and education statistics.

The new types of communication with users and respondents and the other achievements in the information technologies will bring to significant changes in the communication channels, data processing and storage.

The main challenges that will determine the development of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics until 2020 are, as follows:

- 1. Increasing needs and deepening users interest in official statistics**

- Needs for complex and various statistical information for the purposes of development, monitoring and evaluation of the policy and programmes at national and regional level.
- Necessity of development of an integrated system of indicators for measuring the progress towards green economy and green growth as regards the sustainable development.
- Harmonization of the main areas of business statistics through a common legal framework, improving the quality and standardization of business registers through common definitions.
 - Wider exchange of microdata that can be identifiable, structured and integrated.
- Multiple use of statistical data for different purposes by both internal and external to the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics users.
 - Harmonization of the household and individuals surveys through a common legal framework, improvement of quality, timeliness of output data and standardization of variables.
 - Provision of reliable, timely and precise information on the needs of macroeconomic analysis and taking informed decisions in the field of economic and social policy and protection of the environment in Bulgaria and EU.
 - Linking statistical and geospatial information.
 - Provision of anonymised microdata for research purposes.
 - Application of statistical and econometric methods for evaluation of statistical data.
 - Strengthening the cooperation of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics with other statistical offices - members of the ESS and beyond in the area of dissemination of statistical information in order to increase the recognition of official statistics not only in Europe but also worldwide.
- The Republic of Bulgaria shall comply with the basic requirements of the Special Data Dissemination Standard - Plus of the IMF - the highest level for disclosure of statistical data according to data standards initiatives.
- Providing flexibility in statistical surveys planning and improving timeliness of results in order to meet the user needs of statistical information.
- Additional upgrading and wider use of new data sources (including "large data sets").
- Combining different data sources in the production of statistical information: administrative data, big data, sampling statistical surveys.

2. Appearance of so-called “competitors” in the official statistics when producing information imposes to:

- Establish the official statistics as a source of quality statistical information.

- Use of new information and communication technologies to collect, process and publish statistical data.
- Increase the statistical literacy of users and their criticality towards data provided in the information space.

3. Reduction of respondents' burden ensuring the quality of statistical information:

- Extending the scope of administrative sources used and applying the measures for improvement of data quality, obtained by them.
- Consolidation of household surveys, providing primary data on quality and living conditions of the population.
- Optimization of data used from the administrative registers and information systems and linking the data from different sources for statistical purposes by:
 - implementing contemporary information and communication technologies in the production of statistical information;
 - providing e-services;
 - optimizing statistical instrumentarium.
- The priority projects in the field of statistics compiled by the BNB as part of the ESCB are determined by a decision of the BNB Governing Council.

PART II. OBJECTIVES AND HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

2.1. Main objectives

Development of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics until 2020 imposes the implementation of the following main objectives:

Objective 1: Provision of objective, timely and reliable statistical information on the economic, social and demographic development and environment at national and regional level.

Objective 2: Implementation of new data sources and instruments for improving the production and increasing the quality of statistical products and services.

Objective 3: Enhancing the professional and organizational capacity of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.

Objective 4: Implementation of innovative and effective information and communication technologies and e-services.

Objective 5. Harmonization of the data collected and adoption of common data quality standards that will enable to link different business, social and macroeconomic statistics, to increase the value of the information collected and to extend its use.

The main objectives for the development of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics are defined based on the user needs, priorities in the European Statistical Programme in the period 2013-2017, the significance of providing quality statistical information for development, monitoring and evaluation of different policies, the extent of respondents' burden and the expenditures for conduction of surveys.

The main objectives, outlined in the Strategy for Development of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics will be implemented by achieving particular horizontal and specific priorities.

2.2. Horizontal priorities

Priorities to Objective 1: Provision of objective, timely and reliable statistical information on the economic, social and demographic development and environment at national and regional level.

Priority 1.1. Provision of statistical indicators for development, monitoring and evaluation of European, national and regional policies:

- Indicators regarding Europa 2020 Strategy.
- Indicators regarding National Programme for Development of the Republic of Bulgaria: Bulgaria 2020.
- Indicators for measuring the progress on the implementation of the objectives, outlined in the National Reform Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) and Convergency Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria.
 - Indicator system to monitor the progress in the area of sustainable development under the UN program “Sustainable Development Goals 2030”.
 - Indicators for identifying the macroeconomic imbalances.
 - Indicators for measuring and monitoring the progress towards green economy and green growth.
 - Monitoring and evaluation of performance indicators under Operational Programs.

Priority 1.2. Updating the existing ones and development of indicators for surveys on new phenomena and processes:

- Enriching the contents of the existing statistical information in response to information demand of users.
- Development of indicators in order to describe the new phenomena and processes.

- Updating the existing ones and development of new indicators in order to survey on globalization of the economy and global values chains.
- Development of indicators for studying and evaluating the entrepreneurship and competitiveness.
- Development and dissemination of statistical information as regards the energy intensity of the economy at national level and the energy from renewable energy sources (green energy).
- Implementation of methodological improvements to GDP and GNI data related to Eurostat's methodological and verification missions.
 - Development of methodology for calculation of pension rights in the Republic of Bulgaria and provision of relevant indicators included in the Eurostat's Transmission programme of national accounts data - table 29.
 - Development of additional indicators in the field of the environment.

Priority 1.3. Extending the scope of provided statistical products and services, and strengthening the communication with users:

- Application of innovative approaches and decisions by developing and implementing an electronic portal “e-dissemination” in order to provide an on-line public access to the statistical information.
- Using tools for data visualization and facilitating users of their interpretation.
- Turning the Internet in a main source for dissemination of statistical products and services and communication.
- Extending the opportunities of using the anonymised microdata for scientific and research purposes.
- Increasing the statistical literacy of all user groups.
- Effectiveness, partnership and permanent two-way communication with the media.
- Enlarging the set of regional information for users by building up information database for regions, districts and municipalities in Bulgaria.
- Active dialogue with users of statistical information by organizing seminars and trainings, providing a direct relation between statisticians and users of statistical information.
- The organization of envisaged seminars and training, providing a direct relation between statisticians and users of statistical information, will be specified in the Action Plan on implementation of the Strategy.

- Active dialogue with users of statistical information in order to respond to their requests in a cost-effective and responsive way.
- Providing information in an interactive and easily understandable way by development and implementation of innovative products and services.
- Dissemination of information through “open data” and “linked open data” in order to increase confidence in official statistics and enable users to develop their own products based on statistical data.
- Establishing the NSS as the sole official source of statistical data for all user groups by providing high-quality statistical information products and services.

Priority 1.4. Establishing conditions for production and integration of spatial (georeferenced) information with statistical information:

- Using the infrastructure for spatial information in European Community (INSPIRE), in particular via an EU geoportal.
- Integration of statistical data, when applicable, in order to establish an infrastructure with multiple information sources for providing a spatial and temporal analysis.
- Enlarging the use and dissemination of regional geo-referenced statistical information.

Priority 1.5. Preparation for Population and Housing Census 2021.

Priority 1.6. Building and maintaining the level of administrative capacity to implement the Eurostat requirements on provision of national accounts data.

Priority to Objective 2: Implementation of new data sources and instruments for improving the production and increasing the quality of statistical products and services.

Priority 2.1. Expanding the use of administrative registers and information systems for statistical purposes:

- Implementation of combined methods for data collection.
- Combining data from different information sources.
- Extending the data use from administrative sources.
- Pilot studies on obtaining and using scanned data via web-scraping techniques.

Priority 2.2. Using innovative ICT and instruments for collection of primary data:

- Development of web-based applications for data entry and wider use of electronic forms.
- Development of information systems by using approved standards for submission and dissemination of statistical data, for example SDMX.

- Implementation of innovative methods in surveys (CATI, CAPI, CAWI).
- Using tablets and mobile devices for data collection, development and implementation of applications for mobile devices.
- Wider exchange of microdata for statistical purposes not only in the NSI and the Bodies of statistics, but also in the ESS.

Priority 2.3. Implementing a systematic approach for quality management and control in the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics:

- Implementing a systematic approach for quality management, based on the national framework for quality provision.
- Establishing a system for quality management in production of statistical information products.
- Implementing an annual monitoring on implementation of European Statistics Code of Practice in the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.
- Standardizing the quality reports in the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.
- Recording the quality of statistical products and processes in the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.
- Conducting quality audits of statistical products and processes.
- Organizing and participating in trainings and courses in the field of quality.
- Publishing information on quality of statistical information, provided by NSI, Bodies of Statistics and BNB.
- Harmonizing social, business and macroeconomic statistics by usage of common definitions, exchange of identifiable, integrated and timely microdata.

Priority to Objective 3. Enhancing the professional and organizational capacity of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.

Priority 3.1. Establishing a motivating work environment and development of professional capacity of the employees in the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics:

- Development of the qualification of the staff in order to apply the new information and communication technologies.
- Elaboration and implementation of the strategy on development and management of human resources, including management capacity in the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.
- Development of standards as regards planning of the necessary human resources.

- Implementation of an automated system for human resource management and introduction of new high technologies in the processes of internal and external communication between the employees in the NSI and between the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.
- Implementation of a system for evaluation of turnover, satisfaction from work and working conditions.
- Development of training programmes of new employees and training programmes in order to support and develop the qualification as regards statistical processes.

Priority 3.2. Adapting the organisation of work in the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics towards contemporary information and communication technologies:

- Provision of recent technological products, resources and services as regards the working process.
- Provision to the employees an opportunity to work on a distance (a mobile workplace) in compliance with the security requirements.
- Use of personal mobile devices at the workplace.
- Enlargement and improvement of used analytical platforms for statistical data processing.

Priority 3.3. Cooperation and partnership between institutions of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics and users:

- Active partnership and cooperation between NSI, Bodies of Statistics and BNB as regards the information exchange when participating in European and national projects and elaboration and implementation of the annual National statistical programme.
- Active participation in the National Statistical Council when taking decisions in the field of statistics and strengthening the confidence in official statistics.
- Cooperation and partnership with ministries, institutions and other central and regional authorities of the executive power that support information registers and databases in order to automate the information exchange among institutions and use the administrative sources for statistical purposes.
- Strengthening the partnership with the external users regarding the conduction of specialized surveys in the social field for the purposes of elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes at national and regional level.
- Development of statistical production model.
- Development of uniform standards for the dissemination of statistical information within the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.

Priority 3.4. Establishment of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics as an active member of the European Statistical System and the international statistical community:

- Participation in the preparation and discussion of EU legal acts in the field of statistics by active partnership within ESS.

- Participation in strategic statistical committees and working groups to develop common policies and instruments related to the further ESS development.

- NSI participation as a partner country to the statistical institutes of EU member-states in the implementation of European projects in the field of statistics.

- Strengthening the cooperation within the ESS in order to ensure public confidence in official statistics by developing a unified strategy for communication and dissemination, as well as "branding" of "European statistics".

- Strengthening the bilateral cooperation by signing cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding.

- Increasing the NSI participation in European projects in countries from the West Balkans, EU neighbourhood policy and Eastern Partnership, European Neighbourhood policy – South.

- Organization and successful conduct of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2018.

Priority 3.5. Active cooperation with the academic society in the development of new statistical methods, products and services:

- Participation of representatives of the academic society in the development of methodology of statistical surveys.
- Joint participation of NSI experts and Bodies of Statistics, lecturers and researchers in scientific conferences and other events.
- Involvement of lecturers in conduction of short-term courses on statistics and macroeconomics in order to increase the qualification of NSI experts.
- Involvement of students as trainees at NSI.

Priorities to Objective 4. Implementation of innovative and effective information and communication technologies and e-services.

Priority 4.1. Development of information systems and e-services in order to reduce the respondents' burden, increase the quality of statistical information and improve the methods of its dissemination:

- Implementation of e-services for collection of statistical information from e-government registers in order to implement the Road Map for accomplishing the Common Strategy for E-government in the Republic of Bulgaria 2014-2020.

- Implementation of e-services on joining the Registry Agency to the "Single entry point" between the National Revenue Agency and the National Statistical Institute for submission of annual financial statements in pursuance with the requirements of the Electronic Governance Act on electronic services at one desk and multiple use of collected data.

- Implementation of government systems and optimization of work with users of statistical information.

- Development of an electronic diary and implementation of combined methods for carrying out surveys in households.

- Introduction of the best practices for servicing the respondents such as a Support Center for implementation of a single entry point for contact, providing assistance and solving problems.

- Implementation of Internet services in order to provide information to the society and for information exchange between organizations by electronic portal “e-dissemination” as a component of e-government.

- Introduction of videoconference connections related to conducting e-conferences, e-seminars, etc.

- Development and implementation of e-services for dissemination and exchange of statistical data and metadata in contemporary standards for submission and information exchange (HTML5, SVG, SDMX, DSPL, KML, etc.)

Priority 4.2. Implementation of unified European IT tools, products and standards in order to ensure conditions for integration and harmonisation of statistical production process in the framework of ESS:

- Integration and harmonization of statistical production process by using operational compatible and shared tools and services in compliance with the new model of the business architecture of ESS.

- Use of common IT tools elaborated and provided by ESS, aimed at industrialization of statistical production process.

- Implementation of modern and innovative solutions to ensure process integration.

- Contribution to improving the comparability of statistics at European level in new areas covered by the ESP.

- Implementation of standards for data provision and storage approved by ESS.

- Adoption of common standards for data quality, which will enable to increase the value of the information collected and will expand its multiple use.

Priority 4.3. Increasing the effectiveness and allocation of resources in the data center by implementation of best practice and technologies for infrastructure management:

- Visualization of the infrastructure and provision of reliability and scale of the required resources in mode 24/7/365.

- Study the possibilities to use and implement technologies and services, accessible via Internet, the so-called “cloud computer technologies” for provision of centralized services.

- Implementation of own cloud infrastructure so-called “private cloud” for provision of centralized services to RSO and mobile workplaces.
- Cost reduction related to maintenance, monitoring and administration.

Priority 4.4. Development and upgrading of server and communication infrastructure and personal equipment in order to ensure the ICT development and provision of new services:

- Supply of servers, systems for data storage at corporation level, communication equipment for provision of high-speed and reliable networks.
- Introduction of innovative personal devices at workplaces.
- Step by step transition towards “green” ICT.

Along with the general horizontal priorities for development of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics indicated in the second part, each separate statistical thematic field has specific priorities that are related to the methodology development, enrichment of the contents of the existing surveys, implementation of ad-hoc modules and enlargement of the existing surveys, implementation of new surveys and indicators.

The Strategy for development of the NSS until 2020 will be accomplished by the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics through the implementation of the elaborated action plan. The action plan includes description of the priority directions, deadlines for implementation, expected results and responsible institution. The priority directions are grouped into the following thematic fields:

- Demographic and social statistics
- Macroeconomic statistics
- Business statistics
- Statistics of agriculture, forestry and fishery
- Multi-domain statistics
- Statistical infrastructure.

The Bulgarian National Bank participates in the implementation of the Strategy by taking into account the legal framework for the functioning of the ESCB and in accordance with Recital 9 of the Preamble to Regulation No 223/2009, as well as in implementation of the commitments made by Memorandums (agreements) concluded with the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics.

PART III. RESOURCES, ORGANISATION AND MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The Strategy for Development of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics until 2020 will be implemented based on the developed Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy. The

Strategy is an open document, which contents could be updated in response of the increased new needs and tasks.

Active participation of the NSI and the Bodies of Statistics and strengthening of cooperation and partnership within the National Statistical System are important prerequisites for the successful implementation of the Strategy.

The control and monitoring of the Strategy will be done by NSI. The implementation of the outlined objectives and priorities will be discussed by the National Statistical Council and will be reported annually in the report on implementation of the National Statistical Programme and for the NSI activities.

Annex 1. UN Fundamental Principles of the Official Statistics

UN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPALS OF THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The Fundamental Principles of the Official Statistics were adopted by the Statistical Commission of the United Nations in April 1994.

Principle 1: Relevance, impartiality and equal access

Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.

Principle 2: Professional standards and ethics

To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

Principle 3: Accountability and transparency

To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

Principle 4: Prevention of misuse

The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

Principle 5: Source of official statistics

Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

Principle 6: Confidentiality

Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

Principle 7: Legislation

The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.

Principle 8: National coordination

Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

Principle 9: Use of international standards

The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

Principle 10: International cooperation

Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

Annex 2. Principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice

PRINCIPLES OF THE EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE¹

The European Statistics Code of Practice was adopted by the Statistical Programme Committee on 24 February 2005. The revised version of the document was accepted by the European Statistical System Committee in September 2011.

The European Statistics Code of Practice is based on **15 Principles** covering the **institutional environment, the statistical production processes and the output of statistics**. For each of the Principles there are indicators that are used to monitor the implementation of the Code (the indicators are not pointed out in the Annex)².

Statistical authorities, comprising the Commission (Eurostat), National Statistical Institutes and other national authorities responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics, together with governments, ministries and the European Council, **commit themselves to adhere to the Code**.

The Principles of the Code of Practice together with the general quality management principles represent a **common quality framework in the European Statistical System**.

Principle 1: Professional independence

Professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European Statistics.

Principle 2: Mandate for data collection

Statistical authorities have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.

Principle 3: Adequacy of resources

The resources available to statistical authorities are sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.

Principle 4: Commitment to quality

Statistical authorities are committed to quality. They systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality.

Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality

¹ In accordance with the Public Commitment by the ESCB (Annex 4), without prejudice to [Protocol on the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank](#) (hereinafter referred to as the "Statute"), the BNB, as part of the ESCB, collaborates with the European Statistical System, which comprises Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the European Union), the NSI and other national statistical authorities, and takes account of the principles laid down in the [European Statistics Code of Practice for the National and Community Statistical Authorities](#).

² The European Statistics Code of Practice is loaded on the NSI web page: http://www.nsi.bg/files/Quality/1.1.%20CoP_ALL_BG.pdf.

The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes are absolutely guaranteed.

Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity

Statistical authorities develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.

Principle 7: Sound methodology

Sound methodology underpins quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.

Principle 8: Appropriate statistical procedures

Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, underpin quality statistics.

Principle 9: Non-excessive burden on respondents

The reporting burden is proportionate to the needs of the users and is not excessive for respondents. The statistical authorities monitor the response burden and set targets for its reduction over time.

Principle 10: Cost effectiveness

Resources are used effectively.

Principle 11: Relevance

European Statistics meet the needs of users.

Principle 12: Accuracy and reliability

European Statistics accurately and reliably portray reality.

Principle 13: Timeliness and punctuality

European Statistics are released in a timely and punctual manner.

Principle 14: Coherence and comparability

European Statistics are consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it is possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.

Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity

European Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.

Annex 3. List of Bodies of Statistics

List of the structural units at the State Administration, which are Bodies of Statistics according to the Law on Statistics, Article 3, Para 3

Adopted by the Prime Minister of Bulgaria with Order № P-10 of 9 January 2009; amend. by the Prime Minister of Bulgaria with Order № P-10 of 18 January 2018

Bodies of Statistics	Administration
Intrastat Directorate at National Revenue Agency	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
Information systems and analytic activity Directorate at National Customs Agency	
Agrostatistics Department at Directorate General Agriculture and Regional Policy	MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY
National Health Data and E-Health Directorate at National Center of Public Health and Analyses and Medical Activities Directorates at Regional Health Inspectorates	MINISTRY OF HEALTH
Executive Agency "Maritime administration"	MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS
Administrative, Legal services and Financial Directorate at Directorate General "Civil Aviation Administration"	
Analysis, Planning and Prognosis Directorate	NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY INSTITUTE
Monitoring and Assessments of Environment Directorate at Executive Environment Agency	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

Annex 4. Public commitment on European Statistics by the ESCB

Public commitment on European Statistics by the ESCB

The ESCB's statistical function is based on a legal mandate to collect all necessary and relevant data in order to produce and disseminate impartial, reliable, appropriate, timely, consistent and accessible statistics in the areas under the ESCB's responsibility. Where appropriate, these statistics comply with European and internationally agreed standards, guidelines and good practices. The independence granted to the ESCB under Article 130 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union entails, among other things, that there is no political interference in the compilation and dissemination of statistical information.

The ESCB attaches great importance to the quality of its statistics. It therefore takes into consideration internationally agreed quality standards, such as those formulated in the IMF's [Special Data Dissemination Standard](#) and [Data Quality Assessment Framework](#) which are in turn rooted in the [UN's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics](#). Without prejudice to the [Protocol on the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank](#) (hereinafter referred to as "the Statute"), it collaborates with the European Statistical System (ESS), which comprises Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the European Union (EU)), the national statistical institutes and other national statistical authorities, and takes account of the principles laid down in the [European Statistics Code of Practice for the National and Community Statistical Authorities](#).

The ESCB aims to perform its statistical function effectively and to use resources efficiently when collecting, compiling and disseminating statistics. In accordance with primary and secondary EU law (Article 130 of the Treaty and Article 5 of the Statute, and Council Regulation 2533/98 as amended by Council Regulation 951/2009 respectively), the aim is to collect the necessary statistical information of an appropriate quality while keeping the reporting burden on respondents to a minimum, guaranteeing their privacy and protecting the confidentiality of the non-public information they provide. The possible reuse, for administrative purposes, of confidential statistical information supplied by individual reporters to the ESCB is limited to information on businesses that would otherwise have to submit the same information to the ESCB twice (e.g. for minimum reserves purposes) and must be provided by law. In addition, the ESCB guarantees that confidential statistical information provided by an ESS authority is used for statistical purposes only.

In the performance of its statistical function the ESCB is committed to good governance and the highest ethical standards, as well as to executing its tasks in a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. In short, and in line with the [Eurosystem Mission Statement](#), ESCB statistics are governed by a set of principles referring to the ESCB's institutional environment, statistical processes and statistical output.

Institutional environment

The institutional set-up in which statistics are produced has a significant impact on their quality. The institutional environment significantly affects the integrity and credibility of the production and dissemination of statistics. The relevant principles that apply are:

Principle 1: Professional independence

"Professional independence" has two dimensions in the context of the ESCB's statistical function. First, the independence of the ESCB is guaranteed by Article 130 of the Treaty and Article 7 of the Statute. This applies to all tasks performed by the ESCB and implies that there is to be no political interference in the ESCB's performance of its statistical function. In accordance with the Statute, the ESCB shall not "seek or take instructions from EU institutions, bodies, offices or agencies from any government of a Member State or from any other body". Second, the production of ESCB statistics must meet the criterion of scientific independence, which implies that the choice of sources,

definitions, methodologies and statistical techniques for the development and production of ESCB statistics, as well as decisions about the timing and content of all forms of dissemination, must be guided solely by statistical considerations.

Indicators:

1. The independence of the ESCB statistical function from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating European statistics is guaranteed by law.
2. The ESCB statistical function has responsibility for ensuring that European statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner.
3. The ESCB statistical function has the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.
4. The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.
5. Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.
6. The ESCB, when appropriate, comments publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of official European statistics.

Principle 2: Mandate for data collection

“Mandate for data collection” means that the ESCB must have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Moreover, it is empowered to impose sanctions on reporting agents which fail to comply with their obligations.

Indicators:

1. The mandate of the ESCB to collect information for the production and dissemination of European statistics is specified in law.
2. On the basis of a legal act, the ESCB may compel the response to statistical surveys.

Principle 3: Adequacy of resources

“Adequacy of resources” means that human and financial resources, facilities and the IT infrastructure are used as efficiently as possible and are commensurate with the statistical work programme.

Indicators:

1. Skilled staff, and financial and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current European statistical needs.
2. The scope, detail and cost of European statistics are commensurate with needs.
3. Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new European statistics against their cost.
4. Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all European statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.

Principle 4: Commitment to quality

“Commitment to quality” means that the ESCB statistical function is committed to quality. It systematically and regularly identifies strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality.

Indicators:

1. Quality policy is defined and made available to the public.
2. Procedures are in place to plan and monitor the quality of the statistical production process.
3. Product quality is regularly monitored, assessed and reported upon according to the ESCB quality criteria.
4. There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs.

Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality

“Statistical confidentiality” means the protection of confidential statistical information that relates to single statistical units and is collected by ESCB members either directly from reporting agents or indirectly from ESS authorities or other national/international entities. Confidential statistical information that is transmitted between an ESS authority and an ESCB member should not be used for purposes that are not exclusively statistical, such as for administrative or tax purposes, for legal proceedings or for verification or sanctioning in accordance with Articles 6 and 7 of Council Regulation 2533/98. Such information should only be accessible to those staff performing statistical tasks within the specific domain to which the information relates. Moreover, the ESCB must take all regulatory, administrative, technical and organisational measures that are necessary to protect confidential statistical information from unlawful disclosure or use.

Indicators:

1. Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed by law.
2. Staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.
3. Penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality.
4. Guidelines and instructions are provided to staff on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. The confidentiality policy is made known to the public.
5. Physical, technological and organisational provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases.
6. Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.
7. At least once a year the ECB decision-making bodies publish a report on the application of the principle of statistical confidentiality.

Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity

“Impartiality” means that ESCB statistics must be developed, produced and disseminated in a neutral

manner. Furthermore, they must be equally accessible to all users in order to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the policy decisions of which they form the basis.

“Objectivity” means that ESCB statistics must be developed, produced and disseminated in a systematic, reliable and unbiased manner. It implies adherence to professional and ethical standards and that the policies and practices followed are transparent to users and respondents.

Indicators:

1. Statistics are collected, compiled and disseminated on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.
2. Choices of sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are informed by statistical considerations.
3. Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.
4. Information on the methods and procedures used is publicly available.
5. Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.
6. Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies, source data and techniques.
7. All European statistics are made available to all users. Any privileged pre-release access is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.
8. Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.
9. Special press briefings are held to announce and explain major new statistical releases.

Statistical processes

The processes used for the development, collection, processing and dissemination of statistics constitute the core of all statistical systems. The relevant principles are:

Principle 7: Sound methodology

“Sound methodology” means that, in developing and compiling statistics, the ESCB shall use a sound statistical methodology based on ESCB and EU legislation and standards, and/or internationally agreed standards, guidelines or best practice.

Indicators:

1. The overall methodological framework used for European statistics follows European and other international standards, guidelines and good practices. It takes account of the views of ESCB users.
2. Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied to European statistics.
3. The ESCB data collection systems are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to

ensure high quality.

4. Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited.
5. A policy of continuous vocational training is implemented for staff.
6. Cooperation with the scientific community is organised to improve methodology and the effectiveness of the methods implemented and to promote better tools when feasible.

Principle 8: Appropriate statistical procedures

“Appropriate statistical procedures” means that effective and efficient statistical procedures are implemented throughout the statistical production chain.

Indicators:

1. When European statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for administrative purposes must be a good approximation of those required for statistical purposes.
2. In case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection.
3. Survey designs, sample selections and estimation methods are well based and regularly reviewed and revised as required.
4. The processes used for the development, collection, compilation and production of European statistics are well documented and regularly reviewed to assess their efficiency and effectiveness. They allow published data to be linked with raw data and the quality adjustment and other statistical estimates made during the production process to be retrieved.
5. The information systems dedicated to statistics are provided with the appropriate tools for all statistical activities.
6. Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.
7. The ESCB is involved in the design of administrative data in order to make these data more suitable for statistical purposes.
8. Agreements are made with owners of administrative data which set out their shared commitment to the use of these data for statistical purposes.
9. The ESCB cooperates with owners of administrative data in assuring data quality.

Principle 9: Minimisation of the reporting burden

“Minimisation of the reporting burden” means that the ESCB must establish appropriate procedures to enable user requirements to be met while minimising the burden on reporting agents and without compromising the quality of ESCB statistics.

Indicators:

1. The reporting burden for providers of European statistics is minimised.
2. A merits and costs analysis is carried out before new or substantially enhanced statistics are put into regular production.
3. The information sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used where possible to facilitate its return.
4. Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information.
5. Data sharing is generalised in order to avoid multiplication of surveys.
6. Measures that enable the linking of data sources are promoted in order to reduce the reporting burden.

Principle 10: Cost-effectiveness

“Cost-effectiveness” means that the costs of producing ESCB statistics must be in proportion to their merits and that resources must be used optimally. Where appropriate, the information to be collected must be extracted from available records or sources.

Indicators:

1. Internal and independent external measures monitor the use of resources.
2. Major innovations in statistical processes or information technology are introduced in all steps of the production and dissemination of statistics.
3. Proactive efforts are made to improve the statistical potential of administrative data and limit recourse to direct surveys.
4. The ESCB promotes and implements standardised solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency.

High output quality

“High output quality” encompasses the following five principles:

Principle 11: Relevance

“Relevance” means that ESCB statistics must fulfil stated or implied user needs. These needs may alter over time as a result of changes in the economic environment.

Indicators:

1. Processes are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and consider their emerging needs and priorities.
2. Users’ needs are prioritised and priority needs are reflected in the work programme.
3. User satisfaction is monitored on a regular basis.

Principle 12: Accuracy and reliability (including stability)

“Accuracy and reliability (including stability)” means that ESCB statistics must provide accurate and reliable information on the phenomenon that they are intended to measure. “Accuracy” can be defined as the closeness of the statistical output to the (unknown) true value of the variable that is being measured, while “reliability” refers to the closeness of revised estimations of a specific statistic to the initial value released.

Indicators:

1. Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated.
2. The ESCB applies sound data collection systems, compilation procedures and estimation methods.
3. Revisions are regularly analysed in order to assess the stability of the data and to improve statistical processes.
4. When one or more events has a substantial impact on the statistical output, the reasons for the presence of such outliers are explained, unless this is prevented by confidentiality considerations.
5. The ESCB explains the reasons for sizeable revisions.

Principle 13: Timeliness (including punctuality)

“Timeliness (including punctuality)” means that ESCB statistics must be timely and punctual, whereby “timeliness” refers to the time lag between the availability of the information and the event or phenomenon to which it relates and “punctuality” refers to the time lag between the actual date of release of the data and the date by when the data should have been released.

Indicators:

1. As a minimum, timeliness meets the European and international release standards.
2. A standard daily time for the release of European statistics is made public.
3. The periodicity of European statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible.
4. Divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance and explained and a new release date is set.

Principle 14: Consistency and comparability

“Consistency and comparability” means that ESCB statistics must be consistent: (1) over time, (2) within the dataset that is published in a single release, (3) across datasets and (4) across different frequencies for the same dataset, and that, where appropriate, they must be (5) comparable with statistics of other regions and countries. In this context, the coherence of statistical information refers to the degree to which it can be successfully combined with other statistical information within a broad analytical framework and over time. Consistent statistics also facilitate international comparisons. The

use of standard concepts, classifications and target populations promotes coherence, as does the use of a common methodology across surveys.

Indicators:

1. Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (i.e. arithmetic and accounting identities are observed). Flows and changes in stocks are reconcilable.
2. Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time.
3. Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources.
4. Statistics from the different sources and of different periodicity are compared and reconciled.
5. Statistics are based on internationally agreed concepts and definitions, insofar as relevant, in order to enable international comparisons to be drawn. Conceptual differences, if any, are made public.

Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity

“Accessibility and clarity” means that information on data and metadata must be presented in a clear and understandable form, as well as easily and readily available to all users.

Indicators:

1. Statistics and the corresponding metadata are presented in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.
2. Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology. Key statistics are released by means of a press release.
3. Access to microdata is allowed for research purposes and is subject to specific rules or protocols.
4. Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems.
5. Users are kept informed about the methodology of statistical processes including the use of administrative data.
6. Users are kept informed on the quality of statistical outputs, as defined in these ESCB quality criteria.
7. The ESCB statistical function provides assistance to users in accessing and understanding the data.