



Requirements for structural statistics 2021: overview of progress made

1. Overview

Since 2006, the EPC has annually taken stock of the needs for structural statistics to support the work of the ECOFIN Council¹.

The report gives an overview of progress made over recent years and identifies areas where further efforts are required, in particular:

- The first part of the report (sections 2 and 3) highlights two sets of statistical information that are of key policy relevance: The Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (scoreboard and other relevant statistics) and the EU SDG indicators. It is important to continue the work to further develop and improve the data sets for MIP and to continue monitoring EU SDG.
- The last part of the report (section 4) outlines progress made on other structural data for which continued development and improvement of the underlying statistics is also important.

The EPC acknowledges the need for prioritisation of statistical activities and recommends that main developments aiming at the improvement of structural statistics should be pursued and should relate to the priorities of the European Commission.

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic during the first quarter of 2020 and the confinement measures implemented in all European countries in response to the pandemic had a major impact on statistical compilation. Official statistics were needed more than ever by European citizens, businesses and policy-makers to monitor and address the pandemic's major economic and social impacts. At the same time, statistical offices could not continue with business as usual, although significant efforts were made to meet the obligations and deadlines imposed by the European legislation.

In this sustained period, more attention is being paid to short-term statistical information and the European Statistical System (ESS) has been concentrating its efforts and resources on producing statistics that are most relevant and needed in this situation. National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) of Member States, ensured the continuation of statistical production and dissemination according to established deadlines, following a prioritised list of statistics, which included the PEEIs, selected indicators from the Labour Force Survey, and selected statistics on population, managed migration, agriculture, energy and transport. While the timeliness of data releases was maintained, there were inevitably consequences on data collection and statistical production, which have been clearly communicated to users.

Those consequences included significant difficulties to collect data directly from businesses and outlets as well as households, and from administrative sources due to additional delays. Eurostat in close cooperation with experts from the Member States has developed and communicated widely methodological guidelines on the treatment of non-response and sound imputation techniques. In preparing these guidelines, close cooperation with the ECB

¹ Doc. ECFIN/EPC(2006)51285 final of 22 May 2006

and other international organisations (e.g. ILO), which is an essential dimension, has been ensured.

During the expected recovery phase from COVID-19 (and even beyond) there is an important need for bringing together relevant monthly and quarterly statistical indicators, including new and innovative indicators, to support policymaking in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

2. Statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure

Following the financial and economic crisis and the sovereign debt crisis, a number of EU policy initiatives were launched and implemented over the past years, in particular, to enhance economic governance, and some of them had statistical implications. The Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP), based on Regulation (EU) No 1174/2011² and Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011³ is a surveillance mechanism that aims to detect, prevent and correct macroeconomic imbalances, which emerge or persist in the euro area and the Member States.

The MIP is based on a scoreboard of fourteen macroeconomic and macro-financial indicators defined by the Commission and endorsed by the ECOFIN Council and the European Parliament. The scoreboard indicators cover developments in public and private indebtedness, private sector credit flow, housing prices, net international investment position, current account balances, real effective exchange rates, world export market shares, unit labour costs, unemployment and a set of employment indicators.

The Commission publishes annually at the opening of the European Semester an autumn package containing the Annual Growth Strategy and the Alert Mechanism Report (AMR) based on the MIP Scoreboard. A Statistical Annex, covering the Scoreboard indicators and a set of auxiliary indicators, is produced by Eurostat and published at the same time. Moreover, at the beginning of the following year the Commission publishes the country reports containing in-depth reviews (IDRs) as part of the MIP process, on the base of a whole range of macroeconomic statistics, and taking into account country-specific economic conditions for each Member State. The IDRs allow the Commission to conclude on the possible existence of macroeconomic imbalances and on their severity.

On several occasions, the ECOFIN Council invited the Commission (Eurostat) to take the necessary initiatives to assure a reliable procedure for the compilation of the MIP-relevant indicators as well as a continuous improvement of the underlying statistical information. At the same time, the Council has invited the European Statistical System (ESS) and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) to work together on improving underlying statistics and to ensure their comparability⁴.

Having timely statistics of the highest quality for the analysis of MIP issues is of utmost importance and maintaining a robust quality assurance framework for MIP relevant data is

² Regulation (EU) No 1174/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 on enforcement measures to correct excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the euro area <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1407944383247&uri=CELEX:32011R1174>

³ Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1407944142061&uri=CELEX%3A32011R1176>

⁴ Council Conclusions of ECOFIN Council meeting, 9 November 2011, 13 November 2012 and 15 November 2013
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st15/st15781-re02.en11.pdf>
http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/133462.pdf

essential to ensure that the MIP is based on sound and reliable data, is comparable between Member States and produced according to high quality standards.

Following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding on the quality assurance of statistics underlying the MIP in 2016, Eurostat and the Directorate General Statistics of the ECB regularly implement actions aimed at the improvement of data quality, including the comparison of the relevant data in the Eurostat and ECB databases and their harmonisation, the implementation of the three level quality reporting system, and so far Eurostat together with the ECB/DG Statistics has undertaken eight visits to EU Member States.

The statistics underlying the MIP indicators are based on EU legislation and compiled by the European Statistical System (ESS) and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB). Following the three level approach providing the frame for the work on quality assurance of the MIP indicators, the work performed contained the following actions on:

- Level 1: Preparation of an annual ESS-ESCB quality assessment report on MIP statistics by Eurostat and the ECB aimed at policy makers and the public at large addressing the reliability and comparability of the MIP related statistics and actions to address the most relevant quality issues. In 2021, the level 1 report (seventh report of its kind) was published in July.⁵
- Level 2: The level 2 quality reports of Eurostat and the ECB on Balance of Payments (BoP)/International Investment Position (IIP) have been aligned and follow the basic principles set out in the 'European Statistics Code of Practice' and the 'Public commitment on European statistics by the ESCB'. The reports lay down, in a special section, country specific recommendations for Member States to address notable quality issues. The ECB report also contains a dedicated box focusing on the specific BOP and IIP quality dimensions of relevance for the MIP. The latest report of Eurostat covers data until reference quarter Q2 of 2020. The Eurostat report was disseminated in September 2021. Since 2020, the ECB disseminates the ESCB report on bi-annual basis and the next report will be made available in 2022.

For Eurostat, the quality reporting on annual national financial and non-financial accounts follows the Commission implementing Regulation (EU) No 2016/2304; quality reports on Member States' data provided under the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme are now being produced annually⁶. The ECB produces a biennial quality report on quarterly financial sector accounts.⁷

- Level 2 quality reports on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Housing Price Statistics are regularly produced, with the LFS report recently published⁸. In addition, the Commission (DG ECFIN), in its capacity as the compiler of the Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) indicator, publishes quality information on real effective exchange rate indicators on its website⁹.
- Level 3: Member States prepare condensed country specific self-assessment reports on the quality and statistical processes for statistics underlying the MIP indicators, which are easily understandable by users. They provide the basis for assuring the quality of the statistics and their comparability between countries. Member States publish such reports

⁵ [2021_+ESS-ESCB+report+on+MIP+statistics.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/esa-2010/esa-2010-implementation-and-data-quality)

⁶ Information on quality reporting and assessment is available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/esa-2010/esa-2010-implementation-and-data-quality>

⁷ <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/euroareafinancialaccounts/html/ecb.eaqfa202005~d801564128.en.html#oc1>

⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/7870049/12843519/KS-FT-21-003-EN-N.pdf>

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/quality_report_en_1.pdf

nationally and/or on the website of the CMFB¹⁰. The information for the statistical domains underlying the MIP are published for all EU Member States, while 26 are covered for housing price statistics.

- In compliance with Regulation (EC) No 184/2005¹¹, Eurostat prepares on an annual basis, national quality reports for the EU Member States, covering balance of payments, international investment position, international trade in services and foreign direct investment statistics. Furthermore, Eurostat shares its BoP national quality reports with the ECB. In the context of the Memorandum of Understanding, the ECB prepares national metadata reports, aiming at providing a succinct assessment on the quality issues of the BoP/IIP data of a particular country, and regularly transmits these reports to Eurostat.

Some ongoing developments in the different statistical domains relevant for the MIP should be noted. Cooperation between Member States, Eurostat and the ECB has been established in the context of the 'Early Warning System', and the 'Asymmetry Resolution meetings'. They aim at timely detecting relocations and restructuring events of multi-national enterprise groups and ensuring a consistent cross-country and cross-domain treatment. They bring the relevant national compilers together on a quarterly basis to discuss the largest bilateral symmetries in foreign direct investment.

Overall, the EPC welcomes the contributions made by the statistical community, both at national and at EU level, concerning MIP relevant statistics (i.e. the scoreboard and other relevant statistics for the implementation of the MIP). The EPC also stresses the need to support and continue the work to provide reliable and comparable MIP relevant statistics in support of all the stages of the MIP and considers that the statistics included in the scoreboard should be a priority. In particular, the EPC highlights the importance of improving the consistency and symmetry of BoP and national accounts data.

The EPC underlines that the procedures ensuring reliability of all MIP indicators should continue to be based on active cooperation within the statistical community.

3. Statistics for EU Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) monitoring

Eurostat has led the development of a reference indicator framework¹² for the purpose of monitoring progress towards the SDGs in an EU context in close cooperation with other Commission services and Member States', involving also Council Committees and Working Parties as well as civil society. The indicators have been selected taking into account their policy relevance from an EU perspective, availability, country coverage, data freshness and quality. Many of the selected indicators are used to monitor existing policies, such as the European Green Deal¹³, the set of impact indicators for the 2020-2024 strategic plans, the main indicators of the Social Scoreboard for the European Pillar of Social Rights¹⁴, and the

¹⁰ <https://www.cmfb.org/main-topics/mip-quality>

¹¹ Regulation (EC) No 184/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 January 2005 on Community statistics concerning balance of payments, international trade in services and foreign direct investment.

¹² [Result of the review in preparation of the 2021 edition of the EU SDG monitoring report](#)

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/social-scoreboard-indicators>

target indicators of the European Education Area¹⁵ and the European Skills Agenda¹⁶. The SDGs are integrated into all Commission proposals, policies and strategies: each of the 17 SDGs feature in one or more of the six headline ambitions announced in President von der Leyen’s Political Guidelines¹⁷. The set is open to annual reviews to incorporate indicators from new data sources and to take into account new EU policy priorities. The set is structured along the 17 SDGs and covers the social, economic, environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainability as represented by the Agenda 2030. Each SDG is covered by six main indicators, which have been selected to reflect the SDGs’ broad objectives and ambitions.

On the basis of this indicator set, Eurostat publishes an annual series of monitoring reports. The latest edition, “*Sustainable development in the European Union — Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context — 2021 edition*”, was published on 15 June 2021¹⁸. It begins with a synopsis of the EU’s overall progress towards the SDGs, followed by a presentation of the policy background at global and EU level and an explanation of the way the SDGs are monitored at EU level. It also contains newly introduced chapters on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and on experimental indicators for estimating spill-over effects. The detailed monitoring results are presented in 17 chapters, one for each of the 17 SDGs. Progress is evaluated at the aggregated EU-27 level and data for individual Member States are presented whenever available. This publication provides an assessment of indicator trends against SDG-related EU objectives and policy targets. The assessment method considers whether an indicator has moved towards or away from the sustainable development objective or EU target, as well as the speed of this movement. This assessment is carried out for the long-term (15 years) and short-term (5 years) trend. Moreover, a visualisation of status and progress of each Member State towards the SDGs is included.

4. Progress on underlying structural statistical data

4.1 Cross-cutting issues

Having explored and experimented the use of new data sources during recent years, and particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, several sources have been identified with a high potential for being used in European statistics. The European Statistical System now focuses on their implementation in regular production of so-called Trusted Smart Statistics. To this end Eurostat – in collaboration with ESS members – is developing for each data source dedicated frameworks to address methodological, technical, organisational, legal and communication aspects in a multi-source and multi-purpose environment. Sources comprise the internet, mobile network operators, smart meters, financial transactions and satellite images.

More generally, the ESS has undertaken a number of actions to further promote the case of access to privately held data for official statistics purposes. In particular, the ESS Committee adopted in June 2021 a Position Paper on the future Data Act proposal, which is the joint contribution of the European Statistical System to the ongoing public consultation of the Data Act and whereby the ESS calls on the Commission to ensure that the Data Act proposal provides sustainable legislative access by the ESS members to data held by the private

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/eea-communication-sept2020_en

¹⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223>

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/international-strategies/sustainable-development-goals/eu-holistic-approach-sustainable-development_en

¹⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/publications>

sector when necessary for the development, production and dissemination of official statistics.

As a concrete example of use of privately held data for official statistics, it could also be noted that Eurostat published in June 2021 the very first information on short-stay accommodation offered by four private collaborative economy platforms as a first result of a [landmark agreement](#) between Eurostat and these platforms¹⁹.

With a view to leverage ESS capabilities, Eurostat establishes collaborative networks and provides infrastructure. Recent priority areas comprise European statistics on online job advertisements and skills, web-enriched EuroGroups information as well as smart surveys on households' budget and time use.

The EPC asks Member States to actively participate in the generation of trusted smart statistics, building capacities and orienting the ESS towards innovation and harnessing the potential of a datafied society. The EPC recognises that sustainable access to privately held data is relevant for the production and dissemination of reliable independent official statistics and welcomes the legislative steps taken by the ESS for providing for such access.

The EPC also welcomes the ongoing work in the area of review of statistical classifications (notably review of NACE classification) and encourages Member States for continued engagement in this project.

4.2 European System of National Accounts

ESA 2010 mid-term review

National Accounts are fundamental for economic analysis. Within Europe the current 2010 European system of national and regional accounts (ESA 2010) sets out the national accounts standards and the ways in which key economic aggregates are calculated in the EU, in line with the world-wide 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) methodology. Eurostat's ESA 2010 website²⁰ contains information for stakeholders about national accounts standards: links to the legal documents; various explanatory documents (explanations of methodological changes, explanations of changes in the transmission programme, transmission calendar, etc.); list of frequently asked questions, with Eurostat's replies; links to supporting manuals.

ESA 2010 was first implemented by Member States in 2014, and since then countries have worked to improve their data in line with experience of applying new concepts and data sources. 27 countries obtained temporary derogations covering different parts of the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme, but all derogations expired on 1 January 2020. While most countries delivered due data at the regular transmission deadlines during the year 2020, some compliance issues remain and are followed up by Eurostat since it is of utmost importance that ESA 2010 is fully implemented across countries and sectors, with long consistent time series published.

A mid-term review of the ESA 2010 transmission programme has started in order to implement some adjustments (new COICOP²¹ classification, the addition of a limited set of compulsory variables in response to user needs, integration of voluntary data, shortening of ESA table 11 – COFOG – deadline in order to facilitate its policy use), to clarify some technical aspects of the transmissions (number of tables and composition, voluntary data,

¹⁹ [Short-stay accommodation offered via online collaborative economy platforms - Statistics Explained \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/esa-2010/overview>

²¹ Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose

metadata) and reflect if some deadlines can be adapted to facilitate cross-table consistency. The work started at the level of technical sub-groups and proposals were further discussed at directors' level mid-June 2021. The aim is to have a legal proposal adopted at the end of 2021. This legal proposal is also intended to resolve some non-substantial textual inconsistencies in the ESA 2010 methodology.

ESA 2010 reports

The Commission implementing regulation on the modalities, structure, periodicity and assessment indicators of the quality reports on data transmitted pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 549/2013 (on ESA 2010) was applied to compile first ESA 2010 quality reviews in 2017 and in June 2018, Eurostat produced the first summary report on the quality of ESA 2010 data transmitted in 2016. In December 2020, Eurostat published the fourth summary report on the quality of ESA 2010 data transmitted in 2019²². The reports are being implemented in a staged approach in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The first stage (2017 and 2018) included quantitative indicators on completeness, punctuality and consistency, as well as information on published revision policy and documentation on methodology. The second stage in 2019 added indicators on revision rates of quarterly and annual data for selected variables and cross-domain coherence between non-financial and financial accounts. In 2021 the third and final implementation stage will take place by adding indicators on quarterly revision rates for additional variables, indicators on cross-domain coherence between more domains (main aggregates, non-financial sector accounts, government finance statistics, regional accounts and supply and use tables), as well as adding information on the length of comparable series.

Consistency

Complementing the coordinated benchmark revisions carried out by most countries in 2019, four EU Member States, namely Czechia, Greece, Malta and Poland, as well as Iceland and Switzerland, carried out benchmark revisions of national accounts in 2020²³. Practical guidance on good practices for revising ESA 2010 data²⁴ and a handbook on the consistency of ESA 2010 based national accounts²⁵ helped compilers of national accounts to implement revisions and measures to improve the numerical consistency of data. The next fully coordinated benchmark revision for all Member States is foreseen in 2024.

Following up a review of user needs in 2016, the collection of voluntary national accounts data was extended in 2017-2018, with voluntary data having been collected for government finance statistics from 2015 onwards to respond to the recommendations of the Data Gaps Initiative (DGI-2) for additional data. The collection of additional available voluntary data has been enabled by Eurostat, but transmissions of additional voluntary data remain quite limited so far. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, timeliness of quarterly national accounts estimates including preliminary GDP flash estimates after 30 days and GDP and employment flash estimates after 45 days was maintained and the reliability of estimates remained high despite some further advancement in the timeliness of estimates²⁶. Eurostat also continued

²² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/7870049/9462569/KS-FT-18-012-EN-N.pdf/ff35f9f5-dc67-46ac-96d5-f5757a4c4753>

²³ For Greece the benchmark revision is implemented in two stages (first back to 2010) and for Luxembourg it was limited to financial accounts; Lithuania completed the 2019 benchmark revisions for years before 2010. Latvia, Ireland and Romania also carried out major revisions in 2020; see: For further information see: [Benchmark revisions data availability from 2020.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/KS-GQ-18-012>

²⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/10758445/KS-GQ-20-004-EN-N.pdf/d650560e-11c5-f1e4-cb84-953f6c56c7c3>

²⁶ Czechia, Germany, Portugal and Sweden advanced the publication of GDP flash estimates to T+30 and Luxembourg published its regular estimates after T+2 months.

collecting employment flash test estimates at t+30 days from a number of Member States, in order to monitor the revisions and evaluate if further advancement is possible. A number of guidance notes helped compilers of national accounts to ensure cross-comparability of statistical data despite the measurement challenges due to COVID-19 and additional metadata were published both at Eurostat and at national levels to explain the impact of the pandemic. However, higher than usual revisions with the incorporation of annual data sources can be expected.

In 2019, the ECB and Eurostat initiated a joint project on vertical discrepancies observed between non-financial and financial sector accounts with a view to developing guidelines on how to tackle them. The guidelines are expected to be completed in 2021, while their implementation will be progressive until the 2024 coordinated benchmark revision of national accounts.

Globalisation and digitalisation

The globalisation and digitalisation of economies are two phenomena that affect national accounts and business statistics. Eurostat is giving high priority to deal with these issues in cooperation with policy users and international partners, also in view of a future update of the SNA, expected in 2025. This involves work at conceptual level (e.g. how to consistently record multinational enterprise groups (MNE groups) in national statistics of different countries, or how to monitor new digital products or services) as well as on communication (providing the information necessary for users to better understand the national and international economic performance).

Eurostat considers that the better measuring of the impact of globalisation of MNE groups requires the strengthening of the co-operation and data exchange in the European Statistical System. This was supported by the conclusions of the 2019 DGINS²⁷ Conference held in Bratislava on the economic globalisation. As regards digitalisation, a number of initiatives are under way to better capture the digital economy (see sections 4.5 and 4.6 on Productivity and Business Statistics).

Cooperation at international level in the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts and in the UN Expert Group on Business and Trade statistics is also important. As national accounts and business statistics are areas continuously evolving in line with economic changes and new policy and analytical needs, it is essential for Eurostat to express European needs in the context of international discussions on a future SNA/ESA and the related business statistics that will take place in the coming years. Future priorities to be taken forward are: digitalisation, which will impact the economy e.g. with new digital products, and globalisation and MNE restructuring, which will have an impact on the European statistics in many areas. Eurostat and the Member States are already working intensively with the international community on these issues including with the ESCB and CMFB. In order to timely deal with restructuring events of MNEs, Eurostat has developed an Early Warning System, that is a collaborative network that allows national correspondents in Member States to coordinate the methodological treatment of MNEs once a restructuring event has impact on statistics of more than one Member State.

EURONA

The Eurostat Review of National Accounts and Macroeconomic Indicators (EURONA) is an open access, scholarly journal on methodology, standards and practices on National Accounts and macroeconomic indicators, which aims to bring together users, producers and

²⁷ Directors General of the ESS National Statistical Institutes

researchers in the field. 13 issues of EURONA have been released up to now and it continues to be widely read.

Income, consumption and wealth

Eurostat addresses the need for statistics to take account of a wider range of factors when measuring progress in a changing world through strengthening the household perspective and the distributional aspects of income, consumption and wealth, for example by:

a) Promoting national accounts data on household income and consumption

- press releases on quarterly headline figures including *actual final consumption* at t+94 days and *real growth of adjusted disposable income per capita* at t+120 days, as well as publication of annual data for *consumption per capita*;
- Methodological work undertaken by the Eurostat/ECB Expert Group on Sector Accounts, including the recent approval of practical guidance on the recording of self-employment and related income flows in sector accounts.

b) Providing information on the distribution of income, consumption and wealth.

In 2016, the conference of the Directors General of the European National Statistical Institutes (DGINS) was dedicated to households' income, consumption and wealth (ICW). The resulting Vienna memorandum (DGINS, 2016) reflected the ESS intentions to work towards distributional statistics for household ICW, including the development of a harmonised ICW statistical framework.

As a consequence, Eurostat has been working on two work streams aimed at strengthening the household perspective by focusing on distributional aspects of income, consumption and wealth:

- Since mid-2017, Eurostat is working on a project producing joint distributions of income, consumption and wealth. Based on advanced statistical techniques of data matching using the information available in existing surveys, these data aim at describing the interaction of income, consumption and wealth at household level. The purpose is to shed light on the part of the population, which is most vulnerable to economic shocks, the heterogeneity of saving behaviours between high- and low-income households and the impact of direct and indirect taxation. Since these statistics constitute quite a novelty and rely on strong assumptions, they enter in the scope of experimental statistics: data and methods are presented on a Eurostat webpage²⁸ dedicated to these experimental statistics. Currently, two reference years are available: 2010 and 2015.
- Since 2017, Eurostat, the OECD and some Member States have been working together on the reconciliation of national accounts aggregates and micro-data within a joint expert group (OECD-Eurostat EG DNA). The group aims to develop new statistical products on the distribution of income and consumption consistent with national accounts using micro data sources. At the beginning of 2020, distributional data for households' income and consumption aligned to respective national accounts aggregates were collected from a number of EU and other OECD countries in line with EG DNA methodology and guidelines in a standardised template. In parallel, Eurostat developed a centralised exercise for countries not compiling estimates at national level. It aimed to produce distributional results, based on available information (e.g. sector accounts data, EU-SILC and HBS) and simplified assumptions. This involved testing different methods for allocating the micro-macro gap, including a sensitivity analysis on their impact on the results. Eurostat published

²⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/income-consumption-and-wealth>

countries' estimates of distributional results together with the outcome of the centralised exercise in December 2020 as experimental statistics²⁹. With this publication, the objectives for micro-macro data reconciliation of the DGINS Vienna Memorandum of 2016 on Statistics on income, consumption and wealth has been achieved and the current EG DNA mandate has been completed.

In the same work stream, the ECB established an expert group on linking micro and macro data on wealth (EG LMM) in 2015. The EG DNA and EG LMM kept a close cooperation, facing similar issues in the compilation process and learning from each other's experiences. The ECB relaunched the group recently as an expert group on distributional financial accounts (EG DFA), with the aim to develop experimental distributional accounts on household wealth by 2022.

The EPC welcomes the progress made on the work related with the European System of National Accounts. In particular, the EPC welcomes the ongoing work in the context of the ESA 2010 mid-term review and calls on Member States to support the proposals corresponding to user needs. The EPC also welcomes the ongoing review to the international statistical manuals and calls on Member States to actively provide input to the process.

4.3 Government finance statistics

COFOG data

The provisions in the ESA 2010 transmission programme, implemented as from 1 September 2014, imply that the compilation and transmission of COFOG (detailed government expenditure data by function/purpose) level II data are compulsory for general government covering the time period from 2001 onwards.

All Member States as well as Iceland, Norway and Switzerland delivered COFOG level II data under ESA 2010 (end-December 2020 transmission). The first delivery was transmitted within the legal deadline for all countries, except for one Member State that transmitted the data slightly after the deadline due to a technical issue. COFOG data was provided significantly in advance of the legal deadline by Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. While the overall consistency of initially transmitted data continued to improve, the need to implement further technical and methodological corrections to COFOG data continued to be the driving factor behind the high number of retransmissions still observed. All country data as well as EU and EA aggregates were validated and disseminated in Eurostat's public database by 25 February 2021. The publication of COFOG data was accompanied by a news item, an online publication on COFOG³⁰ and a Eurostat infographic designed for general users³¹.

By the end of 2020, concerned countries had stepped up efforts to complete existing data gaps: all ESA 2010 based derogations expired in 2020. Hence, a significant progress in data availability was observed. As regards COFOG level II data, all Member States as well as Iceland, Norway and Switzerland sent a complete dataset from at least reference year 2001, with all EU Member States providing data from 1995 at COFOG level I. At subsector level, 25 EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland provided complete detailed COFOG level II data for at least seven years on a voluntary basis. Overall, data availability has improved significantly compared to the first ESA 2010 based transmission at the end of December 2014.

²⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/ic-social-surveys-and-national-accounts>

³⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Government_expenditure_by_function

³¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/cofog/>

An update of the COFOG manual was published on 25 September 2019. As regards the treatment of own-account R&D assets in consumption of fixed capital, discussions during 2018 and 2019 in the OECD-Eurostat TF on land and other non-financial assets and the COFOG and Government Finance Statistics (GFS) TF led to concrete guidance on treatment to be included in the updated COFOG manual. Additionally, discussions in the COFOG and GFS TF have led to guidance on the treatment of non-financial transactions within the general government sector, which contributes to harmonising the levels of total revenue and total expenditure reported. Along with necessary updates of country pages describing compilation practices and a cross-classification of ESA transactions and COFOG groups, it includes 17 new case studies as well as newly developed guidance on interest and financial intermediation services indirectly measured and disposals of non-financial assets. Aside from the expected improved harmonisation of the COFOG allocation, an improvement in the harmonisation of measures of total expenditure and total revenue as well as certain other national accounts aggregates is expected in the medium term. This reflects the developmental work of the COFOG TF in recent years.

As regards the quality of the data, further progress will be required on the allocation of R&D expenditure by detailed function. More generally, while overall consistency was assured for all countries at validation, further progress is needed in certain areas such as unexpected negative amounts, allocation of social transfers and subsidies, certain transactions in 'public debt transactions', individual and collective consumption expenditure, consistency of allocation over time and use of some smaller COFOG groups. It should be acknowledged that significant progress on data quality was made by countries, which implemented benchmark revisions in national accounts in 2019 and 2020.

As regards the recording of measures to counter the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a harmonised recording of 2020 data will be facilitated by discussions in the COFOG TF and subsequent written guidance will be disseminated.

Structure of government debt / voluntary data transmissions

In response to key user needs, Eurostat annually collects details on the structure of government debt, covering – among others – government debt by sector of debt holder, by detailed initial and remaining maturity as well as by currency of issuance. The coverage supplied by Member States as well as Norway has gradually expanded since 2014.

From 2015 onwards, Eurostat has been collecting additional voluntary data on general government gross debt, quarterly financial accounts and annual non-financial accounts. All EU Member States as well as Norway now provide additional details on non-financial transactions. Notably, data on transactions with the EU needed in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact are provided by all EU Member States.

Mid-term review of the ESA 2010 transmission programme

As indicated in section 4.2, the ESA 2010 transmission programme is currently under review. In this context, a number of changes are proposed in relation to government finance statistics in order to better meet user needs. Notably, it is proposed to formally integrate existing voluntary collection to the transmission programme (mainly as voluntary data).

It is also proposed to insert some additional compulsory data due to user needs: data on transactions with the EU as well as some data on the structure of government debt.

The ESA 2010 COFOG data is used by a high number of policy Directorates General, inter alia in the context of the European Semester. Due to the transmission deadline for COFOG data at t+12 months after the end of the reference period and the subsequent time necessary for validation and publication of the data, the COFOG transmission cycle is not optimally aligned with the needs of the European Semester. An earlier transmission (by one month) would enable the use of the freshest COFOG data in the context of the European

Semester and would also lead to a quicker alignment of relevant national accounts aggregates to the COFOG data. However, some compilers have already indicated that meeting an earlier transmission deadline would have significant resource impacts, or could reduce the quality of the data, especially for the most recent years. Nonetheless, at the level of technical sub-groups, the proposal has been broadly supported.

Contingent liabilities and non-performing loans

In the context of the last financial crisis, the importance of access to reliable data on public corporations has become evident, notably where difficulties in public corporations have impacted on government finances.

In 2012, Eurostat introduced an annual questionnaire on government controlled units classified outside the government sector, which covers non-financial and financial corporations and Rest of World (ROW). This questionnaire is compulsory and covers annual data, including total liabilities of corporations as well as the market/non-market performances of the companies having total liabilities exceeding 0.01% of GDP. The timeliness of the data transmission is each year at t+12 months after the end of the reference period.

In addition and as a direct result of the Eurostat-organised Task Force on the implications of Council Directive 85/2011 on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States, on 22 July 2013, Eurostat issued a decision on a “supplement on contingent liabilities and potential obligations to the EDP questionnaire”. This provides for the compulsory provision of a supplement to the EDP questionnaire covering total outstanding liabilities related to public-private partnerships (PPPs) recorded off-balance sheet of general government; non-performing loans of general government (government assets); total stock of government guarantees, including government guarantees provided to public corporations, split by sub-sector of general government.

Data have been provided annually by the Member States to Eurostat since 2014 and have been published on Eurostat's website, together with supporting information. Eurostat has also created a special section for data on contingent liabilities on its website.

Work on quality and methodology in the context of Excessive Deficit Procedure Statistics and government finance statistics

In 2019, Eurostat published updates to the manuals on Government Deficit and Debt and COFOG.

In order to support transparency, and following the establishment of procedures to publish outcomes of the methodological work of the GFS TF, Eurostat proceeded with the publication of the first two GFS interpretation in 2019, and published an additional GFS interpretation in 2020. The number is set to expand further during 2021.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, EU Member States' governments engaged in major operations to counter the economic and social impact of the pandemic and containment measures. Eurostat discussed with Member States in the relevant expert groups in order to ensure an appropriate and accurate recording of fiscal data: one guidance note was finalised, while two notes are published in draft form³². A dedicated temporary internal reporting template to report measures undertaken in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, elaborated in collaboration with the ECB, was consulted with the CMFB and first reported by all Member States in April 2021³³ and a statistical reporting table has been developed for RRF-related expenditure.

³² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/government-finance-statistics/methodology/guidance-on-accounting-rules>

³³ Following earlier pilot exercises.

In 2021, Eurostat initiated a project on Development of the ESA accounts of EU institutions with a view to capture the impact on the B.9 and debt of the EU institutions from the post COVID-19 economic development support measures introduced on the European level. The project is expected to be completed end-2022.

The EPC welcomes the progress made on the work related with government finance statistics in terms of efforts to increase data availability and accuracy.

The EPC welcomes the progress made in the availability of COFOG data and supports the development of relevant guidance to ensure the accuracy.

The EPC welcomes the proposals in the context of the ESA 2010 mid-term review to better meet user needs in the field of government finance statistics. The EPC acknowledges that, in the context of the ESA 2010 mid-term review, discussions to shorten the legal deadline for the transmission of COFOG table have taken place – a shortening of the legal deadline would facilitate key policy uses, for example in the context of the European Semester.

The EPC welcomes further the work undertaken to harmonise the recording of COVID-19 related government measures.

4.4 Productivity

Eurostat continued its work on Growth and Productivity Accounts (GPA) in 2020-2021. The final phase of the GPA project concentrates on improving the dissemination of productivity indicators based on official statistics, notably data transmitted in relation to the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme. The project has four main areas of work: i) the extension of publication of labour productivity indicators (LPIs) on the basis of existing national accounts' main aggregates and regional accounts data, including quality-adjusted labour input (QALI) indicators; ii) the production and publication of capital productivity indicators (CPIs) based on existing national accounts' main aggregates data and multi-factor productivity indicators (MFP); iii) a feasibility study of LPIs, including QALI, for the digital economy and iv) the promotion of productivity indicators and awareness raising regarding their importance and relevance. The GPA project is supported by experts from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) for LPIs and the Vienna Institute for Economic Research (WIIW) and a Task Force on Productivity Indicators (TF-PI), with around 30 members including users and national compilers, which met in September and November 2020 as well as April 2021 to discuss and advise on the selection of new indicators and associated metadata. Then countries are also progressing with the implementation of own work at national level supported by grants.

While in 2020 some activities had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, considerable progress has been achieved until mid-2021 and the project is now on track to conclude with the dissemination of additional indicators at the end of 2021. In particular, the JRC has produced a report on “Quality analysis of labour productivity indicators” presenting a systematic review of indicators and advice, which was used to propose the dissemination of additional industry and regional breakdowns. With respect to QALI for digital economy, the JRC presented a feasibility study that proposes two possible options to compile digital QALI: one taking into account digital skills for the whole economy (mainly by using ICT survey) or referring only to digital economy activities (mainly by using LFS and SES survey data). The modernisation of the EU LFS (under Regulation No 2019/1700) will lead to further harmonised measurement of the labour input, however the project will be re-evaluated when the impact of changes in the collection of Labour Force Survey (LFS) and further comparisons with national compilation methods can be assessed.

Concerning capital productivity measures and MFP, the WIIW analysed data availability for compiling indicators and analysed possible derived indicators. Based on the analysis

provided and own considerations, Eurostat presented a proposal for the dissemination of a set of CAPIs and MFP indicator (at total economy level) to be considered as experimental statistics. Parallel work of the task force on fixed assets and estimation of consumption of fixed capital under ESA2010 (TF FIXCAP) and analysis of volume estimates aim to harmonize compilation practices and improve the quality and comparability of underlying sources of data among countries. Finally, Eurostat organised a session in the Conference on New Techniques and Technologies for Statistics (NTTS) 2021 to discuss progress in the measurement of productivity growth from the perspective of official statistics, policy making and recent contributions of economic research with interested users and compilers.

The EPC welcomes the progress made towards the publication of additional indicators by Eurostat to support the analysis of productivity trends and encourages continued good cooperation with national compilers and users to support the understanding of indicators with clear metadata.

4.5 Business and international trade statistics

Regulation (EU) No 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European business statistics, repealing 10 legal acts in the field of business statistics (EBS basic act) was adopted on 27 November 2019. The EBS Regulation will create more integrated business statistics with a further alignment of concepts and definitions in the various business statistics. In addition, it will introduce new data requirements at monthly frequency to further support policy needs.

For the first implementation of the EBS Basic Act, a series of 10 acts need to be adopted. The first implementing act laying down technical specifications and arrangements Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2020/1197 (or EBS General Implementing Act (GIA)) was adopted by the Commission on 30 July 2020 and published in the Official Journal on 18 August 2020. On 18 June, the Commission Decision laying down the derogations with respect to Regulations No 2019/2152 and No 2020/1197 was adopted. In addition, Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2020/1030 laying down the data requirements for the topic "ICT-usage and e-commerce" for the reference year 2021 was adopted on 15 July 2020. First data under the EBS Regulation were received for reference periods starting from 1 January 2021 onwards.

The EBS Regulation also regulates the production of national statistical business registers and of the EuroGroups Register (EGR) and strengthens their essential infrastructure role as authoritative sources for business statistics. The EGR is produced on the basis of an ESS and EFTA NSI's exchange and output of confidential micro data of Multinational Enterprise (MNE) groups to be used for the production of business statistics (in particular related to globalisation). In 2021, the final EGR output was made available to the producers of Foreign Affiliates Statistics and other business and globalisation statistics producers. This output contains information on around 146 thousand MNE groups active in Europe comprising 775 thousand enterprises and more than 1.2 million legal units. In addition, a large majority of Member States and EFTA countries voluntarily participate to the European Profiling programme, a collaborative and interactive activity to analyse the legal and economic structure of the largest and most significant MNE groups and delineate their statistical units. Eurostat continues to co-finance Member States in their European profiling activity, ensuring that the results of this activity is taken into consideration in the national statistical business registers and in the EGR.

In the context of Structural Business Statistics (SBS), since several years, Member States together with Eurostat have been working towards an improved methodology on how to better capture the contribution of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to the economy. Under the EBS Regulation, SBS will be able to focus on genuine SMEs by taking

into account an enterprise group structure. This will allow better targeted SME policies and improved assessment of the policy impact.

Looking at the economy from the regional point of view, SMEs contribute to local economies by promoting growth and innovation in local communities. In this context, business demography statistics are particularly relevant in providing data on business start-ups and closures as well as for high growth enterprises, based on regional breakdowns that will become mandatory under the EBS Regulation.

The rapidly emerging new possibilities of micro data linking methodology will considerably enrich the SME related database with regard to areas such as trade, business characteristics, and innovativeness and performance indicators. This will bring about completely new possibilities of expanding the economic analysis of SMEs.

Furthermore, in the area of business demography statistics, first data on quarterly registrations and bankruptcies of businesses were disseminated.

In addition, the current development project on high growth enterprises and scale-ups largely reflects the policy needs of the key DGs dealing with enterprise policy. The project has broadened the scope and measurement of high growth enterprises to also include micro enterprises, which are not covered by the regular data production. In addition, the project has assessed the sustainability of growth after the high growth period. Enterprises showing the best potential for scaling up their business have been analysed.

The Global value chains survey (international sourcing survey) will be regulated, for the first time, in the EBS.

The ESS is also working on the full implementation of the statistical unit "enterprise" increasing comparability. Given its significant impact on European business statistics, the harmonised definition of the "enterprise" across statistical domains, sectors and countries will increase the quality of the ESS business statistics output. In most domains, Member States will fully implement it for the reference year 2021 at the latest.

In the context of foreign direct investment statistics and in close cooperation with the ECB, Eurostat continued piloting the development of statistics on "Ultimate Investing Country", "Ultimate Host Country" and "Greenfield investment".

International trade in services by modes of supply are an important element of trade negotiations. Eurostat has developed a methodology and used it to produce a pilot dataset, including estimates for EU Member States. Eurostat continues work to further develop the methodology in cooperation with several EU Member States. The second area of international trade in services relates to the services trade by enterprise characteristics (STEC). In this area the methodology was developed (Eurostat-OECD Compilers Guide for statistics on Services Trade by Enterprise Characteristics (STEC)³⁴) and data are already available for 15 EU Member States. The collection of international trade in services by modes of supply and STEC will become mandatory under the provisions of the EBS General Implementing Act (GIA).

Eurostat provides data for monitoring the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and e-commerce in the business and household sectors in the context of implementation of the Digital Single Market. At the same time, there is a need to further progress on measuring the digital economy. Eurostat continued developing, producing and publishing statistics in the area of the digital economy and society. Both ICT surveys are

³⁴ [Compilers Guide for statistics on Services Trade by Enterprise Characteristics \(STEC\) - Products Manuals and Guidelines - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

updated on annual basis. Data are needed for developing and monitoring the EU policy initiatives in the digital area, looking at the use of ICT in households, by individuals and enterprises. Data disseminated cover a whole range of topics, such as digital connectivity, e-commerce, e-government, robotics, cloud computing, big data analysis, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and digital skills.

E-commerce is flourishing, affecting trade patterns and the way businesses operate. Many of the developments in the past decade are due to the rise of the platform economy. For example, the collaborative economy has expanded rapidly in recent years because platforms can provide efficient intermediation between consumers and service providers, e.g., for short-term accommodation, transport services, and other task based work. This has led to a number of policy questions related to consumer protection, competition, and a more flexible labour market with new types of work. In order to address such questions, there is a need to better measure the size of the platform intermediation and their economic impact. Eurostat is currently working on setting up voluntary partnerships with a limited number of platforms to develop the instruments for accessing policy relevant data held by platforms. While many platforms understand the need to collaborate with statistical authorities, they also express concerns about the nature of a voluntary data collection since it is essential to create a level playing field for the platforms. Clear rules are needed to ensure effective and sustainable access. Hence, it is likely that the first pilot projects will need to be followed up by further measures of a more binding nature, and possibly extend statistical access to privately held data³⁵.

The EPC calls upon Member States to support these developments with a view to upgrade the quality of the ESS business statistics and cross-border information, thus better capturing globalisation phenomena. The EPC welcomes the progress towards improving compliance when reporting on enterprises. In doing so, the EPC stresses the importance to maintain the consistency of business statistics with national accounts, where relevant, as well as feasibility and cost-effectiveness of the proposed developments. In addition, the EPC recommends continuing working towards the collection of data via platforms since that could reduce the need to additional surveys on SMEs and micro enterprises as well as generating more policy relevant information on the role of platforms in the digital economy.

In the globalisation context, the EPC supports the integration of new data requirements on international trade in services in the implementing act of EBS, in particular for the modes of supply (MoS) and by enterprise characteristics (STEC). Beyond their analytical value, both elements provide important input to the free trade agreement negotiation by the EU. On the technical side, STEC will be used as an input in the area of global input-output tables.

In line with the ECOFIN Council's recommendations³⁶ to substantially reduce the response burden on enterprises by redeveloping intra-EU trade in goods statistics while maintaining a sound level of quality, international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) have been in the spotlight of modernisation activities over the last years.

The new regulation on European business statistics (EBS) will become applicable for international trade in goods statistics in 2022. It incorporates the key elements of the modernised intra-EU trade in goods statistics, as agreed by the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) in May 2016. The future system of compiling intra-EU trade in goods statistics will be more flexible and innovative in terms of data sources and compilation methods, making it possible to reduce response burden while maintaining the necessary

³⁵ See *Position paper on access to privately held data, which are of public interest*, by European Statistical system, Nov 2017.

³⁶ Economic and Financial Affairs Council meetings of 30 November 2011 and of 13 November 2012.

quality. To this end, the most innovative new technical feature is the compulsory micro-data exchange on intra-EU exports between the Member States

Preparatory measures of the future system were deployed through the project 'Modernisation of the system of compiling intra-EU trade in goods statistics'. The activities carried out under the project were built around ten themes (or work packages), covering a wide range of actions from legislative work and statistical methodology to IT development work and security measures to put in place. In 2021, the outstanding work will focus on the preparation for the start of the micro-data exchange, through testing the IT system.

As regards the extra-EU trade in goods statistics, the EBS introduces the exchange of customs data between the Member States. This will help to improve the quality of extra-EU trade in goods statistics by enabling the use of customs data lodged in another Member State. To make this possible, two legal acts (IA and DA) were prepared and will be adopted in Q3/2021. The exchange of customs data will be arranged using the same IT system as developed for the intra-EU micro-data exchange.

The EPC welcomes the work, accomplished successfully thanks to the collaborative work between Eurostat and the Member States. The EPC calls upon the ESS to maintain its commitment in deploying and implementing modernised intra-EU trade in goods statistics.

4.6 Agricultural statistics

The regulation on Integrated Farm Statistics (IFS)³⁷ establishes a framework for European statistics based on farm-level data by integrating core information on the farm manager, the land and the livestock with related specific issues by means of a flexible system of modules. It provides the legal basis for the 2020 agricultural census and for two sample data collections in 2023 and 2026, and it constitutes an essential backbone and basis for other agricultural statistics, especially a sampling basis. The agricultural census 2020 under the IFS is in progress. The results are expected to be available in 2022.

IFS is the first step of the Strategy for Agricultural Statistics for 2020 and beyond, a major programme for the modernisation of European Union agricultural statistics undertaken by the European Commission in close cooperation with Member States. The strategy addresses the data needs for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), for the new Farm to Fork strategy under the European Green Deal and for agricultural aspects of environmental and health related policies.

The Commission proposal for the Regulation on Statistics of Agricultural Input and Output (SAIO) was adopted in February 2021. The SAIO Regulation is the second step to implement the strategy and it integrates and harmonises the currently separate collections of aggregated data on agricultural production (animals and crops) including organic farming, agricultural price statistics and plant protection product and nutrient statistics, as well as a new domain of grasslands.

The third part of the Strategy for Agricultural Statistics for 2020 and beyond is the modernisation of the Economic Accounts for Agriculture. The Commission proposal for the amending act of Regulation No 138/2004 on Economic Accounts was adopted in February 2021. This amendment makes the provision of regional economic accounts for agriculture and quality reports legally binding.

³⁷ Regulation (EU) No 2018/1091 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on integrated farm statistics and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1166/2008 and (EU) No 1337/2011

The EPC welcomes the objectives of the Strategy for Agricultural Statistics for 2020 and beyond and the progress made towards its implementation.

4.7 Fisheries statistics

The project 'Streamlining and simplification of European Fisheries Statistics' is progressing. The impact assessment of future options for European Fisheries Statistics is close to finalisation. The aim is to streamline the fisheries statistics under a new regulation so that they bring a substantial added value as European Statistics in the complex data architecture necessary for the management and monitoring of fisheries under the Common Fisheries Policy.

The EPC welcomes the project 'Streamlining and simplification of European Fisheries Statistics'.

4.8 Energy statistics

The European Green Deal intends to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. This requires a fundamental transformation and decarbonisation of the energy system, by boosting the use of renewable energy sources and phasing out fossil fuels, among other measures. The Energy Union is the main energy policy framework to deliver the transformations required by the energy system. Using reliable high quality energy statistics to monitor the policy targets under the European Green Deal and the Energy Union packages will enhance the credibility of EU energy policy. Energy statistics are used for monitoring progress towards Europe's 2030 environmental, energy and climate targets, the objectives of the Green Deal, the Energy Union and the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda. This includes the share of energy from renewable sources, indicators on energy efficiency, energy dependence, energy security, energy intensity, transparency of the energy market, energy infrastructure, and more.

Eurostat is updating Regulation (EC) No 1099/2008 on energy statistics to meet the increased demand for data arising from the European Green Deal and the Energy Union. The aim of this amendment is to provide earlier data and better monitor the evolution of renewable energy, energy efficiency, new fuels and energy storage.

On renewables, this amendment aims at collecting data to better monitor bio-based products used to replace feedstock from fossil origin, more detailed data on solar PV and its use in buildings, or heat pumps used in the heating and cooling sector, in line with the Renewable Energy Directive (Directive (EU) 2018/2001³⁸ and the Renovation Wave strategy³⁹.

On electricity, Eurostat proposes to collect data on decentralised electricity produced and auto-consumed in different sectors, as well as more detailed data on newly installed and decommissioned electrical capacities and on large-scale batteries, to monitor the developments resulting from the Strategic Action Plan for Batteries⁴⁰ and the Proposal for a Regulation concerning Batteries⁴¹.

On energy efficiency, this amendment aims at collecting more detailed final energy consumption data for transport use and in the services sector, including energy consumed

³⁸ [EUR-Lex - 32018L2001 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

³⁹ [EUR-Lex - 52020DC0662 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴⁰ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:0e8b694e-59b5-11e8-ab41-01aa75ed71a1.0003.02/DOC_3&format=PDF

⁴¹ [EUR-Lex - 52020PC0798 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

by data centres, as well as energy consumed in the agriculture sector, more details about energy losses during transmission and distribution and on co-generation (CHP). This new data will help monitor the developments linked to Directive (EU) 2018/2002⁴² on energy efficiency.

On hydrogen, significant developments are expected following the EU Hydrogen Strategy⁴³ and Eurostat proposes to collect new data to build a complete hydrogen balance.

This amendment also intends to collect annual data earlier, moving the reporting deadline from the end of November to the end of October after the year-end, as well as to collect data to produce early estimates of energy balances and key indicators 6 months after the end of the reference year.

The scope of Eurostat's energy statistics also includes now the Energy Community (EnC) Contracting Parties. In total, annual energy statistics are now reported and disseminated in a harmonised way for around 40 countries. Furthermore, the cooperation with the EnC Contracting Parties was extended to also cover the reporting of monthly data in the field of energy statistics, starting from oil and natural gas.

To make the complex processes of energy more understandable for data users, the first Eurostat digital publication⁴⁴ "Shedding light on energy in the EU" was updated in 2021. In addition, Eurostat created a set of interactive dissemination tools:

- For energy balances, a web tool (ENSANKEY) displaying Sankey diagrams of the energy balances compiled by Eurostat is available on: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/sankey/sankey.html>.
- For energy prices, Eurostat developed another tool (ENPRICES), available on: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/energy/prices/enprices.html>
- For energy trade, another visualisation tool (ENTRADE) has been released in 2020 to help users discover who are the main trading partners of a given country and visualise the trade flows in different ways. This tool is available on: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy_trade/entrade.html
- For energy monthly data, Eurostat developed another visualisation tool (ENMONTHLY), which is available since mid-April 2021 on: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy_monthly/enmonthly.html
- Another tool (ENDASH, released on 14 May 2021) is a dashboard to visualise the main energy indicators. This interactive tool is available on: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy_dashboard/endash.html

The EPC welcomes the progress made on energy statistics.

4.9 Environmental Economic Accounts

Environmental economic accounts analyse the links between the environment and the economy by organising the environmental information in a way that is consistent with the accounting principles of national accounts. Environmental economic accounts can be used, for example, to identify: efficiency and productivity in use of natural resources and energy (carbon, materials, water, etc.); how circular is our economy; estimate environmental footprints; which are the most polluting activities or the ones that most deplete natural resources; what is the role of government and households; how expensive it is to protect the environment and who pays for it; growth and jobs in the environmental economy.

⁴² [EUR-Lex - 32018L2002 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/2002/oj)

⁴³ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/hydrogen_strategy.pdf

⁴⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy/>

The environmental economic accounts methodology is based on the system of integrated environmental and economic accounting (SEEA 2012), published by the United Nations, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the OECD and the World Bank.

Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 on *European environmental economic accounts* consists of six accounts or modules: air emission accounts, economy-wide material flow accounts, environmental taxes, environmental goods and services sector accounts, environmental protection expenditure accounts and physical energy flow accounts. In addition to those mandatory data collections, Eurostat runs voluntary annual data collections on *forest accounts* and *environmental subsidies and similar transfers*.

In the context of the European Green Deal, there is a high demand to increase the quality of environmental accounts data and to produce environmental accounts on new topics. Eurostat is discussing with Member States the preparation of two legal acts for this purpose. One Commission delegated regulation would increase quality as regards better timeliness, rebalance of granularity across classifications and up-to-date technical lists of material flows and air emissions. This is scheduled to enter into force in 2022 Q2. A second legal act would create new European environmental accounts on top of the existing ones. This amendment would require a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council. Currently 4 new accounts are in discussion, plus an extension of one existing account. They are: forest accounts, water accounts, ecosystem accounts, environmental subsidies and similar transfers, and resource management expenditure as an extension of environmental protection expenditure accounts. Eurostat seeks to continue the discussions and to prepare a draft regulation by the end of 2021.

Eurostat maintains a set of handbooks providing guidance. Eurostat makes available for national compilers an IT tool ('PEFA-Builder'), which populates the energy accounts questionnaire from existing energy statistics. This software is regularly updated and improved.

Environmentally extended Supply-Use and Input-Output tables are regularly produced to investigate the 'consumer perspective' of global climate change, air pollution and material use, which provide footprint type indicators. Eurostat continues to publish annually estimates of air emissions footprints, energy footprints and material footprints for the EU. In particular, material footprints for all Member States are demanded in the context of the circular economy. Some Member States report such data on voluntary basis, but others do not and Eurostat is seeking to estimate country-level material footprints for those countries.

Since 2018, Eurostat maintains the Commission monitoring framework for the circular economy⁴⁵, which consists of 10 indicators, some of which are broken down in sub-indicators, covering production and consumption, waste management, secondary raw materials and competitiveness and innovation. The Commission requires the monitoring framework to be updated by the end of 2021. Eurostat is co-leader of this process, alongside DG Environment. Eurostat also publishes an online interactive Sankey diagram of material flows.

Eurostat promotes the use of official statistics for climate change information purposes with several activities. Eurostat is member of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) steering group and task force supporting the implementation of the CES Recommendations on climate change related statistics. Eurostat is currently running a pilot review of its offer of climate change related statistics. This pilot is scheduled to finalise in October 2021. Eurostat also participates in the task force focused on measuring extreme events and disasters and the role of official statistics in providing data and support in this domain.

⁴⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/circular-economy>

The European Court of Auditors published in October 2019 the special report 2019/16 'European environmental economic accounts: usefulness for policymakers can be improved'. The report makes recommendations, which the Commission (Eurostat and other Directorates General) accepted. Work to implement them is ongoing and there are no delays.

The EPC welcomes the progress in the area of environmental economic accounts and wishes to participate in the discussion on the European Green Deal.

4.10 Transport statistics

A fundamental freedom of the European Union (EU) and its single market is the free movement of people and goods across its internal borders. The transport sector employs around 10 million workers and is the second-largest area of expenditure for European households, contributing 5% to European GDP.

Mobility benefits are not without costs: greenhouse gas emissions (one quarter of the EU's total is produced by the transport sector); air, noise and water pollution; accidents; congestion; and biodiversity loss. The most serious challenge the transport sector faces is to significantly reduce its emissions and become more sustainable. The European Green Deal calls for a 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport, in order for the EU to become a climate-neutral economy by 2050. This change requires sustainable alternatives to become available in a multimodal transport system and the right incentives to drive the transition.

Eurostat constantly supports the EU policies through statistics for five transport modes: aviation, inland waterways, maritime, rail and road. The biggest volume of statistical data is collected in the framework of five Commission regulations, one for each of the aforementioned modes. These statistics are complemented by voluntary data collections at national and regional level, as well as by results of statistical projects.

A voluntary data collection that contributes data not covered by EU legal acts is the Common Questionnaire on Inland Transport, a joint product of Eurostat, the International Transport Forum (ITF), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). It concerns inland transport modes (rail, road, inland waterways and oil pipelines) and provides harmonised and comparable data on infrastructure; transport equipment; enterprises; economic performance and employment; traffic; transport measurement; and accidents.

Eurostat has been cooperating with DG MOVE in an effort to reduce the administrative burden for the countries and increase efficiency by avoiding duplication of work. In this context, the maritime transport statistics Directive (EC) 2009/42 has been listed as one of the reporting obligations in the annex to Regulation (EU) No 2019/1239 on the European Maritime Single Window environment. The Regulation entered into force in August 2019. The adoption of first delegated and implementing acts is foreseen for the first quarter of 2022 and the first development of common IT components is scheduled for 2022. The Regulation will apply from 15 August 2025 onwards.

Passenger mobility in urban areas by different means of transport is a significant and newly developed field of statistics. In 2020, Eurostat published the first set of data on passenger mobility, which will be updated as soon as new data from national surveys is available. This data reflects the effort of the countries in the last 6 years when Eurostat was co-funding the collection of data on passenger mobility. Eurostat collaborates closely with DG MOVE on the mobility projects Urban Mobility initiative and New mobility patterns in EU cities. At the same time, Eurostat is interested in alternative data sources for passenger mobility and is planning to launch the Mobility and Traffic project on the use of mobile data for measuring passenger mobility indicators.

The increased usage of light utility vehicles, especially in urban areas, is of big interest to the Member States and has led Eurostat to plan the development of relevant EU statistics. Eurostat and multiple countries keep on working as a group on the methodological elements of a potential data collection on light utility vehicles, making the best use of countries' experience in this area. The latest meeting of the group was in June 2021. Road freight transport statistics are currently complemented by voluntary data on road traffic, which is collected via the Common Questionnaire on Inland Transport, and by data from an Odometer Reading questionnaire.

Inland waterways is an efficient and less polluting mode of transport. In this context, Eurostat and the Member States are investigating the feasibility of a future data collection on passenger transport by inland waterways. In February 2021, the Commission submitted a report to the European Parliament and to the Council (COM(2021) 59 final) on the results of pilot studies carried out by seven Member States on statistics on passenger transport by inland waterways. The report concluded that, in the seven participating countries, it would be feasible to collect data on passenger transport by inland waterways to a certain extent, but this would have to balance the need for data with the availability of information and the burden on respondents. Eurostat is currently working on a draft methodology to be discussed with the Member States.

Increased demand for data on air transport resulted in tightening the cooperation of Eurostat with Eurocontrol. Thanks to the administrative agreement signed, Eurostat started disseminating a new set of data on the number of commercial flights per country and airport. The monthly figures are available to the public with a maximum delay of 10 days after the end of each month.

Delivery services aim to use drone technology for delivering goods to consumers. Drone delivery may prove faster and more environmentally friendly than ground delivery but will also have an impact on local air traffic. The EU is paving the way to establish a drone service market. In cooperation with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and DG MOVE, Eurostat will investigate the possibilities for developing official statistics on this new mode of transport.

Statistical data on the European Rail Traffic Management System and on numbers of stations with access facilities for persons with reduced mobility were identified by the European Parliament as essential for the implementation of the EU transport policy. In cooperation with the European Union Agency for Railways, in 2020, Eurostat started to disseminate data on the length of railway lines equipped with the European Rail Traffic Management System. Following the implementation of the regulation on the European Vehicle Register in 2021 and the subsequent data collection, Eurostat plans to disseminate data also on stations with access facilities for people with reduced mobility in spring 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the vital role played by transport, and the social and economic costs when free movement of people, goods and services is constrained. A coordinated European approach to transport activity is essential to overcome any crisis and strengthen the EU's autonomy and resilience.

After the second quarter of 2020, the collection and transmission of transport data required under legal acts have been only marginally affected by the measures related to the pandemic. In certain cases, there has even been a positive outcome: several countries have responded positively to Eurostat's request to send data before the official deadlines so that Eurostat can evaluate the effect of COVID-19 on passenger and freight transport. A more significant impact of the pandemic-related measures was on carrying out surveys (e.g. passenger mobility surveys) due to the difficulties to conduct face-to-face interviews. This has led to delays in executing pilot studies under EU funding.

Reliability of transport statistics has not been affected by COVID-19 measures. Member States have transmitted high-quality data; statistical processing of data has not been delayed; and dissemination of statistics has followed the planned schedule.

Relevance of transport statistics has increased this period, since COVID-19 measures have had a significant impact on mobility. Ad hoc data extractions have proven useful for assessing this impact and making policy decisions.

The EPC welcomes the work accomplished successfully thanks to the collaborative work between Eurostat and the Member States, and calls upon the ESS to maintain its commitment to transport statistics.

4.11 Real estate statistics

Among the statistical gaps highlighted by the financial and economic crisis, real estate price and volume statistics have been considered among the areas to be urgently developed to provide appropriate indicators for both residential and commercial property prices and for additional short-term volume indicators for construction.

Particular attention has been devoted to developing internationally comparable house price indices and statistics on house sales. House Price Indices (HPIs) and Owner-Occupied Housing Price Indices (OOHPIs) have been regularly produced and published based on Regulation No 2016/792 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Since 2015, Eurostat has been publishing an annual index of the total value of housing transactions, now encompassing 21 Member States.

Since summer 2020, Eurostat has been publishing quarterly indicators of the total value and number of housing transactions. Together with the HPI and the OOHPI, it forms a coherent and conceptually meaningful data set to inform policy makers and other users. The data now covers 13 Member States.

Against the background of the increasing user demand at the EU level for commercial real estate indicators, in particular from the European Systemic Risk Board (ESBR) expressed in ESRB Recommendation 2019/3, Eurostat established the new Real Estate Price Statistics Working Group as well as three Task Forces: Task Force on Commercial Real Estate Indicators (TF CREI), short-term business statistics commercial real estate indicators Task Force (STS CREI TF) and Task Force on vacancy rates for commercial real estate (TF VRCREI).

- TF CREI provides input into the further development of short and medium as well as long-term solutions for the CREI price statistics indicators (prices, rents and yields). The TF discusses the various ongoing pilot projects in the participating countries and addresses the various challenges, e.g. finding the most suitable data sources. The pilot studies feed into the discussions of new methodologies for developing CREI, as well as manuals.
- STS CREI TF was set up in order to develop the new CREI indicators on construction starts and completions. This task force also discussed the respective methodology needed for these new indicators as well as the supporting grant actions launched. The TF also discussed the organisation and putting in place of the pilot data collections and pilot data production.
- TF VRCREI was set up in spring 2021 to identify potential data sources for vacancy rates and analyse their cost and benefits in relation to the target definition given by ESRB Recommendation 2016/14. This TF is mandated to produce recommendations on the most cost-effective way to collect data to close the identified data gaps as regards vacancy rates.

The EPC welcomes the publication of quarterly house sales indicators as well as the creation of the task forces, TF CREI, STS CREI TF, TF VRCREI and their work. The EPC encourages the remaining Member States who do not transmit quarterly indicators of the total value and number of housing transactions to speed up their efforts to produce these indicators as well.

4.12 Social statistics

4.12.1 Statistics on persons and households

Regulation (EU) No 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples, was adopted on 10 October 2019. The Regulation is part of a major programme for the modernisation of social statistics undertaken in close cooperation with the Member States. It aims at delivering new, integrated ways to collect and use data from social surveys so as to better support policy making in general and social policy in particular. It addresses the increased challenges in this area of statistics, which include rapid innovation in methodologies and uses of IT, the availability of new data sources, emerging needs and expectations of data users as well as continued pressure on available resources. It also supports the actions in the social fields that require a solid evidence base in subjects such as inequalities, skills, access to employment for all and social protection expenditures - all of which will be better described with sound and timely statistics. It streamlines the European social statistics collected from samples as well as makes the data collection process more efficient and the statistical output more relevant.

The first implementation of the Regulation No 2019/1700, a series of implementing and delegated acts has been adopted in 2019/2020 for implementation in the domains 'labour force', 'income and living conditions' and 'use of information and communication technologies' in 2021. First data under the Regulation No 2019/1700 were received for reference periods starting from 1 January 2021 onwards.

In 2021, the implementation of the Regulation No 2019/1700 continued with the adoption of secondary legislation for the domain 'education and training' as well as for data on health and quality of life in the domain 'income and living conditions'

The EPC welcomes the swift implementation of the Regulation No 2019/1700 and assuring data provision starting in 2021.

4.12.2 Labour market statistics and wage indicators

Labour market developments are of key importance to the work of the EPC. At the centre of interest are the effects of the business cycle on employment and unemployment, the impact of the crisis, wage developments and the longer-term evolution of labour demand and supply, in particular with a view to structural features and possible mismatches.

Furthermore, there is a need for timelier quarterly indicators to fully describe labour market developments in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the recently developed statistical information on labour market flows and indicators on labour market slacks. The EPC welcomes Eurostat's publication, on a quarterly basis, of aggregated quarter-on-quarter ILO labour status transition matrices, both rates and levels, for all EU Member States but Germany (Germany to be included by end-2021) and of year-on-year transition matrices for all EU Member States.

The EPC also appreciates the regular dissemination of seasonally adjusted data for the main labour market indicators.

A number of structural characteristics of the labour market were already covered by the indicators used under the Europe 2020 Joint Assessment Framework and have been included in the Scoreboard of the revised European Pillar of Social Rights. In this context and beyond, the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS) is the key statistical source.

The modernisation of the EU LFS is being implemented and first data became available for reference periods starting January 2021 under the Regulation No 2019/1700. This leads to better information on labour market dynamics, further harmonised measurement of the labour status, a streamlined process for regular modules and ad-hoc subjects, a reviewed list of variables filling more users' needs, better use of administrative data and improved timeliness. In addition, data collection is becoming more efficient by the use of multi-mode data collection (computer assistance but also web-interviewing). At the same time, the phasing-in of these improvements creates issues with comparability of indicators over time. Member States and Eurostat need to provide break adjusted time series for as many variables as possible.

Keeping labour costs statistics comparable across countries was particularly challenging in times of full or partial lockdowns. In this regard, the EPC appreciates the guidance note⁴⁶ provided by Eurostat for a harmonized recording of government schemes related to the COVID-19 crisis.

The EPC also takes note of the release of the latest Structure of Earnings Survey ('SES') 2018 data whose sample records the gross wages received and the individual characteristics of more than 500 000 enterprises and nearly 11 million employees throughout the EU. These data were used to update the publication: 'Wage determinants in the European Union'⁴⁷ whose latest edition includes a new analysis of the wage gaps across NUTS I regions and a dedicated chapter on public administration, education and health. SES data on median hourly earnings were also used in the preparation of the Commission draft directives on adequate minimum wages⁴⁸ and pay transparency⁴⁹.

The EPC recognizes the role of Eurostat in the preparation of non-statistical EU legislative acts when some of their provisions refer to statistics. This ensures an appropriate coordination of the statistical aspects and allows keeping the administrative and response burden under control.

As future improvements, Eurostat has launched a process of review of the Labour Market statistics from Businesses (LMB). It encompasses data collections on wages, labour costs, job vacancies and gender pay gap. In particular, Eurostat examines with Member States and other stakeholders the possibility to extend the SES scope to small firms (with 1 to 9 employees) and NACE Rev. 2 section O ('Public administration, defence, social security'). Further use of administrative data and new sources will be targeted. As regards job vacancy statistics, the EPC invites the three Member States concerned to close the remaining coverage gaps (notably for small businesses).

The EPC welcomes the progress made in labour force statistics and wage indicators.

⁴⁶ [Labour-costs_Guidance_note.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=KS-FT-21-004>

⁴⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0682>

⁴⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/com-2021-93_en_0.pdf

4.12.3 Demographic statistics and population projections

Demography

Responding to the demographic change in the EU is a priority of the Commission as proved by the mission letter of President von der Leyen to Vice-president Šuica in which demography has an outstanding role. In 2020, the Commission published the “Report on the Impact of Demographic change”⁵⁰ where the main drivers of demographic change and the impact they are having across Europe were presented. Eurostat worked extensively on the report. The report was accompanied by a Commission staff working document⁵¹ prepared by Eurostat and by a series of country factsheets⁵². The report launched a process that will help to identify concrete actions and solutions, mindful of lessons learned from COVID-19, to support people, regions and communities that are most affected and to enable them to adapt to changing realities⁵³.

In addition to its major impact on people’s lives, on economies and on healthcare systems, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered tremendous interest in related statistics. Therefore, in April 2020, in cooperation with the National Statistical Institutes of the European Statistical System, Eurostat set up a new special European data collection on weekly deaths, in order to support COVID-19 policy and research efforts.

Eurostat publishes⁵⁴ weekly data regularly submitted by the National Statistical Institutes on a voluntary basis, up to the latest available week. These data are cross-classified by sex, 5-year age group and NUTS 3 region. Data going back as far as 2000 are submitted by the countries in order to enable seasonal comparisons. Considering the urgent need for statistical information to monitor mortality, timeliness is the main goal of this data collection exercise.

In December 2020, Eurostat released a European Statistical Recovery Dashboard⁵⁵ containing also indicators tracking economic and social developments, including health. In this context, an indicator of “excess mortality⁵⁶”, based on the weekly deaths statistics, was identified as one of the most useful indicators for assessing additional deaths. “Excess mortality” offers elements for monitoring and further analysing direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The monthly excess mortality indicator draws attention to the magnitude and impact of the crisis on European societies by providing a comprehensive comparison of additional deaths amongst the European countries and allowing for further analysis of its causes. The indicator is simply comparing the total number of deaths from all causes with the number of deaths during a certain period in the past (baseline). In order to capture the dynamics of mortality changes in a more comprehensive way, the excess mortality indicator is calculated for each month, no later than 45 days after the end of the reference period (depending on data available to Eurostat from the national statistical institutes). However, while a substantial increase largely coincides with a COVID-19 outbreak in each country, the indicator does not make a distinction between the causes of death and does not catch differences across sex or age classes. The reasons for an excess mortality may vary according to different phenomena.

⁵⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/demography_report_2020_n.pdf

⁵¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/impact-demographic-change-commission-staff-working-document_en

⁵² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/6061533/12509134/Factsheets+EN.pdf/>

⁵³ More information of the work of the European Commission 2019-2024 to tackle the impact of demographic change in Europe can be found in the [European Commission dedicated pages](#).

⁵⁴ For a complete overview please see the article https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Weekly_death_statistics

⁵⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/recovery-dashboard/>

⁵⁶ For a complete overview please see the article https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Excess_mortality_statistics

Following a growing interest from users, in April 2021, Eurostat released provisional estimates of life expectancy at birth for 2020⁵⁷ based on the voluntary weekly death statistics, much in advance compared to the usual timing of the release of the indicator (February 2022, based on input data transmitted by the countries under Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013⁵⁸ on European demographic statistics).

Redevelopment of European statistics on population

Population statistics is undergoing a period of major changes, in particular related to the increased use of administrative data. In parallel, the demand for these statistics is growing and changing in the context of increased migration flows, impact of ageing and needs for more regional and local information for the assessment of the impact of population changes.

Since 2015, as part of ongoing discussions on the modernisation of social statistics, Eurostat has been working on a long-term comprehensive redevelopment of European population statistics following the 2021 round of population and housing censuses. Eurostat currently undertakes several separate population data collections on different periodicities and under different legal bases, covering demographic, migration and census topics. There are also parts of the city statistics that relate to population topics. An important aim of this redevelopment is to integrate these different population data collections under a single legal basis, allowing for better harmonisation, reduced duplication of work, and a more efficient use for resources in Eurostat and in NSIs. A new legal basis is also necessary since the current Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013⁵⁹ on European demographic statistics will cease to apply on 31 August 2028.

The new Commission initiative on European statistics on population⁶⁰ (ESOP) aims at a new regulatory framework to bring together demographic, migration and census data and ensure greater regional detail. ESOP should allow for flexible and incremental improvements to the statistics to meet evolving user needs and to exploit the opportunities provided by the growing use of administrative data sources and new methods. By bringing population statistics together under a single regulatory framework, it is expected that improvements in harmonisation, coherence, burden reduction and efficiency of production can be obtained. This will be to the benefit of statistics producers and users.

Population projections

In accordance with the May 2018 mandate from the ECOFIN Council and the procedure for the production of population projections agreed in 2019, Eurostat released the population projections EUROPOP2019 in April 2020, within the deadline agreed with the Ageing Working Group. This new round has presented important methodological developments in migration modelling, along the lines suggested by the EPC communication to Eurostat on 15 November 2019. The methodology and results of EUROPOP 2019 were presented to the Ageing Working Group in May 2020 and the data have served as demographic input to the Ageing Report 2021.

After the release of the baseline projections, Eurostat has produced also several sensitivity variants based on parameters set by the Ageing Working Group, namely with lower fertility, lower mortality, and with higher, lower and no migration.

Eurostat has then proceeded to the production of regional projections at NUTS 3 level, with outcomes perfectly consistent with the results from the national level EUROPOP2019 for

⁵⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20210407-1>

⁵⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:330:0039:0043:EN:PDF>

⁵⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:330:0039:0043:EN:PDF>

⁶⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12958-European-statistics-on-population-ESOP>

each single age and sex. The level of granularity of these regional projections is unprecedented and places this exercise among the most complex worldwide, taking into account its high number of geographical units (1,213), the additional requirement of assumptions on internal migration, and the extension of the time horizon to the end of this century. The extremely demanding deadline has been met again and the Eurostat regional projections have been available to users since the very beginning of 2021. They will serve as input to the report on Long-Term Vision on Rural Areas and to the Cohesion Report among others.

In addition to the large set of baseline regional projections data, Eurostat has also produced two sensitivity variants, one with no migration at all, and the other without internal migration. The release of the regional projections has been followed by the publication of an article explaining the main results (Statistics Explained) as well as by a methodological note, the same way as for the national level exercise. In addition, on 30 April 2021 Eurostat presented the main features of these regional projections in a webinar. Several stakeholders have expressed their high appreciation for the work done by Eurostat.

On 18 June 2021, the ECOFIN Council invited Eurostat to treat the population projections as a priority and release the next results by no later than March 2023. Work has started to plan the implementation and reinforce the resources allocated. Cooperation of Member States will be sought to ensure earlier availability of underlying demography and migration data to be able to meet the advanced population projections deadline in 2023.

The EPC welcomes the preparation of regional population projections by Eurostat.