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NOTE

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Delegations will find in annex the 2023 Council conclusions on EU Statistics as approved by the Council (ECOFIN) meeting held on 9 November 2023.

2023 Council conclusions on EU statistics

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

Following the priorities set in the previous Council Conclusions on EU statistics of November 2022, notably on the EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU and taking into consideration the political guidelines for the Commission 2019-2024, the Council has reviewed the progress related to information requirements in EMU, statistics for the EDP, surveillance of macroeconomic imbalances and structural statistics.

Statistical response to crises

The Council WELCOMES that the European Statistical System (ESS) and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) have continued to provide timely and effective statistical support for the EU's response to the Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

In this context, the Council particularly WELCOMES the involvement and efforts of Eurostat, in close cooperation with the Member States, for the development of energy-related statistics and providing guidance for harmonised statistical recording of government measures countering the impact of high energy prices.

The Council UNDERLINES the high priority of timely energy statistics, and therefore ENCOURAGES the swift and complete implementation of the amended Energy Statistics Regulation. The Council ACKNOWLEDGES the development of new indicators on renewable energy, energy efficiency, new fuels and energy storage and TAKES NOTE of the Commission's intention to propose a new amendment on hydrogen reporting.

Statistics in relation to Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal

The Council WELCOMES Eurostat's achievements regarding the provision of statistical indicators and information for the monitoring of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at European Union level in the context of the European Semester as well as Eurostat's contribution to the EU voluntary review and ENCOURAGES Eurostat to continue to monitor progress towards SDGs in cooperation with Member States.

The Council WELCOMES the efforts undertaken by the ESS and the ESCB to address information demands from the European Green Deal, notably in the fields of energy statistics, environment and climate statistics, environmental economic accounts, green financial instruments, transport statistics and circular economy monitoring.

The Council TAKES NOTE of the Commission Proposal for amending Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 on European environmental accounts to expand the range of environmental economic accounts to new modules in the areas of forestry, ecosystems, and environmental subsidies, the Council ENCOURAGES the ESS to develop an updated environmental accounts strategy for the period 2024-28, to guide future developments, taking into account the needs for policymakers, the burden of national statistical authorities and avoiding overlapping work with other initiatives of international organisations.

Making the legal framework governing European statistics fit for the future and ensuring access to data for the compilation of timelier and more detailed official statistics

The Council TAKES NOTE OF the Commission's proposal for a targeted revision of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics to respond to users' needs for timelier, more frequent and more detailed European official statistics, notably in times of crisis. The proposal aims to allow statistical authorities to tap the full potential of new digital technologies and sources, particularly privately held data, by enabling their use for European statistics and also seeks to make the ESS more efficient by promoting data sharing and strengthening coordination in the European and national data ecosystems. The Council APPRECIATES the attempts to legally regulate the access to privately held data for statistical purposes and underlines the need for transparent and simple procedures in this respect, which would fit the current rules of the European statistics production.

The Council TAKES NOTE OF the ECB Opinion of 28 September 2023 on the proposal. The opinion aims to deepen the statistical cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB.

The Council LOOKS FORWARD TO and ENCOURAGES a timely adoption of the amending Regulation.

The Council WELCOMES the ESS's joint Innovation Agenda, with a range of priority projects that exploit new technologies and new data sources. In this context, the Council REITERATES the importance of increased and sustained access for producers of official statistics to new data sources, particularly privately held data.

Adequate resources for official statistics

The Council REITERATES the need to ensure that human and financial resources are adequate for Eurostat and National Statistical Authorities, to address urgent data requirements including on the digital transformation, the green transition and climate change.

The 2023 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU

The Council TAKES NOTE of the developments described in the 2023 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in the EMU. In particular, the Council:

APPRECIATES the further improvements in country coverage, timeliness, and overall quality of the Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs).

UNDERLINES the continuing important role played by the PEEIs as a basis for monitoring short-term economic developments and LOOKS FORWARD TO further progress to close remaining gaps.

The Council WELCOMES the development of a new monthly index of services production and the Commission's proposal for it to replace the current quarterly services turnover indicator as a PEEI from April 2024.

The Council TAKES NOTE of the ongoing activities under the G-20 Data Gaps Initiative, and in particular ENCOURAGES the work being undertaken on statistics for climate change and on distributional measures of household income, consumption and wealth which are consistent with macroeconomic aggregates.

Statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure (MIP) and the Stability and Growth Pact

The Council WELCOMES the quality assurance of statistics underlying the MIP, and APPRECIATES the annual ESS-ESCB quality assessment report on MIP statistics by Eurostat and the ECB, TAKING NOTE of the actions identified therein.

The Council STRESSES the importance of a clear, homogeneous and stable framework for the statistical treatment of data on public finance, and REITERATES its call on Member States to ensure that all statistical data needed for the application of the expenditure benchmark of the Stability and Growth Pact, taking also into account the ongoing discussions on the reform of the EU's economic governance framework, including data on government revenue in the form of EU funding, are reported to Eurostat, and underlines the importance of harmonisation and transparency of such data.

Real estate statistics

The Council WELCOMES and ENCOURAGES the work of both the ESS and the ESCB to improve commercial real estate indicators.

Business statistics

The Council WELCOMES the completion of the regulatory framework including the European business statistics (EBS) regulation (Regulation (EU) No 2019/2152) complemented by ten implementing and delegated acts. The Council WELCOMES new statistics for users, such as monthly services production, as well as trade in services by modes of supply (MoS) and by enterprise characteristics (STEC). The Council ACKNOWLEDGES that improvements in business statistics are based on new data sources, including micro data on intra-EU exports of goods exchanged between Member States, and allow to substantially reduce the response burden on enterprises while maintaining a sound level of quality.

The Council ENCOURAGES the ESS to further develop statistics on the contribution of small and medium sized enterprises to the economy, regional breakdowns, micro data linking and the measurement of high growth enterprises.

The Council ACKNOWLEDGES the results achieved by the ESS in providing data and indicators in the context of the Digital Decade Communication, and UNDERLINES the importance of full implementation of the ESS's action plan. To this end, the Council WELCOMES the further initiatives to meet the identified data needs and gaps.

Demographic and social statistics

The Council **ACKNOWLEDGES** the ongoing negotiations on the Commission's proposal for European statistics on population (ESOP) and **WELCOMES** the publication by Eurostat of long-term population projections in March 2023.

The Council **TAKES NOTE** of the recent Commission proposal for a new regulation on Labour Market statistics from Businesses (LMB), and **UNDERLINES** the importance of timely labour cost statistics. The Council **WELCOMES** the progress made by the ESS on a pilot data collection relating to digital platform workers, and **LOOKS FORWARD** to the publication of first results by the end of 2023.

The Council **ENCOURAGES** the ESS to use its ongoing review of health statistics, with the objective to assess existing data collections, user needs and simplification possibilities, to take forward improvements in these statistics.