



Council of the
European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

On: 8 November 2019

To: Delegations

Subject: EU Statistics

- 2019 ECOFIN EU Statistics Council Conclusions (8 November 2019)

Delegations will find in annex the Council Conclusions on EU Statistics, adopted by the Council (ECOFIN) at its 3725th meeting held on 8 November 2019 in Brussels.

Council of the European Union**Council conclusions on EU statistics*****ECONOMIC and FINANCIAL AFFAIRS Council meeting******Brussels, 8 November 2019***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"Following the priorities set in the previous ECOFIN Council Conclusions on EU statistics of November 2018, notably on the EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU, and taking into consideration the political guidelines for the new Commission 2019-2024, and in particular the statistical needs that underpin the economic governance, the ECOFIN Council has reviewed the progress related to information requirements in EMU, statistics for the EDP and surveillance of macroeconomic imbalance, and structural statistics.

Key developments in European official statistics

The Council HIGHLIGHTS the need to ensure that human and financial resources are adequate for the investment in and maintenance of statistical infrastructure at European and national level in order for the European Statistical System (ESS) to meet the need for regular, high quality, official statistics at Union, national, regional and local level, in the context of the challenges created by globalisation and advances in technology as well as fast-changing data requirements. The Council RECALLS the importance of minimising burden on respondents and the need to balance new statistical demands with efficiency gains and effective prioritisation.

The Council APPRECIATES the importance of work on migration and demographic statistics, and the developments in the areas of employment, digitalisation, Energy Union, climate change, environment, sustainable development, green investment, research and development, innovation, education, health, social protection, social inclusion and poverty.

The Council WELCOMES the ESS initiatives to exploit new data sources and technologies and develop innovative methods for producing high quality, richer and faster European statistics.

The Council WELCOMES the efforts to investigate data availability and the possibility of producing statistics for the European Defence Action Plan, and ENCOURAGES Eurostat to mainstream climate change in all relevant statistical domains.

The Council ENCOURAGES Eurostat to continue to conduct and improve monitoring of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at European Union level in the context of the European Semester.

The Council ACKNOWLEDGES the ongoing work on implementing acts covering detailed data requirements, the definitions of statistical variables and additional technical specifications, following political agreement on the Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS) and the adoption of the Integrated European Social Statistics Framework Regulation (IESS).

The Council WELCOMES that, in the context of ongoing discussions on the future of EMU, European statisticians, will continue to evaluate related emerging statistical needs, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, and UNDERLINES the important role played by the Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs).

The 2019 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU

The Council TAKES NOTE of the developments described in the 2019 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in the EMU. In particular, the Council:

APPRECIATES the substantial improvements in country coverage, timeliness, length of time series and overall quality of the PEEIs and WELCOMES the introduction of employment flash estimates for the EU and euro area from November 2018 onwards.

RECOGNISES the further improvements in the country coverage of some PEEIs and the generally excellent availability of quarterly government finance statistics.

APPRECIATES these improvements and looks forward to further progress to close remaining gaps, WELCOMES the significant improvement in availability of ESA 2010 data and the progress with the ESA 2010 derogations, and ENCOURAGES Eurostat to continue working towards the development of the house sales indicator at quarterly frequency.

Real estate statistics for macro-prudential and other purposes

The Council HIGHLIGHTS the general interest generated from public institutions, policy makers, and market investors, and notably from stability analysts and financial supervisors regarding commercial real estate indicators (CREI), and WELCOMES Eurostat's work on the development of the required statistics.

The Council WELCOMES the various initiatives by both the ESS and the ESCB to progress on the conceptual work on real estate indicators. The Council ENCOURAGES both the ESS and the ESCB to attach the necessary importance and urgency to this issue.

The Council ACKNOWLEDGES the regular collection of available annual and quarterly house sales indicators on a voluntary basis. The Council INVITES the Member States to send available information if not already provided.

Government finance and Excessive Deficit Procedure statistics

The Council HIGHLIGHTS the work of the Commission towards providing a high-quality statistical service in the area of Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) statistics and the underlying government finance statistics of Member States, in order to monitor, implement and develop Community economic policies and in particular the Stability and Growth Pact and the Commission Investment Plan for Europe. The Council CALLS ON Member States to ensure that all statistical data needed for the application of the expenditure benchmark of the Stability and Growth Pact, including data on government revenue from EU funds, are reported to Eurostat. The Council ENCOURAGES Eurostat to continue to provide early clarification of the statistical rules applicable to investments also in the areas of sustainable development and digitalisation.

The Council TAKES NOTE of the progress to date as regards the introduction of methodological changes, and RECOMMENDS further changes to be introduced in a more structured, scheduled and rigorous manner. Moreover, the Council WELCOMES the progress made to complete the procedures regarding methodological guidance. While reaffirming the need for all stakeholders to respect the relevant rules, the Council RECALLS the need to give due consideration to Member States' time and resource constraints for implementation of guidance and action points arising from EDP dialogue visits. The Council TAKES NOTE of the publication of the 2019 edition of the Manual on Government Deficit and Debt and the new manual of the Classification of Functions of Government.

Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure (MIP) statistics

The Council WELCOMES the progress on quality assurance of statistics underlying the MIP, and ACKNOWLEDGES the steps taken by Eurostat and the Directorate General Statistics of the ECB to implement the Memorandum of Understanding.

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

The Council HIGHLIGHTS the contributions made by the statistical community, both at national and at EU level, concerning MIP-relevant statistics, and RECOGNISES the need to support and continue the work to provide reliable and comparable statistics in all the stages of the MIP.

Social statistics

The Council WELCOMES the progress on the modernisation of social statistics in particular its contribution to the Social Scoreboard for the European Pillar of Social Rights by providing data on a broad range of indicators. The Council TAKES NOTE of the progress made towards completing the plan to modernise population statistics.

The Council ENCOURAGES Eurostat to develop further experimental statistics, including the now-casting of social indicators, that could be relevant in the context of the European Semester.

The Council APPRECIATES the agreements on the regulation on 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, and WELCOMES the planned improvements in the EU Labour Force Survey and the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions and their planned modernisation from 2021 under the Integrated European Social Statistics regulation.

Quality assurance of ESA 2010 output

The Council ACKNOWLEDGES that in complement to the work on compliance and data validation, Eurostat introduced a framework for an enhanced quality assessment and significant progress has been achieved in the last year.

Globalisation

The Council ACKNOWLEDGES the work undertaken to address the challenges of globalisation for statistics, including the activities to better understand and measure the structure and activity of multinational enterprise groups and to identify restructuring.

The Council ENCOURAGES ESS and ESCB collaboration on globalisation issues to foster reliable, consistent and accurate data in both financial and non-financial statistics. The Council SUPPORTS initiatives that aim at overcoming unnecessary constraints on the sharing of relevant information between statistical compilers.

Public Sector Accounting

The Council TAKES NOTE of the ongoing technical work on the European Public Sector Accounting Standards (EPSAS), and RECOGNISES the progress made in this area, reported in the Commission Staff Working Document.