



Procedure file

Basic information	
COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation	2012/0084(COD) Procedure completed
European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities Amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009	2007/0220(COD)
Subject 5.10.01 Convergence of economic policies, public deficit, interest rates 8.60 European statistical legislation	

Key players				
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed	
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs		18/09/2014	
		S&D BAYET Hugues		
		Shadow rapporteur		
		PPE GAUZÈS Jean-Paul		
		ALDE IN 'T VELD Sophia		
		Verts/ALE LAMBERTS Philippe		
		ECR FORD Vicky		
	Former committee responsible			
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs		07/05/2012	
		S&D HOANG NGOC Liem		
	Former committee for opinion			
	REGI Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date	
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	3372	05/03/2015	
	Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	3366	27/01/2015	
	Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	3343	07/11/2014	
	Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	3198	13/11/2012	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner		
	Eurostat	THYSSEN Marianne		

Key events			
17/04/2012	Legislative proposal published	COM(2012)0167	Summary
20/04/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
13/11/2012	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
	Vote in committee, 1st reading		

18/12/2012			
21/12/2012	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A7-0436/2012	Summary
20/11/2013	Debate in Parliament		
21/11/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
21/11/2013	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T7-0505/2013	Summary
03/09/2014	Committee decision to open interinstitutional negotiations after 1st reading in Parliament		
07/11/2014	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
07/01/2015	Approval in committee of the text agreed at early 2nd reading interinstitutional negotiations	PE604.834	
05/03/2015	Council position published	05161/2/2015	Summary
12/03/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
20/04/2015	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		
22/04/2015	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A8-0137/2015	Summary
28/04/2015	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T8-0103/2015	Summary
29/04/2015	Final act signed		
29/04/2015	End of procedure in Parliament		
19/05/2015	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2012/0084(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
	Amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 2007/0220(COD)
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 338-p1
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ECON/8/02669

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal	COM(2012)0167	17/04/2012	EC	Summary
Committee draft report	PE497.894	15/10/2012	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE500.544	19/11/2012	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st	A7-0436/2012	21/12/2012	EP	Summary

reading/single reading					
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T7-0505/2013	21/11/2013	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2014)87	30/01/2014	EC	
Text agreed during interinstitutional negotiations		PE604.834	19/12/2014	EP	
Council statement on its position		06582/2015	04/03/2015	CSL	
Council position		05161/2/2015	06/03/2015	CSL	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position		COM(2015)0125	10/03/2015	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE554.676	01/04/2015	EP	
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A8-0137/2015	22/04/2015	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T8-0103/2015	28/04/2015	EP	Summary
Draft final act		00026/2015/LEX	29/04/2015	CSL	

Additional information

National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act

[Regulation 2015/759](#)
[OJ L 123 19.05.2015, p. 0090](#) Summary

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

PURPOSE : to amend Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics in order to strengthen the professional independence of national statistical authorities.

PROPOSED ACT : Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND : recent economic developments have once again demonstrated the need to further strengthen the credibility of statistics. Reliability of statistical data in terms of technical quality- assessment criteria is a pre-requisite in order to ensure the trust of users. But equally important is the credibility of the institutions producing statistics. In this context, the professional independence of statistical authorities must receive particular attention and be guaranteed by law.

The Commission recognised this in its Communication [Towards robust quality management for European Statistics](#) where it indicated the need to strengthen the governance of the European Statistical System (ESS) by securing unconditional application of the principle of professional independence of National Statistical Institutes (NSIs), by clarifying their coordinating role in the national statistical systems and by enhancing the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. Furthermore, it was proposed that Commitments on Confidence in Statistics (CoC) be established in order to make national governments aware of their role in, and co-responsibility for, ensuring the credibility of official statistics by respecting the independence of NSIs. According to the Communication, all these measures should be introduced by an amendment of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009. Moreover, the European Statistics Code of Practice should be revised accordingly.

The key relevance of the principle of professional independence of NSIs was also explicitly recognised by the European Parliament and the Council in the legislative six-pack on enhanced economic governance, which entered into force in December 2011. It specified that the professional independence of national statistical authorities requires transparent recruitment and dismissal processes based solely on professional criteria. Moreover, on 13 March 2012 the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) calling on the Commission to rapidly implement measures to improve quality-management and governance in European statistics.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT : no impact assessment was undertaken. The proposal largely builds on the final conclusions and recommendations of the ESS Task Force on the revision of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 and on Commitments on Confidence in Statistics, which met several times in 2011.

LEGAL BASIS : Article 338(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

CONTENT : the proposal calls for a revision of the current basic legal framework for European statistics, adapting it to meet the policy needs and challenges created for European statistics by recent developments in the global economy. The main goal is to further strengthen governance in the European Statistical System in order to safeguard its high credibility and to respond adequately to data needs resulting from

the enhanced economic-policy coordination in the European Union.

Professional independence of national statistical authorities: the proposal refers explicitly to the Heads of NSIs as persons whose independence in performing their duties is a pre-condition for establishing the independence of the respective institutions. To that end, it is indispensable that Heads of NSIs have the freedom to decide on processes, statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases and publications for all European statistics. They must be also forbidden from seeking, and protected from receiving, instructions from national governments and other institutions. Moreover, Heads of NSIs should be granted considerable autonomy in deciding on the internal management of the statistical office and allowed to publicly comment on the budget allocated to the NSI in the context of statistical tasks to be performed. Furthermore, there must exist transparent and legally binding rules for the appointment, transfer and dismissal of Heads of NSI, based solely on professional criteria.

However, Heads of NSIs should not only enjoy broad autonomy, they should also be accountable for the results the NSIs provide both in terms of statistical output and budget execution. Accordingly, they should present an annual report on the statistical activities and the financial situation of the respective authority.

Commitments on Confidence in Statistics: the proposal also includes the establishment of Commitments on Confidence in Statistics. These declarations of respect of the European Statistics Code of Practice, and notably of the principle of independence of NSIs, aim at strengthening statistical governance in the EU and safeguarding the credibility of European statistics. According to the proposal, they should be signed by the governments of all Member States and counter-signed by the Commission, both at the highest applicable level. Each CoC is intended to be drafted individually by the Member State concerned and to contain country-specific improvement actions. The actual implementation of these actions would be monitored by Eurostat as part of the already established regular assessment of Member States compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice.

The role of the NSIs: the coordinating role of NSIs in the national statistical systems is clarified by the proposal and explicit references to institutions and functions to be coordinated have been added. In addition, the proposal contains further amendments.

Administrative data: the proposal aims to establish a legal framework for more extensive use of administrative data sources for the production of European statistics without increasing the burden on respondents, NSIs and other national authorities. According to the proposal, NSIs should be involved, to the extent necessary, in decisions on the design, development and discontinuation of administrative records, which could be used in the production of statistical data. They should also coordinate relevant standardisation activities and receive metadata on administrative data extracted for statistical purposes. Free and timely access to administrative records should be granted to NSIs, other national authorities and Eurostat, but only within their own respective public administrative system and to the extent necessary for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.

Eurostat: the proposal incorporates the need to adequately secure the independent position of Eurostat at Union level in the same way as is proposed for NSIs at national level. It is crucial for the credibility of the entire European Statistical System and was strongly emphasised by a vast majority of the Member States in the preceding stakeholder consultation.

Programming period: in order to simplify budget planning for statistical activities and to make it more stable, the programming period of the European statistical programme was brought into line with the Unions multi-annual financial framework.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS : The proposal is expected to have no resource impact within the ESS. On the contrary, it is meant to simplify and improve coordination and collaboration within the system, thus ultimately leading to more efficient production of European statistics and to a reduced burden on respondents.

The human resources required within the Commission will be met by staff from the Directorate General who are already assigned to management of the legal act concerned and/or have been redeployed within the Directorate General.

DELEGATED POWERS : the Commission will have the power to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 290 of the Treaty.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

The Council adopted conclusions on EU statistics. These conclusions may be summarised as follows:

EU Statistical Governance: the Council welcomes Commission proposal for amending Regulation (EC) 223/2009 on European statistics, in view of reinforcing the governance framework especially regarding professional independence of the national statistical institutes. It also welcomes the strengthening of the national statistical institutes coordination role which is key to ensuring the implementation of the Principles of the Code of Practice for European Statistics throughout the European Statistical System.

The Council considers that **Commitments on Confidence** in statistics are an important feature of the statistical governance and that these commitments must be rapidly implemented in all Member States, taking fully into account national specificities. The Council agrees with the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) in urging governments to acknowledge their share of responsibility in reinforcing professional independence and strengthening the credibility of European statistics.

Quality assurance of key statistical output: the Council welcomes the progress made in the implementation of a preventive approach to enhance the quality of excessive deficit procedure (EDP) statistics, in particular regarding upstream dialogue visits. It takes note that the delegated act sanctioning the manipulation of EDP statistics will enter into force in November 2012.

The Council awaits the conclusions of the Commissions study on the suitability of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) for Member States. The Council requests that Eurostat presents by early 2013 to the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) an interim report on the impact of the new ESA 2010 on public finance statistics.

The 2012 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU: the Council welcomes the progress since 2011, and notes that the availability and quality of principal European economic indicators (PEEIs) generally have improved but that a harmonised indicator on house sales is not yet available. However, the release dates still remain well behind the targets for national quarterly sector accounts and employment figures.

The Council stresses the importance of (i) strengthening co-operation with partner countries and organisations in order to ensure the timely availability of the required data in all countries involved; (ii) for G20 aggregates fulfilling the data quality frameworks to be in place.

Eurostat and the ECB are called upon to provide an updated EFC Status Report on the fulfilment of the updated EMU statistical requirements in 2013.

Scoreboard statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure: the Council recalls the importance for the credibility of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure of having timely statistics of the highest quality for inclusion in the scoreboard and stresses the need for the Commission (Eurostat) to pursue all necessary initiatives to assure a reliable procedure for the completion of these statistics as well as a continuous improvement of the underlying statistical information. It invites the European Statistical System and the European System of Central Banks to continue to work together on improving the underlying statistics and to ensure comparability.

The modernisation of the European Statistical System (ESS): the Council recognises:

- improvements in the efficiency of European statistics are essential, and that this could be a good long-term strategic option, especially in combination with a well-functioning priority-setting and simplification strategy, while at the same time ensuring the high quality of statistics in all Member States and taking into account the cost-benefit principle;
- that prioritisation in the development and production of statistics based on a strategic priority setting mechanism together with modern methods of statistical production, as outlined in the [Commissions 2009 Communication](#) are important elements in the process of efficient use of resources and channelling them into priority areas.

Member States and the Commission are called upon to secure resources and to enhance the collaboration within the ESS based on a sound distribution of roles and tasks between its members, following cost-benefit analyses before implementation of major modernisation projects.

Lastly, the Council welcomes the fact that there has been follow-up on a number of aspects cited in the [Court of Auditors Special Report No 12/2012](#) entitled Did the Commission and Eurostat improve the process for producing reliable and credible European statistics?, including with the Commission decision on Eurostat of September 2012, the proposals for amending Regulation 223/2009, and the European Statistical Programme 2013-2017. The ongoing work on amending Regulation 223/2009 should also contribute to better implement the code of Practice.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs adopted the report by Edward SCICLUNA (S&D, MT) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics.

The committee recommends that the European Parliaments position adopted at first reading, following the ordinary legislative procedure, should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Independence: it is necessary to ensure the independence of statistical authorities from possible political pressure at national and Union level. To that end, Members stress that national parliaments have a particularly important role to play regarding the legitimacy of the process and in terms of parliamentary control. Thus, the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics adopted by each Member State should include the participation and supervision of national parliaments. Heads of NSIs shall be appointed by national governments after consulting the national parliament.

In addition to guaranteeing the independence of NSIs, it is necessary for the independence of Eurostat to be consolidated and guaranteed by means of effective parliamentary scrutiny and control.

Coordination: Members stress that the coordinating role already attributed to the NSIs for European statistics produced through the ESS should be clarified as regards its scope, so as to achieve more efficient coordination of statistical activities within the ESS at national level, including quality management. It is necessary to step up coordination and cooperation between NSIs and Eurostat and remedy any shortcomings in this respect. The European Central Bank, the ESS and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) should cooperate closely to ensure complete and coherent European statistics.

Access to statistics: national and European statistics should be easy to compare and access and should be updated promptly and regularly so as to ensure that Union policies and funding initiatives take full account of developments in Europe, in particular the consequences of the economic crisis.

All users should have access to the same data at the same time and embargoes should be strictly complied with. NSIs should establish binding dates for the publication of periodical data.

Director-General of Eurostat: the statistical office of the Commission shall be headed by a Director-General, appointed by Commission, for a non-renewable term of office of seven years, after consulting the European Parliament.

The Director-General shall have the sole responsibility for deciding on processes, statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases and publications for all statistics produced by the Commission (Eurostat). In addition, he or she shall appear annually in the framework of Statistical Dialogue before the relevant committee of the European Parliament.

Cooperation with courts of auditors: in order to ensure that data on the public sector are accurate and fairly reflect the situation of public accounts, the ESS shall cooperate and collaborate closely with courts of auditors, without prejudice to their independence.

Fines for manipulation of statistics: unless Council objects by qualified majority, the Commission may impose a fine on a Member State that intentionally or, by gross negligence, seriously misrepresents statistical data.

In order to establish the existence of a misrepresentation, it is proposed that the Commission may conduct all necessary investigations. It may also conduct on-site inspections and have access to all data produced by an NSI at national, regional and local level. The rights of the defence of the Member State subject to investigation shall be fully respected during the investigation.

Transmission and quality of data: where the Commission is not satisfied with the data flow from NSIs to the Commission (Eurostat) or the quality of the data, it shall send a public warning to the Member State concerned, publish it on the website of the Commission (Eurostat), and include a reference to it in the corresponding data set. If, within six months of such publication, the problems have not been remedied, the Commission may impose fines.

The Commission (Eurostat) shall publicly and promptly voice any serious concern it has regarding the quality of the data transmitted. It shall

publicly disclose serious breaches of the Code of Practice.

Peer review, exchange of good practice: the Commission shall establish a template for, and encourage, peer review and exchanges of best practices among NSIs.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

The European Parliament adopted by 517 votes to 20 with 65 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics.

Parliament adopted its position in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary were the result of a compromise between Parliament and Council. They amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Independence: the amendments adopted aimed to ensure the independence of the authorities in relation to possible political pressure at national and Union level and to ensure high quality statistical information.

To that end, the procedures for recruitment, transfer and dismissal of heads of national statistical institutes (NSIs) and, where appropriate, statistical heads of other national authorities producing European statistics, should be: (i) transparent; (ii) based only on professional criteria; (iii) be free of political pressure; (iv) have due regard to equal opportunity and, in particular, to gender balance. These procedures must be made public. Member States may establish a national body for assuring the professional independence of the producers of European statistics in the Member State.

Furthermore, the independence of Eurostat must be consolidated and guaranteed by means of effective parliamentary scrutiny and control.

Director General of the Commission (Eurostat): the statistical office of the Commission (Eurostat) shall be headed by a Director-General appointed by the Commission, for a non-renewable term of office of seven years, after consultation with the European Parliament and Council.

The Director General shall

- have sole responsibility for deciding on processes, statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases and publications for all statistics produced by the Commission;
- be empowered to decide on all matters regarding the internal management of the Commission (Eurostat);
- appear annually in the framework of Statistical Dialogue before the relevant committee of the European Parliament.

Before imposing any disciplinary measure on the Director-General, the Commission shall consult the European Parliament.

Coordination: Parliament clarified the scope of the coordinating role already attributed to the NSIs for European statistics produced through the European Statistical System (ESS). It also recommended strengthening coordination and collaboration between the NSIs and Eurostat. Furthermore, the ESS and the ESCB should closely cooperate to ensure production of complete and coherent European statistics.

Access to statistics : European statistics should be easy to compare and to access and should be updated promptly and regularly so as to ensure that Union policies and funding initiatives take full account of developments in Europe, in particular with regard to the consequences of the economic crisis.

Commitments regarding trust in statistics : this would aim to ensure the confidence of the public in the quality of European statistics to rigorously apply the European Statistics Code of Practice (the Code of Practice). To that end, Member States and the Commission shall establish and publish on their websites, specific policy commitments moving towards overall confidence in statistics, including a citizens summary

The Commitments by the Commission (Eurostat) shall be regularly monitored by ESGAB on the basis of an annual report sent by the Commission.

Quality of data: the Commission shall adopt implementing acts laying down the arrangements, structure and periodicity of quality reports provided for in sectoral legislation.

Where sectoral legislation provides for fines in cases where Member States misrepresent statistical data, the Commission may initiate and conduct investigations as necessary, including, where appropriate, on-site inspections in order to establish whether such misrepresentation was serious and intentional or grossly negligent.

Where the Commission considers that a Member State has failed to fulfill its obligations under the Regulation or under the applicable sectoral legislation as regards the representation of the statistical data, it shall act in accordance with Article 258 TFEU.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

The Council adopted conclusions on EU statistics as part of an annual review of statistical governance.

In its conclusions, the Council stressed that EU policy frameworks rely increasingly on the timely provision of high quality socio-economic statistics. These play an important role in planning, decision-making and the monitoring of policy initiatives.

The conclusions focus on the following:

EU Statistical Governance: the Council invited the Commission and Member States to pursue these efforts in order to enhance, wherever and as appropriate, shared standards of professional independence and good governance at all layers of the ESS. It stressed that there is a particular need to secure the credibility of European statistics by strengthening the professional independence of Eurostat and of national statistical institutes, in full compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice, and clarifying their coordinating role within their respective statistical systems.

Quality assurance of key statistical output: whilst welcoming the efforts made by Eurostat to further strengthen EDP verification procedures,

the Council encouraged the Commission to continue work on this project to develop accrual-based European Public Sector Accounting Standards (EPSAS) applicable to public sector entities, while respecting subsidiarity and national competences and the proportion between potential costs and benefits.

The 2014 Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU: the Council endorsed the 2014 EFC Status Report and welcomed the progress since 2013 in terms of availability of Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs) generally. However, timeliness of the PEEIs remains similar to 2013, and a harmonised indicator on house sales (quarterly) is not yet fully available.

Furthermore, the Council took the view that the provision of G20 aggregates, in addition to quarterly GDP and monthly CPI, fulfilling the data quality frameworks in place, would be required.

Statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure and structural statistics: the Council welcomed progress towards the modernisation of the European statistical system (ESS) as well as the EU structural statistics. It recalled that the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure must rely upon sound and harmonised official statistics, including in the scoreboard. It also welcomed the development of an action plan for improving the quality and timeliness of statistics on inequality, poverty, income and social exclusion.

Efficiency and priority setting: the Council stressed that the long-term strategic modernisation goals have to be shared by the ESS partners, and be accomplished by short-term achievements in specific statistical areas, as identified in close cooperation between ESS members.

Whilst recognising that need to balance new statistical demands with efficiency gains and effective priority-setting, the Council welcomed the objectives of the ESS Vision 2020 as a response to these challenges. It encouraged the ESS to work on measures to implement the agreed Vision 2020 and called on the Member States and the Commission to secure and prioritise resources, while recognising that the resources available in Member States and the Commission to achieve this are limited.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

The position of the Council at first reading with a view to the adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics resulted in a compromise with the aim of addressing the principal concerns of the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission.

The compromise reached at the triilogue on 3 December 2014 contains the following elements:

immediately after being appointed, the Director-General of Eurostat will appear before the European Parliament;

- the head of each National Statistical Institute (NSI), being professionally independent, must be appointed solely on the basis of their professional qualifications. At recruitment, equal opportunities for women and men will be taken into consideration;
- the relationship between the European Statistical System (ESS) and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) has been clarified. The compromise provides that the ESS and the ESCB are to cooperate closely, as equal partners. The national authorities will decide the roles to be assigned to the National Statistical Institute and to the National Central Bank (NCB) at national level;
- inspection visits within Member States will be possible to the extent permitted by the Treaties, and then only where sectoral legislation provides a legal basis for such initiatives.
- the "Commitment on Confidence in Statistics" has been clarified.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

The Commission supports the position of the Council which reflects the political agreement reached between the European Parliament and the Council on 3 December 2014 and includes elements proposed by both institutions.

The Commission accepts in particular:

- the main amendments as regards the specific situation of national statistical institutes (NSIs), which aim to limit the scope of the statistical decision-taking power of the Heads of NSIs, notably to matters within their own institutions and the provision on professional independence which is extended to cover, in addition to Heads of NSIs, the statistical heads of other national authorities;
- the focus on the professional independence of the Director General of Eurostat and the formalisation of a statistical dialogue which will enable every year for a direct exchange of views between the Director-General of EUROSTAT and the relevant Committee of the European Parliament on statistical matters;
- in response to the European Parliament's request, the introduction of measures foreseeing publication of Commissions concerns regarding the quality of national contributions to European statistics;
- the reference to the cooperation between the European Statistical System and the European System of Central Banks on compilation of European statistics.

The Commission notes that the provision on establishment by Member States of Commitments on Confidence in Statistics is weakened but combined with a more detailed description of the applicable monitoring and reporting process by the Commission.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs adopted the recommendation for second reading in the report by Hugues BAYET (S&D, BE) on the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending

Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics.

The committee recommended the European Parliament to approve, unamended, the Council position at first reading.

The proposed amendment to Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics constitutes an essential part of the process aiming to strengthen the reliability of European statistics.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

The European Parliament adopted a legislative resolution approving, unamended, the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics.

The proposed Regulation calls for a revision of the current basic legal framework for European statistics, by adapting it to meet the policy needs and challenges created for European statistics by recent developments in the global economy. The main goal is to further strengthen governance in the European Statistical System in order to safeguard its high credibility and to respond adequately to data needs resulting from the enhanced economic-policy coordination in the European Union.

European statistics: professional independence of national statistical authorities

PURPOSE: to strengthen governance of the European Statistical System (ESS).

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) 2015/759 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics.

CONTENT: the Regulation revises the current basic legal framework for European statistics, adapting it to meet the policy needs and challenges created for European statistics by recent developments in the global economy.

The specific objectives of the Regulation are as follows:

(1) Strengthen professional independence of statistical authorities and guarantee minimum standards, applicable across the Union. The heads of national statistical institutes (NSIs) shall:

- have the sole responsibility for deciding on processes, statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases and publications for European statistics developed, produced and disseminated by the NSI;
- neither seek nor take instructions from any government or other institution, body, office or entity;
- be empowered to decide on all matters regarding the internal management of the NSI;
- be responsible for the statistical activities and budget execution of the NSI;
- publish an annual report and may express comments on budget allocation issues related to the statistical activities of the NSI;
- be recruited respecting transparent procedures and based only on professional criteria and ensuring that the principle of equal opportunities is respected, in particular with regard to gender.

(2) Consolidate the independence of the statistical authority of the Union (Eurostat) to be consolidated and guaranteed by means of effective parliamentary scrutiny. It is recalled that Eurostat is the statistical authority of the Union and a Directorate-General of the Commission. It shall be headed by a Director-General who shall be responsible for the statistical activities of Eurostat.

(3) Clarify the scope of the coordinating role already attributed to the NSIs in order to achieve more efficient coordination of statistical activities at national level, including quality management, while duly taking into account the statistical tasks performed by the European System of Central Banks (ESCB).

(4) Define the commitment on confidence in statistics: this commitment should include specific undertakings by the government of that Member State to improve or maintain the conditions for the implementation of the Code of Practice. The Commitment, which should be updated as necessary, could include national high quality assurance frameworks, including self-assessments, improvement actions and monitoring mechanisms.

(5) Improve access, use and integration of administrative records: in order to reduce the burden on statistical authorities and respondents, the NSIs and other national authorities should be able to access and use administrative records promptly and free-of-charge, including those filed electronically, and to integrate those records with statistics.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 8.6.2015.