

European statistics relating to persons and households

2016/0264(COD) - 29/06/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted the report by Tamás MESZERICS (Greens/EFA, HU) on the proposal for a regulation 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.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows.

Subject matter: Members stated that this Regulation establishes a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples of those persons and households in accordance with the European Statistical Programme.

The report recommended, inter alia:

- collecting high-quality, gender-segregated and age-segregated data in order to identify issues specific to gender and age and allow for a solid factual basis to assess progress with regard to gender equality and tackling gender and age-based discrimination;
- strengthen data in areas such as the living conditions of the citizens, the inequalities, the quality of life and their well-being, the Union's objective enshrined in the TFEU;
- developing high-level indicators reflecting other dimensions in particular social aspects of progress, such as quality of life (including work-life balance), inclusion, well-being and social cohesion;
- measuring consumption, wealth and debts, including possible debts in foreign currencies, which sometimes represent considerable sums for some households in relation to their income;
- examining poverty, taking into account its multi-faceted nature, involving not only the material aspects such as income, consumption, wealth or debts, but also health, education and access to and use of services;
- better describing disability (autonomy, adjustments in the labour market and barriers to social and labour integration) while making the surveys accessible to people with disabilities;
- obtaining better coverage of hard-to-reach vulnerable sub-populations (e.g., people living in care homes and the homeless); in the meantime, Member States should report on the extent and extent of non-coverage of these specific subpopulations;
- better describing the three dimensions defining the material well-being of households: income, consumption and wealth;
- ensuring more systematically the collection of European social statistics, including the labour force, income and living conditions, time use, consumption, health, education and training and participation in lifelong learning, as well as the use of information and communication technologies;
- obtaining reliable statistics at national and regional level. In this respect, Members stressed the importance of having access to aggregated data for comparable territorial units such as NUTS2, while taking costs into account and providing Member States with the appropriate financial resources.

Fundamental principles: Members believe that the development, production and dissemination of European statistics are governed by the statistical principles of professional independence, impartiality, objectivity reliability and cost-effectiveness. It is essential to invest more in high-quality, more accurate and holistic data collections and not to reduce investments.

Access: policy-makers, public administrations, researchers, trade unions, students and civil society representatives, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which should access data freely and easily through Commission (Eurostat) databases on its website.

Furthermore, the Regulation shall ensure the right to respect for private and family life and to the protection of personal data, as provided for in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. This Regulation also ensures the protection of individuals as regards the processing of personal data

Union contributions: since the implementation of the Regulation could require major adaptations in national statistical systems, limited derogations should be granted to the Member States. Where appropriate, a financial contribution from the Union should also be provided to the Member States in the form of grants, in particular for capacity-building purposes and to support feasibility studies and pilot studies.