

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
ON THE COOPERATION**

BETWEEN

THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM

AND

THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF CENTRAL BANKS

24 APRIL 2013

WHEREAS:

- (1) European statistics is developed, produced, and disseminated, within their respective spheres of competence, by the European Statistical System (ESS) defined by Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European statistics and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) performing their statistical function on basis of Article 5 of the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank;
- (2) The ESS and the ESCB operate under separate legal frameworks reflecting their respective governance structures;
- (3) In order to minimise the reporting burden, to ensure the high quality of European statistics based on coherent production processes, to eliminate inefficiencies and work duplication, enhance the transparency and accountability, article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009, article 2a of Regulation (EC) No 2533/98 concerning the collection of statistical information by the European Central Bank as amended by Regulation (EC) No 951/2009 require that the ESS and the ESCB cooperate closely;
- (4) Article 8a of Regulation (EC) No 2533/98 provides for rules under which confidential statistical information may be exchanged between the ESCB and the ESS when this is necessary for the efficient development, production or dissemination, or for increasing the quality, of European statistics;
- (5) In the area of statistics for the excessive deficit procedure (EDP), the Commission (Eurostat) frequently needs expert advice on issues raised in the context of Council Regulation (EC) 479/2009 and it is important that this expert advice is unbiased and takes account of the statistical expertise available within the ESS and ESCB constituencies;
- (6) The Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics was established by Council Decision 2006/856/EC of 13 November 2006;

In order to ensure that the ESS and the ESCB shall cooperate, respecting the principles of partnership, symmetry and subsidiarity, when designing and implementing their respective statistical work programmes,

THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE REACHED THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDING:

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to enhance in a symmetric way the cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB as producers of European Statistics, to:

- facilitate close cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB in areas of shared responsibility or common interest, thereby increasing the potential synergies in the production of balance of payments, financial statistics, government finance statistics, macro-economic statistics and national accounts (see Annex 1);
- jointly address the increased demand from the Member States and Union institutions for improved statistical information, identify possible gaps and the best way to address them, minimize the burden on respondents;
- enhance the quality of European statistics, eliminate inefficiencies and work duplication, enhance the transparency and accountability of statistical producers.

The ESS and the ESCB recognize that, to achieve these goals, the co-operation has to take place both at strategic and at operational levels.

Moreover, the ESS and the ESCB recognise the specific function at operational level of independent technical advice to the European Commission (Eurostat) on matters relating to the statistics for the excessive deficit procedure (EDP).

ESS/ESCB cooperation on strategic and operational matters

1. To enhance the co-operation at strategic level between the ESS and the ESCB the *European Statistical Forum* (the Forum) shall be established.
2. The Forum shall be composed of:
 - (i) one representative per Member State from the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC);
 - (ii) one representative per Member State from the Statistics Committee of the ESCB (STC);
 - (iii) one representative from Eurostat;
 - (iv) one representative from the ECB.

Each member of the Forum may appoint one alternate that in his/her absence may participate in the Forum meetings.

3. The Forum shall convene once annually, in principle back-to-back, preferably with the DGINS and the STC thematic meeting, and alternating between the two.
4. The Co-Chairs of the Forum will be the Chairperson of the ESSC and the Chairperson of the STC. The secretariat of the Forum shall be jointly assured by Eurostat and ECB DG-Statistics.
5. The Forum will strive for general consensus on all subjects. If such consensus cannot be reached, the Forum will vote by a simple majority of the members present in its meeting.

Each member shall have one vote. Written procedure may be used for matters of urgency arising between two consecutive meetings.

6. The Forum shall be assisted by a Bureau composed of the two Co-chairs of the Forum, the Chair and Vice-chair of the operational platform, as well as two members representing the national statistical institutes and two members representing the national central banks elected by the Forum.
7. The Bureau shall prepare the meetings of the Forum and monitor its follow-up activities and shall meet annually, at least three months ahead of the meeting of the Forum, while during the year “virtual meetings” (e.g. tele- or video-conferences) can be organized. The secretariat of the Bureau shall be assured by Eurostat and ECB DG-Statistics.
8. The Forum shall ensure the exchange of appropriate information related to the ESS and the ESCB statistical activities, discuss priority-setting and advise the two Systems on:
 - a) the content and consistency of the statistical work-programmes of the ESS and of the ESCB, making proposals for a better coordination of the programmes;
 - b) possible future challenges for European statistics and medium-term strategic visions and actions allowing for such challenges to be addressed by ESS and ESCB;
 - c) priority issues for cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB two Systems and time horizon in which they may be treated.
9. The Forum shall adopt an annual operational work-programme for cooperation between ESS and ESCB in the field of European statistics. Transversal or cross-cutting issues will be implemented by the CMFB (i.e. the operational platform). For other topics, relevant ESS/ESCB bodies should be assigned according to their specific subject-matter competences, avoiding duplications of work and ensuring cost-efficiency.
10. A draft proposal for an operational work-programme relating to transversal and cross-cutting issues will be provided by the CMFB. Relevant ESS/ESCB bodies may also provide input relating to their specific subject-matter competences. The Bureau will prepare a draft work-programme for the deliberation of the Forum, including the draft proposal of the CMFB.
11. The Forum shall draw up its Rules of Procedures.

Advice on Excessive Deficit Procedure Statistics

12. Beside the co-ordination activities described by the MoU, the ESS and the ESCB shall cooperate for the delivery of an independent technical advice to the European Commission (Eurostat) on matters relating to the statistics for the excessive deficit procedure (EDP). The CMFB will provide this advice according to the relevant legal basis and the strict procedures established by the Committee itself.

Future actions

1. The functioning of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be reviewed by 31 December 2015.
2. Rules of procedures of the CMFB and of other ESS/ESCB groups will be reviewed to ensure that the goals of this MoU are achieved and to make their work as efficient as possible. In

the case of CMFB rules of procedures will take into account the differences between the co-operation and the advice (EDP) functions.

3. Taking into account the experience of co-operation and the goals of this MoU, relevant legal acts will be reviewed as appropriate.

Annex 1

1. National accounts statistics, including government finance statistics, except excessive deficit procedure (EDP) statistics.
2. Balance of payments statistics.
3. Trade in goods and services statistics.
4. Foreign direct investment and foreign affiliates statistics.
5. Horizontal statistical issues, such as
 - Seasonal adjustment methodology and practices;
 - Revision policies
 - Common technical solutions
 - Coordination on (confidential) data exchange
6. Co-ordination of positions on international statistical initiatives, such as
 - Development of international methodological statistical standards and related research agenda
 - G-20 initiatives in the field of statistics and similar international initiatives

Bad Seberheim, 24.7.2013

