

Box 9**GOOD STANDARDS FOR COMPILING AND REPORTING GOVERNMENT FINANCE STATISTICS**

The recent revisions in fiscal data have led to concerns about the quality and reliability of government finance statistics in the EU. At the same time, it is clear that the compilation and reporting of these statistics should not be vulnerable to political and electoral cycles in any Member State.

A number of steps need to be undertaken to ensure the quality of government finance statistics and their reporting to the European Commission:

- The European System of Accounts (ESA 95) should be fully respected when recording any kind of expenditure and revenue for the purpose of the excessive deficit procedure. Recording should be done consistently across countries and over time.
- Countries should consider the quality and integrity of their statistics as a priority matter and apply high standards in the domain of statistics. At the European level, common standards

should be agreed that reinforce the independence, integrity and accountability of the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and also help to enhance confidence in the quality of government finance statistics. These standards and their application should be reviewed regularly at the EU level.

- The current biannual notification of deficit, debt, investment and interest expenditure should be complemented by making available a complete set of government accounts, including breakdowns of expenditure, revenue, deficit, debt and the deficit-debt adjustment.
- A more formal delegation should be granted to the NSIs – and where applicable the NCBs, insofar as they are concerned – of the responsibility for supplying the actual budgetary data in the framework of excessive deficit procedure notifications.