

PROGRESS REPORT

In accordance with Article 11 (4) of the revised EU Regulation No 223/2009 on European statistics this progress report provides information on the implementation of the European statistics Code of Practice and on the efforts undertaken towards the establishment of a Commitment on Confidence.

1. Compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice

The Italian National Institute of Statistics together with Eurostat, the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and the Other National Authorities (ONAs) is part of the European Statistical System (ESS), which develops, produces and disseminates European statistics under Regulation (EC) No. 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European Statistics, amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/759 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015. Being Member of the European Statistical System is a value for the whole country. According to the Italian statistical law, Istat is a legal person under public law (Art 14 of Legislative decree no. 322/1989). It is a public body with scientific, organisational, financial and accounting independence and carries out its activities according to the principles of scientific independence, impartiality, objectivity, reliability, quality, and confidentiality of statistical information, as laid down at European and international levels

The Italian National Institute of Statistics is the main producer of European statistics in Italy, and the national coordinator for European statistics according to the European statistical law. The national statistical law (Legislative decree no. 322/1989) is a government act and establishes, the National Statistical System (Sistan) and the coordinating role of Istat as key pillar for official statistics. The National Statistical Program takes into account the evolution of statistical information needs and establishes statistics of public interest including European statistics entrusted to the National Statistical System (NSS).

The European statistics Code of practice (CoP) is geared to strengthen the credibility of official statistics and to guarantee an institutional framework to ensure professional independence, compliance with european standards and statistical principles, harmonization and comparability of data as well as equal access by all users. Relevance, timeliness, consistency, accuracy, reliability and comparability over time and space are the characteristics that distinguish the information made available to the country. A second round of peer reviews in the EU Member States, the EFTA countries and Eurostat was carried out from 2013-2015. It covered all 15 Principles of the Code and the coordinating role of the NSIs in the national statistical systems. The Peer review in Italy was conducted in June 2015 by a team of international experts and an observer by Eurostat. Overall, the Peer Review team considers that ISTAT is highly compliant with the CoP. On the basis of recommendations provided in the final Report,²¹ improvement actions (IA) in the period 2016-2018 regarding the implementation of the CoP were identified to further enhance this compliance aimed at improving institutional framework, cost-effectiveness, human resources policy and continuing efforts to serve the needs of users. At the end of 2016 eight IA were completed and other were partially completed or in progress.

During the year several measures have been taken to amend the national statistical law with a government act to rationalize the structure of Istat and enhance Istat's coordinating role. A specific Plenary session, on the revision of the NSS, took place in the National Conference of Statistics, held in Rome on 22-24 June 2016, proceeding the dialogue with relevant institutions for the process of the revision of the law. ISTAT has carried out several meetings with administrations to develop tailored initiative to re-profile current and potential ONAs and to enhance know-how and good practices in quality management within the NSS. In particular Istat has developed an ad hoc module to be launched through an online survey in June 2017 to monitor the responsibility on the production of European statistics and the transmission to Eurostat. Istat has developed tools to be used for quality assurance assessment, testing them on some ONAs statistical processes. Furthermore Istat started a training program in collaboration with the National School of Administration (SNA) to enhance skills on quality management of the ONAs. In order to have a common dissemination portal for official statistics, Istat has developed an Hub architecture based on SDMX standard for the dissemination of statistics of public interest. Several administration, including ONAs, are involved in the process in order to publish their datasets that will be accessible by the HUB.

Istat has launched and implemented the new modernization programme which will lead from a stovepipe model towards an integrated production system based on centralized data collection and common infrastructures and services. The production of official statistical information harnessing multiple data sources (including survey data, administrative data and Big Data) represents a substantial path in terms of developing new methodologies, reengineering of statistical production processes, designing new IT and organisational set ups, increasing standardization of processes and establishing a governance framework based on Istat's Business Architecture and GSBPM. Istat's new organizational structure centralizes the corporate support service both within the Directorate general (legal-administrative ones) and the Department for data collection and development of methods and technologies for the production and dissemination of statistical information (technical-scientific ones). In the second part of the year 2016 Istat started to use the Project and Portfolio Management Control System (PPMO) to coordinate the portfolio of innovation projects identified according to the implementation of modernisation program. According to the Strategic Plan and its specific programs devoted to the integration of data derived from administrative sources, statistical surveys or from new data sources, specific initiatives have been included into the PPMO in order to develop the production of integrated data. The new production model is also supported through specific training actions: change management training was addressed to executives and top management, as well as training on portfolio and project management.

In order to improve the measurement of response burden for businesses a set of indicators to measure burden for business surveys was defined. During the period from April to December 2016, all the enterprises involved in economic surveys were given access the Business Portal reaching a total of 200,000. This result involved a substantial improvement in terms of efficiency of direct surveys data collection processes and entailed significant advantages in terms of services offered to respondents involved in economic statistical surveys. In the meantime, the Portal has become the only way for enterprises to access the economic surveys questionnaires. All the companies included in the Portal can benefit from the "statistical informative "return" section that includes a set of personalized short-term indicators. They have substantial advantages in terms of transparency and reduction of improper statistical burden since they can easily track on line their status with respect to the list of surveys they are included in and receive full and immediate

support for the compilation of the questionnaire. It is intended to apply the same model to institutions and farms.

Istat reviewed its dissemination policy with a view towards a more integrated system. The shift from releases stemming from a single survey or a single source towards integrated products in 2016 was continuous. The emphasis shifted from survey-centred releases to phenomenon-centred ones. Among the main results, there are the releases on external trade (integrating information on volumes, values, prices and trading enterprises), ICT (from the household and business sides), building and construction (cost, price, and production indexes), transnational corporations, local governments, national accounts, and on the labour market. The streamlining of dissemination proceeded regularly according to plans, and reduced the number of releases from 354 in 2014 to 290 in 2016, with a favorable impact on the overall editorial output. A new Directorate for development of statistical information and culture was established to promote integrated new products, formats and for management and dissemination of statistical information.

A new section of Istat website was released, providing respondents with information on data access (including the new online form for RDC access); variables available for each survey, including organisational, legal and methodological aspects.

Istat, in accordance with the Data Protection Authority, put forward a proposal for amending the national legislation in order to promote remote access to microdata.

2. Efforts undertaken towards the establishment of a Commitment

With reference to the compliance with the provision established in Article 11, paragraph 4, of the revised EU Regulation No 223/2009 on European statistics, a specific proposal for a Commitments on Confidence in statistics (CoC) has been submitted to the government for examination. This proposal contains a specific CoC to be included in the three-years National Statistical Program (PSN), which comprises also European statistics included in the European Statistical Program, starting from the PSN 2017-2019 onward.

The approval procedure establishes that the PSN shall be adopted by the Council of Ministers on a proposal from the President of the Council and enacted by a decree of the President of the Republic.