



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON STATISTICAL COOPERATION
BETWEEN
THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM
AND
THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF CENTRAL BANKS

INTRODUCTION

1. European statistics are developed, produced and disseminated, within their respective spheres of competence, by the European Statistical System (ESS) defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European statistics and by the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) performing their statistical function on the basis of Article 5 of the Protocol (No 4) on the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank. The ESS and ESCB operate under separate legal frameworks reflecting their respective governance structures.
2. The ESS and the ESCB cooperate closely, notably to minimise the reporting burden and guarantee the coherence necessary to produce high quality European statistics, as required by Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European statistics and Council Regulation (EC) No 2533/98 concerning the collection of statistical information by the European Central Bank.
3. The implementation of the revised Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 and the planned revision of Regulation (EC) No 2533/98 create new opportunities for the existing long-standing statistical cooperation, in particular with regard to data sharing between the two systems for statistical purposes and for improving the quality of European statistics.

4. A continued statistical cooperation at strategic level is therefore appropriate and necessary under these circumstances, based on a common vision of the main strategic priorities ahead, with statistical cooperation at operational level ensuring that these main strategic priorities are effectively realised.

PURPOSE

5. The purpose of this Memorandum is to facilitate the close cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB on strategic priorities in statistical areas of shared responsibility or common interest as set out in the Annex, at both strategic and operational level.
6. The statistical cooperation at strategic level aims to strengthen the capacity of the two systems to jointly address the continuously increasing demand from the Member States and Union institutions as well as from the citizens, businesses, researchers and the public, for improved statistical information; to identify possible data gaps and the best way to address them; and to minimise the burden on respondents. It also contributes to enhancing the quality of European statistics, further exploiting synergies and increasing the transparency and accountability of statistical producers.
7. The statistical cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB builds upon and complements the bilateral statistical cooperation between the respective National Statistical Institutes and the National Central Banks at national level and between Eurostat and the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank at European level. It provides for an overarching framework ensuring consistency and coordination at all levels of cooperation.
8. This strategic cooperation also takes into account the respective mandates, tasks and work carried out by the ESS Committee (ESSC), the ESCB Statistics Committee (STC) and the Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics (CMFB).
9. The Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics (CMFB) was originally established by Council Decision 91/115/EEC of 25 February 1991 and subsequently by Council Decision 2006/856/EC of 13 November 2006, also acting as the operational platform for statistical cooperation between the two systems.

10. The strategic cooperation needs to be complemented by the statistical cooperation between the two systems that takes place at operational level. Statistical cooperation at operational level will continue to be implemented by the CMFB.
11. In the area of statistics for the excessive deficit procedure (EDP), Eurostat frequently needs expert advice on issues raised in the context of Council Regulation (EC) No 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.

THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL FORUM

12. The European Statistical Forum brings together in a conference format the Presidents or Directors-General of the National Statistical Institutes of the ESS, the senior management of the Statistical Departments of the National Central Banks of the ESCB, the Director-General of Eurostat and the Director-General of the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank, to exchange views and experiences on topics of strategic importance for both systems and users with the view to enhancing cooperation and coordination. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the CMFB also attend the meetings of the European Statistical Forum.
13. Participants may designate a person who may participate in the conference in their absence. Participants may be accompanied by a staff member of their respective organisation. High-level representatives or experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda of the conference may be invited to attend the European Statistical Forum on an ad hoc basis.
14. The European Statistical Forum is convened at least every three years. It is co-chaired by the Director-General of Eurostat and the Director-General of the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank. The co-chairs convene the European Statistical Forum and set its agenda.
15. The European Statistical Forum is assisted by a Bureau, ‘the ESF Bureau’, composed of:
 - the Director-General and Deputy Director-General of Eurostat;

- the Director-General and Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank;
 - three Presidents or Directors-General of the National Statistical Institutes of the ESS, designated by the ESSC for a period of two years;
 - three members of the STC from three of the National Central Banks in the ESCB, designated by the STC for a period of two years;
 - the Chair and Vice-Chair of the CMFB.
16. The ESF Bureau prepares the meetings of the European Statistical Forum and monitors its follow-up activities. In particular, the ESF Bureau selects the topics for discussion by the European Statistical Forum, based on their relevance for both the ESS and the ESCB as well as for the statistical users. The ESF Bureau contributes also to the preparation of a joint proposal by Eurostat and the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank on the common strategic priorities for statistical cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB.
 17. The ESF Bureau is co-chaired by the Director-General of Eurostat and the Director-General of the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank. The co-chairs convene the ESF Bureau meetings and set its agenda. The ESF Bureau meets on a regular basis and at least once a year. Experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda of an ESF Bureau meeting may attend that meeting as observers at the invitation of the ESF Bureau co-chairs.
 18. The secretariat function and support to the European Statistical Forum and the ESF Bureau are jointly provided by Eurostat and the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank.
 19. Meetings of the European Statistical Forum may be complemented by dedicated workshops, open to the participants of the European Statistical Forum, experts from the ESS and ESCB and to other experts as necessary and decided by the ESF Bureau. These workshops are convened and prepared under the same conditions as those concerning the European Statistical Forum.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR STATISTICAL COOPERATION

20. The strategic priorities for statistical cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB are discussed by the European Statistical Forum and approved by the ESSC and the STC respectively, based on a joint proposal by Eurostat and the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank.
21. The strategic priorities are reviewed and updated under the same conditions as they are established and whenever and as frequently as the need arises, taking into account in particular any new relevant informational needs in areas of common responsibility or interest. The strategic priorities remain in place until they are updated.

OPERATIONAL COOPERATION

22. At the level of operational cooperation, a draft proposal for the CMFB work programme is presented every two years by the Chair of the CMFB respectively to the ESSC and the STC for endorsement, either in a meeting or via a written procedure. The Chair of the CMFB is also invited to the ESSC and STC to present a progress report one year after the adoption of the CMFB work programme. In addition, the Chair of the CMFB is invited to the ESSC and STC as an observer for topics with relevance for the CMFB work programme.
23. The operational cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB is also of strategic importance for the CMFB to fulfil its mandate as laid down in Council Decision 2006/856/EC of 13 November 2006 and in particular to express opinions on the development and coordination of the monetary, financial and balance of payments statistics, as well as for the delivery by the CMFB of independent technical advice to Eurostat on issues raised in the context of Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 relating to statistics for the Excessive Deficit Procedure.
24. The secretariat function and support to the CMFB are jointly provided by Eurostat and the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

25. In addition to the cooperation implemented by the CMFB acting as the operational platform, follow up actions stemming from the discussions at the European Statistical Forum, will be ensured and undertaken by the participants in their respective domains.
26. This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to provide a framework for statistical cooperation with unlimited duration. Its functioning will be reviewed upon a reasoned request by the ESSC, the STC, Eurostat or the Directorate-General Statistics of the European Central Bank. It replaces the Memorandum of Understanding on the cooperation between the ESS and the ESCB of 22 April 2013.

Signed on 20 November 2024 in Frankfurt am Main.

For the ESS

For the ECB

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of the European Statistical System
Committee

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ANNEX

AREAS OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY OR COMMON INTEREST BETWEEN THE ESS AND THE ESCB

- National accounts statistics, including government finance statistics, except excessive deficit procedure (EDP) statistics
- Balance of payment statistics
- Trade in goods and services statistics
- Foreign direct investment and foreign affiliates statistics
- Business registers
- Climate change related statistics
- Horizontal statistical issues, such as:
 - Time series analysis, including seasonal adjustment, outlier detection and temporal disaggregation methodologies and practices;
 - Revision policies;
 - Data quality methodologies and practices;
 - Methodologies for backcasting EU and Euro area aggregates;
 - Common technical solutions;
 - Coordination and improvement of (confidential and non-confidential) data exchange;
 - Reducing burdens and rationalising reporting requirements of respondents;
 - Coordination of positions on international statistical initiatives, such as:
 - Development of international methodological statistical standards and related research and innovation agenda;
 - G20 initiatives in the field of statistics and similar international initiatives.