ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Requirements for structural statistics 2022: overview of progress made

1. Overview

Since 2006, the EPC has annually taken stock of the needs for structural statistics to support the work of the ECOFIN Council[1].

The report gives an overview of progress made over recent years and identifies areas where further efforts are required, in particular:

- The first part of the report (sections 2 and 3) highlights two sets of statistical information that are of key policy relevance: The Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (scoreboard and other relevant statistics) and the EU SDG indicators. It is important to continue the work to further develop and improve the data sets for MIP and to continue monitoring EU SDG.

- The last part of the report (section 4) outlines progress made on other structural data for which continued development and improvement of the underlying statistics is also important.

The EPC acknowledges the need for prioritisation of statistical activities and recommends that main developments aiming at the improvement of structural statistics should be pursued and should relate to the priorities of the European Commission.

With the onset of the recovery phase from COVID-19 work has progressed on bringing together relevant monthly and quarterly statistical indicators, including new and innovative indicators, to support policymaking in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine creates additional and urgent needs for reliable and harmonised statistics, in particular, in the fields of energy, migration and labour market statistics. Eurostat together with the ESS is working on the statistical response to the crisis in order to support policy decisions on Ukraine and on the implications of the war.

2. Statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure

The Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP), based on Regulation (EU) No 1174/2011[2] and Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011[3] is a surveillance mechanism that aims to detect, prevent

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[1] Doc. ECFIN/EPC(2006)51285 final of 22 May 2006

[2] Regulation (EU) No 1174/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 on enforcement measures to correct excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the euro area http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1407944383247&uri=CELEX:32011R1174

[3] Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1407944142061&uri=CELEX%3A32011R1176

and correct macroeconomic imbalances, which emerge or persist in the euro area and the Member States.

The MIP is based on a scoreboard of fourteen macroeconomic and macro-financial indicators defined by the Commission and endorsed by the ECOFIN Council and the European Parliament. The scoreboard indicators cover developments in public and private indebtedness, private sector credit flow, housing prices, net international investment position, current account balances, real effective exchange rates, world export market shares, unit labour costs, unemployment and a set of employment indicators.

The Commission publishes annually at the opening of the European Semester an autumn package containing the Annual Growth Sustainability Survey and the Alert Mechanism Report (AMR) based on the MIP Scoreboard. A Statistical Annex, covering the Scoreboard indicators and a set of auxiliary indicators, is produced by Eurostat and published at the same time. Moreover, at the beginning of the following year the Commission publishes in-depth reviews (IDRs), which allow the Commission to conclude on the possible existence of macroeconomic imbalances and on their severity. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Semester cycle was temporarily adapted to coordinate it with the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The national reform programmes (NRPs) play a dual role; besides their role for the European Semester, the NRPs also fulfil one of the two bi-annual reporting requirements of Member States under the RRF.

Having timely statistics of the highest quality for the analysis of MIP issues is of utmost importance and maintaining a robust quality assurance framework for MIP relevant data is essential to ensure that the MIP is based on sound and reliable data, is comparable between Member States and produced according to high quality standards.

In line with the Memorandum of Understanding on the quality assurance of statistics underlying the MIP, Eurostat and the Directorate General Statistics of the ECB work together on the improvement of data quality, including so far nine joint visits to EU Member States.

The statistics underlying the MIP indicators are based on EU legislation and compiled by the European Statistical System (ESS) and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB). Following the three level approach providing the frame for the work on quality assurance of the MIP indicators, the work performed contained the following actions on:

- Level 1: Preparation of an annual ESS-ESCB quality assessment report on statistics underlying the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure by Eurostat and the ECB aimed at policy makers and the public at large addressing the reliability and comparability of the MIP related statistics and actions to address the most relevant quality issues. In 2022, the level 1 report (seventh report of its kind) was published in June.[4]

- Level 2: The level 2 quality reports of Eurostat and the ECB on Balance of Payments (BOP)/International Investment Position (IIP) have been aligned and follow the basic principles set out in the 'European Statistics Code of Practice' and the 'Public commitment on European statistics by the ESCB'. The reports lay down, in a special section, country-specific recommendations for Member States to address notable quality issues and scope for improvements. The ECB report also contains a dedicated box focusing on the specific BOP and IIP quality dimensions of relevance for the MIP. The Eurostat report also presents a box "Quality indicators on BOP and IIP statistics underlying the macroeconomic imbalances procedure" and describes country-specific situation. The latest report of Eurostat covers data comprising the reference period from the quarter Q3 of 2017 until quarter Q2 of 2021. Eurostat intends to send its report to the European Parliament and European Council in September 2022. Since 2020, the ECB disseminates the ESCB report

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[4] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/16624/8465494/2022-ESS-ESCB-report-on-MIP-statistics.pdf/5da48908-967f-0c53-145a-af0de191943c?t=1657267864984

on a biennial basis. The latest report on Euro area and national BOP and IIP statistics[5] was published in May 2022.

For Eurostat, the quality reporting on annual national financial and non-financial accounts follows the Commission implementing Regulation (EU) No 2016/2304; quality reports on Member States' data provided under the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme are now being produced annually[6]. The ECB produces a quality report on quarterly financial sector accounts. [7]

- Level 2 quality reports on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Housing Price Statistics are regularly produced, with the LFS report recently published[8]. In addition, the Commission (DG ECFIN), in its capacity as the compiler of the Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) indicator, publishes quality information on real effective exchange rate indicators on its website[9] and in 2022, additionally published metadata according to the new Reference Quality Framework (RQF)[10].
- Level 3: Member States prepare condensed country-specific self-assessment reports on the quality and statistical processes for statistics underlying the MIP indicators, which are easily understandable by users. They provide the basis for assuring the quality of the statistics and their comparability between countries. Member States publish such reports nationally and/or on the website of the CMFB[11]. The information for the statistical domains underlying the MIP are published for all EU Member States, while 26 are covered for housing price statistics.
- In compliance with Regulation (EC) No 184/2005[12], Eurostat prepares on an annual basis, national quality reports for the EU Member States, covering balance of payments, international investment position, international trade in services and foreign direct investment statistics. Furthermore, Eurostat shares its BOP national quality reports with the ECB. In the context of the Memorandum of Understanding, the ECB prepares national metadata reports, aiming at providing a succinct assessment on the quality issues of the BOP/IIP data of a particular Member State, and regularly transmits these reports to Eurostat.

Some ongoing developments in the different statistical domains relevant for the MIP should be noted. Cooperation between Member States, Eurostat and the ECB has been established in the context of the 'Early Warning System', and the 'Asymmetry Resolution meetings'. They aim at timely detecting relocations and restructuring events of multi-national enterprise groups and ensuring a consistent cross-country and cross-domain treatment. They bring the relevant national compilers together on a quarterly basis to discuss the largest bilateral asymmetries in foreign direct investment.

Overall, the EPC welcomes the contributions made by the statistical community, both at national and at EU level, concerning MIP relevant statistics (i.e. the scoreboard and other relevant statistics for the implementation of the MIP). The EPC also stresses the need to

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[5] https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/bopips/ecb.bopips202205~d69af262de.en.pdf
[6] Information on quality reporting and assessment is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/esa-2010/esa-2010-implementation-and-data-quality,the last quality report published at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/7870049/13975013/KS-FT-21-009-EN-N.pdf
[7] https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/euroareafinancialaccounts/html/ecb.eaqfa202105~28a3958ad8.en.html
[8] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/7870049/14455112/KS-FT-22-003-EN-N.pdf/1010df35-96f3-f7b3-b13b-e10888f96552?t=1647961382032
[9] https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/quality_report_en_1.pdf
[10] https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6fad0013-ef38-4146-9930-e55b65b174eb_en?filename=reference_metadata_on_methodology_and_quality_for_reer_-_may_2022.pdf
[11] https://www.cmfb.org/main-topics/mip-quality
[12] Regulation (EC) No 184/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 January 2005 on Community statistics concerning balance of payments, international trade in services and foreign direct investment.

support and continue the work to provide reliable and comparable MIP relevant statistics in support of all the stages of the MIP and considers that the statistics included in the scoreboard should be a priority. In particular, the EPC highlights the importance of continuing to improve the consistency and symmetry of BOP and national accounts data.

The EPC underlines that the procedures ensuring reliability of all MIP indicators should continue to be based on active cooperation within the statistical community.

3. Statistics for EU Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) monitoring

Eurostat has led the development of a reference indicator framework[13] for the purpose of monitoring progress towards the SDGs in an EU context in close cooperation with other Commission services and Member States, involving also Council Committees and Working Parties as well as civil society. The indicators have been selected taking into account their policy relevance from an EU perspective, availability, country coverage, data freshness and quality. Many of the selected indicators are used to monitor existing policies, such as the European Green Deal[14], the set of impact indicators for the 2020-2024 strategic plans[15], the main indicators of the Social Scoreboard for the European Pillar of Social Rights[16], and the target indicators of the European Education Area[17] and the European Skills Agenda[18]. The SDGs are integrated into all Commission proposals, policies and strategies. The set is open to annual reviews to incorporate indicators from new data sources and to take into account new EU policy priorities[19]. The set is structured along the 17 SDGs and covers the social, economic, environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainability as represented by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[20]. Each SDG is covered by at most six main indicators, which have been selected to reflect the SDGs broad objectives and ambitions.

On the basis of this indicator set, Eurostat publishes an annual series of monitoring reports. The latest edition, "*Sustainable development in the European Union — Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context — 2022 edition*", was published on 23 May 2022[21]. It begins with a synopsis of the EU's overall progress towards the SDGs, followed by a presentation of the policy background at global and EU level and an explanation of the way the SDGs are monitored at EU level. It also contains chapters on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, on indicators for estimating spill-over effects and on SDG interlinkages. The detailed monitoring results are presented in 17 chapters, one for each of the 17 SDGs; progress is evaluated at the aggregated EU-27 level and data for individual Member States are presented whenever available. A separate chapter provides an overview of status and progress of EU Member States towards the SDGs. This publication provides an assessment of indicator trends against SDG-related EU objectives and policy targets. The assessment method considers whether an indicator has moved towards or away from the sustainable development objective or EU target, as well as the speed of this movement. This assessment is carried out for the long-term (15 years) and short-term (5 years) trend.

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[13] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/indicators
[14] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en
[15] https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/strategic-plans-2020-2024_en
[16] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/social-scoreboard-indicators
[17] https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/eea-communication-sept2020_en
[18] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223
[19] Result of the review in preparation of the 2022 edition of the EU SDG monitoring report
[20] https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda
[21] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/publications

4.   Progress on underlying structural statistical data

4.1 Cross-cutting issues

Having explored and experimented the use of new data sources during recent years, and particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, several sources have been identified with a high potential for being used in European statistics. The European Statistical System now focuses on their implementation in regular production of so-called Trusted Smart Statistics. To this end Eurostat – in collaboration with ESS members – is developing for each data source dedicated frameworks to address methodological, technical and quality aspects as well as procedures to integrate these data sources in a multi-source and multi-purpose production environment. Legal and organisational issues have been identified to be considered in the context of the efforts to access privately held data. Communication packages addressing main stakeholders including the general public have been developed. Sources comprise the internet, mobile network operators, smart meters, ship messages and related databases, financial transactions and satellite images.

More generally, the ESS has undertaken a number of actions to further promote the case of access to privately held data for official statistics purposes. In particular, the ESS Committee adopted in June 2021 a Position Paper on the Data Act proposal, which was the joint contribution of the European Statistical System to the then ongoing public consultation of the Data Act and whereby the ESS called on the Commission to ensure that the Data Act proposal provides sustainable legislative access by the ESS members to data held by the private sector when necessary for the development, production and dissemination of official statistics. The expert group on facilitating the use of new data sources for official statistics, which was created by Eurostat, published its report[22] on 28 June 2022. While believing that reusing privately held data for official statistics can be of great value for society and economy, the report recognises that the current legal framework for European statistics does not cover this aspect. The expert group highlights regulatory gaps, fragmentation of practices and a lack of clarity regarding businesses' rights and obligations and recommends a balanced regulatory framework that makes it possible to reuse privately held data for statistical purposes in a sustainable way.

As a concrete example of use of privately held data for official statistics, Eurostat is publishing information on short-stay accommodation offered by four private collaborative economy platforms as a first result of a landmark agreement[23] between Eurostat and these platforms[24].

With a view to leverage ESS capabilities, Eurostat establishes collaborative networks and provides infrastructure. Recent priority areas comprise European statistics on online job advertisements and skills, web-enriched EuroGroups information, as well as smart surveys on households' budget and time use.

The EPC asks Member States to actively reinforce the generation of trusted smart statistics, building capacities and orienting the ESS towards innovation and harnessing the potential of a datafied society. The EPC recognises that sustainable access to privately held data is relevant for the production and dissemination of reliable independent official statistics and welcomes the initiative of the ESS to support a legislative proposal by the Commission for providing for such access.

The EPC also welcomes the adoption of the new structure of Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE Rev. 2.1) to be established by means

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[22] Empowering society by re-using privately held data for official statistics – A European Approach

[23] Airbnb, Booking, Expedia and Tripadvisor to share data with Eurostat - Products Eurostat News - Eurostat (europa.eu)

[24] Short-stay accommodation offered via online collaborative economy platforms - Statistics Explained (europa.eu)

of a delegated act and encourages Member States for continued engagement in the implementation phase.

Finally, work is ongoing with a view to making the European Statistical System fit for the future. The objective of a possible targeted revision of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics would be to seize opportunities provided by digital transformation, in terms of new data sources, technologies and data ecosystem players in order to be able to meet growing demands for timelier, more granular and responsive European statistics to support EU policies and the public debate.

4.2 European System of National Accounts

ESA 2010 mid-term review

National Accounts are fundamental for economic analysis. Within Europe the current 2010 European system of national and regional accounts (ESA 2010) sets out the national accounts standards and the ways in which key economic aggregates are calculated in the EU, in line with the world-wide 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) methodology. Eurostat's ESA 2010 website[25] contains information for stakeholders about national accounts standards: links to the legal documents; various explanatory documents (explanations of methodological changes, explanations of changes in the transmission programme, transmission calendar, etc.); list of frequently asked questions, with Eurostat's replies; links to supporting manuals.

ESA 2010 was first implemented by Member States in 2014, and since then countries have worked to improve their data in line with experience of applying new concepts and data sources. 27 countries obtained temporary derogations covering different parts of the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme, but all derogations expired on 1 January 2020. While most countries delivered due data at the regular transmission deadlines during the year 2020, some compliance issues remain and are followed up by Eurostat since it is of utmost importance that ESA 2010 is fully implemented across countries and sectors, with long consistent time series published.

A mid-term review of the ESA 2010 transmission programme was made in order to implement some adjustments (new COICOP[26] classification, the addition of a limited set of compulsory variables in response to user needs – notably for transactions with the institutions and bodies of the EU and for the structure of general government gross debt, integration of voluntary data, shortening of ESA table 11 – COFOG and ESA tables 6 and 7 – Financial Accounts and Balance Sheets – deadline in order to facilitate their policy use), increase the consistency of data among the different domains and to clarify some technical aspects of the transmissions (number of tables and composition, voluntary data). A more robust approach to report structural and data specific metadata is embedded in the amending proposal from the Commission[27]. This proposal also resolves some non-substantial textual inconsistencies in the ESA 2010 methodology and repeals 11 obsolete legal acts. Following the adoption of the proposal by the Commission at the end of 2021, it is under negotiation by the European Parliament and the Council, with the expectation that an agreement will be reached in 2022.

ESA 2010 reports

Based on the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2016/2304 of 19 December 2016 specifying the modalities, structure, periodicity and assessment indicators of the quality reports which countries have to provide in accordance with Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 549/2013 (ESA 2010), Eurostat continued to publish regular quality reports on ESA 2010 transmissions. In December 2021, Eurostat published the fifth summary report on the quality

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[25] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/esa-2010/overview
[26] Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose
[27] EUR-Lex - 52021PC0776 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

of ESA 2010 data transmitted in 2020[28]. The reports were being implemented in a staged approach in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The first stage (2017 and 2018) included quantitative indicators on completeness, punctuality and consistency, as well as information on published revision policy and documentation on methodology. The second stage in 2019 added indicators on revision rates of quarterly and annual data for selected variables and cross-domain coherence between non-financial and financial accounts. In 2021 the third and final implementation stage added indicators on quarterly revision rates for additional variables, indicators on cross-domain coherence between more domains (main aggregates, non-financial sector accounts, government finance statistics, regional accounts and supply and use tables), as well as adding information on the length of comparable series.

Consistency

In 2021, Luxembourg implemented a benchmark revision, while Latvia carried out a major revision, but the benchmark revision for Greece was not yet completed for years before 2010. More detailed information on the benchmark revisions that Member States carried out during 2019-2021 is available on Eurostat's website[29]. A fully coordinated benchmark revision for all Member States is scheduled for 2024. Further improvements are expected until the end of 2022 when the outstanding issues specified in the GNI reservations will be addressed. Practical guidance on good practices for revising ESA 2010 data[30] and a handbook on the consistency of ESA 2010 based national accounts[31] helped compilers of national accounts to implement revisions and measures to improve the numerical consistency of data. Recommended good practices should also be applied for the next harmonised benchmark revision in 2024.

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, national contributions to Eurostat's preliminary flash estimate T+30 days, as well as T+45 days flash estimate of GDP and employment were maintained. Further improvements were realised in 2022, as Slovenia introduced estimation of GDP growth rate at T+45 days in May 2022, and Slovenian detailed data for production and expenditure approach were published 2 days later T+47 days. At the same time, the Netherlands and Estonia are working on grants received by Eurostat on the estimation of employment and GDP flash estimates respectively. The Netherlands are exploring the feasibility of advancing the employment and GDP flash at T+30, while Estonia is working towards publishing GDP flash estimates at either T+30 or T+45. Ireland is also exploring the feasibility of GDP flash estimates at either T+30 or T+45. Eurostat is currently publishing national estimates for 11 countries, (namely Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Portugal and Sweden) in its T+30 news release. The assessment of employment test estimates continued, aimed at publishing quarterly employment flash estimates after 30 days (T+30) once quality criteria are met. A number of guidance notes helped compilers of national accounts to ensure cross-comparability of statistical data despite the measurement challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and additional metadata were published both at Eurostat and at national levels to explain the impact of the pandemic. However, higher than usual revisions with the incorporation of annual data sources can be expected.

In 2019, the ECB and Eurostat initiated a project on vertical discrepancies observed between non-financial and financial sector accounts with a view to developing guidelines on how to tackle them. In 2020, the relevant Expert Groups met together in a workshop organised by the ECB and Eurostat and shared national practices and experiences on addressing the vertical reconciliation, while users presented their needs and the ECB and Eurostat reflected on some

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[28] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=ks-ft-21-009
[29] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/esa-2010/esa-2010-implementation-and-data-quality
[30] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/KS-GQ-18-012
[31] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/10758445/KS-GQ-20-004-EN-N.pdf/d650560e-11c5-f1e4-cb84-953f6c56c7c3

first ideas for the recommendations. Based on the experience and opinions shared during the workshop, a draft document with guidelines was prepared, which was discussed in detail during a second workshop organised in March 2021. After that, several consultation rounds with the relevant technical groups took place. As a result, the guidelines were finalised and published on Eurostat's and ECB's websites in March 2022, while their implementation will be made progressively until the 2024 coordinated benchmark revision of national accounts. Financial support is provided to Member States to conduct work in this area.

Globalisation and digitalisation

The globalisation and digitalisation of economies are two phenomena that affect national accounts and business statistics. Eurostat is giving high priority to deal with these issues in cooperation with policy users and international partners, also in view of a future update of the SNA, expected in 2025. This involves work at conceptual level (e.g. how to consistently record multinational enterprise groups (MNE groups) in national statistics of different countries, or how to monitor new digital products or services) as well as on communication (providing the information necessary for users to better understand the national and international economic performance).

Eurostat considers that the better measuring of the impact of globalisation of MNE groups requires the strengthening of the co-operation and data exchange in the European Statistical System. This was supported by the conclusions of the 2019 DGINS[32] Conference held in Bratislava on the economic globalisation. As regards digitalisation, a number of initiatives are under way to better capture the digital economy (see sections 4.5 and 4.6 on Productivity and Business Statistics). In addition, a few EU NSIs are using EU grants to carry out experimental work on Digital Supply and Use Tables, Digital Intermediation Platforms and Data as an asset.

Cooperation at international level in the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts and in the UN Expert Group on Business and Trade statistics is also important. As national accounts and business statistics are areas continuously evolving in line with economic changes and new policy and analytical needs, it is essential for Eurostat to express European needs in the context of international discussions on a future SNA. Future priorities to be taken forward include digitalisation, reflecting environmental issues, and globalisation and MNE restructuring. Eurostat and the Member States are already working intensively with the international community on these issues including with the ESCB and CMFB. In order to timely deal with restructuring events of MNEs, Eurostat operates an Early Warning System, that is a collaborative network that allows national correspondents in Member States to coordinate the methodological treatment of MNEs once a restructuring event has impact on statistics of more than one Member State. To exploit synergies with Business Statistics and Large Cases Units, the Early Warning System is now under the umbrella of the MNE network.

Income, consumption and wealth

Eurostat has been working on two work streams aimed at strengthening the household perspective by focusing on distributional aspects of income, consumption and wealth:

- Eurostat continues developments on the joint distribution of income, consumption and wealth micro data. Based on a statistical matching of the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), the Household Budget Survey (HBS) and the Household Finance and Consumption Survey (HFCS), these data aim at describing the interaction of income, consumption and wealth at household level. The purpose is to shed light on the part of the population which is most vulnerable to economic shocks, the heterogeneity of saving behaviours between high- and low-income households and the impact of direct and indirect taxation. Results can be accessed on Eurostat's public dissemination database, where the experimental nature of these statistics is clearly indicated. Further information

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[32] Directors General of the ESS National Statistical Institutes

can be found on a dedicated section of Eurostat's webpage[33]. Two reference years are available: 2010 and 2015. Three Statistics Explained articles give further insight into these statistics. Revised statistics based on recent methodological improvements were published in June 2022. In August, new experimental indicators on the affordability of essential goods and services were released for the first time. Work on the reference year 2020 will start as soon as micro data for 2020 income will be available at the end of the 2022.

- In December 2020, Eurostat and the OECD published for the first time experimental results of the distribution of households income and consumption aligned with macroeconomic totals. The publication combined own national estimates provided by a number of countries with the centralised results compiled by Eurostat based on the information available from social surveys (EU-SILC and HBS) and the regular sector accounts data reporting. The distributional data were accompanied by detailed methodological information (guidelines on how to compile distributional national accounts and a methodological note on the EU centralised exercise), metadata (both for national and centralised exercises), as well as sensitivity indicators. Moreover, the final report of the joint OECD-EUROSTAT expert group DNA was published in May 2022[34]. The latest developments are:

    o A new data collection round was launched in autumn 2021. Updated national estimates by income quintile by three countries and centralised results for all countries by income decile for income (2015-2019) and consumption (updated 2015) were published in June 2022[35].

    o Grants: Eurostat published a call for proposals in December 2021. Four countries applied and the evaluation was communicated to the relevant Member States in May-June 2022.

    o A new Task Force on Household Distributional Accounts (TF HDA) was launched in June 2022 with the participation of 12 EU Member States, the OECD and the ECB.

    In the same work stream, the ECB established an expert group on linking micro and macro data on wealth (EG LMM) in 2015. The EG DNA and EG LMM kept a close cooperation, facing similar issues in the compilation process and learning from each other's experiences. The ECB relaunched the group as an expert group on distributional financial accounts (EG DFA), with the aim to develop experimental distributional accounts on household wealth by 2022. The EG DFA has so far only disseminated DFA estimates only to internal users, but expects to disseminate DFA estimates to all users by end 2022.

The EPC welcomes the progress made on the work related with the European System of National Accounts. In particular, the EPC welcomes the ongoing work in the context of the ESA 2010 mid-term review and calls on Member States to support the proposal corresponding to user needs. The EPC also welcomes the ongoing work to increase the coverage of Eurostat's GDP flash estimates at T+30 and/or T+45 in order to improve their reliability as well as the review of the international statistical manuals and calls on Member States to actively provide input to the process.

4.3 Government finance statistics

COFOG data

The provisions in the ESA 2010 transmission programme, implemented as from 1 September 2014, imply that the compilation and transmission of COFOG (detailed government

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[33] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/income-consumption-and-wealth
[34] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=ks-tc-21-010
[35] INew estimates on household distributional accounts - Products Eurostat News - Eurostat (europa.eu)

expenditure data by function/purpose) level II data are compulsory for general government covering the time period from 2001 onwards.

All Member States as well as Iceland, Norway and Switzerland delivered COFOG level II data under ESA 2010 (end-December 2021 transmission). The first delivery was transmitted within the legal deadline for all countries. COFOG data was provided significantly in advance of the legal deadline by Bulgaria, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. While the overall consistency of initially transmitted data continued to improve, the need to implement further technical and methodological corrections to COFOG data continued to be the driving factor behind the high number of retransmissions still observed. All country data as well as EU and EA aggregates were validated and disseminated in Eurostat's public database by 22 February 2022. The publication of COFOG data was accompanied by a news item, an online publication on COFOG[36] and a Eurostat infographic designed for general users[37].

By the end of 2021, concerned countries had stepped up efforts to complete existing data gaps: all ESA 2010 based derogations expired in 2020. Hence, a significant progress in data availability was observed. As regards COFOG level II data, all Member States as well as Iceland, Norway and Switzerland sent a complete dataset from at least reference year 2001, with all EU Member States providing data from 1995 at COFOG level I. At subsector level, 25 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland provided complete detailed COFOG level II data for at least seven years on a voluntary basis. Overall, data availability has improved significantly compared to the first ESA 2010 based transmission at the end of December 2014.

As regards the quality of the data, further progress will be required on the allocation of R&D expenditure by detailed function. More generally, while overall consistency was assured for all countries at validation, further progress is needed in certain areas such as unexpected negative amounts, allocation of social transfers and subsidies, certain transactions in 'public debt transactions', individual and collective consumption expenditure, consistency of allocation over time and use of some smaller COFOG groups.

As regards the recording of measures to counter the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a harmonised recording of 2020 and 2021 data is being facilitated by discussions in the COFOG TF and GFS TF and subsequent written guidance. While significant efforts were made by compilers to ensure comparability, some further harmonisation of the recording is still expected.

Structure of government debt / voluntary data transmissions

In response to key user needs, Eurostat annually collects details on the structure of government debt, covering – among others – government debt by sector of debt holder, by detailed initial and remaining maturity as well as by currency of issuance. The coverage supplied by Member States as well as Norway has gradually expanded since 2014.

From 2015 onwards, Eurostat has been collecting additional voluntary data on general government gross debt, quarterly financial accounts and annual non-financial accounts. All EU Member States as well as Norway now provide additional details of non-financial transactions. Notably, data on transactions with the EU needed in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact are provided by all EU Member States.

Mid-term review of the ESA 2010 transmission programme

As indicated in section 4.2, the ESA 2010 transmission programme is currently under review. In this context, a number of changes were proposed in relation to government finance statistics

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[36] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Government_expenditure_by_function
[37] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/cofog/

in order to better meet user needs. Notably, it was proposed to formally integrate existing voluntary collection to the transmission programme (mainly as voluntary data).

It was also proposed to insert some additional compulsory data due to user needs: data on transactions with the EU as well as some data on the structure of government debt.

Additionally, the legal deadline for transmission of COFOG data was proposed to be shortened to T+11 months. The ESA 2010 COFOG data is used by a high number of policy Directorates General, inter alia in the context of the European Semester. Due to the transmission deadline for COFOG data 12 months after the end of the reference period and the subsequent time necessary for validation and publication of the data, the COFOG transmission cycle is not optimally aligned with the needs of the European Semester. An earlier transmission (by one month) would enable the use of the freshest COFOG data in the context of the European Semester and would also lead to a quicker alignment of relevant national accounts aggregates to the COFOG data.

Contingent liabilities and non-performing loans

In the context of the last financial crisis, the importance of access to reliable data on public corporations has become evident, notably where difficulties in public corporations have impacted on government finances.

In 2012, Eurostat introduced an annual questionnaire on government controlled units classified outside the government sector, which covers non-financial and financial corporations and Rest of World (ROW). This questionnaire is compulsory and covers annual data, including total liabilities of corporations as well as the market/non-market performances of the companies having total liabilities exceeding 0.01% of GDP. The timeliness of the data transmission is each year at 12 months after the end of the reference period.

In addition and as a direct result of the Eurostat-organised Task Force on the implications of Council Directive 85/2011 on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States, on 22 July 2013, Eurostat issued a decision on a "supplement on contingent liabilities and potential obligations to the EDP questionnaire". This provides for the compulsory provision of a supplement to the EDP questionnaire covering total outstanding liabilities related to public-private partnerships (PPPs) recorded off-balance sheet of general government; non-performing loans of general government (government assets); total stock of government guarantees, including government guarantees provided to public corporations, split by sub-sector of general government.

Data have been provided annually by the Member States to Eurostat since 2014 and have been published on Eurostat's website, together with supporting information. Eurostat has also created a special section for data on contingent liabilities on its website.

Work on quality and methodology in the context of Excessive Deficit Procedure Statistics and government finance statistics

Eurostat last published updates to the manuals on Government Deficit and Debt and COFOG in 2019. An update of the Manual on Government Deficit and Debt is foreseen in 2022. In order to support transparency, and following the establishment of procedures to publish outcomes of the methodological work of the GFS TF, Eurostat proceeded with the publication of the first two GFS interpretations in 2019, and published an additional GFS interpretation in 2020. During 2021, two GFS interpretations were published and during 2022, four GFS interpretations were published so far.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, EU Member States' governments engaged in major operations to counter the economic and social impact of the pandemic and containment measures. Eurostat discussed with Member States in the relevant expert groups in order to ensure an appropriate and accurate recording of fiscal data: one guidance note was finalised,

while two notes are published in draft form[38]. A dedicated temporary internal reporting template to report measures undertaken in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, elaborated in collaboration with the ECB, was consulted with the CMFB and first reported by all Member States in April 2021[39]. In addition, a statistical reporting table has been developed for RRF-related expenditure, which was consulted with the CMFB in August 2021 and first reported by the Member States in April 2022. On the recording of RRF, extensive guidance was issued in the context of the EDP statistics. Users are being kept informed through country-specific metadata published alongside quarterly government finance statistics data.

In 2021, Eurostat initiated a project on Development of the ESA accounts of EU institutions with a view to capture the impact on the B.9 and debt of the EU institutions from the post COVID-19 economic development support measures introduced on the European level. The project is expected to yield results by end-2022.

The EPC welcomes the progress made on the work related with government finance statistics in terms of efforts to increase data availability and accuracy, notably for the accounts of the EU institutions and the structure of government debt.

The EPC welcomes the progress made in the availability and timeliness of COFOG data.

The EPC takes note of the proposals in the context of the ESA 2010 mid-term review to better meet user needs in the field of government finance statistics, e.g. the shortening of the legal deadline for COFOG data to facilitate key policy uses, for example in the context of the European Semester.

The EPC welcomes future work to increase the level of harmonisation in the recording of COVID-19 measures in COFOG statistics as well as to increase availability of government finance statistics data of Member States.

The EPC welcomes further the work undertaken to harmonise the recording of COVID-19 related government measures.

4.4 Productivity

Eurostat continued and completed its work on Growth and Productivity Accounts (GPA) in 2021-2022. The final phase of the GPA project concentrated on improving the dissemination of productivity indicators based on official statistics, notably data transmitted in relation to the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme. The main goals of the project were the extension of publication of Labour Productivity Indicators (LPIs), production and publication of Capital Productivity Indicators (CAPIs), the compilation of Multifactor Productivity Indicator (MFP) and a feasibility study for Digital Quality-Adjusted Labour Input (QALI). These goals were all reached at the end of 2021.

From 15 December 2021, Eurostat disseminates additional annual labour and capital productivity indicators (LPIs and CAPIs) in its online database (nama_10_prod), accompanied by metadata information[40]. These new indicators include breakdowns by industry, region and asset based on annual national accounts data. In addition, a measure of multifactor productivity was published as experimental statistics[41]. The indicator (presented as 'crude'

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[38] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/government-finance-statistics/methodology/guidance-on-accounting-rules

[39] Following earlier pilot exercises.

[40] Statistical data and metadata providing summary information useful for assessing methodology, coverage and comparability are available at the following links:
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/explore/all/economy?lang=en&subtheme=na10.nama10.nama_10_prod&display=list&sort=category
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/national-accounts/methodology/european-accounts/productivity-indicators

[41] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/multifactor-productivity

MFP indicator) is directly based on national accounts data (labour input and total capital stocks), without assumptions or additional information which are used for more sophisticated multi-factor productivity measures. This is the reason why this indicator is disseminated as experimental.

A feasibility study for Digital QALI, conducted by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), assessed the data sources and methods to measure the impact of digital skills on the (quality of) labour input. Briefly, this study concluded that, based on available data sources, it is not feasible to collect a consistent data set on digital skills, age, hours worked and earnings (the inputs needed for the calculation) and for this reason, is not possible to replicate the approach used for the QALI indicator that Eurostat publishes as experimental statistics since 2018[42]. The feasibility study made an experimental attempt for the computation of a digital QALI. The problem of linking the data across different surveys (to obtain the consistent set of information needed for the calculation) was handled using a statistical matching approach (econometric model), demonstrating its methodological and practical limitations.

Concerning promotion and awareness raising, Eurostat cooperated with NSIs to improve available productivity indicators in the framework of the 'Task Force on productivity indicators'. Financial support was granted to interested Member States to carry out, at national level, the work linked to the main objectives of the GPA project. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two events, originally planned for 2020, were organised (virtually) by Eurostat in 2021: a session on productivity at the New Techniques and Technologies for Statistics (NTTS - in March 2021) to discuss the progress in the measurement of productivity growth from the perspectives of official statistics and a session at 63rd ISI World Statistic Congress (11-16 July 2021), where Eurostat, in cooperation with JRC and the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw), presented the important efforts made to further develop productivity measures.

The mandate of the Task Force on Productivity Indicators (TF-PI), set up in 2019 to support the final phase of the GPA project (2000 -2021), was also regarded as completed with the Eurostat's publication of the indicators. The work done benefited significantly from the expertise of NSIs, JRC and OECD as well as the ECB and main Commission users (ECFIN, EMPL, GROW). The interaction and co-operation with experts from the Task Force was a very important part of the project that significantly influenced final outputs and was highly appreciated by Eurostat.

Following the publication of the indicators and reception of final reports from supporting contractors, activities in 2022 consisted in promoting the disseminated data and the results achieved under the GPA project. In this regard, in March 2022, Eurostat published a new Statistics Explained article on main productivity trends using the productivity indicators. Furthermore, a virtual Eurostat workshop for producers and users of productivity indicators was organised in March 2022, where large participation demonstrated strong interest in the result of the project.

In 2022, work continues with follow-up activities aiming to improve underlying national accounts data, notably employment and asset estimates. In this respect, the productivity estimates will benefit from the parallel work of the task force on stocks of fixed assets and estimation of consumption of fixed capital under ESA2010 (TF FIXCAP), aiming to further harmonise compilation practices and improve quality and comparability among countries with the next benchmark revision in 2024.

The EPC welcomes the publication of additional productivity indicators by Eurostat with clear metadata to support the analysis of productivity trends and encourages continued good cooperation with national compilers and users to further improve and harmonise underlying employment and capital data.

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[42] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/qali

4.5 Business and international trade statistics

In 2021 and 2022, first data required under Regulation (EU) No 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European business statistics[43] (EBS Regulation) were published. This includes the monthly index on services production for which first estimates for European Union and euro area were disseminated in May 2022.

By autumn 2022, the last of the 10 implementing and delegated acts needed for the first implementation of the EBS Basic Act, will be adopted. This includes the implementing act specifying the data requirements for global value chains statistics (Commission Implementing Regulation 2022/918), for innovation statistics (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2022/1092). The implementing act laying down the PRODCOM list 2022 (the first update of the PRODCOM list under the EBS Regulation[44]) is expected to be adopted in the third/fourth quarter of 2022. It will introduce additional codes for primary and secondary raw materials. In 2021, a series of European business statistics manuals[45] (including methodological manuals, compilers' and users' manuals) were released.

The EBS Regulation also regulates the production of national statistical business registers and of the EuroGroups Register (EGR) and strengthens their essential infrastructure role as authoritative sources for business statistics. The EGR is produced on the basis of an ESS and EFTA NSI's exchange and output of confidential micro data of Multinational Enterprise (MNE) groups to be used for the production of business and macroeconomic statistics (in particular related to globalisation). The final EGR output was made available to the producers of Foreign Affiliates Statistics and other business and globalisation statistics producers. In 2022, this output contains information on around 135 thousand MNE groups active in Europe comprising around 900 thousand enterprises and more than 1.2 million legal units. In addition, a large majority of Member States and EFTA countries voluntarily participate to the European Profiling programme, a collaborative and interactive activity to analyse the legal and economic structure of the largest and most significant MNE groups and delineate their statistical units. Eurostat continues to co-finance Member States in their European profiling activity, ensuring that the results of this activity are taken into consideration in the national statistical business registers and in the EGR.

In the context of Structural Business Statistics (SBS) and Business Demography statistics, since several years, Member States together with Eurostat have been working towards an improved methodology on how to better capture the contribution of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to the economy. This will allow better targeted SME policies and improved assessment of the policy impact.

Looking at the economy from the regional point of view, SMEs contribute to local economies by promoting growth and innovation in local communities. In this context, business demography statistics are particularly relevant in providing data on business start-ups and closures as well as for high growth enterprises, based on regional breakdowns that will become mandatory under the EBS Regulation.

The rapidly emerging new possibilities of micro data linking methodology will considerably enrich the SME related database with regard to areas such as trade, business characteristics, and innovativeness and performance indicators. This will bring about completely new

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[43] Regulation (EU) No 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on European business statistics, repealing 10 legal acts in the field of business statistics (EUR-Lex - 32019R2152 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu))
[44] For the first PRODCOM data collected under the EBS Regulation on the reference year 2021 the PRODCOM list adopted in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 3924/91 was still used.
[45] European business statistics manuals

possibilities of expanding the economic analysis of SMEs. For example, it might become possible to focus on genuine SMEs by taking into account an enterprise group structure.

Furthermore, in the area of business demography statistics, first official statistics on quarterly registrations and bankruptcies of businesses were disseminated in 2021. In 2022, a voluntary collection of monthly registrations and bankruptcies will take place.

In addition, the current development project on high growth enterprises and scale-ups largely reflects the policy needs of the key DGs dealing with enterprise policy. The project has broadened the scope and measurement of high growth enterprises to also include micro enterprises, which are not covered by the regular data production. The project has also assessed the sustainability of growth after the high growth period. Enterprises showing the best potential for scaling up their business have been analysed.

The Global value chains (international sourcing survey) Implementing Act, mentioned above, will regulate, for the first time, the data collection as of reference period 2021-2023 (data to be transmitted in 2025).

The ESS is also working on the full implementation of the statistical unit "enterprise" increasing comparability. Given its significant impact on European business statistics, the harmonised definition of the "enterprise" across statistical domains, sectors and countries will increase the quality of the ESS business statistics output. In most domains, Member States will fully implement it for the reference year 2021 at the latest.

In the context of foreign direct investment statistics and in close cooperation with the ECB, Eurostat continued piloting the development of statistics on "Ultimate Investing Country", "Ultimate Host Country" and "Greenfield investment".

International trade in services by modes of supply are an important element of trade negotiations. Eurostat has developed a methodology and used it to produce a pilot dataset, including estimates for EU Member States. Eurostat continues work to further develop the methodology in cooperation with several EU Member States. The second area of international trade in services relates to the services trade by enterprise characteristics (STEC). In this area the methodology was developed (Eurostat-OECD Compilers Guide for statistics on Services Trade by Enterprise Characteristics (STEC)[46]) and data are already available for 15 EU Member States. The collection of international trade in services by modes of supply and STEC will become mandatory under the provisions of the EBS General Implementing Act (GIA).

Eurostat provides data for monitoring the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and e-commerce in the business and household sectors in the context of implementation of the Digital Single Market. At the same time, there is a need to further progress on measuring the digital economy. Eurostat continued developing, producing and publishing statistics in the area of the digital economy and society. Both ICT surveys are updated on annual basis. Data are needed for developing and monitoring the EU policy initiatives in the digital area, looking at the use of ICT in households, by individuals and enterprises. Data disseminated cover a whole range of topics, such as digital connectivity, e-commerce, e-government, robotics, cloud computing, data analysis, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and digital skills.

E-commerce is flourishing, affecting trade patterns and the way businesses operate. Many of the developments in the past decade are due to the rise of the platform economy. For example, the collaborative economy has expanded rapidly in recent years because platforms can provide efficient intermediation between consumers and service providers, e.g., for short-term accommodation, transport services, and other task-based work. This has led to a number of policy questions related to consumer protection, competition, and a more flexible labour

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[46] Compilers Guide for statistics on Services Trade by Enterprise Characteristics (STEC) - Products Manuals and Guidelines - Eurostat (europa.eu)

market with new types of work. In order to address such questions, there is a need to better measure the size of the platform intermediation and their economic impact. Eurostat is currently working on setting up voluntary partnerships with a limited number of platforms to develop the instruments for accessing policy relevant data held by platforms. While many platforms understand the need to collaborate with statistical authorities, they also express concerns about the nature of a voluntary data collection since it is essential to create a level playing field for the platforms. Clear rules are needed to ensure effective and sustainable access. Hence, it is likely that the first pilot projects will need to be followed up by further measures of a more binding nature, and possibly extend statistical access to privately held data[47].

Having in mind digitalisation and its tremendous impact on and potential for the society, businesses and the economy, even further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, in October 2021, the ESSC endorsed an action plan setting a way forward for the ESS towards better measurement of digitalisation. The initiative will also facilitate monitoring of the digital transformation in Europe, one of the main political priorities of the European Commission for the coming years, with specific targets set out in the Digital Decade Communication.

The action plan evolves around three points:

- **Advancing the measurement agenda** includes statistical initiatives, which are set to meet the identified data needs and gaps (e.g. exploring additional sources and enlarging the scope, measure the environmental impact of digitalisation, measure the size and activity of collaborative economy, compile digital supply and use tables, demand for digital skills, explore new sources of data)

- **ESS contribution to the Digital Decade** (monitor the Digital Decade targets)

- **Enhancing the communication and coordination** (new publications, coordinated dissemination of data on digitalisation).

The EPC calls upon Member States to support these developments with a view to upgrade the quality of the ESS business statistics and cross-border information, thus better capturing globalisation as well as digitalisation phenomena. The EPC welcomes the progress towards improving compliance when reporting on enterprises. In doing so, the EPC stresses the importance to maintain the consistency of business statistics with national accounts, where relevant, as well as feasibility and cost-effectiveness of the proposed developments. In addition, the EPC recommends continuing working towards the collection of data via platforms since that could reduce the need to additional surveys on SMEs and micro enterprises as well as generating more policy relevant information on the role of platforms in the digital economy.

In the globalisation context, the EPC welcomes the integration of new data requirements on international trade in services in the implementing act of EBS, in particular for the modes of supply (MoS) and by enterprise characteristics (STEC) as well as the adoption of the Implementing Act laying down the data requirements for global value chains statistics. Beyond their analytical value, both elements provide important input to the free trade agreement negotiation by the EU. On the technical side, STEC will be used as an input in the area of global input-output tables.

As regards digitalisation, the EPC supports the digitalisation action plan.

In line with the ECOFIN Council's recommendations[48] to substantially reduce the response burden on enterprises by redeveloping intra-EU trade in goods statistics while maintaining a

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[47] See *Position paper on access to privately held data, which are of public interest*, by European Statistical system, Nov 2017.
[48] Economic and Financial Affairs Council meetings of 30 November 2011 and of 13 November 2012.

sound level of quality, international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) have been in the spotlight of modernisation activities over the last years.

The new EBS Regulation became applicable for international trade in goods statistics in 2022. It incorporated the key elements of the modernised intra-EU trade in goods statistics, as agreed by the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) in May 2016. The system of compiling intra-EU trade in goods statistics is now more flexible and innovative in terms of data sources and compilation methods, making it possible to reduce response burden while maintaining the necessary quality. To this end, the most innovative new technical feature is the compulsory micro-data exchange on intra-EU exports between the Member States which started in March 2022. The purpose of the timely exchange of micro-data for intra-EU exports of goods is to make available an additional data source to compile intra-EU imports. Using the exchanged micro-data in the compilation creates a possibility to exempt more importing businesses from statistical reporting, thus substantially reducing the response burden for businesses.

As regards the extra-EU trade in goods statistics, the EBS Regulation introduced the exchange of customs data between the Member States. This helps to improve the quality of extra-EU trade in goods statistics by enabling the use of customs data lodged in another Member State. To make this possible, two legal acts (IA and DA) were adopted in July 2021. The exchange of customs data makes use of the same IT system as developed for the intra-EU micro-data exchange. The compulsory exchange of customs data started also in March 2022.

The EPC welcomes the work, accomplished successfully thanks to the collaborative work between Eurostat and the Member States. The EPC calls upon the ESS to maintain its commitment in deploying and implementing modernised intra-EU trade in goods statistics.

4.6 Agricultural statistics

The regulation on Integrated Farm Statistics (IFS)[49] establishes a framework for European statistics based on farm-level data by integrating core information on the farm manager, the land and the livestock with related specific issues by means of a flexible system of modules. It provides the legal basis for the 2020 agricultural census and for two sample data collections in 2023 and 2026, and it constitutes an essential backbone and basis for other agricultural statistics, especially a sampling basis. The agricultural census 2020 under the IFS has been carried out. The results are expected to be available in 2022.

IFS is the first step of the Strategy for Agricultural Statistics for 2020 and beyond, a major programme for the modernisation of European Union agricultural statistics undertaken by the European Commission in close cooperation with Member States. The strategy addresses the data needs for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), for the new Farm to Fork strategy under the European Green Deal and for agricultural aspects of environmental and health related polices.

The Regulation on Statistics of Agricultural Input and Output (SAIO) is the second step to implement the strategy and it integrates and harmonises the currently separate collections of aggregated data on agricultural production (animals and crops) including organic farming, agricultural price statistics and plant protection product and nutrient statistics, as well as a new domain of grasslands. The Commission proposal for the SAIO Regulation[50] was adopted in

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[49] Regulation (EU) No 2018/1091 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on integrated farm statistics and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1166/2008 and (EU) No 1337/2011
[50] EUR-Lex - 52021PC0037 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

February 2021, and in June 2022 the European Parliament and the Council found a political agreement on the proposal. The adoption is expected still in 2022.

The third part of the Strategy for Agricultural Statistics for 2020 and beyond is the modernisation of the Economic Accounts for Agriculture. Regulation (EU) No 2022/590 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 138/2004 as regards regional economic accounts for agriculture was adopted on 6 April 2022 This amendment makes the provision of regional economic accounts for agriculture and quality reports legally binding.

The EPC welcomes the objectives of the Strategy for Agricultural Statistics for 2020 and beyond and the progress made towards its implementation.

4.7 Fisheries statistics

The project 'Streamlining and simplification of European Fisheries Statistics' is progressing. The impact assessment of future options for European Fisheries Statistics has been finalised. The aim is to streamline the fisheries statistics under a new regulation so that they bring a substantial added value as European Statistics in the complex data architecture necessary for the management and monitoring of fisheries under the Common Fisheries Policy.

The EPC takes note of the progress made on the project 'Streamlining and simplification of European Fisheries Statistics'.

4.8 Energy statistics

The European Green Deal intends to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. This requires a fundamental transformation and decarbonisation of the energy system, by boosting the use of renewable energy sources and phasing out fossil fuels, among other measures. The Energy Union is the main energy policy framework to deliver the transformations required by the energy system. Using reliable high quality energy statistics to monitor the policy targets under the European Green Deal and the Energy Union packages will enhance the credibility of EU energy policy. Energy statistics are used for monitoring progress towards Europe's 2030 environmental, energy and climate targets, the objectives of the Green Deal, the Energy Union and the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda. This includes the share of energy from renewable sources, indicators on energy efficiency, energy dependence, energy security, energy intensity, transparency of the energy market, energy infrastructure, and more.

The Commission adopted on 28 January 2022 the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2008 (Commission Regulation (EU) No 2022/132[51]) on energy statistics to meet the increased demand for data arising from the European Green Deal and the Energy Union. The aim of this amendment is to provide earlier data and better monitor the evolution of renewable energy, energy efficiency, new fuels and energy storage.

On renewables, this amendment aims at collecting data to better monitor bio-based products used to replace feedstock from fossil origin (e.g. bio-lubricants or bio-asphalt), more detailed data on solar PV and its use in buildings, or heat pumps used in the heating and cooling sector, in line with the Renewable Energy Directive (Directive (EU) 2018/2001[52] and the Renovation Wave strategy[53].

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[51] EUR-Lex - 32022R0132 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
[52] EUR-Lex - 32018L2001 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
[53] EUR-Lex - 52020DC0662 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

As regards electricity, data will be collected on decentralised electricity produced and auto-consumed in different sectors, on newly installed and decommissioned electrical capacities and on large-scale batteries, to monitor the Strategic Action Plan for Batteries[54] and the proposal for a regulation concerning batteries[55].

With respect to energy efficiency, this amendment aims at collecting more detailed final energy consumption data for transport use and in the services sector, including energy consumed by data centres, as well as energy consumed in the agriculture sector, more details about energy losses during transmission and distribution and on co-generation (CHP). This new data will help monitor the developments linked to Directive (EU) 2018/2002[56] on energy efficiency.

On hydrogen, this amendment will allow Eurostat to build a complete hydrogen balance to monitor the EU Hydrogen Strategy[57].

This amendment also intends to collect annual data earlier, moving the reporting deadline from the end of November to the end of October after the year-end, as well as to collect data to produce early estimates of energy balances and key indicators 6 months after the end of the reference year.

The scope of Eurostat's energy statistics also includes now the Energy Community (EnC) Contracting Parties. In total, annual energy statistics are now reported and disseminated in a harmonised way for around 40 countries (Ukraine stopped reporting for the time being due to its Martial Law[58]). Furthermore, the cooperation with the EnC Contracting Parties was extended to also cover the reporting of monthly data in the field of energy statistics, starting from oil and natural gas. The Contracting Parties are expected to adopt the latest (2022) amendment of the Energy Statistics Regulation[59] based on a Commission proposal for a Decision of the Permanent High-Level Group of the Energy Community (PHLG). The PHLG meeting is scheduled for 14 December and will be followed by the Ministerial Council on 15 December 2022.

Importantly, in direct response to an enormous number of media requests on energy dependency from Russia since the outbreak of the Russian war on Ukraine, Eurostat prepared a full media package at the beginning of March 2022. It comprised a [webinar](#) of record audience, an [overview table](#) for journalists, a dedicated [news item](#) and a [statistics explained article](#). In recent and forthcoming publications, Eurostat has singled out figures on imports from Russia to inform the policy debate and has improved its [energy trade visualisation tool](#). Eurostat is discussing with Member States how to produce more detailed and earlier data on energy trade with Russia to monitor the effect of EU measures.

Since the Russian invasion, the energy policy context evolved rapidly and Eurostat has been taking an active role. The REPowerEU Plan[60], sketched in March in a Commission Communication[61] and adopted mid-May is about rapidly reducing the EU's dependence on Russian fossil fuels by fast forwarding the clean transition and joining forces to achieve a more

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[54] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:0e8b694e-59b5-11e8-ab41-01aa75ed71a1.0003.02/DOC_3&format=PDF

[55] EUR-Lex - 52020PC0798 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[56] EUR-Lex - 32018L2002 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[57] https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/hydrogen_strategy.pdf

[58] Закон України від 03.03.2022 № 2115-IX про захист інтересів суб'єктів подання звітності та інших документів у період дії воєнного стану або стану війни. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2115-20

[59] EUR-Lex - 32022R0132 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[60] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM(2022) 230 final) of 18.5.2022 - REPowerEU Plan

[61] Commission Communication of 8 March 2022 "REPowerEU: Joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy". (COM(2022) 108 final). EUR-Lex - 52022DC0108 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

resilient energy system and a true Energy Union. Eurostat has started to publish or is developing new indicators. Concretely,

- Two indicators on import dependency by origin calculating the ultimate origin of imports for oil and natural gas were published end of September 2022 for the first time.

- Eurostat is monitoring the 15% gas demand reduction target enshrined in Council Regulation (EU) No 2022/1369[62] aiming at reducing gas demand by 15% in all Member States over at least the next 8 months. The first reporting is due on 15 October 2022 and Eurostat will publish this indicator shortly afterwards. Henceforth, gas demand reduction will be reported every two months until April 2023 for the time being. Eurostat is updating this new gas demand reduction indicator every month on basis of the final monthly gas data.

- Eurostat is developing an indicator to monitor the level of gas storage, requiring some methodological discussions to align it with Council Regulation (EU) No 2022/1032[63] on gas storage (minimum gas storage targets: 80% by 1 November 2022, 90% by the end of 2023).

Finally, to make the complex processes of energy more understandable for data users, the first Eurostat's digital publication[64] "Shedding light on energy in the EU" was updated in 2022. In addition, Eurostat created a set of interactive dissemination tools:

- For energy balances, an interactive table with visualisation features displaying energy balances is available on: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy_balances/enbal.html
- In addition, a web tool (ENSANKEY) displaying Sankey diagrams of the energy balances compiled by Eurostat is available on: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/sankey/sankey.html.
- For energy prices, Eurostat developed another tool (ENPRICES), available on: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/energy/prices/enprices.html
- For energy trade, another visualisation tool (ENTRADE) has been released in 2020 to help users discover who are the main trading partners of a given country and visualise the trade flows in different ways. This tool is available on: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy_trade/entrade.html
- For energy monthly data, Eurostat developed another visualisation tool (ENMONTHLY), which is available since mid-April 2021 on: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy_monthly/enmonthly.html
- Another tool (ENDASH, released on 14 May 2021) is a dashboard to visualise the main energy indicators. This interactive tool is available on: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy_dashboard/endash.html

The EPC appreciates the progress made on energy statistics and commends the rapid response to new monitoring needs owing to the war in Ukraine.

4.9 Environmental Economic Accounts

Environmental economic accounts analyse the links between the environment and the economy by organising the environmental information in a way that is consistent with the accounting principles of national accounts. Environmental economic accounts can be used, for example, to identify: efficiency and productivity in use of natural resources and energy

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[62] EUR-Lex - 32022R1369 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[63] EUR-Lex - 32022R1032 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[64] Shedding light on energy in the EU – A guided tour of energy statistics (europa.eu)

(carbon, materials, water, etc.); how circular is our economy; estimate environmental footprints; which are the most polluting activities or the ones that most deplete natural resources; what is the role of government and households; how expensive it is to protect the environment and who pays for it; growth and jobs in the environmental economy.

The environmental economic accounts methodology is based on the system of integrated environmental and economic accounting (SEEA 2012), published by the United Nations, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the OECD and the World Bank.

Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts consists of six accounts or modules: air emission accounts, economy-wide material flow accounts, environmental taxes, environmental goods and services sector accounts, environmental protection expenditure accounts and physical energy flow accounts. In addition to those mandatory data collections, Eurostat runs voluntary annual data collections on forest accounts and environmental subsidies and similar transfers.

In the context of the European Green Deal, there is a high demand to increase the quality of environmental accounts data and to produce environmental accounts on new topics. The Commission adopted Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2022/125[65] of 19 November 2021 amending Annexes I to V to Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts. It increases quality as regards better timeliness, rebalance of granularity across classifications and up-to-date technical lists of material flows and air emissions. There is another legal initiative, namely an amendment of Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 to create new European environmental accounts on top of the existing ones. This amendment would require a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council. The following new accounts will be added: forest accounts, ecosystem accounts and environmental subsidies and similar transfers. The file was adopted by the Commission on 11 July 2022 and entered in ordinary legislative procedure in the European Parliament and the Council.

In May 2022, Eurostat and the Member States agreed to launch a new voluntary data collection on potentially environmentally damaging subsidies, including fossil fuel subsidies.

Eurostat maintains a set of handbooks providing guidance. Eurostat makes available an IT tool for national compilers ('PEFA-Builder'), which populates the energy accounts questionnaire from existing energy statistics. This software is regularly updated and improved.

Environmentally extended Supply-Use and Input-Output tables are regularly produced to investigate the 'consumer perspective' of global climate change, air pollution and material use, which provide footprint type indicators. Eurostat continues to publish annually estimates of air emissions footprints, energy footprints and material footprints for the EU. Eurostat is improving the quality of its air emissions footprints and energy footprints using the FIGARO datasets. As regards material footprints, estimates for all Member States are necessary in the context of the circular economy. Since February 2022, Eurostat produces and publishes material footprints estimates for all the Member States which do not transmit those estimates on voluntary basis.

Since 2018, Eurostat maintains the Commission monitoring framework for the circular economy[66], which consists of 10 indicators, some of which are broken down in sub-indicators, covering production and consumption, waste management, secondary raw materials and competitiveness and innovation. The Commission has scheduled an update of the monitoring framework by mid-2022. Eurostat is co-leader of this process, alongside DG Environment. Eurostat also publishes an online interactive Sankey diagram of material flows.

Since November 2021, Eurostat also publishes quarterly estimates of greenhouse gases. Those estimates are model-based and benchmarked to the annual estimates transmitted by

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[65] EUR-Lex - 32022R0125 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

[66] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/circular-economy

the Member States. Those estimates are published 4 ½ months after the reference quarter and improve significantly the timeliness of the data.

Eurostat promotes the use of official statistics for climate change information purposes with several activities. Eurostat is member of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) steering group and task force supporting the implementation of the CES Recommendations on climate change related statistics. Eurostat run a pilot review of its offer of climate change related statistics between October 2020 and October 2021, and the results were presented to the European Statistical System Committee in October 2021, alongside some short-listed recommendations. Eurostat also participates in the task force focused on measuring extreme events and disasters and the role of official statistics in providing data and support in this domain.

The EPC welcomes the progress in the area of environmental economic accounts and wishes to continue to be regularly informed of progress.

4.10 Transport statistics

A fundamental freedom of the European Union (EU) and its single market is the free movement of people and goods across its internal borders. The transport sector employs around 10 million workers and is the second-largest area of expenditure for European households, contributing 5% to European GDP.

Mobility benefits are not without costs: greenhouse gas emissions (one quarter of the EU's total is produced by the transport sector); air, noise and water pollution; accidents; congestion; and biodiversity loss. The most serious challenge the transport sector faces is to significantly reduce its emissions and become more sustainable. The European Green Deal calls for a 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport, in order for the EU to become a climate-neutral economy by 2050. This change requires sustainable alternatives to become available in a multimodal transport system and the right incentives to drive the transition.

Eurostat constantly supports the EU policies through statistics for five transport modes: aviation, inland waterways, maritime, rail and road. The biggest volume of statistical data is collected in the framework of five Commission regulations, one for each of the aforementioned modes. These statistics are complemented by voluntary data collections at national and regional level, as well as by results of statistical projects.

A voluntary data collection that contributes data not covered by EU legal acts is the Common Questionnaire on Inland Transport Statistics, a joint product of Eurostat, the International Transport Forum (ITF), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). It concerns inland transport modes (rail, road, inland waterways and oil pipelines) and provides harmonised and comparable data on infrastructure; transport equipment; enterprises; economic performance and employment; traffic; transport measurement; and accidents.

Eurostat has been cooperating with DG MOVE in an effort to reduce the administrative burden for the countries and increase efficiency by avoiding duplication of work. In this context, the maritime transport statistics Directive (EC) 2009/42 has been listed as one of the reporting obligations in the annex to Regulation (EU) No 2019/1239 on the European Maritime Single Window environment. The regulation entered into force in August 2019. The adoption of first delegated and implementing acts and the first development of common IT components are scheduled for 2022. The Regulation will apply from 15 August 2025 onwards.

Passenger mobility in urban areas by different means of transport is a significant and newly developed field of statistics. With an increasing need for monitoring the development in passenger mobility, Eurostat and the Members States have developed a harmonised methodology and guidelines for collecting relevant statistics. In the period 2015-2020, Eurostat co-funded several national surveys on passenger mobility and has published the results of

these surveys. Eurostat has also been collaborating closely with DG MOVE on the project 'New Mobility Patterns in European Cities'. At the same time, Eurostat is interested in the use of non-traditional data sources and innovative techniques for measuring passenger mobility indicators. A new 3-year project on using innovative data sources has started in 2022, aiming to produce experimental statistics on traffic and mobility.

The increased usage of light utility vehicles, especially in urban areas, is of big interest to the Member States and has led Eurostat to plan the development of relevant EU statistics. Eurostat and multiple countries have worked as a group on the methodological elements of a potential data collection on light utility vehicles, making the best use of countries' experience in this area. The group held three meetings in 2021 and two in 2022. A draft methodological manual is in preparation, including alternative questionnaires for producing statistical indicators with different trade-offs between simplicity and use of algorithms.

Statistics on light utility vehicles will complement the well-established road freight transport statistics which cover movements of goods in Europe by heavy trucks. Declaring countries compile statistics by means of detailed surveys on their own registered heavy-duty trucks and transmit micro data to Eurostat. The wealth of received data allows Eurostat to produce numerous indicators and send back to countries information on transport operations on their national territories by trucks registered in other countries. Currently, Eurostat and Member States investigate the addition in national surveys of variables such as fuel consumption.

Inland waterways are an efficient and less polluting mode of transport. In this context, Eurostat and the Member States are investigating the feasibility of a future data collection on passenger transport by inland waterways. In February 2021, the Commission submitted a report to the European Parliament and to the Council (COM(2021) 59 final) on the results of pilot studies carried out by seven Member States on statistics on passenger transport by inland waterways. The report concluded that, in the seven participating countries, it would be feasible to collect data on passenger transport by inland waterways to a certain extent, but this would have to balance the need for data with the availability of information and the burden on respondents. Eurostat and Member States are currently working on a methodology for collecting passenger transport data.

Increased demand for data on air transport resulted in tightening the cooperation of Eurostat with Eurocontrol. Thanks to the administrative agreement signed, Eurostat continues disseminating a new set of data on the number of commercial flights per country and airport. The monthly figures are available to the public within two weeks after the end of each month. In addition, Eurostat will soon publish two new dissemination tables presenting annual passenger and freight transport figures by aircraft model, distance bands and transport coverage.

Delivery services aim to use drone technology for delivering goods to consumers. Drone delivery may prove faster and more environmentally friendly than ground delivery but will also have an impact on local air traffic. In cooperation with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and DG MOVE, Eurostat will explore possibilities for developing statistics on this new mode of transport.

Statistical data on the European Rail Traffic Management System and on numbers of stations with access facilities for people with reduced mobility were identified by the European Parliament as essential for the implementation of the EU transport policy. In cooperation with the European Union Agency for Railways, Eurostat disseminates data on the length of railway lines equipped with the European Rail Traffic Management System. Following the implementation of the regulation on the European Vehicle Register in 2021 and the subsequent data collection, Eurostat plans to disseminate data on stations with access facilities for people with reduced mobility, as soon as the data are available, in 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the vital role played by transport, and the social and economic costs when free movement of people, goods and services is constrained. A coordinated European approach to transport activity is essential to overcome any crisis and strengthen the EU's autonomy and resilience.

After the second quarter of 2020, the collection and transmission of transport data required under legal acts have been only marginally affected by the measures related to the pandemic. Moreover, in certain cases, several countries have responded positively to Eurostat's request for data before the official deadlines so that the effect of COVID-19 on passenger and freight transport can be evaluated. A more significant impact of the pandemic-related measures was on carrying out surveys (e.g. passenger mobility surveys) due to the difficulties to conduct face-to-face interviews. This has led to some delays in executing pilot studies under EU funding.

Reliability of transport statistics has not been affected by COVID-19 measures. Member States have transmitted high-quality data; statistical processing of data was done on time; and dissemination of statistics has followed the planned schedule.

Relevance of transport statistics has increased this period, since COVID-19 measures have had a significant impact on mobility. Ad hoc data extractions have proven useful for assessing this impact and making policy decisions.

The EPC welcomes the work accomplished successfully thanks to the collaborative work between Eurostat and the Member States, and calls upon the ESS to maintain its commitment to transport statistics.

4.11 Real estate statistics

Among the data gaps underscored by the past financial and economic crisis, real estate statistics have been considered as one of the areas to be urgently developed to provide appropriate price, volume and other important physical indicators for residential and commercial property markets.

Particular attention has been devoted to developing internationally comparable house price indices and statistics on house sales. House Price Indices (HPIs) and Owner-Occupied Housing Price Indices (OOHPIs) have been regularly produced and published based on Regulation (EU) No 2016/792 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Since 2015, Eurostat has been publishing an annual index of the total value of housing transactions, now encompassing 21 Member States.

Since summer 2020, Eurostat has been publishing quarterly indicators of the total value and number of housing transactions. Together with the HPI and the OOHPI, this statistic forms a coherent and conceptually meaningful data set to inform policy makers and other users. The data now covers 15 Member States, two more than reported last year.

The development of commercial real estate statistics in Europe has had a strong push with recommendations provided by the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB) in 2016 and 2019 on closing real estate data gaps[67]. To support the development of official statistics in this domain, Eurostat has set up a number of task forces and other initiatives under three work streams, whose results were documented in a progress report in December 2021[68].

The Task Force on Commercial Real Estate Indicators (TF CREI) provides inputs to the first work stream, which encompasses the development of price indices, rental indices and rental yield indicators. The TF CREI discusses the results of the ongoing pilot projects in the

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[67] Recommendations ESRB/2016/14 and ESRB/2019/3, respectively.
[68] Commission staff working document progress report on commercial real estate statistics.

participating countries and addresses methodological and practical challenges faced when developing these indicators (e.g. choice of most appropriate data sources). Other actions, such as the development of a technical manual on CREI, for which some chapters have been drafted, are also used as inputs in the discussions of the TF CREI.

The Short-term Statistics Commercial Real Estate Indicators Task Force (STS CREI TF) initially covered construction starts and vacancy rates indicators, but later building permits and works completions were also included. The latter two indicators complement the request of the ESRB for the construction starts indicator as not all building permits granted will result in construction starting and not all construction work is completed. Building permits are already covered by the European Business Statistics regulation and the indicators are available to users. The task force made good progress on developing common definitions, methodology, measurement units and classifications. It also drafted detailed data requirements for the indicators on construction starts and works completions.

The third and last work stream covers the development of vacancy rates, for which a specific task force was set up in spring 2021. The Task Force on Vacancy rates of Commercial Real Estate (TF VRCREI) produced a draft set of recommendations aiming at standardising the compilation of vacancy rates for CREI in 2021. These recommendations would serve as a basis for the development of these statistics that remain, together with rental yields, subject to far less progress than price indices, rental indices and construction starts.

The EPC welcomes the publication of quarterly house sales indicators as well as the work done under the above-mentioned work streams. The EPC encourages the Member States who do not yet transmit quarterly indicators of the total value and number of housing transactions to speed up their efforts to produce these indicators and to continue and strengthen their efforts to build new or further develop already existing commercial real estate indicators.

4.12 Social statistics

4.12.1 Statistics on persons and households

Regulation (EU) No 2019/1700[69] 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, was adopted on 10 October 2019. The Regulation is part of a major programme for the modernisation of social statistics undertaken in close cooperation with the Member States. It aims at developing new, integrated ways to collect and use data from social surveys so as to better support policy making in general and social policy in particular. It addresses the increased challenges in this area of statistics, which include rapid innovation in methodologies and uses of IT, the availability of new data sources, emerging needs and expectations of data users as well as continued pressure on available resources. It also supports the actions in the social fields that require a solid evidence base in subjects such as inequalities, skills, access to employment for all and social protection expenditures - all of which will be better described with sound and timely statistics. It streamlines the European social statistics collected from samples as well as makes the data collection process more efficient and the statistical output more relevant.

Following the adoption of Regulation (EU) No 2019/1700, a series of implementing and delegated acts were adopted in 2019 and 2020, for implementation in 2021, in the domains 'labour force', 'income and living conditions' and 'use of information and communication technologies'. First data under Regulation (EU) No 2019/1700 were received for reference periods from 1 January 2021 onwards.

In 2021, the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 2019/1700 continued with the adoption of secondary legislation for the domain 'education and training' as well as for data on health and quality of live in the domain 'income and living conditions'.

The EPC welcomes the swift implementation of Regulation (EU) No 2019/1700 assuring data provision starting in 2021.

4.12.2 Labour market statistics and wage indicators

Labour market developments are of key importance to the work of the EPC. At the centre of interest are the effects of the business cycle on employment and unemployment, the impact of the crisis and the war in Ukraine, wage developments and the longer-term evolution of labour demand and supply, in particular with a view to structural features and possible mismatches.

In particular, inflation has reached unprecedented levels since several decades, raising concerns on a possible price/wage spiral. Although this risk had not materialized at the time of drafting this report, this emphasizes the importance of the quarterly labour cost index as an indicator of possible wage pressures.

Concerning the impact of the war in Ukraine, the EPC takes note that methodological recommendations have been developed about the inclusion of the Ukrainian refugees under temporary protection and living in private households in the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS). In addition, a specific voluntary data collection has been launched on the number of refugees from Ukraine benefiting from temporary protection being registered as unemployed (and/or employed) at the employment services. Moreover, first results from the 2021 EU LFS module on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants were published end of June 2022 in order to highlight the particular situation of migrants in the EU and the obstacles they are facing on the labour market.

Having information on the number and working conditions of platform workers is also of key importance. In this context, the EPC takes note that a pilot data collection on platform workers is taking place in the LFS over the whole year 2022 in 18 countries. First results are expected in summer 2023.

In response to urgent policy needs and in addition to the labour market slack, Eurostat developed LFS-based indicators on absences from work, and total hours worked in the main job and started publishing them in July 2020 and continued since then on a quarterly basis.

The EPC also appreciates the regular dissemination of seasonally adjusted data for the main labour market indicators.

The modernisation of the EU LFS has been implemented and first data became available for reference periods starting January 2021 under the Regulation (EU) No 2019/1700. This leads to better information on labour market dynamics, further harmonised measurement of the labour status, a streamlined process for regular modules and ad hoc subjects, a reviewed list of variables meeting more users' needs, better use of administrative data and improved timeliness. In addition, data collection is becoming more efficient by the use of multi-mode data collection (computer assistance but also web-interviewing). At the same time, the phasing-in of these improvements creates issues with comparability of indicators over time. Breaks in time series linked to the implementation of the new definition of employment and unemployment in the LFS under Regulation (EU) No 2019/1700 has been carefully managed and break corrected series for all Member States including EU aggregates were finalised and published on 25 February 2022.

The EPC also takes note of the release of a new statistical analysis of Gender Pay Gaps in the European Union[70] based on the latest Structure of Earnings Survey ('SES') 2018 data. This study sheds new light on the determinants of the gender pay gap and more broadly on the differences between the expected earnings of all men and women of working age.

Eurostat has made progress in reviewing the legal basis for Labour Market statistics collected from Businesses ('LMB review'), which includes data collections on wages, labour costs, job vacancies and gender pay gap. Three preliminary scenarios have been identified at working group level: (1) a baseline scenario with no change compared with the current situation (2) an intermediate scenario retaining proposals with no or minor impact on costs and burden and (3) a comprehensive scenario covering the main user needs identified, irrespective of their impact on costs and burden. This preliminary assessment will be complemented this year by a full evaluation of the LMB acquis and by an impact assessment of possible actions to meet user expectations even better in the future. In this context, Eurostat has launched a public consultation on the 'have your say'[71] portal of the Commission that lasted from 9 February 2022 to 13 May 2022 and was answered by 79 stakeholders, among them individuals and organisations. Eurostat will also organize in-depth interviews of a selection of stakeholders with a view to identifying emerging needs that would have been missed in the preparatory work at technical level. Under the LMB review, Eurostat envisages in particular to extend the SES scope to small firms (with 1 to 9 employees) and NACE Rev. 2 section O ('Public administration, defence, social security') which would correct the existing biases in hourly earnings. The LMB review is also an opportunity to foster the use of administrative data and new sources and to collect early estimates for the flash Labour Cost Index.

The EPC welcomes the progress made in labour force statistics and wage indicators.

4.12.3 Demographic statistics and population projections

Demography

Responding to the demographic change in the EU is a priority of the Commission as proved by the mission letter of President von der Leyen to Vice-president Šuica, in which demography has an outstanding role.

In 2022, Eurostat continued collecting and publishing weekly deaths[72] data regularly submitted by the National Statistical Institutes, up to the latest available week. This voluntary data collection, triggered in April 2020 by the urgent need for statistical information to monitor mortality linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, was a big success in the ESS. Additionally, Eurostat continued releasing the indicator of "excess mortality[73]", based on the weekly deaths statistics, produced for European Recovery Statistical Dashboard[74] as one of the most useful indicators for assessing additional deaths.

In July 2021, Eurostat released the first edition of the Interactive publication "Demography of Europe"[75] which was updated in May 2022: in this publication population structure, population change, population diversity and marital status of the EU, of the Member States and of the EFTA countries are described with dynamic visualisations and short texts. Data in this publication show yearly figures up to the year 2021 at the most. Where applicable, the impact

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[70] Gender pay gap in the EU (europa.eu)

[71] European labour market statistics on businesses (LMB) (europa.eu)

[72] For a complete overview please see the article https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Weekly_death_statistics

[73] For a complete overview please see the article https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Excess_mortality_-_statistics

[74] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/recovery-dashboard/

[75] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/digpub/demography/

of the COVID-19 crisis is commented on. Automatic translation is available in all 24 official EU languages.

In April 2022, Eurostat disseminated provisional estimates of life expectancy at birth for 2021[76] based on the voluntary weekly death statistics, much in advance compared to the usual timing of the release of the indicator (February 2023, based on input data transmitted by the countries under Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013[77] on European demographic statistics).

Statistical response to support decisions on Ukraine

On 12 April 2022, Eurostat invited countries to transmit voluntarily monthly data on grants of temporary protection to persons fleeing Ukraine due to Russian invasion. The purpose of this request was to ensure the timely availability of official statistics in this area. Thanks to contributions from most countries, Eurostat was able to publish the first monthly data on temporary protection granted in March and April 2022 on 19 May 2022. These data refer to the number of temporary protection statuses granted at first instance during the reference month to persons fleeing Ukraine, as well as the stock of beneficiaries of temporary protection statuses at the end of the month. Countries are invited to send data to Eurostat within one month following the end of the reference period. This is earlier than the deadline foreseen in Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 for the quarterly data under Article 4.2(d).

Redevelopment of European statistics on population

Population statistics are the backbone of social statistics and have many statistical and policy uses. They are undergoing a period of major changes, in particular related to the increased use of administrative and other new data sources. In parallel, the demand for these statistics is growing and changing in the context of increased migration flows, impact of ageing and needs for more regional and local information for the assessment of the impact of population changes. Also the recent disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine called for more timely and relevant data on population and demographic changes.

Since 2015, as part of the ongoing discussions on the modernisation of social statistics, Eurostat has been working on a long-term comprehensive redevelopment of European population statistics following the 2021 EU census round. Eurostat currently undertakes several separate population data collections on different periodicities and under different legal bases, covering demographic, migration and census topics. There are also parts of the city statistics that relate to population topics. An important aim of this redevelopment is to integrate these different population data collections under a single legal basis, allowing for better harmonisation, reduced duplication of work, and a more efficient use of resources in Eurostat and in NSIs – while providing more relevant and better quality data for policy and other public needs. A new legal basis is also necessary because the current Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013[78] on European demographic statistics will cease to apply on 31 August 2028.

The Commission initiative on redeveloping European statistics on population[79] (ESOP) aims at a new regulatory framework to bring together demographic, migration and population and housing census data and ensure greater regional detail. It is included in the Commission Work Programme 2022 as a REFIT initiative and supported by an evaluation and impact assessment. For this initiative, during 2021 and early 2022 Eurostat carried out a backward-looking evaluation of the status quo and a forward-looking impact assessment of policy options

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[76] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220506-2
[77] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:330:0039:0043:EN:PDF
[78] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:330:0039:0043:EN:PDF
[79] https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12958-European-statistics-on-population-ESOP

for modernisation. As a part of this, a dedicated stakeholder consultation helped pinpointing the key needs and goals for the initiative.[80]

More precisely, the evaluation shows that the current legal framework has achieved significant overall improvements to European population statistics since 2005. EU added value has been increased significantly thanks to considerable improvements at EU level in terms of completeness and comparability; coherence and consistency; and timeliness. At the same time, the evaluation identifies four main problems. The current legal framework:

1. does not fully ensure sufficiently complete, coherent, and comparable statistics, especially when voluntary datasets covering relevant policy needs are factored in, which may lead to sub-optimal statistical evidence for decision making;
2. does not ensure sufficient availability of population data in terms of frequencies and timeliness of data publications;
3. fails to capture characteristics and details of topics or groups that have become politically and societally relevant during the past decade;
4. is not flexible enough to adapt to evolving policy needs and to enable exploitation of data from administrative and other new sources in the Member States and at EU level.

The findings from the stakeholder consultation have largely confirmed these problems. However, another clear uptake from the consultation is that there is a deep division between statistics producers (mostly national statistical institutes) and professional statistics users (in policy, research and other professional contexts) on the perception of these problems. While users generally see them as critical gaps that need to be lifted substantially and with due priority, statistics producers' opinions are largely driven by additional costs and burden implied. Regarding a forthcoming Commission proposal for a new legal framework, policy and other professional users including at EU level would push strongly for a very ambitious modernisation, whereas Member States would strongly favour less ambitious, punctual improvements of the status quo. Eurostat is currently working on preparing a Commission proposal for new legal framework in line with the outcomes of the evaluation and impact assessment.

Population projections

On 18 June 2021, the ECOFIN Council invited Eurostat to treat the population projections as a priority and release the next results by no later than March 2023. Eurostat reinforced its resources. The implementation plan for the release of long-term population projections EUROPOP2023 was discussed with the national statistical institutes and endorsed by the European Directors of Social Statistics. The European Statistical System Committee and the EPC's Working Group on Ageing Populations and Sustainability (AWG) were informed. The publication of the next long-term projections at European and national levels is planned in March 2023 and at a regional level – in December 2023. To meet the advanced publication dates and ensure regional detail, Eurostat has invited the national statistical institutes to provide their annual demography and migration statistics one month earlier than the legal data transmission deadline and contribute to a voluntary collection on the regional migration flows.

Furthermore, Eurostat is preparing a short-term update of the population projections EUROPOP2019 in September 2022 covering the period 2022-2032 for the purpose of the Commission's economic forecast and in support of the work of the Output Gaps Working Group. Such short term updates will be published annually, in between the releases of the long-term projections.

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[80] See e.g. the factual summary report from the open public consultation survey conducted between September and December 2021: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12958-European-statistics-on-population-ESOP/public-consultation_en

Population and housing census

The 2021 round of population and housing censuses in the EU is under way and by June 2022 all but one Member States (Hungary) have carried out their data collection. However, Hungary, together with Germany and Ireland that also had their census operations in 2022, has agreed to take steps to adjust the data to a reference date in 2021, thereby fulfilling the legal requirements of the census programme.

Regarding the census outputs, the deadline for making available to Eurostat the main census data and metadata are set in Regulation (EC) No 763/2008. This requires that Member States shall provide Eurostat with final, validated and aggregated data and with metadata within 27 months of the end of the reference year. This deadline falls on 31 March 2024, and all Member States and EFTA countries plan to deliver these data by this time.

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2018/1799 sets 31 December 2022 as the deadline by which date data on the total population at 1 km square grid level must be provided by the Member States. All Member States have confirmed to be ready to provide this statistics by the deadline.

Dissemination of the census data will be primarily done through the platform Census Hub. Final preparations are being made for the opening of the Census Hub to allow NSIs to connect and disseminate data for the 2021 census. These preparations are planned for completion before the first data transmission in December 2022. Eurostat is providing statistical and technical support, guidelines and training for NSIs as they prepare the census outputs and make them accessible via the Census Hub.

The EPC welcomes the progress made on demographic statistics and population projections.

4.12.4 Public health and health and safety at work statistics

Eurostat continued to collect data on health care resources, health care activities, causes of death and accidents at work. Given the importance of health statistics, several methodological advancements have been made.

The implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work will take a new step in 2022 through an implementing act on healthcare facilities, healthcare human resources and healthcare utilization. The implementing regulation covers partly what is collected on a voluntary basis from Member States since 2010 in these domains. It is foreseen to be adopted in the fourth quarter of 2022.

The implementing regulation will partly cover what has been collected in these domains from Member States, on a voluntary basis since 2010. It is foreseen that the implementing regulation will be adopted by the end of 2022.

For improved analysis of accidents at work data, Eurostat carried out a methodological survey with participation of all Member States on the possibility of recognising COVID-19 with occupational origin. The purpose of the survey was to provide information regarding national practices of recognising COVID-19 as occupationally related. The findings were published as a statistical report[81] in September 2021. The report contains replies from all 27 EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland.

The EPC took note of the comprehensive review of health related statistics launched by Eurostat and underlined the need for relevant and timely statistical information in the context of the establishment of a European health union.

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[81] Possibility of recognising COVID-19 as being of occupational origin at national level in EU and EFTA countries - Products Statistical reports - Eurostat (europa.eu)