



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Budgets

2011/0459(COD)

23.4.2012

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
on the European statistical programme 2013-2017
(COM(2011)0928 – C7-0001/2012 – 2011/0459(COD))

Rapporteur: Derk Jan Eppink

PA_Legam

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Commission's Proposal

The Commission has proposed a Regulation for the establishment of the European Statistical Programme, which will provide the framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics over the period from 2013 to 2017.

The total amount to be borne by the budget of the EU is 299.4 million EUR (current prices) for the duration of the programme.

General Context

In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Statistics, a multiannual European statistical programme should be established, providing a framework for EU actions. The current Community Statistical Programme (CSP), covering the period from 2008 to 2012, is the seventh of its kind.

The European Statistical Programme will provide the framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics over the period from 2013 to 2017. It is to lay down priorities concerning the needs for information for the purpose of carrying out the activities of the European Union. Those needs should be weighed against the resources needed at Union and National level to provide the required statistics, and also against the response burden and the respondents' associated costs.

The ESP will be the subject on an interim progress report and a final evaluation report after the expiry of the programme period.

The European Statistical System (ESS) is the partnership between the Community statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), and the National statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. In recent years the ESS has been faced with a number of challenges:

- Firstly, the need for European statistics has been constantly increasing, and this trend is unlikely to change in the future.
- Secondly, the nature of statistics has changed - evidence-based decision making requires statistics that meet quality criteria linked to the specific purposes they are serving, and there is a growing need for complex multidimensional statistics supporting composite policy areas.
- Thirdly, due to the appearance of new actors on the information market, including those providing information in nearly real time, the priority for the ESS in the future is quality and, in the case of short-term statistics, timeliness in particular.
- Fourthly, budget constraints at both National and European level, as well as the need to further reduce the burden on enterprises and citizens, make the situation even more challenging.

Priorities & Objectives

The main purpose of European statistics is to underpin the development, monitoring and evaluation of European policies with reliable, objective, comparable and coherent factual information.

The general objective of the ESP is for the European Statistical System to be the leading provider of high-quality statistics on Europe.

The following overriding objectives shall be pursued in all statistical actions undertaken for the implementation of this programme:

- Objective 1: provide quality statistical information to support the development, monitoring and evaluation of the policies of the EU properly reflecting priorities;
- Objective 2: implement new methods of production of European statistics aiming at efficiency gains and quality improvements;
- Objective 3: strengthen the partnership within the European Statistical System and beyond in order to further enhance its productivity and its leading role in official statistics worldwide.

Furthermore, in order to implement the ESP, the Commission shall adopt annual work programmes which will set out the objectives pursued and the expected results.

Financing

The financial envelope for the implementation of this programme is set at 299.4 million Euros, including 57.3 million Euros covered by the programming period 2007 to 2013, and 242.1 million Euros covered by the programming period 2014 to 2017.

Amendments

In light of the financial crisis, and particularly the fact that the crisis was aggravated by the lack of timely, accurate, and high-quality national statistics, your Rapporteur would suggest the following:

- High-quality national statistics are absolutely essential for the purpose of policy-making at both national and EU level, and in the context of the Eurozone's supervisory mechanisms.
- Actions taken under the ESP must be closely and regularly monitored to ensure accuracy and efficiency, and prevent irregularities; inspections and spot-checks must be routinely carried out as a rule rather than at the discretion of the Commission (Eurostat) or the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).
- The independence and integrity of national statistical authorities must be strongly guarded, with transgressions deterred through effective penalties. In the interests of transparency, Eurostat will publicise information on the quality of national statistics, with particular attention to those national statistical authorities that underperform on a routine basis.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Amendment 1

Draft legislative resolution

Paragraph 1 a (new)

Draft legislative resolution

Amendment

1a. Points out that the financial envelope specified in the legislative proposal constitutes only an indication to the legislative authority and cannot be fixed until agreement is reached on the proposal for a regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020;

Or. en

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2) In accordance with that Regulation, the European statistical programme should provide the framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics, the main fields and the objectives of the actions envisaged for a period not exceeding five years. It should lay down priorities concerning the needs for information for the purpose of carrying out the activities of the European Union. ***Those needs should be weighed against the resources needed at Union and national level to provide the required statistics, and also against the response burden and the respondents' associated costs.***

(2) In accordance with that Regulation, the European statistical programme should provide the framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics, the main fields and the objectives of the actions envisaged for a period not exceeding five years. It should lay down priorities concerning the needs for information for the purpose of carrying out the activities of the European Union.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2a) In light of the current budgetary constraints at both Union and Member State level, those needs should be carefully weighed against the resources needed at Union and national level to provide the required statistics, and also against the response burden and the respondents' associated costs; in this regard the programme should seek to, wherever possible, make real savings by identifying overlaps and inefficiencies.

Or. en

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 4

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(4) Statistics developed, produced and disseminated under this programme should contribute to the implementation of the policies of the European Union, as reflected in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and other policies addressed in the Commission's strategic priorities for 2010-2014 ***(i.e. strengthened and integrated economic governance, climate change, reformed agricultural policy, growth and social cohesion, people's Europe and globalisation)*** and should be fostered through actions financed

(4) Statistics developed, produced and disseminated under this programme should contribute to the implementation of the policies of the European Union, as reflected in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and other policies addressed in the Commission's strategic priorities for 2010-2014 and should be fostered through actions financed under this programme where the European Union can bring a clear added value.

under this programme where the European Union can bring a clear added value.

Or. en

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 – indent -1 (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

- Firstly, the current financial crisis has shown that low-quality national statistics can have devastating effects on the economies of the respective Member States and of the Union in general. Consistently accurate and high-quality statistics, produced by wholly independent national statistical authorities, are therefore absolutely essential for the purpose of policy-making at national and Union level, and especially in the context of the Eurozone's supervisory mechanisms.

Or. en

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 – indent 1

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

- Firstly, the need for European statistics has been constantly increasing, and this trend is unlikely to change in future.

- Secondly, the need for European statistics has been constantly increasing, and this trend is unlikely to change in future.

Or. en

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 – indent 2

Text proposed by the Commission

- **Secondly**, the nature of statistics has changed — evidence-based decision making requires statistics that meet high quality criteria linked to the specific purposes they are serving, and there is an increasing need for complex multidimensional statistics supporting composite policy areas.

Amendment

- **Thirdly**, the nature of statistics has changed — ***statistics are no longer merely one source of information for policy-making purposes, but are now at the very heart of the decision-making process.*** Evidence-based decision making requires statistics that meet high quality criteria linked to the specific purposes they are serving, and there is an increasing need for complex multidimensional statistics supporting composite policy areas.

Or. en

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 – indent 3

Text proposed by the Commission

- **Thirdly**, due to the appearance of new actors on the information market, including those providing information in nearly real time, the priority for the ESS in future is high quality and, in the case of short-term statistics, timeliness in particular.

Amendment

- **Fourthly**, due to the appearance of new actors on the information market, including those providing information in nearly real time, the priority for the ESS in future is high quality and, in the case of short-term statistics, timeliness in particular.

Or. en

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 – indent 4

Text proposed by the Commission

- **Fourthly**, budget constraints at both

Amendment

- **Fifthly**, budget constraints at both

national and European level as well as the need to further reduce the burden on enterprises and citizens make the situation even more challenging.

national and European level as well as the need to further reduce the burden on enterprises and citizens make the situation even more challenging.

Or. en

Amendment 10

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 11

Text proposed by the Commission

(11) In the context of the implementation of the Programme, where appropriate, cooperation with third countries not participating in the Programme should be encouraged, taking into account any relevant agreements between those countries and the Union.

Amendment

(11) In the context of the implementation of the Programme, where appropriate, cooperation with third countries not participating in the Programme should be encouraged, taking into account any relevant agreements, ***or any envisaged agreements*** between those countries and the Union.

Or. en

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 13

Text proposed by the Commission

(13) ***Since*** the objective of this Regulation, namely to establish the European Statistical Programme 2013 to 2017, ***cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore*** be better achieved at the level of the European Union, ***the*** European Union may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Regulation does not go beyond what is

Amendment

(13) The objective of this Regulation, namely to establish the European Statistical Programme 2013 to 2017, can be better achieved at the level of the European Union. ***The*** European Union may ***therefore*** adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Regulation does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve that objective.

necessary in order to achieve that objective.

Or. en

Amendment 12

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 14

Text proposed by the Commission

(14) An ex-ante evaluation has been performed in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, in order to focus the programme established by this Regulation on the need for effectiveness in achieving the objectives and in order to incorporate budgetary constraints from the design phase of the programme onwards. The value and impact of the measures taken under the Programme should be regularly monitored and evaluated, including by independent external evaluators. For the purpose of evaluating the programme, measurable objectives have been formulated and indicators developed.

Amendment

(14) An ex-ante evaluation has been performed in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, in order to focus the programme established by this Regulation on the need for effectiveness ***and efficiency*** in achieving the objectives and in order to incorporate budgetary constraints from the design phase of the programme onwards. The value and impact of the measures taken under the Programme should be regularly monitored and evaluated, including by independent external evaluators. For the purpose of evaluating the programme, measurable objectives have been formulated and indicators developed.

Or. en

Amendment 13

Proposal for a regulation

Article 4 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 4a

Independence and Transparency

Since national statistical authorities are part of the ESS, each Member State shall ensure the independence and integrity of

its statistical authority. Interference by governments with the independence of national statistical authorities shall be effectively deterred through appropriate measures.

In the interests of transparency, Eurostat shall disclose publicly its opinion on the quality level of national statistics. Any recurrent underperformance of national statistical offices shall be highlighted and made public in as timely a manner as possible. To this effect, Eurostat's periodic updates shall provide specific information on each Member State.

Or. en

Amendment 14

Proposal for a regulation Article 12 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

1. The Commission shall take appropriate measures ensuring that, when actions financed under this Regulation are implemented, the financial interests of the European Union are protected by the application of preventive measures against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities, by effective checks and, if irregularities are detected, by the recovery of the amounts wrongly paid **and, where appropriate, by effective, proportionate and** deterrent penalties.

Amendment

1. The Commission shall take appropriate measures ensuring that, when actions financed under this Regulation are implemented, the financial interests of the European Union are protected by the application of preventive measures against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities, by **consistent and** effective checks and, if irregularities are detected, by the recovery of **all** the amounts wrongly paid **in combination with** effective deterrent penalties.

Or. en

Amendment 15

Proposal for a regulation

Article 12 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

The European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) **may** carry out on-the-spot check and inspections on economic operators concerned directly or indirectly by such funding in accordance with the procedures laid down in Regulation 2185/96 with a view to establishing whether there has been fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the European Union in connection with a grant agreement or grant decision or contract funded under this Regulation.

Amendment

The European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) **shall** carry out on-the-spot check and inspections on economic operators concerned directly or indirectly by such funding in accordance with the procedures laid down in Regulation 2185/96 with a view to establishing whether there has been fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the European Union in connection with a grant agreement or grant decision or contract funded under this Regulation.

Or. en