

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Regional Development

2006/0229(COD)

4.5.2007

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council
on the Community Statistical Programme 2008 to 2012
(COM(2006)0687 – C6-0427/2006 – 2006/0229(COD))

Draftsman: Mieczysław Edmund Janowski

PA_Legam

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

In the financial framework for the period 2007-2013 that was adopted in 2006 the Member States decided to allocate more than one third of the budget to regional policy measures, with the overriding aim of implementing the principles of cohesion and solidarity between more-developed and less-developed EU regions.

Given the scope and complexity of regional policy and the massive financial resources brought to bear, it is essential to establish effective means of monitoring progress in the implementation of structural policy at regional level and of assessing the effectiveness of the action taken.

The availability of reliable statistics that are as comprehensive as possible is an essential precondition for effective monitoring and assessment.

It should also be stressed that, from the standpoint of cohesion policy and structural fund implementation, the provision of statistics enabling summaries to be drawn up at Community, Member State and regional level is of essential importance.

Moreover, the statistics must not only be accurate and comprehensive but must also cover all parts of the European Union and a sufficiently long period of time, with due attention being paid to the need for continuity of provision, so as to enable the situation in individual regions to be compared and trends in the processes under way in the regions to be assessed.

It is unacceptable, for example, for the pursuit of short-term priorities or temporary organisational problems to be allowed to lead to a situation in which the collection of such data is suspended for a period of time, since this would in the medium term result in only an incomplete or fragmentary picture of the situation being obtained.

We shall only be able to assess the true extent of regional development and the role played by cohesion policy in that development if we have access to reliable and comprehensive statistics.

This will enable a more accurate assessment to be made of the effectiveness of individual measures and, in turn, allow future measures to be targeted in such a way as to maximise their effectiveness and impact.

It should be emphasised that the information generated by the statistical analysis methods currently used in the regional policy field, based on the NUTS statistical units in force, is not always completely reliable. This is due in particular to the averaging of data in regions in which the level of economic development of the capital city is clearly higher than that of other areas in the region. There is objective evidence for this, based on the use of smaller territorial statistical units and backed up by what can be seen with one's own eyes. Bearing this in mind, efforts therefore need to be made to ensure that the statistics paint a faithful picture of the true economic situation.

AMENDMENTS

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

Amendment 1

Recital 2

(2) In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 322/97, the Community should have timely access to statistical information comparable between the Member States which is up to date, reliable, pertinent and produced as efficiently as possible for the formulation, application, monitoring and assessment of its policies.

(2) In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 322/97, the Community should have timely access to statistical information *that is* comparable *as* between the Member States, ***individual regions of the European Union and individual types of common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS)***, which is up to date, reliable, pertinent and produced as efficiently as possible for the formulation, application, monitoring and assessment of its policies.

Justification

This addition is necessary in order to ensure that the statistical information made available enables comparative summaries to be drawn up at both national and regional levels, which is a precondition for proper assessment of the effectiveness of cohesion policy implementation.

Amendment 2

Recital 4

(4) The specific method of drawing up Community statistics requires particularly close cooperation within a developing Community statistical system via the Statistical Programme Committee, set up by Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom, as regards the adaptation of the system, notably via the introduction of legal instruments necessary to establish the said Community statistics. Account is to be taken of the burden on respondents, be they business, central or local government units, households or individuals.

(4) The specific method of drawing up Community statistics requires particularly close cooperation within a developing Community statistical system via the Statistical Programme Committee, set up by Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom, as regards the adaptation of the system, notably via the introduction of legal instruments necessary to establish the said Community statistics. Account is to be taken of the burden on respondents, be they business, central, ***regional*** or local government units, households or individuals.

¹ Not yet published in OJ.

Justification

The failure to include regional units among the respondents is probably merely an oversight, but it could give rise to misunderstandings, which is why they need to be added.

A reference to the regional level must not be omitted, least of all when the national and local levels are explicitly mentioned.

Amendment 3

Recital 5

(5) The production of Community statistics within the legislative framework of the five-year programme is achieved through the close, coordinated and coherent cooperation between Eurostat and the national authorities. For that purpose, Eurostat should ensure the coordination under various forms of the national authorities in a network representing the European Statistical System (ESS) to assure the timely provision of statistics in support of European Union policy needs.

(5) The production of Community statistics within the legislative framework of the five-year programme is achieved through the close, coordinated and coherent cooperation between Eurostat and the national authorities. For that purpose, Eurostat should ensure the coordination under various forms of the national authorities in a network representing the European Statistical System (ESS) to assure the timely provision of statistics, ***of a standard allowing the necessary comparability between Member States***, in support of European Union policy needs.

Justification

The criteria are in many cases so disparate that it would be difficult to produce accurate statistics reflecting actual findings.

Amendment 4

Recital 6

(6) In the production and dissemination of Community statistics under this Decision, the national and Community statistical authorities should respect the principles set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice, which was attached to the Recommendation of the Commission of 25 May 2005 on the independence, integrity and accountability of the national and Community statistical authorities.

(6) In the production and dissemination of Community statistics under this Decision, the national and Community statistical authorities should respect the principles set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice, which was attached to the Recommendation of the Commission of 25 May 2005 on the independence, integrity and accountability of the national and Community statistical authorities. ***In this process, efforts should be made to promote convergence in terms of the statistical information gathered and the possibility of scientific treatment thereof.***

Justification

Basic information should be compiled according to standard criteria so as to ensure that the findings, once processed, will lend themselves to comparison.

Amendment 5 Recital 6 a (new)

(6a) In accordance with the Community's objectives regarding equality between men and women set out in Articles 2 and 3 of the EC Treaty and in Article 16 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, Member States are required to keep separate statistics on men and women at least where such statistics are a direct or indirect precondition for financing from the European Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.

Justification

Statistics have to differentiate between men and women, as in accordance with Community objectives on equal treatment it must be possible to ascertain how European policies are having gender-specific effects. This is directly connected with the main priority of solidarity, economic and social cohesion and sustainable development, because these European policy areas are committed to the aim of gender mainstreaming (see Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006).

Amendment 6 Recital 8

(8) Since the objectives of this Decision, namely the Community Statistical Programme 2008 to 2012, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore be better achieved at Community level, the Community 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 Decision does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives.

(8) Since the objectives of this Decision, namely the Community Statistical Programme 2008 to 2012, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore be better achieved at Community level, the Community may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty, ***in particular by regularly requiring the production of statistics at regional level, so as to show up disparities between the levels of development of the regions in accordance with Article 158 of the EC Treaty.*** In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in

Article 5 of the Treaty, this Decision does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives.

Justification

The main priority of solidarity, economic and social cohesion and sustainable development is directly aimed at the data to be collected in the context of the European regional policy. In the implementation of regional policy it is necessary for statistics to be available at regional level so as to ascertain differences in regional development and monitor regional policy intervention (see Annex II, Title XVII, 'Economic and social cohesion').

Amendment 7 Recital 10 a (new)

(10 a) To make for increased coherence and effectiveness in Community measures for cities and enable credible comparisons to be made, it is necessary for Community statistical purposes to define what is meant by 'European city' and 'European metropolitan area'.

Amendment 8 Article 2, paragraph 1

1. Taking account of the available resources of the national authorities and the Commission, the programme shall be guided by the principal Community policy priorities of:

- prosperity, competitiveness and growth,
- solidarity, economic ***and*** social cohesion ***and*** sustainable development,
- security, and
- further enlargement of the European Union.

(1) Taking account of the available resources of the national authorities and the Commission, the programme shall be guided by the principal Community policy priorities of:

- prosperity, competitiveness, ***innovation***, and growth,
- solidarity, economic, social ***and territorial*** cohesion, sustainable development ***and demographic challenges***,
- ***education and youth***,
- security, ***transparency***,
- ***development cooperation***, and
- further enlargement of the European Union.

Justification

Territorial cohesion cannot now be separated from economic and social cohesion, as it is likewise mentioned in the draft constitutional treaty.

Other priorities need to be added to reflect the EU's chief concerns. The Union has built up a fund of know-how in a whole range of technical fields. As a leading development aid partner, it could help a great deal, by means of technical and financial advice, to develop and modernise statistical systems in developing countries.

Making publicly available data on which the Community decisions are based is crucial for ensuring clarity and better understanding of the data reliability.

Amendment 9

Article 3, paragraph 1, introductory sentence

1. The programme shall be implemented in accordance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice with a view to producing and disseminating high-quality, harmonised Community statistics and to ensuring a proper functioning of the European statistical system as a whole. National authorities and the Community statistical authority shall:

1. The programme shall be implemented in accordance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice with a view to producing and disseminating high-quality, harmonised Community statistics and to ensuring *the* proper functioning of the European statistical system as a whole, ***with due regard to the need to ensure timely provision of the necessary statistical information***. National authorities and the Community statistical authority shall:

Justification

Due attention should be drawn to the need for timely provision of statistical information by Member States, which is a precondition for the proper functioning of the European statistical system.

Amendment 10

Article 3, paragraph 1, point (a)

(a) establish an institutional and organisational environment which promotes the effectiveness and credibility of national and Community statistical authorities producing and disseminating official statistics;

(a) establish an institutional and organisational environment which promotes the effectiveness and credibility of national and Community statistical authorities producing and disseminating official statistics ***and regional statistics based on the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)***;

Justification

An explicit mention of the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) seems necessary in order to highlight the Community's goal to provide single uniform breakdown of territorial units for the production of regional statistics for the European Union.

Amendment 11

Article 3, paragraph 1, point (c)

(c) ensure that Community statistics comply with the European quality standards and serve the needs of European Union institutional users, governments, research institutions, civil society organisations, enterprises and the public generally.

(c) ensure that Community statistics comply with the European quality standards and serve the needs of European Union institutional users, governments, **regional and local authorities**, research institutions, civil society organisations, enterprises and the public generally;

Justification

To identify the different levels of users within a Member State.

Local and regional authorities need reliable Community statistical information in shaping their policies and defending their regional interests.

Amendment 12

Article 3, paragraph 1, point (c a) (new)

(ca) ensure that the summaries compiled are of a standard that makes Community statistics fully comparable with world statistics;

Justification

The comparability of statistics must be ensured not just at Community level but also in the context of the world economy, so as to enable a more accurate assessment to be made of the real situation in the European Union, its Member States and its regions in comparison with competitors at world level.

Amendment 13

Article 3, paragraph 1, point (c b) (new)

(cb) ensure that summaries are compiled to such a standard as to render Community statistics fully compatible with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the UN Statistical Commission on 14 April 1994;

Justification

The comparability of statistics must be ensured not just at Community level, but also in the context of the world standards.

Amendment 14

Article 3, paragraph 1, point (c c) (new)

(cc) provide, where requested and warranted, the necessary technical support in the area of statistical organisation, and enable good practice to be shared with other bodies or third countries.

Justification

As indicated above, the Union has a fund of knowledge and human and financial resources invaluable to cooperation. Worldwide comparison of statistical data is still very patchy because of the inadequacy of the material, especially in the developing countries.

Amendment 15

Article 4, paragraph 1

1. The programme shall ensure continued statistical support for decisions and evaluations in current Community policy areas and provide statistical support for any additional requirements arising from new Community policy initiatives.

1. The programme shall ensure continued statistical support for decisions and evaluations in current Community policy areas and provide statistical support for any additional requirements arising from new Community policy initiatives, ***with emphasis being placed on the reliability, quality and comparability of the statistical information.***

Justification

This addition is required in order to ensure that the statistical information made available enables accurate comparative summaries to be drawn up for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of cohesion policy implementation.

Amendment 16

Article 4, paragraph 2

2. The Commission shall, in the preparation of the annual statistical work programmes, take account of the cost-effectiveness of the statistics produced and ensure an ongoing review of statistical priorities, with a view to

2. The Commission shall, in the preparation of the annual statistical work programmes, take account of the cost-effectiveness of the statistics produced and ensure an ongoing review of statistical priorities, with a view to

making best use of available resources of the Member States and the Commission and to minimising the burden imposed on respondents.

making best use of available resources of the Member States and the Commission and to minimising the burden imposed on respondents, ***taking due care to ensure the chronological continuity of the data collected.***

Justification

This addition is required in order to ensure the chronological continuity of the statistical information made available and to make sure that it covers a sufficiently long period of time to enable trends in the processes under way in the regions to be assessed. This information is of fundamental importance in assessing the effectiveness of Community cohesion policy.

Amendment 17
Article 4, paragraph 3

3. The programme shall ensure the development of instruments to increase the flexibility of the European Statistical System and to improve its ability to respond in a timely manner to changing user needs.

3. The programme shall ensure the development of instruments to increase the flexibility of the European Statistical System and to improve its ability to respond in a timely manner to changing user needs. ***The programme shall also guarantee convergence in terms of the statistical material gathered and the possibility of scientific processing thereof.***

Justification

Basic information should be compiled according to standard criteria so as to ensure that the findings, once processed, will lend themselves to comparison.

Amendment 18
Article 4, paragraph 3 a (new)

(3a) The programme shall ensure transparency, with account being taken, inter alia, of Article 1(1) and (2) of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1104/2006 of 18 July 2006 amending Regulation (EC) No 831/2002 implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 on Community Statistics, concerning access to confidential data for scientific purposes¹.

¹ OJ L 197, 19.7.2006, p. 3.

Justification

In order to enable drawing statistical conclusions for scientific purpose, this Commission Regulation establishes the conditions under which access to confidential data transmitted to the Community authority may be granted. It enumerates the different surveys and data sources to which it applies.

Amendment 19 Annex II, Title XVII, subheading 4

Main initiatives 2008-2012

The work to be undertaken under the 2008–2012 statistical programme will be determined by the shape of the new Community regional policy within the new programming period for the structural funds. Consolidation work on the existing data will be continued, notably in the urban audit, transport, environment and research & development areas. The implementation of a legislative framework for Regional Population data and the anticipated revision of the ESA 95 regulation encompassing the Regional Accounts data will be of significant importance for the structural indicators work. The methodological consistency of regional statistics shall be improved by the inclusion of more rigorous methodology in the relevant legislative framework when revised and the application of quality standards already commenced in regional accounts data shall be extended to other regional statistics to assure comparability and timeliness.

Main initiatives 2008-2012

The work to be undertaken under the 2008–2012 statistical programme will be determined by the shape of the new Community regional policy within the new programming period for the structural funds. Consolidation work on the existing data will be continued, notably in the urban audit, transport, environment and research & development areas. The implementation of a legislative framework for Regional Population data and the anticipated revision of the ESA 95 regulation encompassing the Regional Accounts data will be of significant importance for the structural indicators work. The methodological consistency of regional statistics shall be improved by the inclusion of more rigorous methodology in the relevant legislative framework when revised, ***by ensuring the production and quotation of separate statistics on men and women***, and ***by*** the application of quality standards already commenced in regional accounts data ***which*** shall be extended to other regional statistics to assure comparability and timeliness.

Justification

Statistics have to differentiate between men and women, as in accordance with Community objectives on equal treatment it must be possible to ascertain how European policies are having gender-specific effects. This is directly connected with the main priority of solidarity, economic and social cohesion and sustainable development, because these European policy areas are committed to the aim of gender mainstreaming (see Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006).

PROCEDURE

Title	Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Community Statistical Programme 2008-2012
References	COM(2006)0687 - C6-0427/2006 - 2006/0229(COD)
Committee responsible	ECON
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	REGI 12.12.2006
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Mieczysław Edmund Janowski 1.2.2007
Discussed in committee	20.3.2007
Date adopted	2.5.2007
Result of final vote	+: 44 -: 0 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Alfonso Andria, Stavros Arnaoutakis, Jean Marie Beaupuy, Rolf Berend, Wolfgang Bulfon, Antonio De Blasio, Vasile Dîncu, Gerardo Galeote, Iratxe García Pérez, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Ambroise Guellec, Gábor Harangozó, Jim Higgins, Alain Hutchinson, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Evgeni Kirilov, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Mario Mantovani, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Yiannakis Matsis, Miroslav Mikolášik, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, Maria Petre, Markus Pieper, Elisabeth Schroedter, Stefan Sofianski, Grażyna Staniszevska, Oldřich Vlasák, Vladimír Železný
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Bastiaan Belder, Brigitte Douay, Den Dover, Riitta Myller, Zita Pleštinská, Christa Prets, Miloslav Ransdorf, Richard Seeber, László Surján, Károly Ferenc Szabó
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Véronique De Keyser, Henrik Lax, Samuli Pohjamo