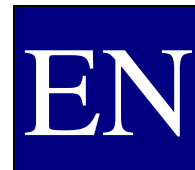




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Conclusions on EU Statistics

3045th ECONOMIC and FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Council meeting

Brussels, 17 November 2010

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"Following the priorities set-up in the ECOFIN Council on 8 November 2005 on statistical governance and on 10 November 2009 on the Status Report on Information Requirements in the EMU, the ECOFIN Council has reviewed the progress made in these areas and endorses the EFC opinion on EU Statistics.

Greece

The repeated revision of the Greek fiscal data has been a concern for the credibility of the Greek and EU statistical system. The Council has **URGED** the Greek authorities to resolve the institutional and methodological issues. An Action Plan on Greek statistics and governance was adopted in May 2010 and progress has been achieved in order to reestablish confidence. However, gaps in the capacity of the Greek authorities are still present. The Council **WELCOMES** the support given by the Commission (Eurostat) to provide assistance to Greece in the area of statistics; it also **WELCOMES** the efforts of the Greek authorities to correct the deficiencies in the administrative and business accounting systems, as well as in the statistical system.

Code of Practice

The Council **WELCOMES** the second report of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) and **CALLS UPON**:

P R E S S

- Member States to accelerate, where needed, their alignment of statistical legislation with the principles of the Code of Practice and the European Statistics Regulation;
- to step up the implementation of other national improvement actions in order to achieve full adherence to the Code of Practice;
- to reinforce the binding nature of the Code of Practice by enshrining in a legal act some of the minimum standards, including professional independence. Full implementation of the provisions in the code needs to be accelerated by the ESS, in particular to reinforce mandates for data collection and to further enhance quality.

Enhanced economic policy coordination – statistical considerations

The Council WELCOMES the recommendations of the Van Rompuy Task Force on enhanced economic policy coordination to strengthen EU statistics and INVITES the Commission to present proposals based on those recommendations. The Council CONSIDERS it important that the statistical indicators and underlying data to be used for the enhanced economic policy coordination are firmly based on a sound statistical methodological framework, compiled in accordance with the principles laid out in the European Statistics Code of Practice, and that the European Statistical System be involved in the discussions concerning statistical aspects raised by the indicators.

Revision of ESA

The Council reviewed the progress made towards a revision of the European System of Accounts (ESA). In this respect, the Council

- WELCOMES the progress made in the revision of ESA, including the progress with the Transmission Programme, and underlines that timely, reliable and comparable national accounts data are essential for economic and monetary policies.
- WELCOMES the impact assessment, and takes note of the estimated increases in GDP and GNI levels due to methodological changes, in particular from capitalization of research and development and of military expenditures; NOTES that the assessment is provisional and INVITES Eurostat to further progress with it, in particular for an assessment of the impact on government debt and deficit, and INVITES Member States to provide, as soon as possible, the additional information required for that purpose.
- CONSIDERS that it is desirable - for administrative purposes – to refer to the agreed **set of national accounts standards** in the EU when the ESA is revised, in order to reinforce quality, enhance clarity and transparency of communication vis-à-vis the authorities (EFC, Finance Ministers) and other users, and increase efficiency, while reducing burden. The Council STRESSES that measures should be taken to ensure that the transition period from ESA95 to the new ESA should be as short as possible, in particular in the context of administrative uses for EDP and GNI purposes.

- **ACKNOWLEDGES** that the implementation will require an investment by Member States in terms of human, financial, organizational and infrastructure resources; **RECALLS** the need to streamline processes and **CALLS** upon Member States to invest into a more efficient production system, where needed, and to ensure that the national legal framework encourages statistical access to administrative sources and the ESS to step up efforts for a clear and vigorous priority setting.

The 2010 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU

The Council **ENDORSES** the 2010 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in the EMU. In particular, the Council

- **WELCOMES** the progress since 2009, and notes that the PEEI targets have been achieved for almost all indicators but that three indicators are not yet available (residential property price indices, house sales and corporate output price index for services), while three other PEEIs are still behind their targets in terms of timelines (employment, quarterly sector accounts and job vacancy statistics); **EMPHASISES** the need for further harmonization of the statistics to ensure comparability across countries; **CALLS** upon Eurostat and NSIs to continue their efforts.
 - **STRESSES** that the PEEI framework will have to evolve in order to meet future demands and **CALLS** upon Eurostat, in co-operation with the ECB and with National Statistical Authorities to define the long-term targets, in particular to identify current and future gaps adequately, to determine the priority settings, and to outline a roadmap that can be monitored.
 - **WELCOMES** the progress made in meeting the structural needs on statistics and **UNDERLINES** the need for further work in this area, as outlined in the EPC Report.
 - **IS AWARE** that adequate resources need to be available in meeting current and future demands, in particular from the enhanced economic policy coordination, the "Europe 2020" strategy and the European Systemic Risk Board, and **CALLS UPON** the ESS to step up its focus on clear and rigorous priority setting, including negative priorities.
 - **INVITES** Eurostat and the ECB to provide an updated EFC Status Report on the fulfillment of the updated EMU statistical requirements in 2011.
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