

CMFB opinion

on the draft proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European statistical programme 2013-2017 (ESS multiannual work programme)

1. The CMFB shall assist the Commission in drawing up and implementing the multiannual programme of work relating to monetary, financial and balance of payments statistics¹.
2. At Eurostat's request, the CMFB Chairman, with the assistance of the CMFB Executive Body, asked the CMFB Members to inform him about their views on the draft proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European statistical programme 2013-2017 (ESS multiannual work programme). Subsequently, the Chairman, assisted by the Executive Body, finalised this opinion.
3. The CMFB welcomes the draft proposal for the European multi-annual statistical programme 2013-2017, which is well structured and well-balanced. The CMFB generally supports the main priorities and objectives defined in the programme relating to the development and coordination of the monetary, financial and balance of payments statistics and welcomes the layered approach of the statistical infrastructure (as illustrated in the draft proposal) linking the type of information to its usage. Furthermore, the draft proposal provides flexibility to adapt and prioritize emerging needs and takes openly the concerns about the burden on compilers and respondents, and the pressure on resources for carrying out statistical functions into account. Furthermore, the CMFB fully supports the full implementation of the Code of Practice in all Member States and welcomes measures aimed at further enhancing statistical governance of the ESS such as the reinforcing of the independence. The CMFB considers that the draft proposal will provide the necessary frame for the adoption of more detailed annual work programmes during the period 2013-17.
4. Since European statistics are developed, produced, and disseminated by both the ESS and the ESCB under separate legal frameworks reflecting their respective governance structure, the collaboration between the members of these two systems is essential in order to achieve synergies, and avoid duplication, and to guarantee the coherence necessary to produce European statistics. The CMFB emphasises that the ESS multiannual work programme should:
 - support the co-operation with the ESCB, European and international organisations through common projects and co-ordinated developments. The collaboration could strengthen the consistency between standards, increase the quality (relevance, reliability, and timeliness) of the statistics under the responsibilities of the ESS and the ESCB, and facilitate the exchange of data. The work programme should also promote the collaboration between NSIs and NCBs at national level for the compilation of a wide range of economic statistics.

¹ Article 2 of Council Decision 2006/856/EC establishing a Committee on monetary, financial and balance of payments statistics. OJ L 332, 30.11.2006, p. 21.

- emphasise the need for integration along the production chain (e.g. coordinated revision and release policies, and common approach to seasonal adjustment methods), across statistical domains (e.g. production of environmental accounts), and across Member States (e.g. promote SDMX based data exchange) in line with the Commission communication of 2009 on the production method of EU statistics².
 - promote the sharing of good practices to increase the efficiency, productivity, and quality of statistical processes, e.g. a wider use of statistical matching and data linking techniques and further development of standard IT tools.
 - more clearly identify the implementation of the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme integrated with the BPM6 implementation as one of the main priorities. The need to continue improving government finance statistics should also be emphasised.
 - facilitate the use of administrative data. This will require additional involvement of the statistical authorities in the design of administrative records, and further efforts to remove the legal obstacles (both national and EU-legislation) that currently prevent the use of administrative data (including tax data) for statistical purposes, especially confidentiality concerns. The further development and integration of common business registers would also be welcomed.
 - anticipate the changes that are likely to take place over the coming years, with more focus on services rather than goods, income rather than production, and quarterly data rather than annual data for economic analysis. As regards the further development of government finance statistics, preventive measures, such as promoting further standardisation in public accounts, and a wider proactive management of risk assessment are needed, including assessing the adequacy of the quality of upstream data for compiling statistics in accordance with ESA rules. The programme should also consider the globalisation phenomenon, which is essential for a clear view on the role of Europe worldwide.
5. Accordingly, the CMFB recommends that Eurostat take account of the general and specific remarks raised.
6. In addition to this opinion, all comments from the CMFB Members have been transmitted to Eurostat and will be kept in the records of the CMFB secretariat.

(Signed)

João Cadete de Matos
CMFB Chairman

Lisbon, 24 May 2011

² COM(2009) 404 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade.