

## **Guidelines on communication of major statistical revisions in the European Union**

The **Code of Practice** adopted by Eurostat and the National Statistical Institutes of the European Union recommends, under its Principle 8 “Appropriate Statistical Procedures”, that “revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures”.

A proper communication of major statistical revisions is an important element of a revision policy. **Major statistical revisions** are revisions that significantly affect important macro-economic and social indicators and are due to changes in statistical methods, concepts, definitions, classifications, improved source data and/or regular updates of the benchmarking period. Often, the above changes are combined in major revisions at intervals of five to ten years and carried back for a number of years. Due to their size, the major statistical revisions are important for the use of statistics and may change the assessment of the macro-economic and/or social situation. Therefore, a proper communication of major statistical revisions is essential to the credibility of official statistics and these Guidelines apply to all ESS-statistics affecting important macro-economic and social indicators.

The **communication of major statistical revisions** (MSRs) shall be guided by the following **good practice** in the European Union:

(1) **Pre-announcement:** MSRs are publicly announced in advance of the release date<sup>1</sup>. A summary statement should indicate the main reasons for the revision, the expected release date and format, the variables and periods covered. At the same time, sufficiently detailed information should be provided in an official letter to the Chairperson of the Statistical Programme Committee.

(2) **Documentation:** The actual release of MSRs is accompanied by sufficient documentation allowing users to appropriately assess the new presentation of the macro-economic and/or social situation. The documentation shall detail the reasons for the revision, broadly estimate their impact on main aggregates, and clarify any implied breaks in time-series or inconsistencies with related, not (yet) revised statistics. In case MSRs affect several statistical areas and are spread over time, the timetable for further revisions is indicated. The documentation shall also be made available to Eurostat at the release date.

(3) **Communication about major co-ordinated revisions:** Communication about MSRs which are due to changes in concepts, definitions or classifications in the European Union, as a consequence of amendments to European legal acts affecting all or many of the Member States, as well as the timing and implementation of these MSRs, should be carefully co-ordinated across the ESS.

*(Signed)*

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CMFB Chairman  
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<sup>1</sup> At least a quarter in advance for annual and quarterly statistics and a month in advance for monthly statistics.