

Annual Report 2011

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Lascaris, Valletta VLT 2000
Malta
Tel.: (+356) 2599 7000
Fax: (+356) 2599 7205 / 2599 7103
e-mail: nso@gov.mt
website: <http://www.nso.gov.mt>

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Unit D2: External Cooperation and
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Directorate D: Resources and Support Services
National Statistics Office
Lascaris
Valletta VLT 2000
Malta
Tel: (+356) 2599 7219
Fax: (+356) 2599 7205

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29 February 2012

The Chairman
Malta Statistics Authority

In accordance with the provisions of subsection 5(g) of the Malta Statistics Authority Act XXIV of 2000, I hereby submit to you this report on the operations of the National Statistics Office for the year ended 31 December 2011.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Pace Ross'.

Michael Pace Ross
Director General

Mission Statement

"To produce efficiently and with minimum burden on respondents high-quality statistics that are relevant, reliable and comparable, and to disseminate them in an impartial, independent and timely manner, making them available simultaneously to all users."

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S OVERVIEW

2011 was a very busy year for the National Statistics Office, with the Prime Minister mandating the NSO to carry out a Census of Population and Housing, in accordance with EC Regulation 763/2008¹ of the European Parliament and of the Council. In terms of statistical output, 250 news releases were disseminated. The introduction of the NACE Rev. 2 classification in National Accounts was a key milestone. Ten publications were issued, among which were two new publications on climate statistics and on statistical research methodology. Through a press conference, the NSO also presented the results of a survey among households on the domestic consumption of electricity. The presentation was part of a project which was co-financed by the European Commission through a grant agreement.

With regard to human resource development, new statisticians were contracted and training for staff was promoted and sustained. A new unit focusing on the Business Register was set up, and all managerial posts were filled. Human resources continued to be deployed more efficiently.

In terms of financial resources, the NSO recorded a modest surplus after years of deficits. Efficiency gains amounting to €105,000 were achieved which, together with various cost-cutting measures, contributed towards this positive outcome. Income and expenditure both surpassed the €4.4 million mark.

The following highlight the NSO's achievements for 2011.

Statistical Operations and Methodology

Census of Population and Housing 2011

In 2011 Malta joined all EU Member States in carrying out a census of population and housing. The NSO was entrusted with this oldest and most complex statistical exercise. Most of my time as Census Officer was devoted to the planning of the nationwide census and the supervision and execution of key operations.

Logistical support

Early in 2011, a six-person Census Co-ordinating Committee was appointed. One of the first tasks of the Committee was to set Census Day for 20 November 2011, and to come up with a logo and slogan in preparation for the official launch.

The 2011 Census was publicly launched in June. A call for census enumerators was issued for public-sector employees, with a subsequent call for the general public. Simultaneously, committee members also visited the 41 schools, serving as collection centres, across Malta and Gozo to ensure that the logistical support would be in place by November.

¹ Regulation (EC) No. 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on population and housing censuses.

Concurrently, the NSO engaged in regular meetings with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) in devising enumeration areas. In all 1,021 such areas were mapped out, approximately one hundred more than the 2005 Census. In the apportioning of enumeration routes, care was taken to ensure an equitable distribution of 180-230 dwellings. The NSO obtained a number of administrative databases to ensure the full coverage of dwellings.

With the help of the Permanent Secretary at the MFEI, the NSO rented premises in Valletta to house census operations. The vacant ex-Pilar School in Marsamxett Road is a short distance away from the NSO premises, and following minor refurbishment works, proved to be very appropriate for housing the Census.

Census questionnaire

The census questionnaire was drafted, taking into consideration the core variables required by European legislation, as well as new proposals following a series of meetings with stakeholders and non-governmental organisations. These meetings took place in June and July. In August the census questionnaire was pilot-tested among a random sample of the population and among NSO employees. Following feedback, the questionnaire was fine-tuned, and eventually sent for design and layout.

In September, the NSO engaged in discussions with two printing presses and Maltapost. The printing and packaging of the census questionnaire was assigned to a private press, while the printing of census forms was entrusted to the Government Printing Press. The process was supervised by NSO staff, who ensured its smooth running and adherence to tight time schedules.

Briefing sessions on the census questionnaire and the enumeration process in general were held towards the end of October: six three-hour briefings were held for the six district managers, 91 supervisors and 1,021 enumerators, including a session in Gozo.

IT infrastructure

The IT Systems Unit, together with MITA, worked on a specific IT software programme for census data entry purposes, while the NSO bought 25 laptops and leased a further 25 computers to be used by the data entry operators. The Unit was also responsible for producing the identity tags for enumerators and supervisors.

Public relations

From 23 June to 3 July, the NSO participated in the annual trade fair where a stand was set up to promote the Census. An information pamphlet was produced for promotion purposes, as well as other interesting material, including a prize competition.

The NSO put considerable input in the production of various Maltese- and English-language TV and radio census adverts of different time durations. These adverts were subsequently shown on TVM, Net Television, One TV and Favourite Channel. The radio adverts were aired on Radio Malta, Magic, One Radio, Radio 101, RTK and Bay Radio. A number of adverts were also placed in Air Malta's in-flight magazine, *SkyLife*, throughout September, October and November, as well as in the Catholic Church's magazine, *Flimkien*. Other adverts appeared in magazines published with The Sunday Times and on the front pages of daily and weekly papers. The NSO was invited to participate in a number of live radio programmes with phone-ins and in discussion programmes on various television stations.

A decision was taken to outsource the freephone service, with a view to offering the best possible support facilities to the public. The NSO duly submitted its application to the Malta Communications Authority to operate a freephone service. Upon authorisation, the NSO approached GO plc and Centrecom Ltd. to handle its freephone calls. Freephone 170 was launched on 26 October, simultaneously with the mailing of census questionnaires to households. Training was delivered to 28 telephone operators, with the NSO taking care of explanations of definitions and concepts, and the contracted company delivering the required soft skills relating to telephonic communication. This initiative proved successful and helped in no small way to alleviate the telephone call burden on NSO staff, while offering a more professional service to residents. In two months, 24,921 calls reached the call centre, of which 22,649, or 91 per cent, were answered.

Work on the processing of census data is in progress. The preparations detailed above will hopefully ensure that the Census will reap the desired results. Preliminary results will be published in 2012.

Carrying out of Surveys

In the course of the year, the NSO embarked on the carrying out of a number of surveys on behalf of government ministries and agencies, such as the Broadcasting Authority, Transport Malta, the Commerce Division, the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, and the Ministry of Health, to name a few. These surveys were an alternative source of income for NSO to complement the Government's subvention for 2011, although some survey work had to be declined or put on hold due to the preparations for the Census. Agreements on EU grants were also signed.

Technical Meetings with Statistical Users

Throughout the year, the NSO had regular meetings with our users and data providers. Meetings were held with the Central Bank of Malta, in particular with the new Governor, the Economic Policy Division and the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment. In addition, meetings were held with the Commissioner of Inland Revenue and the VAT Commissioner, wherein the NSO gained access, in

terms of the Malta Statistics Authority Act, to important sources of financial administrative data. This will eventually reduce the response burden.

Meetings were also held with two main data suppliers, the MFSA and ETC, wherein NSO explained the statistical requirements in terms of the Malta Statistics Authority Act, and the importance of re-classifying employment data in terms of NACE Rev. 2.

Eurostat-Malta Meeting

On 13-14 October, a Eurostat delegation visited the NSO to conduct talks with the National Accounts Unit regarding compliance with the current data transmission programme, and also on the new transmission programme, including any derogations which Malta is envisaging to request in due course. Discussions also focused on GDP main aggregates, financial and sector accounts, and supply-use tables.

Organisational Issues

Developments at managerial level

During the period under review, the organisational restructuring at managerial level continued. One director retired and one unit manager stepped down. Three new female managers were appointed. Another two managers were detailed to head a different unit. The Structural Business Statistics Unit was split in two, and a new Business Register Unit was set up. This necessitated the physical relocation of two units: Methodology and Research, and IT Systems.

Monthly managers' meetings were sustained wherein strategic issues were discussed. The European Statistical Programme for 2013 to 2017 and the proposed new code of practice were two cases in point. However, other topics discussed ranged from resource constraints, teleworking guidelines and negative priority-setting, to new policies and issues that concern office staff and that are beyond the NSO's control. In particular, managers were encouraged to keep abreast of ongoing developments, in particular those impacting NSO's work directly, such as the eurozone debt crisis. Managers were regularly reminded of the need for quality in statistics, and on the importance of safeguarding confidentiality.

Job exposure week

As an employer, the NSO participated in the job exposure week by hosting a number of boys and girls from St. Benedict's College for one week. Each student was assigned to a different unit, being given an overview of unit operations and assigned basic tasks in this regard.

Staff Training

The onus for staff training was transferred to the Personnel and Budgetary Matters Unit. NSO staff across various units attended ESTP training courses abroad, mainly in Luxembourg. Other staff opted for local SDO training courses and seminars, including an opportunity for two statisticians to participate in a three-week seminar, held in China, on Island Economies for Developing Countries. This initiative was sponsored by the Chinese Embassy. No training opportunity was rejected despite financial constraints.

In October, two half-day seminars were held for NSO managers and directors. The course was conducted by Dr Paul Gauci, and focused on creativity and leading through emotional intelligence.

Additionally, all managers were asked to attend a Standard Cost Model (SCM) training programme organised by the Better Regulation Unit at OPM, so as to quantify the burden on respondents, in terms of cost, of NSO's questionnaires.

The NSO conducted an in-house course for assistant statisticians, and the six successful participants were promoted to the grade of statistician, in accordance with Clause 12(d) of the MSA-UHM Collective Agreement. Three were unsuccessful, while another six dropped out.

Furthermore, three staff meetings were held during the period under review. Staff members were briefed on the NSO's goals and objectives, and on their role and responsibility within the organisation.

Going Green

During 2011, the NSO took another step across the whole Office towards environment friendliness, whereby measures were introduced to 'go green'. Waste separation at source was practised successfully with the help of specialised waste separation bins on all floors. Data in respect of 2011 revealed that paper was, as expected, the most recycled material, followed by plastic, amounting to 366 and 177 grey bags respectively. On the other hand, glass and metal amounted to 11.5 and 4.5 bags respectively throughout the whole year.

Events in 2011

NSO's tenth anniversary

On 1 March, the NSO commemorated the tenth anniversary since its setting up in its present form as the executive arm of the Malta Statistics Authority. A classical organ recital was held at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mdina, followed by drinks at a nearby venue. The recital was performed by Maestro John Aquilina, the Metropolitan Cathedral organist. All NSO staff, including past employees, and their partners, were invited to attend the event.

For the occasion, NSO launched a publication, authored by Ms Catherine Vella, recording the 60-year history of Malta's statistical institute, from the setting-up of the Office in 1947 to 2011.

Visits by dignitaries to the NSO

On 25 May, the Hon. Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister, paid a courtesy visit to the NSO, and subsequently met the management and staff at their desks. He thanked NSO for its output, and announced that a census would take place in November.

On 10 June, the Hon. Tonio Fenech, Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment, visited NSO for a press conference on the official launch of the 2011 Census.

On 15 December, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment toured the Census Office in Valletta.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by thanking the Malta Statistics Authority Board, in particular the Chairman Mr Reno Camilleri, for the support provided to the NSO in terms of human and financial resources, and practical advice. My appreciation is also due to the directors and all NSO staff for their support and their willingness to adopt new practices towards improving the quality of NSO product and services. Without them I would not have succeeded in performing all the above-mentioned tasks.

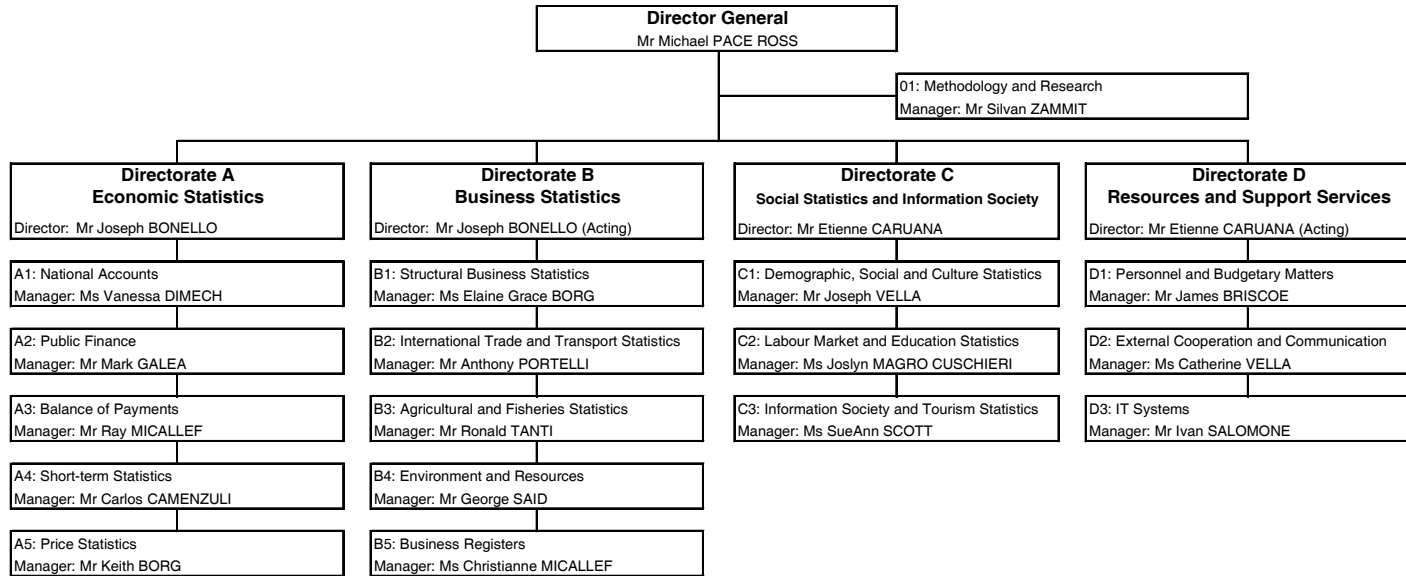


Michael Pace Ross
Director General

February 2012



Organisation Chart for the National Statistics Office (Malta) as at 31 December 2011



DIRECTOR GENERAL

UNIT 01: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

In addition to providing support to functional units within NSO and external organisations, including survey and sample design, the Unit has, throughout 2011, been directly involved in the planning, methodological preparations and development of the 2011 Census of Population and Housing.

Cross-Unit Initiatives

The main role of the Methodology and Research Unit is to provide technical assistance to various units within the NSO. Assistance is normally required at various stages of the statistical process, particularly those of sampling, survey design and other methodological areas including questionnaire design, data collection methods and statistical inference.

This support is also offered to public and private organisations, where the Unit may also be commissioned to carry out tailored sample surveys on behalf of third parties by means of face-to-face, postal or telephone enquiries.

Throughout the year, a total of 24 samples were provided, of which 12 were used internally by the NSO while another 12 were specifically requested by clients. These included personal, household and business samples.

In the course of the year, the Unit worked in close collaboration with Unit A1 on the EU grant project entitled 'Introduction of NACE Rev. 2 in National Accounts – Improvements in Quarterly Sector Accounts'. The main responsibilities of the Unit included the updating of economic activity information of a number of businesses from the NACE Rev. 1.1 to the NACE Rev. 2 classification.

Updating of Register data

The Unit is constantly engaged in the upkeep of various registers maintained by the Office for internal purposes. One of the key tasks throughout the year under review was to finalise the Population and Dwellings Register, which includes key demographic information on all individuals and dwellings in the country. This database is used for the selection of a large number of samples required by the Office and formed the basis of the 2011 Census of Population and Housing mailing database.

Census of Population and Housing 2011

One of the main tasks of the Unit throughout the year under review was to coordinate all activities related to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, including the methodology, logistics, information technology and communications.

The unit was also responsible for the setting-up of the Census mailing register, questionnaire, administrative forms and manual, enumeration areas and maps and all software used throughout the census process.

Enumeration areas and maps were drawn up by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) while software was developed by two co-ordinated teams, one from the NSO and the other from the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA).

The questionnaire was prepared after a series of consultation meetings were held with a number of organisations, and conforms to the recommendations, concepts and definitions on population censuses of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Eurostat.

In addition, the Unit was also responsible for the selection of over 1,200 staff required for Census purposes, including 94 supervisors and 1,021 enumerators, who were responsible for the collection of Census questionnaires from households.

The Unit is also responsible for the Census data entry process. This involves the supervision of around 40 persons who were specifically recruited to key-in the information collected in the 2011 Census. The first set of preliminary results from the Census will be available in the second quarter of 2012.

Statistical Disclosure Control

In the course of 2011, Unit 01 was actively involved in the formulation of a draft microdata policy for the use of survey data for research purposes. In addition, the Unit worked in close collaboration with a number of units at the NSO to provide anonymised microdata sets for a selected number of surveys carried out by the Office for research purposes through Eurostat.

Surveys Carried out on behalf of Third Parties

In the year under review, the Unit undertook a number of customised socio-economic surveys and business research on behalf of public and private organisations, including:

- a survey among individuals on Divorce carried out on behalf of the Centre for Family Studies;
- a survey among businesses on Hazardous Waste carried out on behalf of WasteServ Ltd;
- a survey among individuals on ICT education and qualifications carried out on behalf of the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA);
- three surveys among individuals undertaken in collaboration with the University of Malta.

DIRECTORATE A: ECONOMIC STATISTICS

Ms Vanessa Dimech was appointed manager of Unit A1 with effect from 11 July. She replaced Mr Joseph Vella, who was detailed by the Director General to head Unit C1.

UNIT A1: NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

In the year under review, the National Accounts Unit continued its process of revising annual and quarterly estimates to ensure that data is updated in line with the European System of National and Regional Accounts (ESA95). Revisions made during the year were mainly due to the availability of new statistical data and to methodological improvements resulting from this continuous process of improving the operating methods. The Unit published its quarterly news releases in accordance with the news release calendar.

Other Activities

Apart from its regular news releases, during 2011 the Unit was also engaged in the following tasks:

- i. the compilation of weights for the annual purchasing power parities' (PPP) exercise, including reports on VAT, rents and tips in the service industries;
- ii. the annual Gross National Income (GNI) questionnaire and its supporting quality report for EU own resources purposes;
- iii. the calculation of the weighted average rate for the VAT own resources exercise;
- iv. the provision of a number of additional tables requested by Eurostat in the current transmission programme within the 70-day timeframe.

Ongoing Projects

Implementation of NACE Rev. 2

The implementation of the NACE Rev. 2 statistical classification was published within the established deadline of 7 September 2011, as per Regulation (EC) No 1893/2006 and Regulation (EC) No. 1392/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transmission of national accounts data in NACE Rev. 2. The implementation of NACE Rev. 2 incorporated the important issue of back casting: quarterly data in NACE Rev. 2. was published for the period 2000 to 2011, as requested by Eurostat.

The Unit considered two main options with regard to back casting: the micro and macro approach. Whenever possible preference was given to the micro approach. In the absence of a direct link between NACE Rev. 1.1 and NACE Rev. 2, the macro approach was used in the first attempt to implement NACE Rev. 2. Conversion coefficients in terms of turnover were derived in matrix form from the Business Register for 2000, 2005 and 2010. These conversion coefficients were applied to all the variables of interest (i.e. output, intermediate consumption, value-added, compensation of employees and employment) for each respective year.

Benchmark Revision

The Unit took the opportunity to carry out a benchmark revision exercise together with the implementation of NACE Rev. 2 in those activities where this was deemed necessary. These revisions generally related to better data sources and updated methodologies to those originally applied for the period 1995 to 2003. National accounts data for this series had been finalised as per news release 96/2007 on 8 June 2007. However, since then the Unit updated some methodologies, and consequently data for the period 1995 to 2003 had to be updated accordingly.

Institutional Sector Accounts

During 2011, the sector accounts for the period 2005-2009 were updated and transmitted. Sector accounts for 2010 were transmitted for the first time in November 2011.

Economic Statistics Development Programme (ESDP)

The Unit continued to participate in the Economic Statistics Development Programme with the ultimate aim of identifying potential areas for improvement in National Accounts. The Committee, under the chairmanship of the Director of Economic Statistics, includes all the managers of the Economic Statistics Directorate, representatives of the Central Bank of Malta and the Economic Policy Division within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

Grants

The Unit successfully completed Grant Agreement No. 20102.2009.001-2009.366 'Methodological and Technical Improvements'. This grant involved two projects:

- Project 1: Introduction of NACE Rev. 2 in National Accounts;
- Project 2: Annual institutional sector accounts.

International Missions

The Unit hosted two important missions during the year under review.

i. Eurostat-Malta meeting, 13-14 October 2011

The issues for discussion included compliance with the current transmission programme and any derogations which will be requested with regard to the new transmission programme beyond 2014 in the areas of GDP main aggregates, financial and sector accounts, Supply-and-Use tables and Input-Output tables.

ii. **VAT own resources control visit, 7-11 November 2011**

The control visit experts reviewed the pending reservations Malta has with regard to the VAT own resources. As a result of this control visit and the work carried out in the two months following this mission, most of these reservations are expected to be lifted.

Courses and Meetings

During 2011 the Unit was represented at the National Accounts Working Party. One unit member attended a Task Force on Research and Development.

UNIT A2: PUBLIC FINANCE

During 2011 the Unit continued its routine work on the compilation of quarterly and annual non-financial and financial accounts for the General Government Sector, and the bi-annual compilation of the EDP (Excessive Deficit Procedure) Notification. Other activities carried out are described below.

Scoreboard Indicators

The Economic Governance legislative package, which came into force on 23 November 2011, introduced the Excessive Imbalance Procedure intended to prevent and correct macroeconomic imbalances among Euro Area Member States. The Scoreboard, including a set of indicators, is designed to serve as a tool for the early identification and monitoring of imbalances. Since the selected indicators were known from the beginning of the year, the Unit started working on them. As data was not available for two indicators related to private sector debt, NSO made use of administrative sources. Following extensive work and cooperation between the Public Finance Unit and the Central Bank of Malta, in October the annual financial accounts for all the sectors of the economy were sent to Eurostat in a publishable format. These accounts were used to extract those scoreboard indicators that were still missing. As a result, data for all the external and internal imbalances scoreboard indicators are available for Malta.

Quality Management in Government Finance Statistics

Following the communication of the Commission "Towards robust quality management for European Statistics" and the increasing importance of high quality public finance data, Eurostat organised a Workshop on the Quality Management in Government Finance Statistics. The aim of the workshop was to ensure and improve the quality of the upstream data sources that are an input for the EDP statistics. This will be achieved through the introduction of an 'Upstream Dialogue Visit', implementation of the Code of Practice, developing a quality management framework through process mapping, mapping of interfaces and documentation, risk assessments, and the introduction of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). These initiatives will commence in 2012, following the setting up of a dedicated Working Group. The unit manager, accompanied by the Accountant General, participated in this two-day workshop.

Research and Development in the General Government Sector

Early in 2011, the Unit carried out its annual survey within General Government (which includes the Higher Education Sector) to measure the sector's output in Research and Development (R&D). The data were subsequently transmitted to Eurostat, together with the relevant Quality Reports and Metadata files. Results were also published locally.

The R&D questionnaire has been amended, on a pilot basis, to include the data collection of Transnational Coordinated Research carried out by government ministries, departments, entities and local councils for the period 2009/2010. With the support of a new grant agreement, the data received were first analysed and subsequently a process was initiated to increase the responses in the 2012 R&D questionnaire, to enable the NSO to complete Eurostat's questionnaire on the new ERA (European Research Area) core indicator 'national public funding to transnationally coordinated research'.

The Price of Motherhood

The Unit participated in a study together with the Centre for Labour Studies on the relationship between childbearing and the participation of women in the Maltese labour market. The study was based on the administrative data on births held at the NSO (1996-2009) and the employment records of females held by the ETC (2000-2009). It examined a total of 43,263 mothers. The results were presented on 24 November during a half-day seminar entitled 'The Price of Motherhood'.

Other Actions

The Unit continued to support the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment in work relating to government finance aspects, advising on issues impacting government finance statistics, and providing support during foreign visits from DG ECFIN, IMF as well as from the various credit-rating agencies.

The Unit maintained the compilation of a full set of data on Government's expenditures and receipts in respect of social protection, as per ESSPROS methodology. In 2011 the Unit published the annual publication on social protection expenditure for the years 2005-2009. This publication presented data on expenditure under the various social protection schemes and was drawn up in accordance with the ESSPROS Manual.

In 2011, the Unit converted the General Government Sector contribution to GDP from the NACE Rev. 1.1 to the NACE Rev. 2 classification, going back to 2000. Data for the period 1995-1999 will be converted in 2012.

Training

Two staff members participated in a one-day training course that provided instructions on compiling the yearly update of the 'Taxes in Europe Database' with a new software application TEDBv2/TAXREF. Following the course, the new

database was updated successfully. In May, a staff member participated in a Seminar on Island Economies for Developing Countries, organised by the Hainan University in China. Another staff member attended two one-week courses on Government Finance Statistics organised by Eurostat.

UNIT A3: BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

The Unit is mainly responsible for the compilation of the balance of payments, the international investment position, and foreign direct investment. The compilations are undertaken by the NSO with the collaboration of the Central Bank of Malta, which in turn is responsible for the financial sector.

Balance of Payments (BOP)

The monthly Balance of Payments statement was compiled and submitted to the European Central Bank (ECB) within the stipulated six weeks from the end of the period under review. This statement is broken down by country and includes all requested instruments (as per Regulation). An updated quarterly BOP statement was submitted to Eurostat and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and was also uploaded on the NSO website in its entirety within 90 days from the end of the quarter. A summarised version of the quarterly statement was also published locally. In September, the Unit compiled and submitted an extensive number of quarterly and annual (detailed) reports revised back to 2006 in line with the major revisions to already published data. These reports covered balance of payments, international trade in services, and direct investment flows and positions. Foreign Direct Investment reports are also broken down by country and by economic sector.

International Investment Position (IIP)

The International Investment Position statement was compiled quarterly from the direct reporting questionnaires also used for the BOP compilation. The IIP statement was submitted to the IMF as per SDDS requirements. The statement was also released in a bi-annual news release showing positions at the end of each quarter.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Developments in foreign direct investment were compiled monthly. The same sources used for the balance of payments and IIP are used so as to lessen the burden on respondents. A summarised bi-annual news release provides figures on the composition of FDI, broken down by country and economic sector. These cover flows and stocks, both in Malta and abroad.

Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey (CPIS)

Together with a number of countries, Malta once again participated in the annual CPIS conducted under the patronage of the IMF. Information regarding the stock position of portfolio investment abroad at the end of the year was collated from the same sources from where the BOP and IIP are compiled. These are essentially

shown by country where the investments are made. The CPIS 2010 was submitted to the IMF for inclusion (aggregated to other countries' contributions) on its website.

Coordinated Direct Investment Survey (CDIS)

The year under review was the second year of Malta's participation in the Coordinated Direct Investment Survey, a survey similar to the CPIS but relating to direct investment. Direct investment positions in Malta, broken down by country of investor, and direct investment abroad by country of destination, were compiled and submitted to the IMF. The data provided is assimilated with the contributions of the other participating countries and published on the IMF's website.

Foreign Affiliates Statistics (FATS)

Outward FATS statistics were compiled for base year 2009. Entities abroad having more than a 50 per cent shareholding by Maltese enterprises were surveyed. Information on employment and turnover was requested. The data were submitted to Eurostat to be published in an aggregated form with the data of the other Member States. Owing to the small number of enterprises, it was necessary to safeguard confidentiality and therefore these statistics were not published for Malta on its own. Inward FATS 2009 was not compiled due to data being unavailable.

Other Issues

The survey on special purpose enterprises (SPEs) is an ongoing exercise launched in 2010. This work covers enterprises that are registered in Malta but operate abroad.

In the course of 2011, eight news releases were published by the Unit: four featured the quarterly Balance of Payments statement, two focused on the IIP, and a further two on FDI flows and positions.

UNIT A4: SHORT-TERM STATISTICS

Industry

In the beginning of the year, a new sample covering NACE divisions 08-36 was drawn and approximately 460 monthly questionnaires were sent to enterprises operating in the quarrying, manufacturing and energy sectors. These enterprises provided data on turnover, employment, hours worked, wages and salaries and new orders for all markets.

The Unit transmitted, on a monthly basis, a full set of industrial indices back casted to 2000. The data were also produced in working-day, seasonal and trend format, and were transmitted together with the unadjusted data. During the year, administrative sources were utilised to estimate non-respondents in the relevant sectors.

Furthermore, four news releases on industrial indicators were published.

Index of Industrial Production

The Index of Industrial Production was compiled and disseminated in NACE Rev. 2, retrospectively to 2005. The data were released on a monthly basis and in compliance with the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). Approximately 100 monthly questionnaires were sent to manufacturing enterprises, while additional information was obtained from another 70 enterprises that submit hours worked and turnover data within the framework of short-term statistics. Data were disseminated by Main Industrial Grouping (MIG) and also at the division level of NACE (2-digit). The data were transmitted in unadjusted, working-day-adjusted and seasonally-adjusted format, approximately six weeks after the reference month. The Unit compiled monthly news releases in the year under review.

Producer Price Index for Industry

The producer price index is a leading indicator for short-term analysis. It is based on an index that measures ex-factory prices of leading manufacturing products. Data on selected products are compiled monthly from approximately 80 top manufacturing enterprises.

Monthly indices in respect of MIG level started being compiled in 2005 and are broken down into five 'flows'. The total index is broken down into domestic and non-domestic markets, the latter further divided into euro and non-euro area. The producer price index is published with a time lag of 30 days from the reference period, in line with SDDS requirements.

Construction

Following the implementation of a new sample in 2011, quarterly data were collected from a number of construction companies. These were included in the short-term statistics database and converted into NACE Rev. 2. Further to the quarterly transmission of the data, four news releases were published on this topic, covering employment, wages and salaries, hours worked and new permits for residential buildings.

Services

A new sample in NACE Rev. 2 was used for the services sector, which comprises wholesale and retail trade and other services. Approximately 1,000 questionnaires were sent every quarter to enterprises classified in selected sectors, providing data on turnover, employment, wages and salaries and hours worked. In 2011, four news releases were compiled for the services sector, also using administrative data. The data were transmitted in working-day, seasonal and trend format, together with the unadjusted indices.

Stocks

The Unit sends about 370 questionnaires to various enterprises operating in different sectors of the economy on a quarterly and annual basis. The collected data are used internally for the compilation of stocks within the framework of national accounts.

UNIT A5: PRICE STATISTICS

Consumer Price Indices

In the year under review, the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) was compiled using a slightly modified weighting scheme (when compared to the one used in the previous year), based primarily on the Household Budgetary Survey (HBS) as well as on national accounts data. This update was deemed necessary in anticipation of the requirements of the new EU legislation². The weights of the Retail Price Index (RPI) remained unaltered since it is a fixed-base index. Over 9,600 prices of goods and services monitored every month were used in the compilation of the two indices.

Treatment of Seasonal Items

From December 2010, all EU Member States were required to treat fruit, vegetables, fish, clothing and footwear as seasonal items. The Regulation stipulates that the HICP sub-indices at elementary product group level shall be either a strict annual weights index or a class-confined seasonal weights index. In other words, Member States had to choose between two specific methodologies entailing either monthly variable weights or price estimation of items which are out of season. The indices of fruit, vegetables and fish have been compiled using monthly variable weights for at least two decades, and since the methodology is deemed acceptable, this was retained. However, for the compilation of the clothing and footwear indices the NSO opted for strict annual weights (with price estimation when the product is out-of-season). The impact of this change on both the HICP and the RPI, which was not significant, was reported to the Commission on a monthly basis.

Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices - Constant Taxes (HICP-CT)

For some time, the Commission was considering to flag the HICP-CT as a negative priority. However, the main users (European Central Bank, other Central Banks and DG ECFIN) expressed their concern, and the HICP-CT was reinstated in the HICP production scheme.

² Commission Regulation (EU) No. 1114/2010 of 1 December 2010 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No. 2494/95 as regards minimum standards for the quality of HICP weightings and repealing Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2454/97.

Owner-Occupied Housing (OOH)

OOH will be introduced in the HICP framework in 2015. Eurostat is satisfied with the progress registered in this area since the coverage improved and timeliness was gradually reduced from T+3Q (quarters) to T+4M (months), which meant getting closer to the target of T+3M. The Unit is collaborating with the Central Bank of Malta in a project initiated in 2011 which aims to construct an enhanced property price index using, inter alia, mortgage information provided by the commercial banks.

Car Survey

The methodology used in carrying out a commissioned car survey was revised to ensure that the collected prices give a better picture of the market. After a thorough review of practices, all stakeholders agreed that the best way forward was to collect the required information directly from consumers, thus mitigating the problem of undervalued price readings. The survey was conducted in March 2011 by phone and the sample covered over 500 customers.

DIRECTORATE B: BUSINESS STATISTICS

A new manager, Ms Elaine Grace Borg, was appointed to head Unit B1 with effect from 1 September. She replaced Mr James Briscoe, who was asked to head Unit D1. A new Business Registers Unit was set up on 1 September, with Ms Christianne Micallef as manager.

UNIT B1: STRUCTURAL BUSINESS STATISTICS

Structural Business Statistics Sample Survey (SBS)

During 2011, the Unit mailed out around 9,000 questionnaires for the annual SBS questionnaire for the reference year ending 2009. The SBS survey is sample-based for enterprises with an employment headcount of 0-4. A Census is undertaken for enterprises with five employees or more. Every year, the sample is drawn by the Methodology and Research Unit.

The survey covers various sectors of the economy. These include manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade and selected services sectors covered by EC Regulation 295/2008³.

The SBS 2009 survey was double-coded using NACE Rev. 2 with regard to the principal economic activity, alongside the NACE Rev. 1.1 classification. SBS 2009 was the last reference year to be coded with the NACE Rev. 1.1 classification.

The survey incorporates data required for other functioning units within the NSO, namely the Business Registers Unit, the National Accounts Unit, the Environment and Resources Unit and the Short-term Statistics Unit. In addition, it also covers certain domains required for the Foreign Affiliate Trade Statistics (FATS) exercise, previously compiled by the Balance of Payments Unit. This domain was assigned to the Unit in December 2011.

SBS Data Analysis and Transmission

During the first quarter, the Unit finalised SBS weights and transmitted the final SBS 2007 results. Preliminary data series for SBS 2008 and 2009 were also sent. The Unit vetted or confirmed a number of checks that were sent by Eurostat's data managers for SBS 2007 data.

Data regarding credit institutions for SBS 2010 were requested by the Central Bank of Malta in the third quarter of 2011. These data were transmitted to Eurostat in the fourth quarter. The Unit also transmitted the data regarding pension funds for reference year 2010. The Unit also compiled Eurostat's quality reports for SBS reference year 2009 with regard to credit institutions and pension funds data.

³ Regulation (EC) No. 295/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2008 concerning structural business statistics.

Access to Finance

The Unit was responsible for the compilation of the one-off Access to Finance Survey, as required by the SBS Recast Regulation. The study was based on a sample of around 600 units with ten employed persons or more. During 2011, the Unit compiled and concluded this study.

The interim report and the final data reports were compiled and submitted by the end of the first quarter, as required by Eurostat. In the third quarter, the Unit issued a news release based on this study.

Other issues

During 2011, the Unit was represented in a number of international meetings on the framework of structural business statistics.

UNIT B2: INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TRANSPORT STATISTICS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS

Intrastat/Extrastat System

During 2011, the International Trade and Transport Statistics Unit sustained its ongoing IT programme to further expand the scope of the Intrastat/Extrastat system, which serves as the backbone for the storage and dissemination of International Trade data. The system enhancements which were carried out included:

- Updates of the Combined Nomenclature (CN) for 2012 on the Intrastat website;
- Ongoing maintenance, creation and further development of the existing report-generating capability of the System;
- Further promotion of the Intrastat online service with its added XML upload facility among traders whose number increased by 231 new web users, to 2,791. Throughout the year, 91.3 per cent of all Intrastat declarations were lodged electronically.

Main Output

During the period under review, the Unit was actively engaged with the fulfilling of its primary task to compile, check and disseminate external trade data. Trade data are collected from two main sources: the Supplementary Declaration System (Intrastat) covering trade between EU Member States, and the Customs Electronic System (CES) covering Extra-EU trade (Extrastat). In the course of its work, the Unit also provided a help desk function to both providers and users of statistical information in the foreign trade domain.

During the year under review, the Unit maintained the publication of its monthly news releases in line with the calendar published on the NSO website. Furthermore, monthly transmissions of Extra-EU and Intra-EU data covering both aggregated and detailed data were made within the deadlines specified in the relevant regulations. During 2011 the Unit also undertook a new project: the classification of trade statistics by business characteristics. This was done through the use of software produced under an XT-Net project on the integration of Trade and Business Register data which was finalised in December 2009. The new Intrastat and Extrastat Regulations related to the compilation of statistics on trade by business characteristics came into force on 1 January 2010 and were based on the successful linking of the trade and business register databases, which catered for new datasets for dissemination. This has the advantage that no additional data collection is needed from providers of statistical information. The data produced were transmitted to Eurostat for dissemination through the COMEXT⁴ database.

Other Activities

During the period under review, the Unit was represented by a senior statistician at the May and November committee meetings on statistics relating to the trading of goods covering Intra-EU and Extra-EU trade. These meetings were hosted by Eurostat. Additionally, a one-day seminar on the Dissemination of International Trade Statistics was also held before the November Committee meeting to commemorate the 20th anniversary of COMEXT. Participation at these committee meetings and seminars invariably serves as an essential source of information, enabling the Unit to keep abreast of all developments at European level.

A senior statistician, a recent addition to the Unit, attended an overseas Course on International Trade in Goods Statistics during the first quarter of 2011. Additionally, in May he participated in a three-week Seminar on Island Economies, organised by the Hainan University in China.

Throughout 2011, the Unit actively supported the External Cooperation and Communication Unit with the provision of merchandise trade and transport data in response to various requests originating from regular and occasional users of information. The Unit also supported a number of other NSO units in the provision of merchandise trade and transport data required in the compilation of other statistics. When considering the number of requests received by the External Cooperation and Communication Unit covering trade and transport statistical data, these made up 30 per cent of all information requests.

The Unit continued to provide the most updated monthly merchandise trade data, following Malta's entry in the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) in December 2009.

⁴ COMEXT is a Eurostat database used for storage, extraction, aggregation and dissemination of foreign trade statistics.

TRANSPORT STATISTICS

Sources and Outputs

The compilation of Transport Statistics is primarily based on administrative data provided by the Gozo Channel Company Limited, Transport Malta, the Police Department and the Guard and Warden Services Limited.

In 2011, the Unit continued with its ongoing initiative in the upgrading of its systems to efficiently store and process data in the transport database. This process has enabled better validation, usage and a more timely use of the data. The transport statistics database is invaluable in the production of news releases on road traffic accidents, the stock of motor vehicles, as well as on sea transport between Malta and Gozo.

The Unit is determined to provide more support to users with a view to enabling the extraction of higher analytical value from its news releases. The Unit is continually exploring viable new areas concerning transport statistics that can be initiated in conformity with Eurostat's recommendations. Furthermore, the Unit is also working towards further enhancing the annual Transport Statistics publication.

Main Activities

During the period under review, the Unit was represented by a statistician who participated in the Air Transport Working Group meeting held in Luxembourg on 7-8 June and at the annual Meeting of the Coordinating Group for Statistics on Transport (CGST formerly CCST) held on 14-15 December in Luxembourg. As a follow-up, meetings are envisaged with the local authorities to discuss issues resulting from both meetings, as well as Malta's reporting obligations.

In the course of 2011, the news releases were issued on a quarterly basis and covered three different transport themes: Sea Transport between Malta and Gozo, Motor Vehicles, and Traffic Accidents. All the databases concerning transport statistics were continuously updated to enhance the efficiency and availability of data. New transport data from other sectors are still being requested on an ongoing basis in order to further widen the scope of the data disseminated by the Unit.

UNIT B3: AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES STATISTICS

Census of Agriculture 2010

In September 2010, the Unit undertook the Census of Agriculture. The Census of Agriculture is a comprehensive survey undertaken every 10 years to collect exhaustive data on the structure and utilisation of agricultural holdings. Data collection from agricultural holdings was undertaken from September 2010 to January 2011 with the data being inputted in the fourth quarter of 2010 and in the first quarter of 2011. The validation procedures and data analysis were undertaken in the second quarter. The micro data were submitted to Eurostat and were validated in the third quarter. The results will be published in 2012. The

next data collection exercise on the structure of agricultural holdings, based on the Census, will be the Farm Structure Survey (FSS) scheduled for 2013.

Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)

In the first quarter the Commission accepted the 2009 results of the FADN survey. During this period, the Unit launched the FADN survey with 2010 as reference year. The Unit was responsible for the design of the questionnaire and the sample selection. The Paying Agency of the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs was responsible for the collection, validation and dissemination of the data to DG AGRI.

Fisheries

The Unit has access to the fleet register held at the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA), from where information is used to compile tables on the structure of the vessels for the purposes of the annual publication of Agriculture and Fisheries Statistics. In collaboration with MRRA, the Unit also compiles catch and landings statistics which are transmitted to Eurostat and the FAO every year. Furthermore, the Unit is responsible for the data collection pertaining to aquaculture. The raw data are analysed and validated, following which tables are compiled and sent to Eurostat every December.

Other Activities

A number of news releases on animal husbandry were duly issued by the Unit. Other releases included the Economic Accounts for Agriculture 2010, Aquaculture 2010, World Food Day 2011, and four quarterly releases on each of the following domains: fruit and vegetable production, producer/input agricultural price indices, meat production and fish landings.

The annual collection of statistics relating to agriculture and fisheries for the reference year 2009 was published in CD format.

During the year, the Unit was represented at a number of working groups on Agriculture and Fisheries held in Luxembourg.

UNIT B4: ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

Environment and Resources statistics comprise water, land, energy, air emissions, waste, environmental accounting and taxes, and sustainable development indicators. These datasets are regularly maintained and updated annually to comply with the regular reporting obligations to Eurostat, as well as to satisfy national requirements. In the period under review, the Unit expanded the existing data collection programmes in respect of specific requirements for energy statistics, environmental accounting, environmental taxes and indicators relating to sustainability. These improvements were in part possible through the technical and financial assistance of Eurostat.

Waste

The Unit is continuously researching improvements in the collection of specific datasets regarding particular waste streams. During 2011 a domestic waste characterisation survey was initiated, which involved the sampling of domestic households. This work is being done in close collaboration with WasteServ, and will be used to upgrade the existing data for this particular solid waste stream. During the period under review the Unit was represented at Eurostat meetings and contributed to the discussions on the introduction of a new European legislation regarding the import and export of waste. The Unit also worked closely with MEPA to address several data issues regarding waste.

Water

In the past year, the Unit continued to build on its previous work regarding the updating of the water databases through the collaboration with Automated Revenue Management Systems Ltd. (ARMS). Several meetings were held with ARMS Ltd. in order to refine the datasets which are being produced. By mid-2011 the Unit had received several datasets covering water and electricity consumption and its costs for the various economic sectors. The validation and verification of the received data is ongoing.

Work also progressed on the compilation of waste water statistics through a closer collaboration with the Water Services Corporation. This has resulted in the creation of new datasets which were added to the existing set of statistics already compiled. The result of this work was communicated to Eurostat and was well received.

Energy

The Energy Statistics legislation, Regulation (EC) 1099/2008⁵, in force since 2008, obliges reporting to Eurostat on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The datasets involved include prices of fossil fuels and electricity, fuel imports, power generation and energy consumption by sector. Owing to the liberalisation of fuels in Malta, full collaboration was sought between the Malta Resources Authority and the NSO to facilitate the transfer of data between the Authorities. Bilateral cooperation and efforts have yielded a good result in the data collection of energy balance statistics. A similar improvement was also registered with the Energy directorate at Eurostat, where Malta has made good progress in the submission of data.

During the year under review the Unit also concluded a survey on energy consumption in households. This involved a bilateral investigation consisting of a CATI survey among 1,500 households, coupled with a physical electrical energy measurement of 60 households for a whole month. This exercise was finalised by mid-2011 and the results were delivered through a press conference. The results of the study were also published on the NSO website.

⁵ Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on energy statistics.

Sustainable Development Indicators

During the period under review, the Unit concluded another project for the compilation of a set of indicators on sustainable development. Results were published and are available on the NSO website. During 2011, the Unit also collaborated with MEPA regarding the sustainable development indicators which are integrated in the annual *State of the Environment Report*.

Environmental Accounting and Taxes

The Unit continued to build on the work carried out in the past two years. During the period under review, the Unit compiled new data relating to environmental goods and services, environmental taxes and environmental accounting. These datasets were transmitted to Eurostat for further evaluation. Meetings abroad were also attended by staff where technical assistance was provided. Furthermore, the Unit is in the process of strengthening the initiated data collection relating to the NAMEA Air Emission Accounts.

Consultations

During 2011, staff members of the Unit were involved in consultations with stakeholders regarding various environmental datasets. Staff also attended training sessions related to the different aspects of their daily work. On different occasions, staff members participated and delivered presentations in local and international conferences and working groups.

UNIT B5: BUSINESS REGISTERS

Business Register (BR)

A new unit was set up to focus on improving the quality of the Business Register. The scope of the BR is to provide an up-to-date and exhaustive list of all enterprises and individuals conducting business in Malta.

The primary sources of the BR are administrative sources, mainly the VAT department and the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA), where births and deaths of enterprises are recorded. A significant aspect of the BR is that it is an important tool used by most of the technical units within the NSO.

During 2011, maintenance at the enterprise level commenced, mainly to assign NACE Rev. 2 classification to approximately 6,000 enterprises recorded in the BR. Other maintenance included vetting of foreign enterprises registered locally, checking shipping companies, and the removal of duplicate enterprises. Furthermore, contacts with external sources were strengthened for better usage of administrative data. Every month, roughly 500 new companies were included in the BR and a questionnaire was sent out to obtain structural information. For the 2010 EuroGroup Register (EGR), relationships were completed and sent to Eurostat. Enhancements in the BR are an ongoing process.

Research and Development Survey (R&D)

The R&D survey collects data which are essential to ensure availability of pertinent statistical information to monitor Science and Technology (S&T) related activities in Malta and to support the development of the S&T policy. The current R&D data collection for 2010 includes business enterprises from all sectors of the economy grouped by the employment size of the enterprise. As a result, the coverage of enterprises for this survey increased from 100 to 300 enterprises. The aim of widening the scope of the survey is to capture Business R&D intensity in line with the Europe 2020 targets. During the period covered by this report, two sets of reminders were posted and provisional data for the 2010 R&D survey were submitted to Eurostat at the end of October.

Innovation Survey

The aim of the Innovation Survey is to collect information across the business sector about new or significantly improved products, process, organisational or marketing methods. Innovation data collection involves approximately 1,600 enterprises across a number of sectors within the economy. The non-core variables of the survey and the pilot module were covered by a Eurostat grant. In order to exceed the minimum response rate of 70 per cent as required by guidelines stipulated by Eurostat, two sets of reminders were posted.

DIRECTORATE C: SOCIAL STATISTICS AND INFORMATION SOCIETY

Mr Joseph Vella was detailed to head Unit C1 with effect from 11 July, after the unit manager stepped down.

UNIT C1: DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURE STATISTICS

POPULATION

The compilation total population estimates, based on the latest Population and Housing Census, is one of the main responsibilities that fall under the remit of the Demographic, Social and Culture Statistics Unit. During the period under review, the Unit coordinated with various government departments in order to obtain information on important demographic components, including statistics on births, deaths, adoptions and regular and irregular migration, used for updating the total population distribution. In addition, data were collected on marriages, separations, divorces and crime statistics, published in the annual Demographic Review. The Unit also compiled both life tables and population projections. Methods applied for data collection and data analysis were in line with harmonised methodologies as recommended by Eurostat, thus ensuring comparability with other EU Member States.

During 2011, extensive work was carried out in relation to the development of a centralised database and data-capturing tool in which information regarding new asylum applicants and decisions could be entered and accessed from a unique depository system. This was the result of an agreement with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, with the ultimate aim of facilitating the production of more timely and higher-quality statistics.

The Unit continued to provide assistance to the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees in the production of asylum statistics.

During the year under review, the Unit also engaged in the set-up of a working group on crime statistics with the aim of creating a forum among organisations that are considered the main contributors of such statistics. Participants included representatives from the statistics department of the Malta Police Force, Corradino Correctional Facility (CCF), Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit (FIU), University of Malta Institute of Criminology and the Malta Law Courts. The working group focused mainly on aspects of future crime statistics data collections in the light of new requirements pertaining to the European Commission, including Eurostat. As a result of the working group and follow-up meetings, NSO has succeeded in collecting statistical information relating to such requirements.

LIVING CONDITIONS

2011 Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2011)

The Unit is responsible for the compilation of EU-SILC (Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) in Malta, a survey which has been conducted locally since 2005. EU-SILC is an exercise aimed at collecting timely and comparable data on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions and is anchored in the European

Statistical System (ESS). This survey is also a source for statistics on material deprivation, as well as other socio-economic information used in the field of research. The methodology applied for this survey is based on Eurostat recommendations, ensuring consistency and comparability across EU Member States. It is regulated by a European Framework Regulation (EC 1177/2003).

During the year under review, the Unit incorporated a number of improvements to EU-SILC 2011, especially in connection with the re-designing of the data capturing tool in collaboration with MITA. Improvements were also applied to the existing validations, while a number of new filter questions were introduced into the system framework in order to minimise interviewing errors.

The fieldwork for EU-SILC 2011 commenced during the second quarter, with a gross sample size of 4,851 households, of which 17 per cent were contacted for the fourth time, 23 per cent for the third time and a further 25 per cent for the second time. The sample also included 1,712 newly entered households, representing 35 per cent of the gross sample. The repeated contact of households over the years contributes to enhanced reliability of indicators that measure changes in poverty and other social indicators over time.

A net response rate of nearly 82 per cent was achieved for this survey. Data collection was effected by means of Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). Interviewers participating in the data collection were requested to attend two separate briefings covering the EU-SILC questionnaire and the use of the laptop with regard to the data entry program.

Results of this survey are expected to be transmitted to Eurostat by September 2012. A publication comprising all analyses will then follow in 2013.

2010 Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2010)

In the year under review, the Unit engaged in the analysis of the SILC data collection carried out in 2010. Administrative data were used as the main source of information on employee income and social benefits in order to improve quality and reduce burden on respondents. Data were submitted to Eurostat in September, while detailed results will be presented in a planned publication during 2012. The main indicators and the corresponding sampling errors, together with the methodological aspects of the cross-sectional components, were presented in the intermediate quality report submitted to Eurostat.

2009 Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2009)

In 2011, the completion of the longitudinal datasets and the submission of the final quality report led to the finalisation of the EU-SILC 2009 project. The longitudinal datasets covered households from previous EU-SILC surveys covering the period 2006-2009. Indicators measuring poverty and social exclusion were issued in the SILC 2009 publication.

CULTURE

In 2011, the Unit finalised all work linked to the project for the economic impact assessment of Valletta as a cultural city, in collaboration with the Creative Economy Working Group (CEWG) within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment. Following the presentation of survey results among stakeholders, the findings were incorporated in the report *City of Culture: The impact of arts and culture on city life and the national economy*.

In line with its four-year plan on cultural statistics in collaboration with the CEWG, the Unit engaged in data collection in connection with a range of cultural activities. During 2011, surveyed cultural organisations included band clubs and dance schools. In the preparation stage, an effort was made to take into account any requested statistical demands from both internal and external sources.

Culture Participation Survey

In April the Unit conducted the Culture Participation Survey. The survey provides information on participation in most of the cultural activities in Malta. The target audience consisted of the Maltese population aged 16 and over.

The survey was carried out by means of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). For this survey, 1,441 persons were contacted, of whom 70 per cent provided sufficient response. The Culture Participation Survey was conducted using harmonised methods as recommended by Eurostat. Extensive work was carried out in preparation for the scheduled launch of this publication in January 2012.

UNIT C2: LABOUR MARKET AND EDUCATION STATISTICS

LABOUR MARKET

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Data collection associated with the Labour Force Survey has continued to be carried out on a monthly basis. The rotation pattern used for this survey is 2-(2)-2 which implies that a household is contacted four times over a 15-month period. In order to enable the collection of information for the different panels, the Unit is making use of two pools of interviewers, namely an external pool to cover the first panel of respondents and an internal pool of interviewers to cover the second to fourth panels. The first interview is usually carried out by means of face-to-face interviews, whereas most of the follow-ups are conducted by telephone.

The collection of LFS data is being carried out as per Council Regulation 2257/2003⁶. Information is transmitted to Eurostat on a quarterly basis along with

⁶ Regulation (EC) No. 2257/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2003 amending Council Regulation (EC) No. 577/98 on the organisation of a labour force sample survey in the Community to adapt the list of survey characteristics.

a quarterly accuracy report. Transmissions are carried out 12 weeks following the end of the quarter and results are published both at a national and European level. In this regard various indicators generated from this survey are regularly updated on the Eurostat website. The LFS is considered to be the main source of labour market statistics at an international level since it compiles information using harmonised definitions as established by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In addition, this survey is the main source of a number of Europe 2020 targets such as employment rates, early school leavers, and rate of persons completing tertiary education level.

In the course of 2011, the LFS included an ad hoc module on the employment of disabled persons. Information was collected during the first six months of the year and results are expected to be disseminated to Eurostat by the first quarter of 2012. In addition, the results of the 2010 ad hoc module on the reconciliation between work and family life were transmitted to Eurostat by the second half of 2011.

Registered Employment and Unemployment Data

The publication of administrative data on registered unemployed persons as provided by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) was continued in 2011. News releases on this topic were published on a monthly basis. Information included a profile of registered unemployed persons by sex, region, age, duration of unemployment and type of occupation sought.

A separate series of releases containing information on registered employed persons were also published during 2011. Each issue included information on the economic activity of the employed population classified by type of employment (full-time or part-time). Additional figures on the sex, professional status, region and economic sector of full-time employed persons were provided.

Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases

Information relating to accidents at work was published on a quarterly basis throughout the year under review. The Department of Social Security continued to provide additional information. As a result, the NSO was able to have a more comprehensive view of this statistical topic, enabling it to fully comply with EU statistical obligations.

In terms of statistics relating to occupational diseases, no improvement was recorded. However, the NSO is seeking the collaboration of the Department of Health Information and Research in order to improve the quality of information pertaining to such diseases.

Labour Cost Index (LCI)

The Unit compiled the quarterly LCI using forecasts relating to data provided on compensation of employees and hours worked. Hourly labour costs in NACE Rev. 1.1 were converted to NACE Rev. 2 using a conversion matrix. In 2012 the Unit plans to revise the information pertaining to the LCI using compensation of

employees data provided by the National Accounts Unit in NACE Rev. 2, and hours worked using the LFS.

The quality report for the LCI was submitted to Eurostat in September.

Job Vacancy Statistics

The Job Vacancy Survey is carried out in conformity with Commission Regulation 19/2009⁷. Information pertaining to this survey is collected on a quarterly basis and transmitted to Eurostat 70 days after the end of the reference quarter.

The target population for this enquiry comprises of companies employing ten persons or more. Information is collected on a quarterly basis and administrative sources are used to provide some of the variables which are requested for the survey. In this regard, links to internal sources on employment have been established in order to reduce the burden on respondents. In addition, vacancies generated within ministries, government departments and government entities are collected directly from the Management and Personnel Office (MPO). Data from private companies are collected by email, ordinary mail or telephone.

The Unit also compiled and transmitted the first quality report to Eurostat.

Labour Market Policy

The data collection of labour market interventions continued during 2011 with the submission of data relating to 2010. Data relates to descriptive information on each measure, eligibility criteria and a profile of participants.

Structure of Earnings Survey

In the course of 2011 the Unit started work on the Structure of Earnings Survey. This survey, regulated by Council Regulation 530/1999⁸, is carried out once every four years. The target population comprised enterprises employing ten employees or more which operated in industry and service-related activities. Work undertaken during 2011 included the drafting of the questionnaire, selection of responding units and selection of the employee sub-sample. Data collection was carried out by email and ordinary mail. Additional work in connection with this survey is expected to be carried out during 2012.

Structural Indicators

The Unit is responsible for the compilation of a number of structural indicators which include the gender pay gap, annual labour costs and annual earnings. These are worked out on an annual basis using different sources of information. In addition,

⁷ Commission Regulation (EC) No. 19/2009 of 13 January 2009 implementing Regulation (EC) No. 453/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quarterly statistics on Community job vacancies, as regards the definition of a job vacancy, the reference dates for data collection, data transmission specification and feasibility studies.

⁸ Council Regulation (EC) No. 530/1999 of 9 March 1999 concerning structural statistics on earnings and on labour costs.

statistics on minimum wages are compiled on a biannual basis and forwarded to Eurostat.

The Unit is also responsible for the compilation of data related to tax and benefits. These data are provided as part of an OECD questionnaire and are provided on an annual basis. The information provided from this questionnaire is used to calculate the low wage trap, unemployment trap and inactivity trap.

EDUCATION

During 2011 the Unit undertook the collection of data on students and personnel in pre-primary to secondary schools. Administrative records held at the Education Division were used to obtain information on state-run schools operating at pre-primary to secondary level, whereas questionnaires were sent out to independent and church-run schools as in previous years. Data relating to post-compulsory education were provided by another administrative source, namely the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE). For statistics which were not available at the NCHE, the NSO contacted the respondents directly.

Work on education finance statistics was also undertaken. In this regard, data for schools and education-related entities operating in the public sector were obtained from the Public Finance Unit within the NSO. Independent educational institutions provided financial data on their schools. However, provision of administrative data on education finance still has not reached the desired level.

The expected implementation of the new ISCED classification entailed a number of tasks by the Unit. In this regard, the Unit worked in close cooperation with the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) in order to determine the classification of different courses provided by the various educational institutions. Where MQC was not in a position to assist, the NSO was obliged to determine the classification of the course in question by using any information which was available on the internet or from the pertinent educational establishment's prospectus. This cooperation is intended to result in a mapping framework between ISCED and MQF levels so that both classifications would be consistent with each other.

As in previous years, this Office also worked on statistics related to foreign students learning English in Malta. The information was collected by the Education Division using electronic questionnaires. The NSO was subsequently responsible for the checking of the information and the publication of results.

Adult Education Survey (AES)

In the year under review, the Unit finalised all work in connection with the AES conducted in 2009. All data were validated by Eurostat and results emanating from this survey were published on Eurostat's website.

Another AES survey is expected to be conducted during 2012.

Careers of Doctorate Holders

The Unit worked on the compilation of data on doctorate holders. A register of doctorate holders in Malta was created for this purpose by referring to different sources of data. In this regard a number of entities were consulted, including the University of Malta, the Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships Board, the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme Board, and a number of commercial entities.

Data collection was carried out by means of ordinary mail and email. The response rate for this survey was 75 per cent. All data pertaining to this exercise, along with the national methodology template, output tables and technical report, were disseminated to Eurostat during the third quarter. A news release incorporating the survey findings was also published by the NSO in October.

This survey was partly financed by a Eurostat grant.

UNIT C3: INFORMATION SOCIETY AND TOURISM STATISTICS

INFORMATION SOCIETY

The items featuring under this domain include statistics on Post and Telecommunications, the ICT usage and e-Commerce in Enterprises Survey and the ICT usage in Households and by Individuals questionnaire. Data concerning Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are collected as per European Regulation (EC) No. 808/2004⁹ and are comparable with those of other EU Member States.

The data collection process relating to the ICT surveys is part financed by the Eurostat by means of a grant agreement. Statistics concerning post and telecommunications are based on information held by the Malta Communications Authority (MCA).

Census on ICT usage and e-Commerce in Enterprises

This census was carried out in the first quarter and measured the extent of computer and internet usage in enterprises employing a minimum of ten employees. Data collection was first undertaken in 2005 and is carried out annually by means of a postal survey which is supplemented by face-to-face interviews in the case of non-respondent enterprises.

Key topics covered by this questionnaire included the use of e-Commerce and e-Government services, as well as an ad-hoc module on ICT and environment impact in enterprises; the latter module was introduced in 2011. A response rate of 71 per cent was achieved, and the data were subjected to in-depth quality and consistency checks, taking a longitudinal approach over time. The data were then calibrated and submitted to Eurostat by November.

⁹ Regulation (EC) No. 808/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society.

Survey on ICT usage in Households and by Individuals

This survey was carried out in the second quarter with the scope of measuring computer and internet usage in households and by individuals aged 16-74. For the purpose, a stratified random sample of 2,000 individuals was selected. The survey was carried out by a team of NSO part-time personnel through face-to-face interviews. Similar to the ICT Survey in Enterprises, the ICT usage by Individuals Survey was first carried out in 2005 and has since been conducted annually.

Data collection followed a similar pattern to the ICT Survey in Enterprises. Among the topics covered in the questionnaire were the use of e-Commerce and e-Government facilities and individuals' level in e-Skills. The response rate was 74 per cent. Data were duly verified, calibrated and submitted to Eurostat by early December.

Data Dissemination

At a local level key findings of the ICT Survey in Enterprises were published by the NSO in a November news release. A comprehensive publication covering both ICT usage in Enterprises and ICT usage in Households is being compiled and is planned for release in the first half of 2012.

Post and Telecommunications

Throughout 2011, the Unit also took care of the analysis and dissemination of quarterly post and telecommunications statistics which are received from the MCA. The timely dissemination of this information has been made possible by close cooperation with this Authority.

Furthermore, the Unit provided updated information society subscription indices for upload onto the online dissemination database StatDB. Indices are provided for internet, analogue and digital television, as well as fixed and mobile telephone subscriptions. The base year for the indices was updated.

TOURISM STATISTICS

The NSO collects tourism data under European Council Directive 95/57/EC. This framework obliges the NSO to collect information on inbound and outbound tourism, as well as on domestic tourism. The NSO also collects statistics on same-day visitors travelling to Malta on cruise ships. Furthermore, the Unit launched a pilot project to measure the contribution of the private accommodation sector in Gozo. Throughout the year under review, the Unit undertook preparations for the implementation of the new tourism Regulation 692/2011¹⁰.

¹⁰ Regulation (EU) No. 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism and repealing Council Directive 95/57/EC which came into force on 1 January 2012.

Tourstat survey on Inbound and Outbound Tourism

In 2011, the NSO maintained its commitment to deliver accurate and timely tourism statistics to users. The Unit has been carrying out an ongoing frontier survey at the Malta International Airport (MIA) and at the Seaport since 2001. As from 2010, the survey was extended to cover outbound tourists with the variables including country of residence, purpose of visit and expenditure incurred.

The survey is calibrated using MIA administrative data and information from the operators of sea passenger transport. The average response rate was 70 per cent. Outputs include two monthly news releases and monthly/quarterly submissions to Eurostat as per European Council Directive 95/57/EC.

Census on Collective Accommodation

The NSO continued to collect tourism information from the suppliers of tourism services. The main scope is to measure occupancy levels in hotels, guesthouses, apart-hotels and hostels. A census of accommodation establishments is carried out every month, followed by a news release. The response rate is consistently over 90 per cent. Furthermore, the Unit carries out a series of quality and consistency checks on all the data received from hoteliers.

Cruise Passenger Information

The Unit publishes a monthly news release on cruise passenger traffic based on administrative data collected by Transport Malta. These statistics measure same-day visitors in Malta. This is a growing niche in the local tourism market and possesses some unique characteristics. Such data are not mandatory under the European Directive on Tourism; however the NSO recognises the value of this information for local users, and as a component for the future work on Tourism Satellite Accounts.

Survey on Domestic Tourism

The Unit reinforced its efforts to provide information on domestic tourism. Following a pilot exercise, a fully-fledged survey was implemented and results were sent to Eurostat.

Survey on Private Accommodation in Gozo

In the year under review, the Unit undertook a new enquiry with the aim of measuring the private accommodation sector in Gozo. This study was modelled on the accommodation survey carried out among hoteliers, and attempts to measure tourism activity on the sister island from the supply side. The first results of this pilot project are expected to be published in the first half of 2012.

DIRECTORATE D: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Following the retirement of Mr Paul Mifsud, Mr Etienne Caruana was detailed to supervise and coordinate the Resources and Support Services Directorate in an acting capacity. Ms Vanessa Dimech was appointed to manage the Personnel and Budgetary Matters Unit on 1 January, while Mr James Briscoe took over with effect from 11 July.

UNIT D1: PERSONNEL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

PERSONNEL

The overall workforce at NSO comprises 166 persons. Table 1 illustrates that female employees outnumber males by 1.6 to 1, with women accounting for 63 per cent of the total. The statistician grade forms the backbone of the NSO, accounting for 45 per cent of staff: nine Principal Statisticians, 20 Senior Statisticians and 46 statisticians. The Management Team comprises the Director General, three Directors, one Legal Adviser, 18 Managers and one Financial Controller. Although female participation within the Management Team is increasing from year to year, this grade is still dominated by males, with a ratio of 2:1. Other personnel groups include 40 executive staff, 20 clerical staff and seven support staff. Female concentration in the latter three functions is quite significant at a ratio of two females for every male employee.

Table 1. NSO staff members by function: December 2011

Function	Males	Females	Total
Management team	16	8	24
Statisticians	24	51	75
Executive staff	9	31	40
Clerical staff	8	12	20
Support staff	5	2	7
Total	62	104	166

Charts 1 and 2 illustrate characteristics on the composition of NSO personnel. One can note a relatively young workforce, with 76 per cent of personnel under 41 years of age.

Chart 1. Staff distributed by sex and age

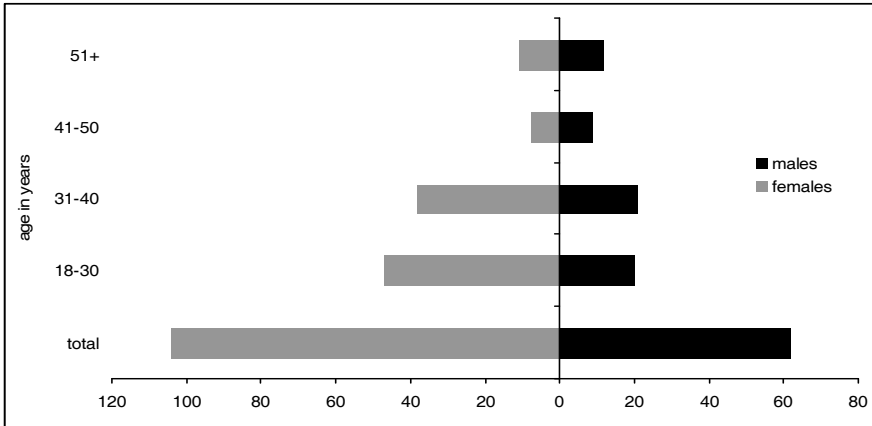
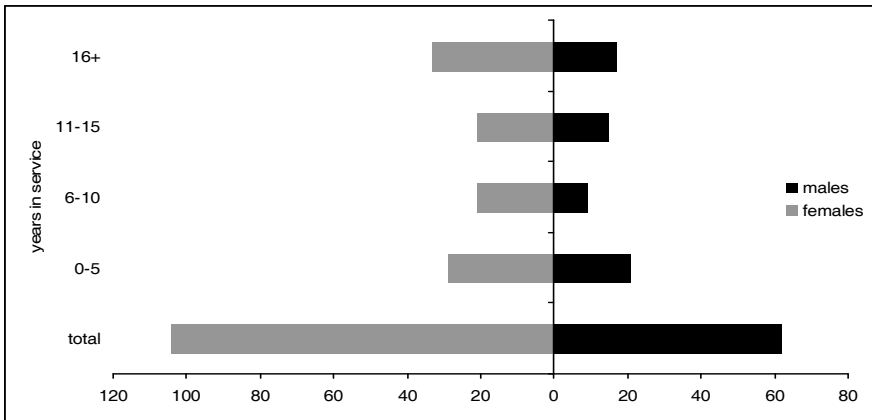


Chart 2. Staff distributed by sex and years in service



As depicted, during the last decade the NSO underwent and still regularly undergoes consecutive staff intakes in possession of a higher educational attainment. However, maintaining a balance between experience and academic achievement is vital for the re-generation of the Office. Chart 2 gives a graphical representation of staff distributed by the number of years in service, thus indicating the experience-spread which illustrates the build-up and inter-temporal continuity. Whereas in recent years the strongest group was the 6-10 year in service bracket, there is now a strong group at both extremes and a balance between the remaining 6-10 and 11-15 year brackets. More than 69 per cent of staff members were recruited since 2000, while about 30 per cent were recruited since 2007. This was in part the result of staff turnover requiring replacement with new graduates.

Chart 3. Staff distributed by highest level of education and years in service

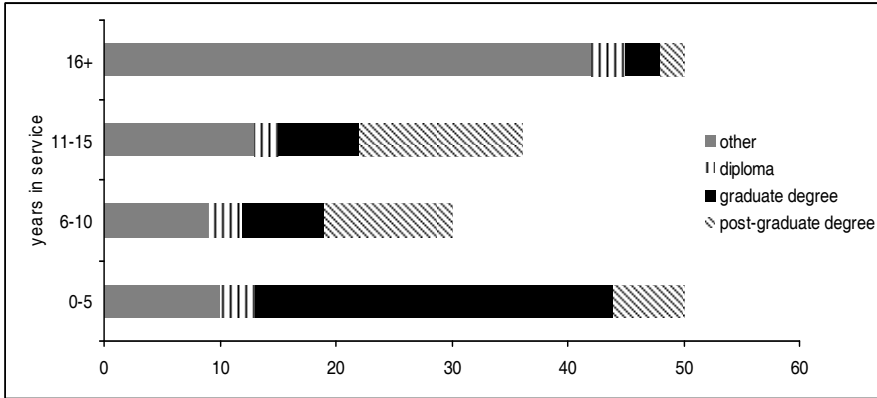


Chart 3 illustrates the relationship between the level of education and work experience at NSO. The majority of graduates are young in terms of experience. New recruits for the post of Statistician required a minimum first degree in Statistics, Economics, Mathematics, Accountancy, Management, Banking and Finance or other related subjects (Second Class as minimum classification). Over 55 per cent of the personnel have more than a post-secondary educational level. Of these, 11 staff members had a relevant diploma certificate, while 48 and 33 possessed graduate and post-graduate attainments respectively.

Table 2. NSO staff members opting for family-friendly measures: 2011

	Males	Females	Office days/wk	Office hrs/wk	Home days/wk	Home hrs/wk	Total hours
Reduced hours	1	14	72.00	422.50	0.00	0.00	422.50
Teleworking	0	8	20.25	162.00	19.75	158.00	320.00
Reduced hours and teleworking	0	12	31.00	170.00	27.00	155.00	325.00
Total	1	34	123.25	754.5	46.75	313	1,067.50

In all, the Office has 35 persons who work on reduced hours, telework or a mixture of both, amounting to 21 per cent of the NSO's total workforce.

Of all applicants who applied for any one of these measures, 12 persons, or 34 per cent, were Statisticians while others were Statistics Executives, Clerks or Interviewers.

The total estimated weekly hours worked by persons who opted for such family-friendly measures stood at 1,068, which is equivalent to the number of weekly hours worked by 27 full-time employees. The total weekly office days worked by these persons stood at 123 out of a total 175 days, equivalent to 25 full-time persons.

TRAINING

Local Training

In 2011, 16 employees attended courses organised by the Centre for Development, Research and Training (CDRT) as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Courses organised by the Centre for Development, Research and Training: 2011

Training type	No. of participants
Excel as Database	1
Europe 2020	4
Managing Teleworkers Workshop	7
Delivering Successful Presentation Course	1
Overcoming Negativity at the Workplace - Workshop for Middle Managers	1
German Basic Knowledge	1
Negotiation and Problem Solving skills workshop for Middle Managers	1
Total	16

The total number of participants for local training courses was 76, as shown in Table 4. Among other courses, the Office once again organised a specific Team-building Training Programme for Managers.

Table 4. Local courses: 2011

Training type	Number of participants	% of Total
ICT-related Training	1	1.3
Excel as Database	1	1.3
Management Development Training	32	42.1
Library Management system	4	5.3
Managing Teleworkers Workshop	7	9.2
Overcoming Negativity at the Workplace - Workshop for Middle Managers	1	1.3
Team-building Training Programme - Leading the Team	19	25.0
Negotiation and Problem Solving skills workshop for Middle Managers	1	1.3
Continuous Development Training	43	56.6
Standard Cost Model Methodology Training	14	18.4
Europe 2020	4	5.3
ISCO 2008	23	30.3
Delivering Successful Presentation Course	1	1.3
German Basic Knowledge	1	1.3
Total 2011	76	100
<i>Total 2010</i>	<i>134</i>	<i>100</i>

Training Abroad

As shown in Table 5, 13 employees attended training and study visits abroad in the year under review. The majority of courses were organised by Eurostat within the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) framework.

Table 5. Training abroad 2011

Training type	Number of participants	% of Total
Methodology	6	46.2
New and advanced technologies for data collection and transmission	1	7.7
Survey Methodology and Sampling Techniques	2	15.4
Seasonal Adjustment and Demetra+	1	7.7
Nomenclatures, Classifications and their Harmonisation	1	7.7
Data Analysis and Data Modelling Course	1	7.7
National Accounts and Public Finance	4	30.8
Taxref Training	2	15.4
Government Finance Statistics Course - Part I	1	7.7
Government Finance Statistics Course - Part II	1	7.7
Other Thematic Training	3	23.1
IEA Energy Statistics Course	1	7.7
International trade in good statistics	1	7.7
Lot 4: Disseminating Statistics: Internet and Publication	1	7.7
Total 2011	13	100
<i>Total 2010</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>100</i>

Official Business Abroad

Table 6 provides a brief outline of NSO's business abroad. The profile comprises three sections: participants by function, type of business attended and the monthly distribution.

Table 6. Travel-related profile: 2010 and 2011

Participation by function	Business trips		Business days	
	2010	2011	2010	2011
Management Team	84	79	151	159
Statisticians and Programmer III	57	51	124	153
Executive Staff	2	1	5	3
Total	143	131	280	315
<i>Description by type</i>				
Committees and Task Forces	16	6	24	10
Conferences and Seminars	6	7	13	46
Council Meetings, GNI and Other Meetings	28	39	52	78
Study Visits and Training	12	13	45	46
Working Groups/Parties and Workshops	81	66	146	135
<i>Distribution by month</i>				
January	4	3	6	4
February	7	7	12	17
March	15	23	29	48
April	14	6	28	12
May	12	16	22	73
June	27	28	58	64
July	5	2	12	3
August	-	-	-	-
September	13	10	23	14
October	17	17	35	40
November	19	11	37	28
December	10	8	18	12

In total, NSO staff attended 131 official trips abroad spread over 315 business days, implying a monthly average of 11 trips or 26 business days. Among these was the opportunity for two statisticians to participate in a three-week seminar held in China, financed by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. The majority of these trips were conducted by the Management Team, reflecting the main type of business abroad, namely Working Groups and Meetings. Junior staff, mainly in the Statistician and Executive grades, were more likely to attend Study Visits and Training Courses. The latter are considered to be vital for the required capacity building of staff members since such training programmes and grant agreements expose participants to specific training sessions delivered by field experts. Together with in-depth learning opportunities, such programmes harness and breed the sharing of ideas and experiences with other international counterparts, mainly among participants from EU Member States.

Table 7 summarises the direct financial burden on the Office related to official business abroad. Although the NSO receives financial support from the European Commission and other institutions to cover travelling expenses in connection with Working Groups and Other Meetings, other expenses such as subsistence allowances and insurances are borne by the NSO. In 2011 the NSO financed 61 per cent of the total costs of all official business abroad, which amounted to €78,231.

Table 7. NSO's travel-related expenses before reimbursement: 2011

Month	Per Diem and other expenses		Travel		Insurance		Total
	No. of days	€	No. of trips	€	No. of persons	€	€
January	4	910	3	995	3	42	1,947
February	23	3,775	7	2,355	7	84	6,214
March	63	11,962	23	7,964	23	280	20,206
April	16	3,356	6	1,906	6	84	5,347
May	91	9,157	16	6,219	16	245	15,621
June	83	16,717	28	14,236	28	363	31,317
July	3	733	2	1,121	2	28	1,882
August	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
September	21	4,202	10	3,017	10	112	7,330
October	46	10,602	17	8,237	17	238	19,077
November	33	6,699	11	4,883	11	154	11,736
December	21	4,229	8	3,390	8	112	7,731
Total	404	72,343	131	54,323	131	1,741	128,406

Grant Agreements

Table 8 lists 17 Grant Agreements that were concluded in 2011, implying projects that were carried out by the NSO and approved by the European Commission. Such agreements are essential for the NSO in view of the ever increasing statistical commitments on the relatively limited resources of the NSO. As indicated in Table 8 the global value of the projects covered by the Grant Agreements concluded in the year under review was €459,821, of which around 30 per cent was financed by the NSO and 70 per cent by the European Commission.

Table 8. Grant agreements concluded in 2011 ...

Grant description	Total outlay	NSO contribution	EU contribution
	€		
Community innovation survey	18,632	5,589	13,043
Support for the development of indicator sets to monitor sustainable development strategies	16,504	4,889	11,615
Community subsidies for user support on European statistics 2009/2010	6,761	2,490	4,271
ICT usage in households and by individuals 2010	29,382	2,938	26,444
Research and development statistics	11,158	3,489	7,669
Introduction of NACE Rev. 2 in National Accounts and improvement in quarterly sector accounts	40,009	19,100	20,909
EU SILC: 2008 operation	180,755	60,246	120,509
Reduction of Asymmetries in Intrastat	24,192	9,439	14,753
Production of PPP data by Member States	21,942	6,905	15,037
Preparation of the implementation of ISCO-08	5,695	1,716	3,979
2010 Labour Force Survey ad hoc module on reconciliation between work and family life	28,712	8,613	20,099
Development of detailed statistics on energy consumption in households	39,950	19,975	19,975

... Table 8. Grant agreements concluded in 2011

Grant description	Total outlay	NSO contribution	EU contribution
	€		
Implementation of the career development of the doctorate holders 2008 (CDH)	18,926	5,690	13,236
ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises and on ICT investment expenditure in 2010	42,596	4,260	38,336
Development of indicator sets for monitoring national SD strategies	16,504	5,880	10,624
Adult education survey	30,864	10,191	20,673
Total - 2011	459,821	148,251	311,570

UNIT D2: EXTERNAL COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION

2011 marked the first full year of operations of the External Cooperation and Communication Unit since the merger between two former units on 21 June 2010. The tasks carried out by the Unit can be broadly classified into information services and desktop activities and cover three main functions:

1. External cooperation;
2. Communication;
3. Dissemination.

EXTERNAL COOPERATION

Parliamentary Questions

The Unit has a coordinating role in the management of Parliamentary Questions (PQs) among the four NSO directorates. The compilation of draft responses to PQs is given the highest priority. During 2011, the Office provided data and information in response to 168 PQs. The distribution among the various remits as at December 2011 is shown in Table 9.

Table 9. PQs forwarded to the NSO in 2011

Directorate	No.
Director General	2
Economic Statistics	37
Business Statistics	29
Social Statistics and Information Society	34
Resources and Support Services	66
Total	168

Of note is the fact that PQs requiring the input of Social Statistics and Information Society have more than doubled over 2010.

Coordination of Grant-based Projects

The Unit has the responsibility to monitor grants, awarded mostly by the European Commission. To this end, the Unit works closely with the technical units, as well as with the Personnel and Budgetary Matters Unit. The main tasks include:

- filling of grant applications in collaboration with the technical project managers;
- submission of applications within the stipulated deadlines;
- dealing with clarifications and follow-up actions required by the European Commission;
- ensuring that deliverables are submitted on time;
- documenting the procedures.

Table 10 details the grant projects which were awarded to the NSO in 2011. It is pertinent to mention that all submitted grant applications in the year under review had to have an estimated contribution by the European Commission of not less than €50,000. In 2011 opportunities for grant projects decreased considerably in comparison with 2010. This threshold was revised down to €25,000 in 2012 following the Director General's intervention.

Table 10. Grants awarded to the NSO in 2011

Reference number	Grant name	Technical unit
50602.2011.002-2011.271	Eurostat grants for 2011 Theme 5.06 - "Science, technology and innovation. Title: "Innovation and R&D statistics"	Business Registers and Public Finance
50904.2011.005-2011.298	Eurostat grants for 2011 Theme 5.09 - Environmental accounts and climate change. Title: "Environmental Accounts"	Environment and Resources
50701.2011.002-2011.396	Eurostat grants for 2011 Theme 5.07 - Information society. Title: "Data collection on ICT usage and ICT Investment/Expenditure 2012	Information Society and Tourism Statistics
20601.2011.003-2011.422	Eurostat grants for 2011 - ESTAT/G-6. Theme 2.06.01 - Harmonised Consumer Price Indices	Price Statistics

International Affairs

The international affairs function of the Unit chiefly involves (1) monitoring the status of EU legislation in progress; and (2) driving and sustaining the developing relations between the NSO, supranational and international organisations including:

1. Eurostat;
2. European Commission and EU-related bodies;
3. National Statistical Institutes;
4. International Monetary Fund (IMF);
5. International Labour Organisation (ILO);
6. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In the course of 2011, the Unit made interventions with regard to developments in EU legislation as presented in Table 11. The principal pieces of legislation treated during the high-level Working Party on Statistics during the year under review were the proposed regulations in respect of the European System of national and regional Accounts (ESA), European statistics on safety from crime, European statistics on permanent crops, and statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods by road. The permanent crops regulation was published in December 2011 with the full title: Regulation (EU) No 1337/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 concerning European statistics on permanent crops and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 357/79 and Directive 2001/109/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Table 11. EU legislation in the making: Instruction notes compiled by the NSO in 2010

Regulation	Council Working Party on Statistics
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on permanent crops	2 February 2011
	9 March 2011
	12 May 2011
	31 May 2011
	22 June 2011
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Environmental Economic Accounts	2 February 2011
	9 March 2011
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European Statistics on Tourism	2 February 2011
	9 March 2011
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods by road	2 February 2011
	5 April 2011
	31 May 2011
	22 June 2011
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union (ESA 2010)	20 September 2011
	12 April 2011
	12 May 2011
	31 May 2011
	22 June 2011
	12 July 2011
	20 September 2011
	11 October 2011
	3 November 2011
	23 November 2011
15 December 2011	
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European statistics on safety from crime	12 July 2011
	20 September 2011
	11 October 2011
	23 November 2011
	15 December 2011

COMMUNICATION

Media Monitoring Service

The Unit provides a press monitoring service in order to measure the extent, quality and accuracy of the coverage of NSO statistical releases and publications in the print and internet-based media. This also includes coverage of Eurostat news releases and publications in local newspapers and on local radio and television stations. In the course of 2011, the Unit monitored an average of 50 coverages per week, taking into account the weekend papers. This estimate excludes a good part of television and radio coverage. Table 12 provides an overview of the recorded NSO presence in the media.

Table 12. Media coverage by statistical domain

Theme	% coverage
Economy and Finance	26.3
Population and Social Conditions	17.0
Industry and Services (incl. ICT and Tourism Statistics)	18.5
Agriculture and Fisheries	3.7
International Trade and Transport	9.4
Environment and Energy	1.1
Census 2011	3.6
Eurostat Mentions	17.0
NSO Mentions and Advertisements	3.3
Total	100.0

An important tool in the media monitoring service is the Knowledge Management portal – KM@NSO – developed in 2009 in collaboration with the IT Systems Unit. This system includes a knowledge repository. Media coverages are attributed to the different units and directorates within the NSO and recorded accordingly in the system.

The Unit also receives occasional requests from media professionals to assist them with information in the preparation of their articles and programmes. Information requests from members of the media are given high priority.

Role in *Economic Survey 2011*

Throughout October-November 2011, the Unit coordinated the submission of data to be included in the *Economic Survey 2011*, a publication which forms part of the annual Government Budget documents. Data were submitted on the following statistical domains:

- Government revenue and expenditure;
- National Accounts data;
- Foreign trade;
- Main tourism indicators;
- Inflation rates and price indices;
- Agriculture and fisheries indicators and indices;
- Balance of Payments;
- Population;
- Social indicators;
- Labour;
- Environment.

DISSEMINATION

Information Requests

The Unit encourages the concept of a single entry point for all statistical information requests. Requests may be 'simple', in which case they are dealt with directly by the unit staff, or 'complex', where reference is made to the technical units. Among other things, a single-entry-point approach ensures fairness and consistency in the application of cost-recovery charges to users who lodge complex requests.

In all, in the year under review, the Unit recorded 2,150 requests through the online request management system and through the unit generic mailbox. Telephonic information requests dealt with by the Unit were estimated at 1,800 in the year under review.

A breakdown, by statistical theme, of the information requests dealt with through the online request management system, is shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Information requests - % share by statistical theme

Theme	% theme
Economy and Finance	11.7
Population and Social Conditions	21.0
Industry and Services (incl. ICT and Tourism Statistics)	16.2
Agriculture and Fisheries	4.1
International Trade and Transport	30.1
Environment and Energy	3.1
Other	13.8
Total	100.0

A breakdown by type of user as regards requests placed through the website reveals that requests lodged by enterprises and students/academics accounted for the largest segments, with nearly 30 per cent apiece of total queries in 2011. Other requests were lodged by ministries and government departments and members of the general public.

Library

In the year under review, the Unit continued to develop the library collection both as regards physical and online resources. In February, the staff members working in the library joined MFEI personnel in sessions of familiarisation with the V-Smart library management system, which were delivered by a representative of V-Smart.

News Releases and Publications

The desktop publishing branch of the Unit is responsible for the coordination and maintenance of the advance release calendar, as well as for the layout and formatting of news releases and publications, including liaising with the providers of printing services. Table 14 shows a time series of the NSO's news release output. A classification by statistical theme is presented in Table 15, which corresponds to the NSO organisational structure as at December 2011.

Table 14. News releases: 2001-2011

Year	Number
2001	124
2002	147
2003	207
2004	249
2005	281
2006	292
2007	207
2008	232
2009	236
2010	249
2011	250
2012	251*

* projected

Table 15. News releases in 2011 - % share by statistical theme

Theme	% theme
Economy and Finance	39.6
Population and Social Conditions	18.8
Industry and Services (incl. ICT and Tourism Statistics)	22.4
Agriculture and Fisheries	8.8
International Trade and Transport	9.6
Environment and Energy	0.8
Total	100.0

Publications issued in 2011 are listed in Table 16. The Unit assumes a coordinating role in cross-unit publications such as the *Malta in Figures* and *Annual Report* series, as well as in special publications such as the concise history of the National

Statistics Office published on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the setting up of the Office in its current form.

Table 16. Publications: 2011

Title	Format
Social Protection: Malta and the EU 2010	Print and online
NSO Annual Report 2010	Print and online
Malta's Statistical Institute: A Concise History 1947-2011	Print and online
Agriculture and Fisheries 2009	CD and online
ICT Usage by Enterprises and Households 2010	Print and online
Statistics on Income and Living Conditions 2009	Print and online
Statistics for the Uninitiated: The Research Road We Make	Print
The Climate of Malta: Statistics, Trends and Analysis 1951-2010	Print and online
Demographic Review 2010	Print and online
Malta in Figures 2011	Print and online

NSO Website

The website has developed into the Office's principal dissemination medium. Virtually all the NSO's published output is available on the web for browsing and download on an unlimited access basis and free of charge. The website administrator within the Unit is responsible for publication uploads, as well as for the StatDB, Sources and Methods and Selected Indicators updates submitted periodically by the technical units. Advances in these activities were registered in the year under review.

At a meeting held on 20 April at the GO offices among the NSO, MFEI officials and GO management, the issue of the NSO/GO support agreement was discussed. The GO management informed NSO that they would cease to provide website support beyond 2011. Accordingly, MFEI set in motion the process for an alternative provider to take over the support function of the NSO website from GO.

The new service provider for support of the current NSO website is Alert Communications Ltd.

Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS)

In the year under review, Malta observed the required timeliness and quality standards in its updates of SDDS data. The pertinent International Monetary Fund report documenting Malta's performance will be issued in April 2012.

Legal Notices

During 2011, the legal adviser supported the Unit in the issuing of two legal notices related to the Office's operations. These are:

L.N. 188 of 2011 Index of Inflation for the Year 2010

L.N. 384 of 2011 Immovable Property Price Index as on 1st April 2011

Participation in Book Fair

Further to a first-ever participation in the Malta Book Fair of 2010, the NSO took part in the 2011 edition held on 9-13 November at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. In addition to serving as an excellent opportunity to display the latest publications by the NSO and Eurostat, the Book Fair was a most appropriate event for publicising the Census of Population and Housing 2011 and for raising awareness on statistics among students and families. The NSO also did well in publication sales, more than doubling the revenue registered in 2010 from this activity.

Other Activities

Throughout the second half of the year under review, the Unit provided support to the Census 2011 Coordinating Committee, especially in connection with communications, awareness-raising, and in the printing of maps handed out to enumerators.

UNIT D3: IT SYSTEMS

The role of the Unit was to support the various units in IT-related matters. Throughout the period under review, the main focus of the Unit remained software development and desktop support. Another fundamental task carried out by the Unit is to research and analyse new technologies that can be exploited by the NSO.

Software Development

A total of 23 software applications were developed by the IT Systems Unit during 2011. Three of the applications were designed for Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The remaining projects consisted of windows-based

applications for data capturing and/or data analysis. There were also four applications, developed in previous years, that required enhancements.

IT Support

The Unit responded to over 300 internal calls for IT support. These were mostly software-related and therefore were immediately settled by means of internal resources. Hardware-related issues were tackled by the respective suppliers. There were also calls for support from the Central Bank of Malta and the Commissioner for Refugees, with regard to the Balance of Payments and REFCOM information systems respectively.

The Unit was also engaged in the maintenance and administration of four servers.

IT Services by External Service Providers

A team from MITA contributed software development services to the NSO. The effort of this team in the course of 2011 concentrated on enhancements and adaptations of existing software.

Eurostat-related Matters

The Unit was also responsible for maintenance of the eDAMIS data transmission portal. This portal is hosted on one of the servers administered by the Unit and is used by the various technical units to transmit data to Eurostat. Other IT tools supplied by Eurostat are supported by staff members working within the Unit.

In September 2011, a Eurostat team visited the NSO to assist the Unit in the implementation of the SDMX reference infrastructure. This tool will be used for the purposes of the European Census Hub project, but can also be deployed in other projects involving SDMX. This places the NSO in a better position to meet the requirements of the forthcoming EU regulation on data and metadata exchange.

In the year under review, staff members from the Unit participated in three international meetings and workshops.

Census of Population and Housing 2011

An intensive effort on the part of unit staff members focused on the Census of Population and Housing carried out in November. The Unit was responsible for all IT-related matters concerning the Census and therefore IT preparations started well in advance. Such tasks included the setting up of a PC network at the Census Office, development of a dedicated website and various software tools, and provision of support during the census period. One of the software applications that were used for the Census was developed by MITA.