

Commitment on Confidence in Statistics

Citizen's Summary

On Thursday 17 May 2018, the Government of the Republic of Malta approved the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics. With this document, the Government commits itself to full support for the development of the Maltese Statistical System, notably the production and dissemination of statistics according to the 15 principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The Code of Practice is a guiding document which binds together the members of the European Statistical System as regards the people, policies, programmes and practices within statistical authorities.

The European Statistical System (ESS) is the partnership between, on the one hand, the statistical authority of the Union, which is the Commission (Eurostat) and, on the other, the national statistical authorities of the EU Member States. National statistical authorities comprise the National Statistical Institutes of Member States and other national authorities responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.

Member States collect data and compile statistics for national and EU purposes. The ESS functions as a network in which Eurostat's role is to lead the way in the harmonisation of statistics in close co-operation with the national statistical authorities. ESS work concentrates mainly on EU policy areas - with the extension of EU policies, however, harmonisation has been extended to nearly all statistical fields. This is a continuous process ultimately aimed to ensure that the ESS provides high-quality statistics - in terms of robustness, reliability and timeliness - to support European and national policies.

To ensure quality in statistics, a legal framework was created. The overarching law on European Statistics is Regulation (EC) 223/2009. In 2015 an amending law - Regulation (EU) 2015/759 - added three new paragraphs in Article 11 concerning Commitments on Confidence. Furthermore, Recital 11 of this amending law states:

The quality of European statistics could be strengthened and the confidence of users reinforced, by involving national governments in the responsibility of applying the European Statistics Code of Practice.

The Commitment on Confidence can be taken as a declaration that the Government will do all in its power to ensure the fundamental principles underlying public statistics, including provision of appropriate and sufficient resources to statistical authorities as well as facilitating conditions to access data from administrative and other sources. Furthermore, citizens are assured of the professional independence of statistical authorities, of the value of official statistics as a public good, and that the rights of respondents in the context of statistical confidentiality continue to be respected.