



Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union



First semester 2010

“European statistics are relevant statistics necessary for the performance of the activities of the Community”

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Why are European Statistics important?

Policy makers use official statistics to take decisions.

The public and media need statistics to evaluate the performance of the economy, the labour market, etc.

National statistics are still important for national purposes in Member States whereas EU statistics are essential for decisions and evaluation at European level.

It is important to harmonize the statistics of the different countries in order to make comparisons among them, and to analyse the convergence in issues such as the income, the labour market, etc.

Thus, we are able to answer this type of questions: Which EU country has a higher female employment rate? What is the inflation differential between Spain and the EU?.





Did you know that...?

1953: The Statistics Division for the Coal and Steel Community is established.

1958: The European Community is founded and the forerunner of Eurostat is established.

1959: The present name of Eurostat for the Statistical Office of the European Communities is adopted.

1960: First Community Labour Force Survey.

1970: The European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA) is published and the general industrial classification of economic activities (NACE) is established.

1989: The Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) is established and the first programme (1989-1992) is adopted.

1995: The statistical bases for the calculation of the Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) is established. It was published for the first time in 1997.

1997: The Council approves the “Statistical Law” (Regulation 322/97).

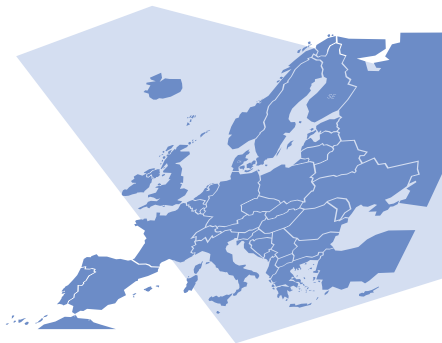
1999: Entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam. This Treaty added for the first time a reference to statistics in article 285 (measures for the production of statistics).

2001: The Flash estimate of HICP is published for the first time.

2004: Eurostat started to disseminate statistical data in its web site free of charge, except microdata for research purposes.

2005: The European Statistics Code of Practice is established.

2009: Regulation 223/2009 of the Council and the European Parliament on European Statistics is approved. This Regulation replaces the “Statistical Law” of 1997. The European Statistical System Committee is created on replacement of the SPC.



The European Statistical System (ESS) is a partnership between the Community statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), the national statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics.

The ESS also coordinates its work with European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, candidate countries, other Commission services, the European Central Bank (ECB) and international organisations such as the OECD, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Role of Member States

The national statistical authority designated by each Member State as the body responsible for coordinating all activities at national level for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics (the NSI) shall act as the contact point for Eurostat on statistical matters. The relationship between Eurostat and Member States is articulated through various forums: Committees, Directors Groups, Working Groups, Task Forces, etc.

European Statistical System Committee

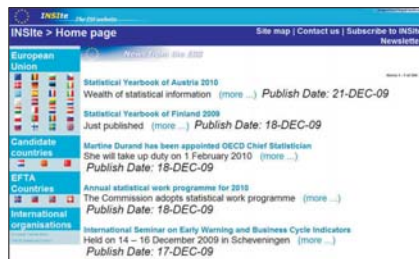
The core of the ESS is the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC), which provides professional guidance to the ESS for developing, producing and disseminating European Statistics. The ESSC meets up to 4 times a year, it is chaired by the Commission and involves the presidents/general directors of the national statistical offices of Member States and EFTA countries.

DGINS Conference

One of the most important forums of the ESS is the Conference of General Directors of the National Statistical Institutes (DGINS), held once a year in one of the Member States in order to discuss issues related to the statistical programme and strategic topics. The first DGINS Conference was held in Luxembourg in 1953.

INSite: ESS website

INSite is the ESS website. This freely accessible website was launched in 2007. It enables the exchange of experiences and information between Eurostat and national statistical offices of Member States, candidate countries and EFTA countries.





Eurostat, situated in Luxembourg, is the Statistical Office of the European Union. It is a Directorate-General of the European Commission, which currently reports to the Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner. Its task has been increasing over the years.

Around 900 people work for Eurostat: officials, experts from Member States and other staff. Just over 4% of them comes from Spain.



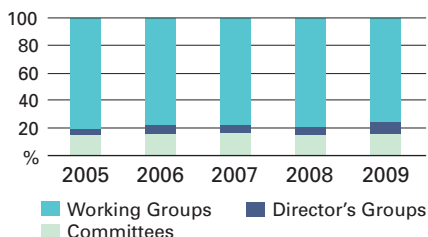
Eurostat's mission is to provide the EU with a high-quality statistical information service.

To this end Eurostat shall:

- a) conduct research on statistical methodology and technologies;
- b) promote the adoption of Community statistical standards by Member States;
- c) advise and support Member States on statistical matters;
- d) compile statistical information, undertake analysis and provide technical explanation to avoid erroneous analysis;
- e) collect statistics required for Community statistical purposes;
- f) reinforce the cooperation with and between national statistical authorities;
- g) cooperate with international organizations and help third countries in the improvement of their statistical systems;
- h) upgrade the professional statistical knowledge and skills of Commission staff working in the field of Community statistics.

Eurostat's relations with Member States are articulated on the basis of different discussion forums, mainly coordinated by Eurostat and composed of experts from the statistical offices of Member States. In 2009, it held about 120 meetings including Committees, Directors Groups and Working Groups.

Meetings within ESS* (%)



* Task Forces and other statistical forums are not included.



Statistics in the Treaty on the European Union

The legal basis for statistics is Article 338 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), ex art. 285 TEC. Therefore, almost the whole of the statistical regulations adopted by the Council and the European Parliament is based on this article.

Article 338 TFEU

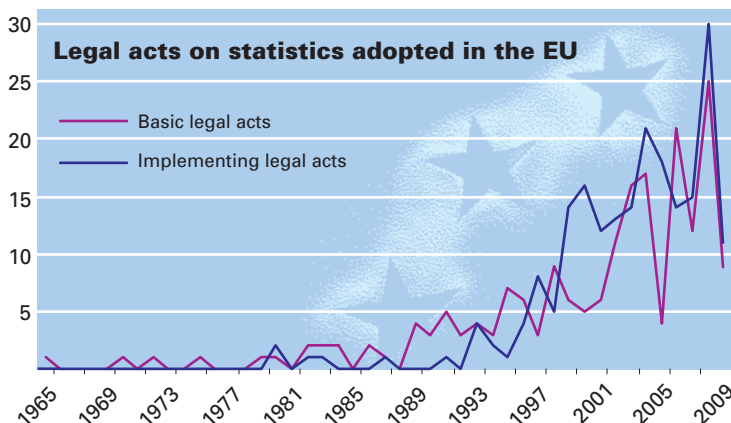
1. Without prejudice to Article 5 of the Protocol on the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank, the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall adopt measures for the production of statistics where necessary for the performance of the activities of the Union.
2. The production of Union statistics shall conform to impartiality, reliability, objectivity, scientific independence, cost-effectiveness and statistical confidentiality; it shall not entail excessive burdens on economic operators.

The “Statistical Law”: Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Statistics

The Statistical Law establishes a legal framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.

In compliance with the principle of subsidiarity and in accordance with the independence, integrity and accountability of the national and the Union authorities, **European statistics are relevant statistics necessary for the performance of the activities of the European Union.**

The European statistical work programmes provide the framework for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. The number of statistical binding legal acts is being increased in accordance with the establishment of the programme and there are currently around 400 binding acts.



The Institutions of the European Union and the legislative process



The Institutions of the European Union are:

The European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors.

The *Treaty of Lisbon* recognizes, for the first time, the European Council and the European Central Bank as institutions.

Legislative procedure in Statistics

The EU legislative powers are distributed among three institutions: **the Commission, the Council** and the **European Parliament**.



The Commission

“It exercises the right of the legislative initiative, in most cases, preparing the legislative proposals.”

Therefore, the European Parliament and the Council usually adopt the legal acts after receiving the proposals from the Commission.

The Council

“It is the main legislative body.”

It may adopt the basic legal acts by itself, although in most cases it adopts the acts together with the European Parliament.

The European Parliament

“It is co-legislator with the Council.”

It always adopts the basic legal acts with the Council.

The legal basis for European statistics proposals is Article 338 TFEU which establishes the ordinary legislative procedure (previous co-decision) for the adoption of the EU statistical basic legal acts.

Did you know that...?



About 3/4 of EU legislation has been adopted by this procedure.



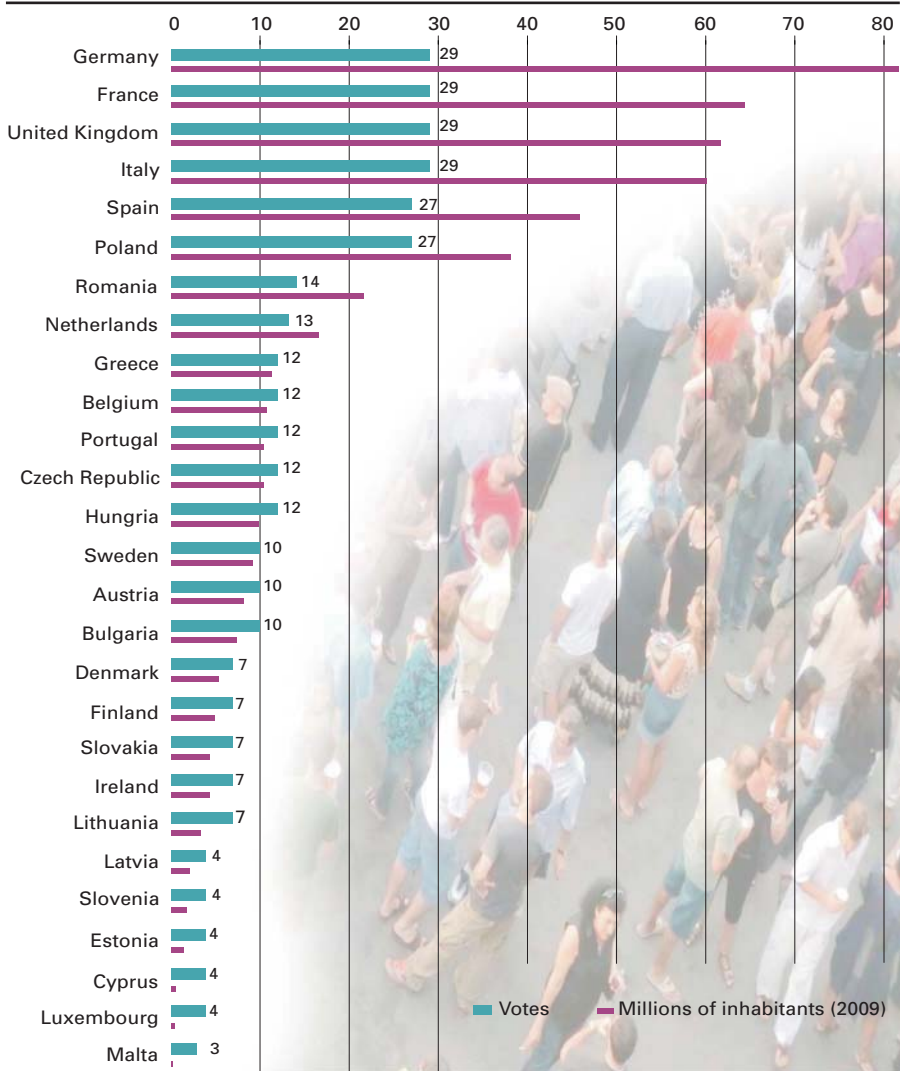
In most cases the Council adopts acts by qualified majority of Member States: a minimum of 255 votes out of 345 (73.9%) and at least 62% of the population.



It is a democratic process where the European Parliament (EP) and the Council act on equal terms, and the acts are adopted on a double legitimacy of the citizens (EP) and countries (Council).



Qualified majority*: Votes weighting and population



*A minimum of 255 votes out of 345 (73.9%) is required to reach a qualified majority. In addition:
- A majority of Member States must approve the decision, and
- Any Member State may ask for confirmation that the votes cast in favour represent at least 62% of the EU's total population.

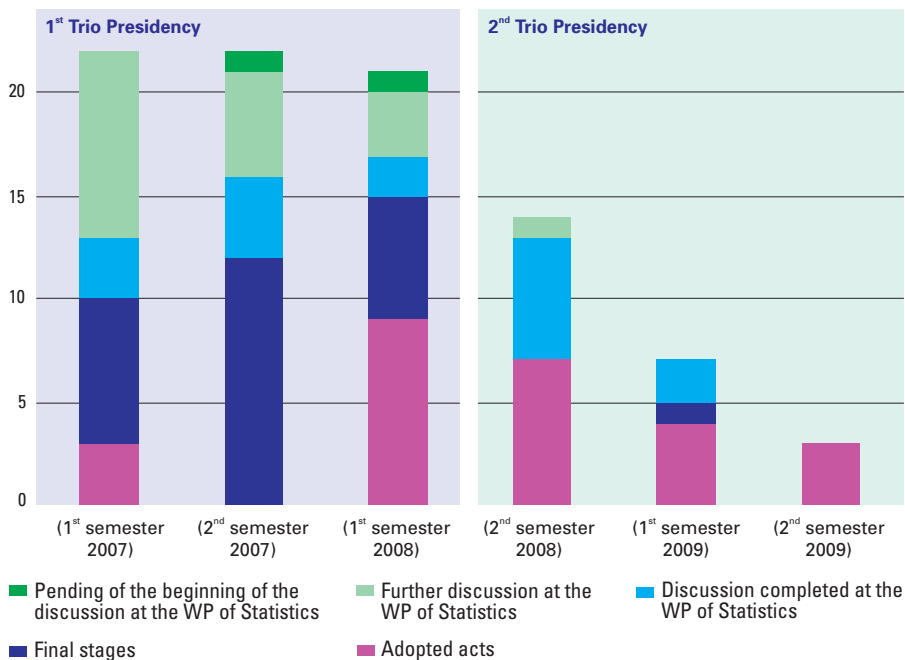


In September 2006 the Council of the European Union amended its Rules of Procedure in order that: every 18 months, the three Presidencies due to hold office shall prepare, in close cooperation with the Commission, a draft programme of Council activities for that period.

The figure of the Presidency in Trio has the objective of reinforcing the continuity of the Council's activities and of giving a longer durability to the initiatives processed at the Council.

The legislative dossiers on Statistics are usually discussed at the Working Party (WP) of Statistics.

Legislative Dossiers of the 1st and 2nd Trio Presidency by semester



The first Trio Presidency consisted of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia. During these 18 months a total of 30 legislative dossiers related to statistics were discussed. The second Trio Presidency, held by France, Czech Republic and Sweden, discussed a total of 14 legislative dossiers related to statistics.

Spain, together with Belgium and Hungary, constitute the third Trio Presidency that covers the period January 2010 to June 2011. This Presidency in Trio is going to share a common logo during the next 18 months.





Spain assumes for the fourth time the rotary Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the EU during the first semester of 2010.

Our country has held the EU Presidency on three occasions:

January-June 1989

July-December 1995

January-July 2002

The Presidency holds a fundamental role in the organisation of the Council's work, especially in the process of political and legislative decision-making.

In particular, the Presidency organizes and manages the meetings, and draws up commitments capable of solving difficulties in a satisfactory way for all Member States.

The Council of the EU is chaired every six months by a different Member State following a schedule that has been established until the year 2020, and that takes into account the following criteria: alphabetical order, population and geographical situation. This means each Trio Presidency comprises a small, medium and large country, as regards the number of inhabitants.

The Spanish Presidency will encourage :

- 1 The implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice and the improvement of the quality, reliability and transparency of statistical products and processes.
- 2 Policies aimed to meet the needs for statistical information within the framework of the reduction of burden, promoting the use of new information and communication technologies.
- 3 Production of official statistics, focussing on statistical information demands.

Furthermore, it is expected to deal with a series of legal acts related to the production of official statistics on tourism, environmental accounts, permanent crops and carriage, among others.





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