

Implementation of the amendment to Regulation 223/2009 and the coordination role of the National statistical institutes

Session: *Governance and coordination of the National Statistical System in the enlargement and ENP-East countries*

*Bojana Radojevic,
Statistical office of Montenegro, Podgorica, Montenegro;
bojana.radevic@monstat.org*

Abstract

Law on official statistics and official statistical system of Montenegro (Statistical Law) gives to Statistical office of Montenegro (MONSTAT) explicit responsibility for coordinating the National Statistical System. Montenegro has a comprehensive suite of instruments to operate a National Statistics System (NSS) in an effective manner. This suite includes the Statistical Law, the five-year Development Strategy of official statistics, the five-year Programme of official statistics, the Memorandum of understanding between MONSTAT and other official producers and the MONSTAT Annual Plan of official statistics.

Furthermore, Article 8 of the new Law gives MONSTAT a leading role in the coordination of the NSS, explicitly referring to coordination of official statistics as one of MONSTAT's activities.

During 2015, coordination role is empowered on effective way through follow instruments:

Been formed Sector for coordination of statistical data sources, which coordinates with the official statistical system at the national level. Activities in the sector relating to:

- Coordination and cooperation with producers of official statistics;
- Coordination and cooperation with scientific research institutions, universities...;
- Coordination the preparation of legislation, secondary legislation of the statistical system, (the Law on Statistics, Development Strategy, a five-year Program of official statistics, the Memorandum of understanding, the Annual Plan, the Report on the realization of the Annual Plan, Calendar of publishing statistical data) and memorandums;
- Establishment of cooperation with administrative data sources and other relevant institutions in charge of keeping administrative records;
- Coordination of Council of Statistical System;
- Consultation with users in order to expand the user community and
- Other activities related to coordination of statistical system.
- Adopted two procedures which regulate coordination of statistical system:
 - Procedure of accession of statistics in the system of official statistics of Montenegro;
 - Procedure on the use of administrative data sources for the purposes of official statistics.

Keywords: coordination of the NSS, cooperation, produces, quality.

1. Description of the National statistical system of Montenegro

1.1. Legislation

The main legal act regulating statistics is the Law on Statistics (Official Gazette of Montenegro No 18/12 of 2012). It was last amended in 2012 to strengthen the implementation of the CoP and to assure compliance with EU Regulation 223/2009 on European Statistics. The law establishes the general principles for the organization of official statistics, one of which is “objectivity and professional independence from political and other interest groups”. It defines the coordination role of Statistical office of Montenegro (MONSTAT) and the scope of the Official Statistics Work Programme (OSWP), and stipulates the key tasks and duties of the Other National Authorities (ONAs) which produce statistics. It also establishes a mandate for data collection, sets out the rights and duties of respondents in providing data, and regulates the protection and dissemination of statistics. The OSWP, which is coordinated and prepared annually by MONSTAT, plays a central role. Article 35 of the law gives MONSTAT the right of access to administrative registers if they are needed for implementing the OSWP. Businesses are obliged to respond to surveys free of charge according to article 29 of the law.

1.2. Statistical Council

The Law on Statistics also established the Statistical Council as an advisory body to MONSTAT. The Council considers the key issues relating to the OSWP, the strategy, the organization and methodology of statistics, the use of administrative registers, development and improvement of official statistics system and international cooperation etc. Director General of MONSTAT is the member of the Council and consists of 17 members, representing state and agencies managing statistics, universities, non-government organizations, public organizations, business representative organizations, and the media

1.3. Mission and strategy

The mission of MONSTAT is “*to provide quantitative and representative information on economic, demographic, social and environmental issues in Montenegro to all users in accordance with the internationally defined methodology and highest professional standards. Data for national purposes and international dissemination should be provided at minimum costs*”.

The main trends of MONSTAT’s activity are laid down in its five-year strategy. The current strategy covers the period 2014–2018 and is aimed at the development and improvement of reliable, timely and comparable statistical information, with a particular focus on full harmonization of official statistics with the EU laws in the area of statistics until 2018. The MONSTAT strategy defines the goals and expected results as well as the indicators measuring the progress in their achievement. For purpose of the medium-term planning of the development of official statistics, the Programme of Official Statistics has been prepared for the period 2014 – 2018, which is based on the elaborated concept of the statistical product. The Annual Survey Plan, which is derived from the Programme, is a short-term document elaborating statistical activities up to the level of statistical surveys.

1.4. Head of MONSTAT

The head of the office shall be appointed, according to the Law on State Administration, by the Government for a term of five years, upon proposal of the competent Minister, and on the basis of an open competition. Qualifications required for a head of an administration body as well as reasons for an early dismissal of a civil servant in a management position are laid down in the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees (Official Gazette of Montenegro No 50/08 of 2008).

1.5. Organization structure

The administrative structure of MONSTAT consists of 5 sectors – supported by 18 statistics divisions, and 5 supporting divisions (dissemination, quality, international cooperation, project, legal, etc.). The headquarters are located in Podgorica. The Director General supervises these sectors either directly or through Deputy Director Generals: the First Deputy

Director General, responsible for macroeconomic statistics, and four Deputy Director Generals (responsible for business/agriculture statistics, social statistics/demography, IT/dissemination and coordination).

According to Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Description of Statistical Office of 2014, the maximum allowable number of employees for MONSTAT is 200, though at the end of 2015 the actual number of active staff was 103.

1.6. National Statistical System (NSS)

The NSS comprises MONSTAT (which produces over 75% of the country's official statistics) and 9 ONAs. National statistics systems of Montenegro covered are the following producers of official statistics:

- Statistical Office of Montenegro, (MONSTAT);
- Central bank of Montenegro;
- Ministry of Finance;
- Other producers of official statistics determined by a Program of official statistics.

Other producers of official statistics, which are determined by OSWP for 2014-2018, are: Institute of Public Health, Customs Administration, Department of Public Revenues, Securities Commission, Health insurance fund of Montenegro, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of Montenegro and Ministry of Science.

Statistical office is the main holder and disseminator of statistical data, as well as expert holder, organizer and coordinator of a system of official statistics, and presents official statistics of Montenegro in the International Statistical System.

All producers of official statistics are obliged to, while collecting, producing, processing and disseminating of statistical data, apply principles of official statistics, as well as methodologies and standards for production of statistics within own competence, with prior obtained consent from Statistical office, for the production of transparent and internationally comparable data,

in accordance with this law. MONSTAT has defined the procedure¹ for accession to the statistical system, which indicates the open system for cooperation.

1.7. Official Statistics Work Programme - OSWP (five years document)

The five years OSWP consists of a list of statistical activities assigned to MONSTAT and ONAs. All statistical works carried out by MONSTAT and ONAs are reflected in the Programme. The compilation of the OSWP is coordinated by MONSTAT, which is also mandated by Law of statistics. OSWP specifies for each activity, the authority responsible, the legal background, a brief description, the periodicity, the method of execution, the level of geographic breakdown, the deadline for submission of results, and the international standards and regulations. There are 289 statistical activities in the Programme, of which 237 will be performed by MONSTAT 10 by the Central Bank of Montenegro, 5 by the Ministry of finance 37 and by ONAs. MONSTAT also prepares the implementation Report on the OSWP in last year specified for implementing the Programme.

1.8. Annual Plan of Official Statistics

The Annual Plan of Official Statistics is derived from the Programme as a short-term document which provides a more detailed elaboration of the statistical activities for the relevant year. Prepared in cooperation with ONAs latest by 10 June of preceding year and adopted by the Government latest by 1 December of the preceding year upon prior opinion of the Council. There is a report on implementing the Annual Plan which is reviewed and approved by the Government.

1.9. Press release calendar of statistical data

Article 50 of the Law indicates that official statistics producers (MONSTAT and ONAs) shall be obliged to prepare and maintain a calendar of statistical data dissemination with the data on

¹ *Procedure of accession of statistics in the system of official statistics of Montenegro*

type of survey and dates of statistical data dissemination, no later than 20th December of the current year for the following year, to be posted on the internet page of the competent body.

1.10. Dissemination

MONSTAT publishes their statistics on their own website www.monstat.org. Publication is in line with the release calendar, which covers one year and is published at the end of the preceding year. All statistics of MONSTAT are published at the standard release time of 11 am. The statistical data must be at the same time and equally available to all users.

2. Governance and coordination of the National Statistical Systems in Montenegro

Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 is the basic legal framework for the functioning of the European Statistical System and for all sectoral legislation for the production of European statistics. It defines statistical principles and fixes the respective Member States' obligations. The compliance with this Regulation is a necessary condition for maintaining confidence in European statistics and, consequently, for the accuracy and credibility of the Union's policy measures based on the information contained in European statistics.

The Commission's proposal for amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 was adopted on April 2015 with four main objectives, namely to strengthen the professional independence and the coordinating role of NSIs, to improve the access to administrative records, as well as to ensure political support to the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice by means of so-called Commitments on Confidence in Statistics (CoC). The proposal was debated during almost three years before political agreement was reached.

Montenegro have comprehensive suite of instruments to operate a National Statistics System (NSS) in an effective manner. This suite includes the Statistical Law, the Development Strategy, and the five-year Programme, the MONSTAT Annual Plan, Press Release calendar

and Annual report. Furthermore, Article 8² of the Law gives MONSTAT a leading role in the coordination of the NSS, explicitly referring to coordination of official statistics as one of MONSTAT's activities.

All the necessary statutory mechanisms for coordination of the statistical system are therefore in place. The coordination role is strengthened by the involvement of the *Statistical Council* and new *Sector for coordination of statistical data sources*. Within the Sector has four departments including the Department for Coordination of statistical data sources which is responsible for coordination of statistical system on national level. Responsibility of Department is:

- Coordination and cooperation with producers of official statistics;
- Coordination and cooperation with scientific research institutions, universities, the academic community;
- Coordination the preparation of legislation, secondary legislation of the statistical system, (the Law on Statistics, Development Strategy, a five-year Program of official statistics, the Memorandum of understanding, the Annual Plan, the Report on the realization of the Annual Plan, Calendar of publishing statistical data) and memorandums;
- Establishment of cooperation with administrative data sources and other relevant institutions in charge of keeping administrative records;
- Coordination of Council of Statistical System;
- Consultation with users in order to expand the user community and
- Other activities related to coordination of statistical system.

² MONSTAT main holder and disseminator of statistical data, as well as responsible professional body, organiser and coordinator of official statistics system, and it shall represent the official statistics of Montenegro in the international statistical system.

2.1. Cooperation with producers of official statistics

Cooperation with the MONSTAT and ONAs develops and towards on the implementation CoP, not only in coordination and cooperation in implementing the Development Strategy of Official Statistics, Programme and Annual Plan of Official Statistics, Report on implementing the Programme and Annual Plan.

According to that MONSTAT organized a one-day seminar "*Statistical system of Montenegro*" for the Institute of Public Health. The Public Health Institute is part of the statistical system of Montenegro, other producer of official statistics in the field of public health. Special attention at the seminar dedicated to the application of the Code of Practice of official statistics with other producers of official statistics, in this case the Public Health Institute.

2.2. Cooperation with administrative data sources

MONSTAT also has the authority to take part in all activities related to setting up new or modifying the existing administrative data sources or in activities related to sources whose data are based on continuous monitoring and observation, and which are relevant for the official statistics. Until now MONSTAT signed 12 Memorandum of Understanding with holders of administrative data: **Custom authorities of Montenegro** (2004) - custom data, **Ministry of Interior and Public Administration** (2009)-internal and international migration, **Ministry of Interior and Public Administration** (2010)-statistics of birth and death, **Tax Authorities of Montenegro** (2010)-data for business register, salaries and employment, **Ministry of finance of Montenegro** (2010)-macroeconomic data, **Agency for Environmental Protection** (2011,2012)-waste statistics, environment, **Ministry of agriculture** (2013)-data of agriculture, **Central bank of Montenegro** (2014) - macroeconomic data, **Judicial Council of Montenegro** (2015)-justice statistics, **Ministry of Education** (2015) - education statistics, **The State Prosecution** (2015)-justice statistics, **Ministry of Interior and Public Administration** (2015)-crime statistics, **Agency for electronic media** (2015)-electronic media, **Agency for electronic communication and post activities**-(2015).

In the negotiation process is trilateral agreement between the three producers of official statistics (MONSTAT, Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank) in the context of the implementation of the ESA 2010 methodology.

According to improve coordination MONSTAT prepare *Procedure on the use of administrative data sources for the purposes of official statistics*.

2.3. Coordination and cooperation with the academic community

MONSTAT has a good relationship with the academic community, including long-standing cooperation with research institutions. Each year several undergraduates spend time as interns in MONSTAT, and many of these go on to apply for vacancies (CoP Indicator 7.5). Some students prepare theses on methodological topics arising at MONSTAT.

MONSTAT signed Memorandum of cooperation with University Donja Gorica (UDG) in field to improved statistical knowledge and promotion of official statistics. Also, MONSTAT is committed to the strengthening administrative capacities through the continuous development of human resources, especially the last few years. It was strengthened the management structure with 3 assistants who are master in the field of statistics.

At the level of the institute 12 employees are with master's degrees in the field of statistics and economics.

In continuously since 2010 with the support of EUROSTAT implement a training program for employees in EUROSTAT or NSI (internship program), 20% of employee's successfully completion of training.

2.4. The way forward

The statistical legislation for European statistics – Reg. 223 sends a strong signal to producers of official statistics and users of European Statistics. Montenegrin Law of statistics is full in line with Reg. 223 and UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and broadly in accordance with European Statistics Code of Practice.

New Department of national coordination manages various tasks that are necessary for the development and reporting on the Development Strategy, the Programme for the five-year and annual plans.

Therefore, next steps in cooperation are:

- Stronger use of administrative sources in view of reduction of expenses and burden on respondent units;
- Promoting cooperation with ONAs and other data producers regard to implement the principles in order to build a common quality of official statistics, which increases the visibility and promotion official statistics.