

ESSC 2017/33/EN

33rd Meeting of the European Statistical System Committee

Luxembourg

17th and 18th May 2017

Final minutes

INTRODUCTION

The Chairperson of the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC), Ms Mariana Kotzeva, welcomed all the participants to the 33rd ESSC meeting and the 91st EEA Conference.

In the name of the ESSC, she also welcomed Mr Mart Mägi who took over the role of Director General of Statistics Estonia as of the 10th of April 2017.

On the other hand, farewells were wished to Mr Dieter Sarreither, whose date of retirement from the position of President of DESTATIS was announced to be October 2017.

The Chairperson of the ESSC bid farewell in absentia to Mr George Georgiou who retired as Director of CYSTAT on the 1st of May 2017. She also welcomed his temporary replacement, Mr Karageorghis, as acting Director.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/1

Commission Regulation (EU) amending Regulation (EC) No 1099/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on energy statistics, as regards the updates for the annual and monthly energy statistics

In line with the Commission's Better Regulation Agenda, the consolidated version of the above draft Commission Regulation was published on the dedicated Web Portal for a 4 week feedback period (02/02/2017 – 02/03/2017) in order to collect the stakeholders' views.

Follow-up: Eight (8) comments were received (details of the public consultation can be found in Annex II of the document ESSC/2017/33/1 - http://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2017-584225/feedback_en).

A. Presentation

1. Eurostat explained that the draft proposal introduces updates for the annual and monthly energy statistics which are crucial due to the dynamic nature of energy statistics, notably in relation to the fast pace of technological progress and the importance of providing data to monitor the development of EU energy policies, in particular the Energy Union.
2. In addition, the adjustments aim at following on market developments and obtaining more relevant data, especially in the area of renewable energy sources. Eurostat described the draft act as being the compromise result of multiple rounds of consultation and exchanges internally within the European Commission, with international organisations and with the Member States at different levels.
3. Eurostat specified that the act includes several technical improvements, like: the update of the definitions of some products and flows to ensure comparability at international level; the requirement for more detailed information in renewable energy sources; and enhanced harmonisation of reporting definitions with the Energy Efficiency Directive as well as between monthly and annual reporting.
4. Eurostat thanked the ESSC for its work on this act and expressed its confidence that a positive vote will contribute to further improving energy statistics in times when relevant and accurate data are crucial to support EU policy-making.

B. Discussion

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C. Opinion

1. None of the Member States voted against.
2. None of the Member States abstained.
3. All of the represented Member States voted in favour. In favour: 28 Member States representing a population of 100%.
4. EEA/EFTA was in favour. Switzerland abstained.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/2

Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2018 and priority setting

A. Presentation

1. Eurostat indicated the ESSC that the 2018 AWP will be the first programme to implement the extended European Statistical Programme (ESP) 2018-2020 that is currently undergoing the ordinary legislative procedure. It was also explained that the proposed 2018 strategic priorities take into account the comments of the Member States to the version of the document presented at the November 2016 ESSC meeting.
2. The political and legal context of the 2018 strategic priorities has been revised to highlight the link of the 2018 AWP with the objectives of the extended ESP 2018-2020. Eurostat expressed its conviction that the AWP underlines the fundamental importance of trusted European statistics to inform citizens and political debates.
3. The Member States were invited to provide detailed written comments on the 2018 AWP until the 23rd of June. The 2018 AWP would eventually be published and transmitted to the ESSC, the European Parliament and ESAC as soon as it is approved by the Commission.
4. Eurostat also presented the 2016 Report on Priority Setting, listing the proposals for repealing or modifying legal acts. It was argued that although in 2016 no proposal was made for stopping certain voluntary data collections, a number of actions were undertaken with the aim of reducing burden, namely in agricultural and water/forestry statistics, transport statistics, social statistics, business statistics and others.
5. Eurostat acknowledged that, under the current mechanism for priority setting, the ESSC had not succeeded in significantly and sustainably reducing the costs and burden for the ESS. Whilst mentioning the cost assessment exercise led by the Resource Directors' Group (RDG), aiming at supporting priority setting, Eurostat invited the Committee to have a broader reflection on the future approach in this regard.

B. Discussion

1. A number of Member States emphasised the importance of using the AWP to communicate to users the scale of innovation and modernisation introduced by the ESS, as well as the challenges being faced by the system (such as access to new data sources). It was also argued that the efforts undertaken in the RDG on cost estimates of statistical products should be better supported by the Member States.
2. A number of Member State representatives confirmed Eurostat's conclusion regarding the list of negative priorities. They called for an ESSC reflection on how to improve the situation and suggested mandating the Partnership Group (PG) to establish a list of ideas for a new approach to priority setting and increased funding in the context of the AWP.
3. One Member State emphasised that any discussion on priority setting should also include key stakeholders. Other delegations made specific suggestions to different Annexes. Eurostat reiterated its invitation to all Member States to send their detailed comments on the AWP.

4. The ECB manifested its concern about the possibility of the discontinuation of the GDP national data release at t+45. In this regard one delegation advocated that the change from t+45 to t+30 should be based on a tested mature process. Eurostat reminded the ESSC that its analysis (undertaking over two years before launching and ever afterwards) shows that there are no quality differences between t+30 and t+45 at the level of EU GDP. At the same time Eurostat acknowledged that this may be different at national level and reassured that a final decision would be taken by the Directors of Macroeconomic Statistics (DMES) on the precondition that the coverage of country information at t+30 would be the same as that as at t+45 before the change was made.
5. One ESSC member mentioned the lack of clear criteria to better differentiate between European and "other" statistics in the catalogue of products. Eurostat proposed a further reflection on this issue in the next meeting of the Task Force on the implementation of amended Regulation 223. Another delegation suggested that the AWP include a separate part dedicated to the indicators for the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Eurostat replied that at this stage this would be inconsistent with the structure of the current ESP.

C. Opinion

1. The ESSC expressed overall support for the draft Annual Work Programme 2018 (AWP). Several ESSC members expressed concerns on the level of ambition in the light of resource constraints at national level. Some members were of the opinion that the strategic priorities should better capture the innovation and modernisation efforts undertaken by the ESS, emphasise the user perspective and challenges relating to access to data.
2. Some specific issues with respect to the relation between European statistics and the catalogue of products will be further clarified by the Task Force on the implementation of amended Regulation (EC) 223/2009.
3. The ESSC took note of the report on priority setting 2016 and the proposals for priority setting and simplification in 2018. The ESSC welcomed the Eurostat initiative to discuss the future approach to priority setting and underlined the importance of finding a more effective mechanism in the future to adequately balance resources and new demands. Eurostat will reflect on how to best take this work forward.
4. The ESSC was invited to send detailed comments on the AWP 2018 and the proposals for priority setting 2018, by the 23rd of June 2017. These will be considered when finalising the AWP.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/3

Update of the Gross National Income at market prices (GNI) Regulation (Reg. 1287/2003)

A. Presentation

1. Eurostat reminded the ESSC that in 2013 it had given a positive opinion concerning the update of the GNI Regulation. However, this had to be put on hold while awaiting for the ratification of the Own Resources Decision, which at the time was its preferred legal basis. After the ratification, the Commission's Legal Service proposed that Article 338 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) should be the legal basis. This implied the application of the more lengthy co-decision procedure.
2. The main differences between the proposal presented on the day and the one in 2013, are: the transition to ESA 2010; the synchronisation of the data transmission date for GNI with that for the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) and that of the National Accounts (NA); and the replacement of the GNI Committee by an expert group. Indeed, the ESSC was informed that a special expert group would be set up to assume the current tasks of the Gross National Income Committee (GNIC), with the exception of comitology powers.
3. Eurostat indicated that compared with the version approved by the Directors of Macroeconomic Statistics (DMES) and the GNIC, certain revisions were introduced to the Explanatory Memorandum to make it compliant with the Commission's Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT). There are no changes to the content of the proposal.

B. Discussion

1. One Member State commented on the implications that the change of legal basis would have on the legislative procedure. Eurostat replied that the Commission's legal service noted that the GNI is not solely used for Own Resources purposes, making a statistical legal basis the most appropriate choice.
2. Eurostat maintained that it will continue to implement measures to make GNI more exhaustive, reliable and comparable. Further to that it was explained that the GNI Expert Group will be responsible for the opinion on the fitness for purpose of annual GNI figures. During the transition to adoption, the GNIC will still have the power to adopt measures, the scope of which will be limited to issues where the ESA 95 and ESA 2010 are identical.
3. One delegation asked for the Commission Decision on the Expert Group to be made available. Eurostat indicated that a copy of the draft Decision was circulated in the GNIC and DMES. Another NSI made reference to the lack of provision for comitology on the adoption of the structure of the quality report. Eurostat differentiated between standard generic quality reports and specific GNI reports which ask for explanation of revisions to GNI (metadata). Eurostat committed to explore the possibility of making a terminological difference between these two types of reports.
4. Eurostat asked the incoming Presidency to fast track the GNI proposal in the Council because it is non-controversial and the aligned dates for the delivery of aggregates only come in force once the updated act successfully passes through the legislative procedure.

C. Opinion

1. The ESSC welcomed the proposal for the revision to the GNI Regulation, in particular the plan to synchronise the date for transmission of GNI data with that of other macroeconomic aggregates.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/4

Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in an EU context

A. Presentation

1. The ESSC was reminded that the European Commission is fully supporting the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Reference was made to the Commission Communication on the *Next Steps towards a Sustainable European Future*, which shows how European policies and Commission priorities contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda. This also foresees a regular monitoring by the Commission of the SDGs in an EU context based on a set of indicators developed for that purpose.
2. The EU SDG indicator set has resulted from a broad consultative process, including with the Member States, within the Commission, with academia and non-governmental organisations.
3. Eurostat introduced the main characteristics of the indicators, stating that these have been selected by keeping focus on relevance and data quality. The UN global indicator list has been one of the main references and an effort was made to align the EU indicator set with the UN list whenever possible. As a result 51% of EU indicators are identical or similar to the indicators applied by the UN.
4. The EU SDG indicator set will be used to produce a first EU SDG monitoring report that will be released in November 2017. This report will assess the progress towards the SDGs in an EU context, but while it will show country data, it will refrain from assessing the performance of individual countries.
5. Eurostat highlighted the fact that, since the EU SDG indicator set only includes already existing indicators, it will create no additional burden on the NSIs and has no financial implications. Furthermore, the indicator set will stay open to future changes.

B. Discussion

1. Some Member States highlighted the importance of better aligning the EU indicator set with the UN global indicators in order to increase international comparability and to avoid any misunderstanding of the data by users. A number of delegations suggested an

alignment of the indicators with the targets to be sought. One delegation expressed its concern about the limit of six indicators per goal.

2. The suggestion of the harmonisation of an EU SDG indicator set with that of the UN was questioned by one NSI stating that the main priority of the EU SDGs is to be of relevance for EU, and not global purposes.
3. Another delegation emphasised that the selected indicators have to meet minimum quality requirements.
4. A number of Member States underlined the importance of ensuring an adequate communication on the EU SDGs covering the relevant information such as the origin, classification and breakdown of these indicators.
5. Eurostat clarified that the monitoring at the global, national, regional and thematic levels is explicitly foreseen. It agreed that the simultaneous monitoring at different levels can pose communication challenges and requires careful explanation.

C. Opinion

1. The ESSC gave a favourable opinion on the EU SDG indicator set, which the Commission will use to monitor progress towards the SDGs in an EU context from 2017 onwards, and welcomed the principle of using existing data.
2. The Committee noted that the EU SDG indicator set will stay open to future reviews, to incorporate new data sources and new indicators as they become available, and to take into account new EU policy priorities. Future reviews should seek to further align the EU indicator set to the UN global set whenever possible and meaningful.
3. The Committee underlined that the quality criteria used to establish the current indicator set should also be applied in future reviews. In particular for indicators based on non-ESS sources, adequate quality must be ensured and the data should be published first by their producers before the indicators are used for monitoring.
4. The Committee emphasised the need to make the purpose of the EU SDG indicator set clear to users and to explain how the EU level monitoring relates to exercises at national, global and thematic levels. The working group on Sustainable development indicators is asked to exchange best practices to address this communication challenge.
5. The Committee noted that work on the 'tier 3' indicators of the UN global indicator set will ultimately result in new internationally agreed methods and definitions. The ESS should make sure it is fully involved in these developments.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/5

ESS Vision 2020

A. Presentation

1. Eurostat updated the Committee on six ongoing ESS Vision 2020 projects (ESS.VIPs), as well as supporting frameworks (cross-cutting activities) which ensure the interdependencies between different projects in the ESS Vision 2020 portfolio.
2. It was explained that the years 2017 and 2018 are expected to see a peak in terms of the number of results delivered by ESS.VIPs. Therefore, the attention of the renewed Vision Implementation Group (VIG) will be focusing on ensuring the deployment of the outputs from all projects
3. It was announced that the next meeting of the VIG will be held at the beginning of July and will focus on the DIGICOM and ESBIR projects, on the monitoring of the deployment projects and on the supporting frameworks.

B. Discussion

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Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/6

Eurostat monitoring report on NSI compliance with the Code of Practice - situation 31st of December 2016

A. Presentation

1. Eurostat presented the second monitoring report on the second round of ESS peer reviews, carried out between 2013 and 2015, which represents the situation in the ESS on the 31st of December 2016. The ESSC was reminded that after its approval the report will be submitted to ESGAB.
2. Eurostat stated that the momentum of the implementation of improvement actions has been sustained. Nevertheless, one third of the open actions at the end of 2016 were either delayed or dependent on authorities outside the NSIs. Eurostat is considering signalling these cases explicitly to the ECOFIN Council in the autumn 'statistical package'.
3. Eurostat proposed that during the next monitoring exercise, the actions marked as "continuous" would be considered as "completed" if they are deemed to be sustainably embedded in the internal processes of the NSIs. Furthermore, the ESSC was informed that the Excel files provided by the NSIs regarding the progress made on the improvement actions would be made available to the ESS via CIRCABC if the Member States agree.

4. The ESSC was informed that the next round of annual monitoring will be carried out by Eurostat in January 2018, assessing the situation on the 31st of December 2017. Eurostat thanked the NSIs for their input to the monitoring.

B. Discussion

1. A number of Member States took the floor to thank Eurostat for its report and recognise the progress made. Furthermore, several delegations stressed the importance of the report for the comparison between Member States highlighting the lessons that can be learnt from the experiences of other NSIs.
2. A number of Member States supported the proposal to upload the mentioned Excel documents on CIRCABC. One delegation lauded Eurostat's proposal to assist NSIs in their efforts to implement actions which do not depend on the NSI. At the same time the same delegation manifested its doubt whether the proposed approach of using the autumn package would yield any results on this front. Indeed it appealed for a more creative approach about how the NSIs can be supported by the European level. To this Eurostat replied that the tools at its disposal are limited.
3. Eurostat reminded the ESSC that the Member States have until the 9th of June 2017 to publish a Commitment on Confidence in Statistics (CoC). In the absence of a published CoC, Member States must report to the Commission on the progress in the implementation of the Code of Practice and on the efforts undertaken towards establishing such Commitment. The Commission will in turn provide a summary report to the European Parliament and Council by the 9th of June 2018. Eurostat mentioned the existence of a template that can be used by the Member States for their CoC. The ESSC was also informed that a potential template for the progress report will be discussed at the next meeting of the Task Force on the implementation of the amended Regulation (EC) 223/2009.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/7

Report on the work of the High-level Group on Quality (HLG-Q)

A. Presentation

1. The new Co-Chairperson of the HLG-Q, Ms Aija Žīgure, thanked all the members of the group for their input in the discussions so far.
2. During its latest meeting on the 17th of May the HLG-Q focused on the modernisation of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP) and at its next meeting the group will discuss the next round of peer reviews. Furthermore, it was announced that representatives of the HLG-Q and ESGAB will meet to discuss the proposed revision of the European Statistics Code of Practice.
3. The Co-Chair asked the ESSC for an extension of the mandate of the HLG-Q until May 2018.
4. Eurostat explained that the aim of the HLG-Q is to propose a limited number of changes to the CoP necessary to take new developments into account. On the matter of proposing a new principle on cooperation and coordination, Eurostat reminded that these aspects were already included in the last peer reviews, and thus just need to be formalised in the CoP.

B. Discussion

1. One delegation underlined the importance of continuity and stability in the quality frameworks over time, reiterating that the work on the modernisation of the CoP should be based on the experience gained from the last round of peer reviews. Reference was made to the need for the inclusion of a coordination principle, as well as innovation, access to data and use of multiple data sources as the highest priorities in any revision of the CoP.
2. The ESSC unanimously approved the extension of the mandate of the HLG-Q by one year with the focus on the task to complete the changes in the CoP, as well as the next round of peer reviews.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/8

Key results of the New Techniques and Technologies for Statistics (NTTS) Conference; Information about the Power from Statistics Conference

A. Presentation

1. Eurostat illustrated some of the key results emanating from the biannual New Techniques and Technologies for Statistics (NTTS) Conference that took place from the 13th to the 17th of March 2017. The ESSC was informed that the number of participants in this Conference has increased over the years, reaching almost 600 this year.
2. The Conference was rich in content featuring papers on a myriad of subjects and included satellite events on topics like migration statistics and indicators. The wrap-up panel chaired by the Acting DG of Eurostat was one of the main events of the Conference.
3. Reference was also made to the successful first European Big Data Hackathon, with around 60 people from 21 countries competing in a challenge to produce statistical information and visualisation tools based on the use of different sources including big data. Several follow-ups are being organised in the aftermath of the Hackathon, for instance a seminar at the DIME-ITDG group meeting in Zagreb, and an event in Greece organised by Eurostat.
4. Eurostat announced the High-level Conference 'Power from Statistics' which will be held in Brussels on the 18th and 19th of October 2017. The discussions will feature 150 prominent panellists and experts from different fields who will information needs entailed by the future political agenda and global developments. The members of the ESSC were encouraged to attend this Conference and participate actively.

B. Discussion

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Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/9

European Statistics Day (ESD) 2017

A. Presentation

1. The ESSC was reminded that the 2017 ESD will be celebrated by the European official statistics community for the second time on the 20th of October 2017. Eurostat proposed that, as for the 2016 edition, the Member States should adopt their own approach to mark that day in the way best befitting their needs and tradition.
2. Eurostat will create an ESD dedicated page on the ESS website, which will serve as a central point of exchange of ideas and activities across the ESS. Member States were invited to send to Eurostat all information about their plans to celebrate the 2017 ESD in order to be included on the website.
3. At European level, the central event marking the day will be the High-level Conference "Power from Statistics: Data, Information and Knowledge" that will be held in Brussels on the 18th and 19th of October. The 2017 ESD will also be marked by the release of the ESS flagship digital publication on *The Life of Women and Men in the EU*, which will be translated in most of the official languages of the EU.
4. Statistics Portugal announced the celebration of the 2017 ESD organised jointly with the European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC) on the 20th of October in Lisbon. The event will be centred on the theme of *The Value of Statistics as a Public Good*. The event will consist, inter alia, in a presentation by a keynote speaker and a panel discussion.
5. The Chair of ESAC expressed her satisfaction that ESD events are flourishing around Europe, highlighting the event that will be held in Lisbon. The Italian delegation also announced events celebrating the 2017 ESD, including a digital publication regarding the 60th anniversary of the European Union.

B. Discussion

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Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/10

Partnership Group (PG)

- Report on the last meeting, 31st March 2017**
- Draft agenda of the next meeting, 30th June 2017**
- ESS priorities beyond 2020**

A. Presentation

1. The Chairperson of the PG, Ms Genovefa Ružić, briefed the ESSC about the last meeting of the PG that was held in Bled, Slovenia on the 31st of March 2017. Emphasis was made on the three strategic issues discussed at the meeting, namely the state of play of the implementation of the ESS Vision 2020, the discussion on the roadmap to prepare the ESS priorities beyond 2020, and the preparation of the 2017 DGINS Conference.
2. The next PG meeting will be held in Ljubljana on the 30th of June, when the group will be discussing, amongst other items, the progress on the ESS strategic priorities beyond 2020, the preparation of the 2017 DGINS Conference and the future informal gatherings at the level of Directors General of NSIs.
3. The Chairperson of the PG also briefed the ESSC delegates on the work of the PG Task Force (TF) for the elaboration of the ESS strategic priorities beyond 2020. A document is being prepared by a small editorial team building on the results of the DGs Seminar in Malta in March 2017. The ESSC was informed that the PG TF was meeting to discuss this document on the 18th of May. The second draft is expected to be presented for discussion at the PG meeting on the 30 June. All Member States are invited to provide their comments in the exchange of views.
4. The ESSC was briefed about the efforts to ensure the access to privately held data for official statistics. It was mentioned that to the PG Chair would write a note on behalf of the ESS to be sent to DG CNECT in this regard. The Committee will shortly be consulted about the content of the note, to be delivered to DG CNECT by the end of June 2017.

B. Discussion

1. Several Member States welcomed the initiative on the access to privately held data and supported the discussion by the ESS on this topic. Eurostat was of the opinion that the ESS should be upfront in showing what kind of added value it will bring, as well as build a pragmatic approach to show the usefulness of the access to privately held data.
2. One delegation advocated an engagement with national data protection commissioners. It emphasised the need for a consistent interpretation of the interplay between data protection legislation and statistical legislation.
3. One Member State proposed an EU-wide initiative for a common interpretation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that will come into force in May 2018. Another delegation explained that it had taken the initiative at national level by submitting the necessary changes to the legal basis to the Member State ministry in charge of the GDPR.

4. Eurostat stated that it analysed the GDPR in detail and will be sharing this analysis with the ESSC. It also suggested collecting examples of issues and solutions from the NSIs, to structure the ESS-wide dialogue on this topic and to explore ways of intensifying the dialogue with the ESS with European Data Protection Commissioners.
5. The ESSC approved the proposal of the Chairperson of the PG to replace Mr Giorgio Alleva (whose mandate has expired) with Mr Jean-Luc Tavernier as a new member of the PG.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/11

Report from the Presidency (Malta)

- Plans for the next Presidency (Estonia)

A. Presentation

1. The Maltese Presidency briefed the ESSC about the items discussed by the Council Working Party on Statistics (CWPS): the extension of the European Statistical Programme to 2018-2020 (ESP 2018-2020), the framework regulation on social statistics (IESS), the framework regulation on farm statistics (IFS), and on the draft Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1059/2006 as regards territorial typologies.
2. The forthcoming Estonian Presidency committed to continue building on the work of the Maltese Presidency, in coordination with the two other Member States of the Presidency trio, Bulgaria and Austria. It stated that at the level of CWPS it plans to continue working on the IESS framework regulation, the IFS framework regulation, and Regulation (EC) No 1059/2006 as regards territorial typologies.
3. The ESSC was informed about the composition of the Estonian Presidency team, the Presidency website, as well as the scheduled meetings of the CWPS.

B. Discussion

1. One delegation thanked the Maltese Presidency for the work done, and wished all the luck to the Estonian Presidency. Two delegations expressed their concerns that FRIBS was not included in the programme of the Estonian Presidency and advocated parallel work to be done on the IESS, IFS and FRIBS dossiers during that Presidency.
2. The Estonian Presidency acknowledged the importance of FRIBS but expressed its preference for closing some of the open dossiers before the former is tackled at the level of the CWPS.

Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/12

European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC) – Report on work activities

A. Presentation

1. The Chairperson of ESAC, Ms Ineke Stoop, informed the ESSC that the Committee drafted an opinion on the draft strategic priorities of the 2018 AWP that was sent to Eurostat on the 10th of March 2017. The general points of ESAC's opinion were, amongst others, the challenge posed by misleading and unreliable data sources, the guidance that is needed concerning the quality of different types of official statistics and the need to exploit administrative data to reduce the burden of data collection. The Chairperson of ESAC clarified that ESAC recommended that the ICT survey also be explicitly mentioned within the scope of the IESS framework regulation in the draft strategic priorities.
2. ESAC had also published an opinion on a pre-final draft EU SDG indicator set on the 29th of March 2017. In this opinion ESAC highlighted the importance that the indicator set covers the indicators which are relevant to the EU, and that these need to be defined, comparable and manageable in size.
3. The next ESAC meeting will be held in Helsinki on the 12th and 13th of June. A joint ESAC-Statistics Finland seminar entitled *Statistics – When Facts Count* will take place there as well. It was also announced that the foreseen ESAC workshop on migration statistics has been integrated into the statistical session at the 2017 DGINS meeting in Hungary.

B. Discussion

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Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/13

Reports from the Directors' Groups

A. Presentation

1. The ESSC was provided with two written reports regarding the DIME/ITDG plenary meeting of the 22nd and 23rd of February 2017, and the DSS Report of its meeting on the 2nd and 3rd of March 2017.
2. Eurostat briefed the ESSC that the ESS Resource Directors' Group (RDG) has last met on the 27th and 28th of April 2018. Emphasis was made on the cost assessment surveys, specifically the "top-down exercise" (to calculate the total number of staff and budget in the ESS), and the "bottom-up" approach (an analysis of 26 statistical products). The RDG concluded that some more time was needed in order to analyse the different challenges so as to harmonise the information received, including the information from the Central Banks.

3. Eurostat explained that the RDG has by now seen 15 cost accounting systems of the NSIs which present a number of similarities.
4. The RDG also discussed the report from the RDF Task Force on skill gaps and learning needs for the implementation of the ESS Vision 2020. The report brought forward good ideas for action, e.g. the use of horizontal tools to enhance skills. Eurostat maintained that many of these actions need to be taken at the level of the NSIs.
5. Eurostat reminded the ESSC about the invitation to put forward names of candidates for new members of the EMOS Board for the period 2018 – 2020.

B. Discussion

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Agenda item ESSC 2017/33/14

Update on DGINS conference, Budapest (HU)

20 – 21 September 2017

A. Presentation

1. The host of the 2017 DGINS Conference on the 20th and 21st of September 2017 made a presentation on the preparations for the Conference. The 2017 DGINS will be held at the MOM Kulturális Központ. The restricted session on the 20th of September will focus on the "ESS strategic priorities beyond 2020", while the topic of the statistical session on the 21st of September will be "Population Movements and Integration Issues". The host also made a reference to the planned social events, amongst which a gala dinner. The invitations to the Conference were handed out in person during the presentation.
2. Eurostat explained that it has been working very closely with the host to prepare the Conference. The NSIs were reminded about the request for expression of interest for presenting papers and contributions to the Conference, to which a number of replies have already been received from a number of Member States.

B. Discussion

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