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With a view to the meeting of the Working Party on Statistics on 31 January 2024, delegations will find attached the Belgian Presidency Flash note.

Presidency Flash

Meeting of the Council Working Party on Statistics

31 January 2024



Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to invite you to the second meeting of the Council Working Party on Statistics (CWPS) under the Belgian Presidency, which will take place on Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 10:00 in Brussels (Justus Lipsius Building). The meeting will be chaired by Mr. Olivier Goddeeris, Deputy Director-General of Statistics Belgium.

The first part of the meeting will be devoted to the regulations that are currently subject to interinstitutional negotiations. Our main aim for this agenda item is to inform delegations on the state of play of these files.

- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on **European statistics on population and housing**, amending Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 763/2008 and (EU) No 1260/2013;
 - The Belgian Presidency has launched a written procedure to consult the delegations on a package which includes the Presidency's ideas for possible landing zones on the subjects mentioned in articles 5, 7, 8, 12, 15 and 19 of the ESOP file. The Presidency Team will further inform the Member States during the Council Working Party on Statistics.
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 as regards introducing **new environmental economic accounts modules**;
 - On the basis of the political agreement that was reached on 5 December under the Spanish Presidency, a compromise was found with the EP on the last technical issues. The 4-column document, together with a document that sets out the main elements of the compromise, will be provided to you as soon as possible. We intend to put this on the agenda of Coreper on Friday 9 February.
- A Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No **223/2009 on European statistics** State of play of the negotiations with the European Parliament
 - The negotiations of Regulation 223/2009 are still ongoing. A lot of progress has been made. A trilogue is planned on Thursday first of February.

The second part of the meeting will be devoted to the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Union labour market statistics on businesses, repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 530/1999 and Regulations (EC) No 450/2003 and (EC) No 453/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Based on the discussions that took place during the last CWPS meeting on 11 January, the Belgian Presidency has prepared a second compromise text.

The following is a summary of the main changes to the Commission's proposal:

- For article 2 on definitions, we included some slight changes for the definitions of 'statistical unit', 'enterprise' and 'microdata'. For consistency reasons, 'administrative records' has been replaced by 'administrative sources', the definition of privately held data has been aligned with recital 7a of regulation 223/2009 and we included a definition of other sources.
- With regards to article 3 on sources and methods, the reference to the Commission in line 64 has been deleted and we made paragraph 1 more consistent with article 2 (a

distinction was made between ‘privately held data’ and ‘other sources’). In Paragraph 1a, the word ‘sources’ has been deleted since no definition of innovative source is included in this regulation.

- For article 4 on data requirements, we added a sentence at the end of line 83 line to not jeopardize the first data collection of 2026. In line 89, NUTS2 has been changed to NUTS1. Additionally, regarding the implementing acts in line 93, the period has been changed from 12 months to 24 months, except for the first reference period for which 12 months remains. Regarding lines 93a to 93d we made some changes based on the Danish proposal that was circulated at the Council Working Party of 31 January, but we allowed for more flexibility by rounding off the number of new variables to the next integer. This essentially means that the number of variables can be increased by 1 for JVS, LCI and GPG and by 2 for SES and LCS.
- In article 6 on statistical units and statistical population, a sentence was added in line 111 based on a proposal by Sweden to allow for an exemption of confidential data linked to defence and internal security purposes. In line 114, regarding the gender pay gap, for reference period 2026, a derogation has been added to allow for a smooth transition from Eurostat’s gentlemen’s agreement to SES.
- Concerning article 8 on quality requirements and quality reporting, a small modification was made in line 134: ‘ensure’ was changed to ‘aims to ensure’ following the comments from member states stating that ensuring full coverage is impossible in practical terms.
- In the first paragraph of article 10 on financing, changes were made based on advice from the council legal service. ‘May be provided’ was changed to ‘shall be made available from the Single Market Programme [...]’ to increase consistency with other files such as ESOP and the framework Regulation. Additionally, line 151 was deleted because it was deemed unnecessary.
- Concerning article 12 on derogations: the extension of the period of a derogation has been modified from 2 to 4 years, which better matches the periodicities. The addition ‘starting from the first reference period as mentioned in the Annex’, that was added in the first compromise proposal has been removed since, according to Eurostat, it could have negative consequences for Member States, as it prevents new derogations in the future. It was also noted at the last Council Working Party that the deadline to apply for an extension of a derogation was missing; this has been added in rule 163a.
- Lastly, some changes were made to the recitals. Most importantly, in recital 6 we added the reference to article 31 of the Directive (EU) 2023/970 to clarify the link between both regulations. Furthermore, two standard recitals were added about delegated and implementing acts (new recitals 13 and 14).

Finally, under AOB, the Presidency will update on the progress made on other files of interest.

Please do not hesitate to contact us in case of questions. We look forward to seeing you in Brussels!

The Belgian Presidency Team on Statistics