



Luxembourg,
ESTAT-DG/MK/B3/D(2020)

**NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF
DIRECTORS-GENERAL AND PRESIDENTS OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTES
OF THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY**

Subject: European Statistical System's response to COVID-19

Dear colleagues,

At these unprecedented times, I hope you and your colleagues are doing well. We in Eurostat are putting extra efforts to ensure the continuation of statistical production and dissemination according to established deadlines and European quality standards.

On 26 March, I have informed our ESS colleagues about measures Eurostat has undertaken or is considering to undertake in the light of this challenging situation. Having in mind our intensive cooperation and the candidate and potential candidate statuses of your countries, I decided to share some relevant points with you, for your guidance and information.

Statistics to be prioritized

In the situation when it became impossible for statistical offices to continue with business as usual, Eurostat considers that ESS efforts and resources should concentrate on producing statistics that are most relevant and needed in the current situation.

Timely, reliable and comprehensive short-term statistics (monthly and quarterly), which are planned for release in the next couple of months, will be crucial for providing an objective picture of the economic and social situation in Europe. They will be also crucial for developing an adequate response to the economic and social shocks caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The prioritisation list includes the Principal European Economic Indicators, selected indicators from Labour Force Survey, from statistics on population, managed migration, agriculture, energy and transport. For your convenience, a detailed prioritisation list, as sent to colleagues in ESS, is attached to this letter. ESS should put priority on these statistics and not spare any effort to provide them in time and with the highest quality.

We understand that the data collections based on interviews are among the most adversely affected by the lockdowns introduced in a number of countries. All these changes have opened methodological and comparability issues as well as required proactive common communication to the users. In the next weeks, Eurostat will be addressing most topical issues, especially with regard to price collections, the LFS and SILC surveys.

Additionally, changes to existing questions and adding new questions to support the analysis of the impact of Covid-19, for instance on the labour market and living conditions, will be considered. Colleagues from unit B3 will be in touch with you for any further relevant information.

Implementation of IPA projects

The outbreak of the Covid-19 will no doubt have a significant impact on the implementation of the current IPA 2017 and Eurostat takes due consideration of the concerns already raised by some of your offices. Upon analysis, we would consider extensions or amendments of contracts, if necessary. For the programming of future IPA 2019, after consultation with grant countries, we have decided to proceed as planned, as there is a danger of losing the financial allocation if not contracted this year. I thank you for the commitment in making this possible.

Meetings and missions

Eurostat will not organise physical meetings or organise missions until the end of May 2020. Written consultations, videoconferencing, especially for task forces, or postponement will be implemented instead. Currently the opportunity to have ESSC via videoconferencing in a restricted composition and with a much shorter agenda is also under investigation. All the measures described above will be reassessed at a later stage to take into account the evolution of the Covid-19 crisis in Europe.

Dear colleagues,

It is clear that the outbreak of the coronavirus is having a significant impact on the administrative capacities in your respective countries, as your governments take the necessary measures necessary to protect citizens. In my letter to ESS colleagues, I have however emphasised a priority to ensure the continuity of producing high-quality statistics on Europe, fulfilling our duty towards European citizens and policymakers who rely on our data.

With this in mind, Eurostat will explore the potential flexibilities with a view to finding pragmatic solutions in each case, while safeguarding the interests of the EU as a whole. The success of this approach will depend on our common efforts and transparent collaboration. I do hope that your NSIs will also be able to contribute to those efforts.

For all details or follow up in relation to the above, please be in contact with colleagues from unit B3.

Let me also use the opportunity to congratulate colleagues from Albania and North Macedonia on the decision to open accession negotiations. On the negotiation path, Eurostat will remain your partner, as in the past with other countries.

Yours sincerely,

(eSigned)
Mariana Kotzeva

Annex: 1

Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs)

Consumer Price Indicators

Monthly Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices: euro area flash estimate

Monthly Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices

Quarterly National Accounts

Quarterly National Accounts: First GDP (flash) estimates

Quarterly National Accounts: GDP release with more breakdowns

Quarterly National Accounts: Household and Company Accounts

Quarterly National Accounts: Government Finance Statistics

Business Indicators

Monthly Industrial production

Monthly Industrial producer prices for domestic markets

Monthly Industrial import prices

Monthly Production in construction

Monthly Retail trade turnover

Quarterly Services turnover

Quarterly Services producer prices

Labour Market Indicators

Monthly Unemployment rate

Quarterly Job vacancy rate

Quarterly Employment

Quarterly Labour cost index

International Trade in goods

Monthly International trade in goods balance: intra- and extra-euro area; intra- and extra-EU

Housing Indicators

Quarterly House price index

Annual House sales

Monthly Building permits

European Social Statistics

Population and vital events of first 6 months 2020

Quarterly employment and unemployment statistics

Monthly and quarterly managed migration statistics

European Sectoral Statistics (Agriculture, Energy, Transports)

Monthly Animal production statistics (milk, meat, poultry)

Annual Crop production statistics (area and production estimates), multiple transmissions

Monthly Energy statistics (quantities of electricity, oil, coal, natural gas & crude oil imports)

Quarterly Transport statistics (road, air, rail, maritime, inland waterways)