



## Ten Years in Service of the Professional Independence of Official Statistics

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The Official Statistics Authority (*Autorité de la statistique publique* - ASP) was created by the Law on the Modernisation of the Economy of 4 August 2008<sup>1</sup> to ensure compliance with the principle of professional independence in the design, production and dissemination of official statistics. It also ensures compliance with the principles relating to the objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of the data produced. The ASP started operating in 2009 and, therefore, is celebrating its tenth anniversary.

The Official Statistics Authority creates official data on which public debate is based. It designs, produces and publishes indices, indicators and statistical tables on the demographic, economic, social and environmental situation of the country, with the mission of providing quality information and making it available to all for decision-making, research and public debate.

It is therefore important that these official data be compiled in complete independence. To that end, the Law of 1951, which organises the French Official Statistical System, establishes the following principle: “*the design, production and dissemination of official statistics shall be carried out in complete professional independence*”.

Simultaneously, Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishes a legal framework, at European level, for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics as part of the European Statistical System (ESS). The latter comprises, firstly, the statistics authority of the Commission, the Directorate-General Eurostat, and, secondly, national statistical institutes and other national statistics authorities. European statistics are governed by the European statistical programme and must be developed, produced and disseminated in accordance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>. A European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) is responsible, at European level, for monitoring the implementation of the Code across the entire European Statistical System.

<sup>1</sup>By amendment to Article 1 of the Law of 1951 on Legal Obligation, Coordination and Confidentiality in the Field of Statistics (see Appendix 1).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2

This European Regulation, which was amended in 2015, also recommends that each Member State “*establish a national body for assuring the professional independence of the producers of European statistics*”. The establishment of the ASP follows this recommendation, with the ASP being more specifically tasked with ensuring that the Code of Practice is applied to national statistics<sup>3</sup>. The annual report published by the ASP is sent to the European Commission in order to show the progress made by the French Official Statistical System in implementing the Code of Practice<sup>4</sup>.

The ASP has very few equivalents in Europe. On the contrary, many national statistical institutes have internal committees that are more or less responsible for contributing to the application of the principles of the Code, but in an “advisory” rather than a “guarantor” capacity. The situation of French statistics, as can be seen from peer reviews, is also characterised by recognised professionalism and a high level of quality, such that the ASP’s activity is generally part of a process of progress, with the instruments at its disposal – essentially the ability to address any subject it deems relevant and make its opinions public – proving sufficient to ensure that any discrepancies to be corrected are corrected without delay and that best practices become widespread.

The experience of the ASP thus appears to be original, which justifies that, ten years after its creation, stock be taken of its contribution and the challenges it must overcome: how has it carried out its task? What progress has thus been made possible? What remains to be done to ensure the relevance of statistics and to bolster confidence in them? How is this crucial for informing public debate and collective choices, for democracy and progress in our societies?

Rather than providing a flat assessment of the Authority’s activities since its creation, the purpose of this note is to show, based on a certain number of non-exhaustive but significant examples, to what extent the Authority’s work has contributed to the progress of the Official Statistical System: firstly, in relation to the principle of professional independence, which ensures the credibility of the statistics (first part of the note), and secondly, in relation to user confidence (second part of the note). Indeed, user confidence relies not only on professional independence, but also on the objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of the data produced by the Official Statistical System. In addition, it depends on the context in which the Official Statistical System operates, which has been marked by major upheavals over the last ten years: demand for the broadening of indicators to meet public expectations in line with the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report; development of public policy evaluation and exploitation of micro-data through research; new types of data, a source of opportunities to better meet these user expectations and respond to challenges, for example to correct their bias or to ensure their protection; proliferation of data, requiring confirmation of the place of official statistics, which is unparalleled in many respects; growing public mistrust of things that are official or refer to scientific standards.

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<sup>3</sup> Decree No 2009-250 of 3 March 2009, as amended, on the Official Statistics Authority (See Appendix 3)

<sup>4</sup> In place of a trust-based commitment.

## Monitoring Compliance with the Principle of Professional Independence: Situations Encountered and Results Obtained

Indeed, the French Official Statistical System (*service statistique public* - SSP) undertakes to comply with the Code of Practice and, in particular, the first principle thereof, relating to professional independence. However, INSEE remains a ministerial department and, therefore, an attempt to influence its work cannot be ruled out.

The Ministerial Statistical Departments (*services statistiques ministériels* - SSM), for their part, are in an ambiguous situation: they contribute more broadly to the steering of their ministry's public policies and this activity may make impartial and independent work difficult. They may be subject to pressures of various kinds that would lead them not to publish the official statistics for which they are responsible in a timely manner. For example, the ministerial officials to whom they report may give priority to other work or may wish to postpone publications that they do not consider politically expedient.

The ASP was undoubtedly created with this type of situation in mind, together with the resulting need to make the independence of official statistics visible to the public, in order to remove any suspicion in this respect. However, there is a broader issue at stake. Indeed, in general, statistical officials are of the opinion that institutional factors are crucial for ensuring the quality of official statistics.

Professional independence also covers the fact that statistics must be developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner, including with regard to technical choices, definitions, methodologies, sources to be used, the schedule and the content of all forms of dissemination: all these must be carried out "*without any pressure from political groups, interest groups, national authorities or European Union authorities*".

The amended 2015 version of European Regulation No 223/2009 has bolstered the professional independence of statistics authorities in order to maintain confidence in European statistics. Following its entry into force, the ASP Decree No 2018-800 of 20 September 2018 increased the ASP's responsibilities and improved the conditions for carrying out its missions, compared with its initial Decree No 2009-250 of 6 March 2009. In particular, the new wording of the Decree provides clearer confirmation of the Authority's role in respect of compliance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. It also provides greater clarity regarding the absolute separation between statistical dissemination and ministerial communication.

Furthermore, in order to comply with European Regulation 223/2009, as amended, the new Decree states that the Authority shall issue an opinion, at the time of appointment of the Director General of INSEE and the heads of SSMs who are directors of central administration, for the attention of the hearing committee responsible for their appointment. This opinion from the ASP shall relate exclusively to the professional competences in the area of statistics of the persons whose appointment is being considered. The conclusion of the opinion (favourable or unfavourable) shall be published in the Official Journal at the same time as the appointment instrument.

This is to ensure that the creation and dissemination of official statistics are free from any political or other external interference.

Since its establishment, the Official Statistics Authority has always paid great attention to ensuring that the Official Statistical System is able to carry out its work and dissemination programme in

complete professional independence, which is reflected in the very concrete elements described hereinafter.

- [\*The Announcement of the Dissemination Schedules\*](#)

The extension of the provisional schedule for indicators, to all areas of official statistics, is an important issue, one for which the Official Statistics Authority has taken charge, as one of the means of improving the independence of producers.

The Official Statistics Authority has always felt that the public display of the information that it is going to disseminate over the coming months, quarters and years represented a strong commitment by statisticians and their administrative hierarchy to all users.

Since 2009, the expansion of the list of SSP statistics for which the publication schedule is announced in advance has been a focus of the Authority's work, with the list having previously been limited to the main economic outlook statistics.

The objective of this expansion was to improve the independence of official statistics, while the inclusion of statistics in a provisional schedule should, de facto, neutralise any discussion regarding their release date and any postponement should be exceptional, reported and justified.

Following the recommendations of the ASP, since 2013 INSEE has released an annual official statistics schedule online and, in late 2017, the Authority noted that all SSMs had released their provisional dissemination schedules online.

In addition, in order to assess the punctuality of the publications announced in the dissemination schedules, the ASP has asked that INSEE monitor the punctuality of publications for each SSM. Since this monitoring has been carried out, an average punctuality rate of just over 90% has been noted (the delays noted do not call into question the independence of the SSMs).

- [\*Embargo Breaches by the Government\*](#)

The European Statistics Code of Practice states that statistical authorities shall decide on the date of release and content of statistical publications in complete independence. All users must have equal access to statistical releases at the same time.

Any privileged pre-release access granted to an external user must be limited, sufficiently justified, monitored and publicised. Certain economic information is thus communicated under embargo, in particular to the ministerial offices concerned to enable them to discover the indicators a few hours prior to publication.

For the Authority, compliance with these embargo rules is essential. It makes it possible to provide users with a guarantee of the transparency required for the credibility of the information.

Since its creation, eight embargo breaches have been detected by the ASP, six of which were governmental in origin. Letters have been sent by the President of the Authority to the ministers (or their ministerial office managers) who breached the embargo to remind them of the rules in this regard.

The Authority's actions led INSEE, in 2017, to restrict the rules governing the early dissemination of economic outlook indicators to limit the risk of a leak, and to draw up a framework document detailing the embargo rules for the entire Official Statistical System.

Examination of these various cases has also made it possible in some cases to identify more suitable rules, in particular to take account of the development of the media. Thus, following the 2019 embargo breach relating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> estimate for the quarterly national accounts for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018, the Authority approved INSEE's proposal to align the times at which the embargo is lifted for all indicators that would be released on the same day<sup>5</sup>.

- [\*The Conditions for the Approval of Ministerial Statistical Departments\*](#)

By virtue of the missions entrusted to it by its decree (Decree No 2009-250 of 3 March 2009, as amended), the Statistics Authority issues opinions when requests are made to create or change the scope of Ministerial Statistical Departments. It regularly monitors approvals through hearing procedures to enable it to ensure that the functioning of the Ministerial Statistical Department always contributes to compliance with the principles of the Code of Practice, in particular the principle of professional independence with regard to the statistics it produces and disseminates. In this context, the ASP may issue an opinion for the withdrawal of approval to a Ministerial Statistical Department if it considers that the conditions under which that Department operates are incompatible with its status as a SSM.

Since 2014, the Authority has focused more specifically on a review of small Ministerial Statistical Departments. Therefore, in October 2014, the Authority held a hearing for the Ministerial Statistical Department for Fishing and Aquaculture, which was then part of the Directorate of Maritime Fishing and Aquaculture (*direction des pêches maritimes et de l'aquaculture* - DPMA).

Following this hearing, the Authority decided by a majority of its members not to uphold the status of a Ministerial Statistical Department for that Department for three main reasons: the absence of a critical size of the Department, which could potentially be detrimental to its independence, its efficiency and the quality of the data produced, the fact that its activities were not mainly statistical and, finally, the absence of statistical publications.

It should be noted that the list of Ministerial Statistical Departments is updated by a decree issued by the Minister of the Economy after the Authority has issued its opinion. To date, the opinions rendered by the Authority in relation to this list have always been implemented.

- [\*Compliance with the Authority's Opinions\*](#)

The Authority carries out its missions, producing whatever opinions it considers useful for ensuring compliance with the principles of the Code of Practice and it draws up recommendations where it finds practices that deviate from the Code.

Following the abolition of the Ministerial Statistical Department for Fishing (see above), the statistical activities of the latter were transferred to the Statistical Service of the Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition of France, as decided by INSEE. The ASP held a hearing for this SSM in June 2017. It then discovered that the assumption of the activities of the former SSM for Fishing and Aquaculture by the Statistical Service of the Ministry of Ecology was well under way, but had not yet been completed; it therefore requested that any new potential organisation relating to those activities not be considered before the current restoration is fully completed, so as

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 4

to ensure compliance with the principles governing official statistics. In fact, at the hearing, the ASP found that the quality of the data on aquaculture could largely be improved and that pre-litigation proceedings had been initiated by Eurostat due to failure to send that data within the specified time limits.

The ASP opinion has not been followed. A decree from the Minister for Agriculture and Food, published in late December 2017 without prior consultation with the ASP, reassigned statistical competence for maritime fishing and aquaculture activities to the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. The ASP then requested that the regulatory definition of the missions of the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food be precisely redefined, based on an analysis to explain the reasons behind the planned transfer and that the corresponding draft be submitted to it. The draft decree amending the organisation of the Ministry of Agriculture was finally sent to the Authority in January 2018 and approved, with the restoration being ensured. It also established the stated intention to lay the foundations for exemplary operation with regard to the principle of professional independence.

This experience was an opportunity to remind the SSMs that any draft decree relating to their Department should be submitted to the ASP for an opinion. It also led the Authority to recommend the gradual standardisation of the decrees establishing the missions of each of the Ministerial Statistical Departments, by incorporating into them the most recent European and national regulations (including, in particular, European Regulation No 223/2009, as amended). Specifically, the decrees must clearly define the areas in which the SSM exercises its powers, affirm respect for its professional independence and include the statistical coordination role played by the Director-General of INSEE. The SSM charter established by INSEE confirms this, specifying the common reference frameworks applicable to Ministerial Statistical Departments due to them forming part of the Official Statistical System. In particular, it presents their missions, duties, rights and operating conditions.

- [Delays in the Publication of Statistical Information](#)

The ASP may be called upon to intervene when statistical publications are delayed in relation to the dates announced.

This was the case in 2011. In November 2011, the President of the Federation of Parents' Councils (*Fédération des Conseils de Parents d'Élèves* - FCPE) sent a letter to the ASP to notify it that the number of publications produced during the final three quarters of 2011 by the Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance Directorate (*direction de l'Évaluation, de la prospective et de la performance* - DEPP) - the Ministerial Statistical Department for National Education - was less than what could be expected in the light of the latter's work schedule, published in February 2011. Several press articles have echoed the criticisms made by the FCPE, referring to a phenomenon of concealment or delay in the publication of data on schools.

The President of the Authority has asked the Director-General of INSEE to refer the matter to the General Inspectorate of INSEE so that it may examine the situation concerning these publications with regard to the 2011 DEPP work schedule. The conclusions of the report from the General Inspectorate revealed that the delay from the first three quarters of 2011 had been reduced. The work and publication schedule was then made public by the DEPP for 2012 and the latter's hearing made it possible to verify that the situation was then satisfactory.

## To Strengthen Confidence in Official Statistics

Compliance with the formal rules on professional independence is essential. However, this is not sufficient to guarantee user confidence in official statistics. Other elements of the European Statistics Code of Practice are essential to consolidate this confidence: These elements are: relevance, quality, consistency, comparability and clarity of results.

In order to strengthen confidence in official statistics, the ASP is active in four areas in particular:

- In order to extend the scope of statistics capable of contributing to the public debate (relevance), the Authority has thus carried out a major project to label data resulting from the use of administrative sources produced outside of the Official Statistical System.

- In the area of unemployment statistics, the Authority's recommendations have contributed to a better understanding and use of official statistics data (quality, consistency and clarity of the results).

- In order to make crime statistics more reliable, the ASP's involvement in the creation of the Ministerial Statistical Department for Internal Security was very important.

- Lastly, the Authority has had to intervene in cases of misuse of figures or controversies of such magnitude as to be likely to discredit official statistics and thus undermine public confidence.

- *The Labelling of Official Statistics derived from the Use of Administrative Sources Produced Outside of the Official Statistical System*

The creation of the Authority opened the way for the possibility of awarding a label for statistical data produced by an administration, a public organisation or a private organisation as part of a public service mission, with such a system having hitherto existed only for surveys.

Therefore, one focus of the Authority's work consisted of introducing, from 2010, a procedure for the labelling of official statistics derived from the use of administrative sources produced outside of the Official Statistical System (the second paragraph of Article 1 of Decree No 2009-250, as amended, of 3 March 2009 on the Official Statistics Authority).

The introduction of this procedure is a response to two objectives: the first seeks to ensure compliance with the principle of professional independence in the design, production and dissemination of these statistics, as well as the quality of the data produced. The second seeks to extend the scope of statistics capable of contributing to the public debate to improve the information available to users and meet their demands (relevance) in a context in which they are increasingly diverse.

It should be stressed that the labelling concerns specific statistical data and not the statistical output of the organisation as a whole.

For producers whose data are labelled, the labelling is a strategic choice which must result in professional independence in the selection of methods for compiling and disseminating statistics

and a continuous improvement system for statistical production processes and a dissemination policy that takes into account user requirements to the extent possible.

Since its creation, 14 labels have been granted by the Authority for a fixed duration, generally five years.

These labels include, for example, the labelling of monthly statistics concerning jobseekers registered with Pôle Emploi, granted by the Authority in 2014.

The Authority's labelling opinions are published in the Official Journal. They are usually accompanied by recommendations to be implemented within a period of five years or less. These recommendations, which are monitored by the Authority, are generally implemented. In fact, such implementation is a prerequisite for renewal of the labelling.

Since 2013, proceedings relating to labels are generally conducted by the Committee for the National Statistical Quality Label. This Committee meets as a commission to propose an opinion and recommendations to the President of the ASP.

See Appendix 5 for further details on the labelling proceedings and the labels granted by the ASP since 2011.

- [\*The Authority's Contribution to Better Understanding, Use and Reliability of Official Statistical Data\*](#)

#### *Clarification in the Dissemination of Labour Market Statistics*

In 2014, the Authority issued a favourable opinion regarding the labelling of monthly statistics concerning jobseekers (DEFM) registered with Pôle Emploi, published jointly by the DARES and Pôle Emploi. This labelling, which was granted for a period of five years, was accompanied by recommendations and a clause for a review in 2016 for the two services.

Due to the importance of the DEFMs in the public debate, the Authority's recommendations included adding a commentary to the monthly DEFM publication focusing on the trend in recent months and requesting that the low significance of month-to-month variation below a certain threshold be mentioned in the publication.

Furthermore, to ensure that the diversity of sources is not a factor in public uncertainty, the Authority had requested that work be carried out to explain the discrepancies between the evolution of data from the INSEE Labour Force Survey on the measurement of ILO unemployment and of DEFMs.

The work described below, carried out in response to the Authority's recommendations, has contributed to further clarification of labour market statistics.

#### *The Work to Explain the Discrepancies between the DEFM Statistics and the ILO Unemployment Statistics*

The first results from the series on DEFMs and ILO unemployed persons have made it possible to determine that the persistent or large discrepancies between the two series are not due to statistical factors that differentiate between administrative sources and survey data, but to conceptual differences in the measurement of unemployment, such as availability to take a job, for example.

Work on matching between the DEFM history file and the Labour Force Survey, conducted by DARES in partnership with INSEE, was carried out in 2019. In particular, a dossier was published

in the INSEE References *Employment, Unemployment and Earned Income* in June 2019 and a working document entitled “Matching between the Labour Force Surveys and the Historical File from Pôle Emploi over the period 2012-2017 - Method and first results” was published in July 2019, with a view to clarifying the origin of the discrepancies.

### *The Publication of “DEFMs”*

Given the importance of the monthly publication of statistics on jobseekers in the public debate, a CNIS consultation group, chaired by Jacques Freyssinet, was set up in 2015 to study the methods for implementation of the recommendations from the ASP. In addition to the changes requested by the ASP, Pôle Emploi and DARES wanted to change the format of the monthly publication and improve its readability.

In 2016, the monthly publication was redesigned: the emphasis was placed on the need for a “trend”-based interpretation rather than a month-by-month one, to which end quarterly developments were introduced to shed light on monthly developments. In addition, to define the volatility of the monthly series, significance thresholds were produced, together with how to interpret them.

It appeared that these changes were not sufficient to reduce the attention paid to monthly developments. The monthly DEFM statistic continued to receive a great deal of attention, due to its early availability, to the extent that it overshadowed the quarterly ILO unemployment measurement from the Labour Force Survey.

As a result, an agreement was drawn up for quarterly interpretation of the series published, using the average number of DEFMs registered in the previous quarter as the figure. The commentary on the monthly figures, which had been the focus of much observer attention but were generally of no statistical relevance, was therefore discontinued.

From the first quarter of 2018, the publication of jobseeker statistics has thus become quarterly and better articulated with the other publications on the labour market (the monthly series continue to be published online each month). The DEFM figures are now published with the same frequency as the other measurement of unemployment, the ILO unemployment rate from INSEE.

### *Employment Statistics*

In 2018, in response to the ASP’s request concerning the issue of communication regarding the discrepancies between the various sources on employment, a report from the General Inspectorate of INSEE was dedicated to communication regarding national employment statistics. A portion of the analyses relied on matching work between the administrative data and the Labour Force Survey. An action plan has been put in place to attempt to correct the bias identified in relation to youth employment in the Labour Force Survey and to strengthen the communication available to the public on employment sources.

- [\*Making Crime Statistics more Reliable through the Creation of the Ministerial Statistical Department for Internal Security \(service statistique ministériel sur la sécurité intérieure - SSMSI\) within the Ministry of the Interior\*](#)

The ASP played an important role in the creation of the Ministerial Statistical Department for Internal Security.

In fact, the issues of insecurity and crime have taken on considerable importance in the public debate with many controversies regarding the reliability of the figures.

In the early 2000s, in order to assess statistics in this field, the decision was made to create the French National Supervisory Body on Crime (*Observatoire national de la délinquance* - OND), which became the French National Supervisory Body on Crime and Punishment (*Observatoire national de la délinquance et de la réponse pénale* - ONDRP) in 2009. In fact, until 2014, this Supervisory Body played a part of the role traditionally assigned to a Ministerial Statistical Department.

In 2012, the ONDRP drew attention to a series of breakdowns following the introduction by the French gendarmerie force of new software that was distorting the monthly recorded crime results published by the Supervisory Body, as law enforcement agencies were required to record all reports of crimes and misdemeanours, even where they did not give rise to a complaint.

A French Parliamentary fact-finding mission chaired by Mr Le Bouillonnet was then launched, one of the recommendations of which was the creation of a Ministerial Statistical Department. Following the Le Bouillonnet report and to avoid further controversy over the collection and use of figures on recorded crime, the Minister for the Interior, Manuel Valls, wanted to undertake a rethink of the production of crime statistics and improve the monitoring of the penal response.

The President of the Authority and the Director-General of INSEE were thus asked by the office of the Minister for the Interior to consider the conditions for producing crime statistics, including the issue of the status of the French National Supervisory Body on Crime and Punishment (ONDRP). This was the subject of a second mission in 2013 by the General Inspectorate of the Administration of the Ministry of the Interior on the recording of complaints by the internal security forces, with the support of the General Inspectorates of INSEE and the French police and gendarmerie forces. This latter mission notably analysed the impact, in terms of statistical breakdowns, of past and future developments in the software used to record complaints within the French police and gendarmerie forces.

The President of the Authority was invited to a hearing at the time of both of these missions.

For the ASP, it was necessary to build a coherent statistical information system covering the entire penal system, from the recording of facts to the adjudication of cases, and the best solution was to create a Ministerial Statistical Department.

In fact, the ASP believed that the creation of such a Department had the following advantage in particular: the Code of Practice provides for the involvement of the administrations holding the information in the production of quality statistics. However, the proximity to the data recorded or produced by the Ministry, due to the presence of an SSM within the Ministry of the Interior, facilitates access to these data for statistical exploitation (access to personal data and access to operational services that collect such data, involvement in the specification of collection and analysis tools, etc.). In effect, SSM status gives the Department direct access, without intermediary, to the detailed databases managed by the French police and gendarmerie forces; however, only access to these personal data files actually enables statisticians to assess the quality of the data and any potential series breakdowns.

As regards the ONDRP, the ASP felt that it could not become a SSM, in particular because of its positioning: the Supervisory Body is, in fact, based within the French National Institute for Advanced Security and Justice Studies (*Institut national des hautes études - INHEJS*), which is a public institution, and this position is incompatible with the status of a Ministerial Statistical Department.

Both missions, in their respective reports, have recommended the creation of a Ministerial Statistical Department separate from the ONDRP, thus agreeing with the ASP's position. The creation of the Department was announced in July 2013. In June 2014, following the hearing of the forerunner of the Department, the ASP issued an opinion in favour of the creation of the Ministerial Statistical Service on Internal Security (*Service statistique ministériel sur la sécurité intérieure - SSMSI*), organically attached to the Central Directorate of the French judicial police and placed under the joint operational authority of the Directorate of the French national police force and the Directorate of the French national gendarmerie force within the Ministry of the Interior.

The SSMSI carries out its activities in complete professional independence, in accordance with the 1<sup>st</sup> principle of the Code of Practice; this professional independence is ensured by dissociation between the decision to regularly produce statistics and to disseminate them, which is taken with the endorsement of the Ministry hierarchy, and the production and dissemination phases themselves, which are the responsibility of the head of the SSM exclusively.

- [\*Incorrect Use of Figures, Disagreements: a Very Careful Watch, sometimes with Direct Action by the Authority\*](#)

Since the creation of the Authority in 2009, INSEE has not experienced a real crisis destabilising the Institute, as was the case with the 2007 controversy on unemployment, which led INSEE to stop publishing unemployment figures taken from the Labour Force Survey.

In contrast, disagreements over the reliability of the figures may have undermined the credibility of statistics in the eyes of the public: articles have criticised the figures and methods used by INSEE in recurring areas such as purchasing power, the price index, unemployment, poverty and immigration, sometimes calling into question INSEE's independence and professionalism.

In accordance with Indicator 1.7 of the European Statistics Code of Practice "*The National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat and, where appropriate, other statistical authorities, comment publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of statistics as far as considered suitable*"; therefore, it is the responsibility of INSEE (or of the Ministerial Statistical Departments) to respond to these criticisms, by press release and/or by changing the tools or methods. This has been done, for example, by creating a customised inflation simulator or by developing studies on pre-stressed expenditure or energy uncertainty.

It does not necessarily need to take direct action; however, the ASP must remain in contact with the services and ensure that the facts are established. In contrast, in the event that the controversies become too big, the Authority may need to take direct action.

This was the case in June 2011: a fierce controversy, which was covered significantly by the press, was triggered by the statements of the then Minister for the Interior on the statistics relating to the estimated academic failure of children of immigrants. Numerous comments in the press raised questions regarding INSEE's figures.

INSEE, supported by the ASP, ensured that all journalists seeking information on the subject had access to the statistics disseminated in 2005 and 2010 on this topic. Subsequently, in view of the controversy and the comments made, INSEE decided to publish a press release explaining what could be deduced from the academic careers of the children of immigrants on the basis of the 2005 statistics, in particular.

At the same time, the President of the ASP sent a letter to the Minister for the Interior regarding the figures published by INSEE in 2005 and then in 2010 and what could be deduced from them, stressing at the same time the discrepancy between the estimate made by the Minister and the orders of magnitude obtained from the statistics disseminated.

In September 2011, following the use of figures that was deemed to be incorrect by the Minister for the Interior, the President of the Authority received a letter from several trade union confederations asking that the Official Statistics Authority comment “*now, a few months before some important upcoming elections, to call on all involved to make rigorous use of official statistics publications, in accordance with the embargo rules*”.

The ASP replied to this letter by fully endorsing the desire for all involved in the upcoming elections to make rigorous use of official statistics publications and by pointing out that throughout this affair, the Official Statistics Authority had remained in constant contact with INSEE and had supported the Institute in its approach.

## Appendix 1

### *Article 1 of Law No 51-711 of 7 June 1951 on Legal Obligation, Coordination and Confidentiality in the Field of Statistics*

Consolidated version as at 11 October 2016

The National Assembly and the Council of the Republic have deliberated,  
The National Assembly has adopted and  
The President of the Republic hereby promulgates the following Law:

#### **Article 1**

Amended by Organic Law No 2010-704 of 28 June 2010 - Article 21 (V)

*I. - The Official Statistical System comprises the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques) and the Ministerial Statistical Departments.*

*Official statistics shall include all output resulting from:*

- *statistical surveys, the list of which is determined each year by a decree by the Minister for the Economy;*
- *the use of data collected by administrative departments, public bodies or private organisations discharging a public service remit, for general information purposes.*

*The design, production and dissemination of official statistics shall be carried out in complete professional independence.*

II. - An Official Statistical Authority responsible for ensuring compliance with the principle of professional independence in the design, production and dissemination of official statistics and with the principles of objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality applicable to the data produced is hereby created.

III. - The Authority comprises nine members:

- a President appointed by decree of the Council of Ministers on the basis of his or her qualifications in the legal, economic and technical fields;
- a qualified person appointed by the President of the National Assembly;
- a qualified person appointed by the President of the Senate;
- a member of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council appointed by its President;
- the President of the Committee on Statistical Confidentiality of the National Council for Statistical Information;
- a member of the Court of Auditors appointed by the First President of the Court of Auditors;
- a member of the Inspectorate General of Finances appointed by the Head of the Inspectorate General of Finances;
- a member of the Inspectorate General of Social Affairs appointed by the Head of the Inspectorate General of Social Affairs;
- a person qualified in the field of statistics appointed by the Minister for the Economy.

## Appendix 2

### *The Principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice*

#### **Institutional Environment**

Institutional and organisational factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of a statistical authority developing, producing and disseminating European Statistics. The relevant Principles are professional independence, coordination and cooperation, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity.

**Principle 1: Professional Independence** Professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European Statistics.

**Principle 1bis: Coordination and Cooperation** National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat ensure the coordination of all activities for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics at the level of the national statistical system and the European Statistical System, respectively. Statistical authorities actively cooperate within the partnership of the European Statistical System, so as to ensure the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.

**Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection and Access to Data** Statistical authorities have a clear legal mandate to collect and access information from multiple data sources for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.

**Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources** The resources available to statistical authorities are sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.

**Principle 4: Commitment to Quality** Statistical authorities are committed to quality. They systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and output quality.

**Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality and Data Protection** The privacy of data providers, the confidentiality of the information they provide, its use only for statistical purposes and the security of the data are absolutely guaranteed.

**Principle 6: Impartiality and Objectivity** Statistical authorities develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.

#### **Statistical Processes**

European and other international standards, guidelines and good practices are fully observed in the statistical processes used by the statistical authorities to develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics, while constantly striving for innovation. The credibility of the statistics is enhanced by a reputation for good management and efficiency. The relevant Principles are sound methodology, appropriate statistical procedures, non-excessive burden on respondents and cost effectiveness.

**Principle 7: Sound Methodology** Sound methodology underpins quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.

**Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures** Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented throughout the statistical processes, underpin quality statistics.

**Principle 9: Non-excessive Burden on Respondents** The response burden is proportionate to the needs of the users and is not excessive for respondents. The statistical authorities monitor the response burden and set targets for its reduction over time.

**Principle 10: Cost Effectiveness** Resources are used effectively.

### Statistical output

Available statistics meet users' needs. Statistics comply with the European quality standards and serve the needs of European institutions, governments, research institutions, business concerns and the public generally. Output quality is measured by the extent to which the statistics are relevant, accurate and reliable, timely, coherent, comparable across regions and countries, and readily accessible by users, i.e. the Principles of Statistical Output.

**Principle 11: Relevance** European Statistics meet the needs of users.

**Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability** European Statistics accurately and reliably portray reality.

**Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality** European Statistics accurately and reliably portray reality.

**Principle 14: Coherence and Comparability** European Statistics are consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it is possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different data sources.

**Principle 15: Accessibility and Clarity** European Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.

### Appendix 3

#### *Decree No 2009-250 of 3 March 2009 on the Official Statistical Authority*

NOR: ECES0826529D

#### **Consolidated version as at 28 September 2018**

The Prime Minister,  
on the basis of the report by the Minister for the Economy, Industry and Employment,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, in particular Article 285 thereof;  
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 of 17 February 1997 on Community Statistics;  
Having regard to the Law of 27 April 1946, as amended, on the allocation and cancellation of appropriations for the financial year 1946, in particular Articles 32 and 33 thereof;  
Having regard to Law No 51-711 of 7 June 1951 on legal obligation, coordination and confidentiality in the field of statistics, in particular Article 1 thereof;  
Having regard to Decree No 46-1432 of 14 June 1946, as amended, implementing Articles 32 and 33 of the Budget Law of 27 April 1946 relating to the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies for Metropolitan France and its overseas territories;  
Having regard to Decree No 2006-672 of 8 June 2006 concerning the creation, composition and functioning of advisory administrative committees;

Having heard the Council of State (finance section),  
Hereby decrees:

#### **Article 1** (*Amended by Decree No 2018-800 of 20 September 2018 - Art. 1*)

The Official Statistical Authority (*Autorité de la statistique publique*) established under Article 1 of the aforementioned Law of 7 June 1951:

(1) Shall issue any opinion that it deems relevant in order to ensure compliance with the principle of professional independence in respect of the design, production and dissemination of official statistics, as well as with the principles of objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of data produced, and to ensure compliance, by the Official Statistical System, with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice established under Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009;

(1 bis) Shall issue any opinion that it deems relevant in order to ensure that the procedures for the dissemination of publications of the Official Statistical System comply with the principles of neutrality and fairness in respect of the treatment of users, as defined under Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 referred to under (1); in particular, it shall ensure that said dissemination is separate and distinguished from all ministerial communications, in accordance with Principle 1 of the European Statistics Code of Practice established under Article 2 of said regulation;

(2) Shall ensure that the design, creation and dissemination of output resulting from the use, for general information purposes, of data collected by administrative bodies, public bodies or private bodies discharging a public service remit are undertaken in compliance with the principles of professional independence and of objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of data;

- (3) Shall be consulted in respect of any draft decree relating to the missions of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*) or of the Ministerial Statistical Departments;
- (3 bis) Shall issue an opinion, on the occasion of the appointment of the Director-General of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies and those of the officials in charge of Ministerial Statistical Departments who are central administrative directors, for the attention of the hearing committee established pursuant to Decree No 2016-663 dated 24 May 2016 establishing a hearing committee for the appointment of central administrative directors. Said opinion shall relate to the competences of the individuals whose appointment is proposed with regard to the principle of professional independence set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice established under Article 2 of European Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of 11 March 2009. The conclusion of the opinion shall be published in the Official Journal at the same time as the instrument of appointment;
- (4) Shall be referred to for an opinion in respect of draft decrees recognising the status of a Ministerial Statistical Department referred to under Article 9;
- (5) May issue observations with regard to any person who does not comply with the principles set out under (1) and (1 bis), once the person concerned has been given the opportunity to express their point of view;
- (6) May request that the Director-General of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies refer matters to the General Inspectorate of the Institute and may call upon the other competent inspectorates via the ministers to whom said inspectorates report;
- (7) Shall hear the President of the National Council for Statistical Information (*Conseil national de l'information statistique*) and the Director-General of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, at least once per year, in respect of the opinions of the National Council for Statistical Information and the implementation of the annual or medium-term statistical programmes.

**Article 2** (*Amended by Decree No 2018-800 of 20 September 2018 - Art. 1*)

The Authority may decide to make public the opinions referred to under Article 1(1), (1 bis) and (5). It shall prepare an annual report on the performance of the work programme of the bodies producing official statistics in relation to the European recommendations on good statistical practice, on the basis of the work programme of the bodies producing official statistics, the list of statistical surveys published in the Official Journal, the publications and the detailed report prepared by the National Council for Statistical Information. Said report shall be submitted to Parliament and made public.

The Authority may make public the conclusions of the audits that it shall conduct pursuant to Article 1(2). It may award a label of public interest and of statistical quality to the productions that it has examined in accordance with said Article.

**Article 3**

Any issue within its remit can be referred to the Authority by the President of the National Assembly, the President of the Senate, the President of the Economic, Social and Environment Council, the Prime Minister, the Minister for the Economy, the President of the National Council for Statistical Information or the Director-General of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies in its capacity as coordinator of the statistical methods, resources and work of public administrative bodies and private bodies subsidised or controlled by the State. The meeting during which the referral is examined must be held no later than three months after it has been made.

The Authority can also decide to refer to itself any issue within its remit.

**Article 4**

In order to perform their missions, the members of the Authority have access to the sites where official statistics are produced or disseminated, may receive any useful documents in the possession of the entities that produce or disseminate official statistics and may collect information from any employee of these entities.

**Article 5** *(Amended by Decree No 2013-34 of 10 January 2013 - Art. 1)*

The members of the Authority are appointed for a term of six years.

The term of office of the President is not renewable.

Except in the case of resignation, the appointing authority can only remove a member of the Authority from his or her duties in the event of an impediment or serious misconduct noted by the latter.

In the event of the death, resignation or removal of a member under the aforementioned conditions, or loss of the status by virtue of which he or she was appointed, another member is designated in accordance with the conditions set out in Article 1 of the aforementioned Law of 7 June 1951 for the remainder of the term of office.

**Article 6**

The Authority meets after being convened by its President or at the request of four of its members. The agenda of the meetings is set by the President.

The Authority is only quorate if at least five of its members are present. Its decisions are adopted by a majority of votes from among the members present. In the event of a tie, the President has the deciding vote.

The Authority can hear any person who is likely to be able to help with its deliberations. These persons do not take part in the vote.

The Authority establishes its own rules of procedure.

The Authority elects from among its members a Vice-President, who stands in for the President pursuant to the conditions laid down in its rules of procedure.

**Article 7**

In order to run its Secretariat, the Authority has resources made available to it by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies.

**Article 8** *(Amended by Decree No 2013-34 of 10 January 2013 - Art. 1)*

The members of the Authority are entitled to reimbursement of the travel expenses incurred in order to attend the meetings under the same conditions as those applicable to civil servants.

If the President agrees, any person invited to the meetings of the Official Statistical Authority is entitled to reimbursement of the travel expenses incurred in order to attend the meeting under the same conditions as those applicable to civil servants.

**Article 9**

The list of the Ministerial Statistical Departments mentioned in Article 1(I) of the aforementioned Law of 7 June 1951 is established and updated by a decree issued by the Minister for the Economy.

As of the date of publication of the present Decree, the Ministerial Statistical Departments are those listed in the appendix hereinafter.

**Article 10**

The Minister for the Economy, Industry and Employment is responsible for executing this decree, which will be published in the Official Journal of the French Republic.



## Appendix 4

### *The Monitoring of Embargo Breaches by the Official Statistical Authority*

#### In 2011, there was an embargo breach concerning the monthly jobseeker statistics

In 2011, an embargo breach by a member of the government was noted concerning monthly jobseeker statistics. Following the letter reporting this breach, sent to the ASP by the trade unions of INSEE, Pôle Emploi, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry for the Ecology and the Banque de France, the Authority decided, in early 2012, to adopt the following position for INSEE and the SSMs: “In the event of an embargo breach, the Statistical Department that issued the statistics in question will no longer send the information to the Minister concerned the day before release”.

#### In 2013, two embargo breaches concerning foreign trade figures and the indicator concerning the business climate

Two letters were sent by the ASP to the ministers who breached the embargo to remind them of the rules in this regard.

The ASP thus sent a letter to the Minister for Foreign Trade following her mid-year interview with the newspaper *Les Échos*. This interview was published in the issue of 7 August 2013. The newspaper reported on the basis of this interview before the embargo was lifted.

The ASP also intervened with the Director-General of INSEE to ask him to no longer send the information to the Minister for the Economy and Finance the day before release, following the announcement of the business climate indicator made by the latter, on 24 September, twelve hours before INSEE, on the program *Journal* on the French TV channel France 2.

#### In 2014, there was another embargo breach concerning the monthly jobseeker statistics

In 2014, the ASP again intervened with Pôle Emploi and DARES, which were jointly responsible for the publication of figures for jobseekers registered with Pôle Emploi, following an embargo breach not by a political official but by the television press, France 2. In its letter of 30 September 2014, the ASP asked the Director-General of INSEE, the Director of DARES and the Director of Pôle Emploi, with copies sent for information to the Minister for Labour and the Minister for the Economy, to provide journalists with a reminder of the rules of dissemination and of the need to respect the embargo on the dissemination of these statistics that received a label in early 2014. It also requested that they no longer send the information to France 2 journalists.

#### In 2015, there was an embargo breach concerning the growth figure

In 2015, the ASP again found there had been an embargo breach, in May, concerning one of the main economic outlook indicators published by INSEE, i.e. The growth figure for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2015. The newspaper, *Les Échos* released the growth figure for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2015 early, on Tuesday 12 May 2015. The figure was released at around 21:00 on the newspaper’s website and was published on the front page of its print edition, released digitally at 22:30, even though the official release of the figures by INSEE was scheduled for the following morning, Wednesday 13 May at 07:30 (the time the embargo was to be lifted). The information was immediately picked up by the media.

This embargo breach concerning the growth figure raised questions about the way in which statistics are disseminated. Though the economic outlook indicators are not reported to the media under embargo, they are, however, communicated according to defined and publicly known rules, the day before release, to the

offices of the Minister for Finance and Public Accounts, the Minister for the Economy, Industry and Digital Affairs, as well as those of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister.

This embargo breach thus led the Director-General of INSEE to amend the rules governing the early release of figures: the most sensitive economic outlook indicators, which are those for which the embargo is lifted at 07:30, will therefore no longer be sent at 18:00, but at 21:00, and in a more restrictive manner, only to the managers of the offices of the Minister for the Economy and the Minister for Finance.

The ASP approved the restriction proposed by INSEE concerning the rules governing the dissemination of economic outlook indicators, so as to limit the risk of leaks.

It also requested that the sending of data be systematically accompanied by a warning to ensure that the recipients of releases under embargo are definitely informed that compliance with the rules on the dissemination of economic outlook indicators is crucial (so as to give users, particularly institutional users and the financial markets, a guarantee of independence and transparency, which is essential for ensuring the credibility of the information and equal access to it).

#### In 2016, there was an embargo breach concerning the INSEE economic outlook note

In 2016, the main event that was specifically reviewed by the Authority mainly concerned an embargo breach in June 2016 concerning the economic outlook note published by INSEE, with the Secretary of State for the Budget within the Ministry of Finance and Public Accounts announcing on 15 June to the Senate Finance Committee that “*INSEE was going to revise its growth forecast to 1.6% in 2016*”, a figure that was included in the economic outlook note due to be released the following day at 18:00 and which it received under embargo. INSEE then brought the lifting of the embargo forward to 13:00 on 16 June.

Given that INSEE’s economic outlook note is one of its flagship products and is a direct extension of INSEE’s statistical output, always eagerly awaited, reported widely by the media and is subject to a precise dissemination framework (pre-announced schedule and embargo rules), the Authority therefore considered this embargo breach lamentable.

The economic outlook note must scrupulously comply with the principles and standards laid down to ensure the credibility of the information produced by INSEE in the eyes of official statistics users, as the independence and transparency of INSEE constitute the foundation of the trust on which official statistics are based.

Following this embargo breach, the ASP wanted to amend its 2009 decree in order to strengthen its competences, in particular with regard to the mission of ensuring that SSP publications are clearly distinguished from any ministerial communication disseminated separately.

This amendment was taken into account in Decree No 2018-800 of 20 September 2018 referenced hereinbefore.

#### In 2017, a framework document sets out the embargo rules for the entire Official Statistical System

In 2017, a framework document was drawn up setting out the embargo rules for the entire Official Statistical System in relation to statistical indicators mainly concerning the economic outlook.

The rules were re-transcribed so as to render them operational within the various Ministerial Statistical Departments.

The Authority recommended that those Ministerial Statistical Departments that had not made public their embargo rules publish them online on their websites by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2018, at the latest.

#### In 2019, there was an embargo breach concerning the third estimate for the quarterly national accounts for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018

On 26 March 2019, the updated growth figures for the quarterly national accounts were discussed on a radio broadcast by the Minister for Public Action and Accounts (*Ministre de l’Action et des Comptes Publics* -

MACP), even though those figures remained under embargo. The President of the ASP therefore asked his Office Manager and the Director-General of INSEE about the conditions under which the embargo had been breached, reminding them that the strictest compliance with the embargo rules was crucial for ensuring public confidence in official statistics.

The MACP Office Manager confirmed the latter's commitment to the independence of official statistics, acknowledging that, accordingly, compliance with the embargo rules was an absolute rule from which there could be no deviation. Its response, sent by email on 18 April, and clarified in an exchange dated 23 April, indicates in particular that: "an embargo breach, such as the one that occurred on 26 March concerning the growth figures, should be dealt with and must not happen again".

However, it wished to stress that a combination of circumstances had to be taken into account in this case: "the fact that the embargo had just been lifted for public finance data and that other macroeconomic data were subject to an embargo that was a little more than an hour later. In the explanation and presentation of public finance data, the growth figure also played an important explanatory role".

In turn, the Director-General of INSEE indicated, in addition to pointing out, for the record, that INSEE had then reacted by immediately lifting the embargo on the corresponding figures, in accordance with the rules to be applied in such cases, that he would provide any updates he considered necessary in the event of confusion between government communication and the dissemination of statistics.

With regard to this particular case, he stated, in particular, that: "as regards INSEE, the procedures in place, presented to the ASP and published on the INSEE website were indeed applied. The "Infos Rapides" data release had been sent to the manager of the office of the Minister responsible for INSEE, at 18:00 for most of the "Infos Rapides" due to be published at 08:45 (including the update of the quarterly accounts estimate in question) and at 21:00 for the information relating to the public accounts, due to be published at 07:30."

However, he added that "the fact is that the coexistence of two different embargo lifting times on the same day is a cause of confusion. It is the consequence of the application of our rules, which we undertake to apply strictly in accordance with IMF standards. It is rare for information due to be available at 08:45 to be as significant in scope as information published at 07:30. In the case at hand, the detailed results of the quarterly accounts were accompanied by a rounding upwards of the annual growth figure for 2018. Even though this complicates the explanation of our rules, and even though cases of this type are rare, in future it is possible to consider stating that, on occasion, information normally available at 08:45 will be shifted to 07:30 when there is already a publication scheduled for 07:30 on the same day."

The Authority approved the INSEE proposal in order to avoid the recurrence of such an incident.



## Appendix 5

### *The Labelling of Statistical Outputs resulting from Administrative Sources*

#### Background

In 2010, the Authority requested that the General Inspectorate of INSEE propose a procedure for the labelling of statistical outputs resulting from administrative sources produced outside of the Official Statistical System and that it test the possibility of labelling on a few specific cases. The aforementioned report by the General Inspectorate of INSEE identified a set of criteria (22 in total) directly related to the European Statistics Code of Practice, making it possible to provide structure to the assessment of a labelling request. This report also established a list of administrative sources that could be considered priority sources, in view of their importance, to enable the labelling procedure to be conducted quickly. The mission itself proceeded, on the basis of criteria that it suggested, with an in-depth expert assessment for three of them (data from the Central Agency for Social Security Bodies [*agence centrale des organismes de sécurité sociale* – ACOSS], notarial data and data on jobseekers at the end of the month [*demandeurs d'emplois en fin de mois* – DEFM]) and recommended labelling for the first and second, but limited to the Île-de-France region. Lastly, it established that an amendment to the regulatory texts was desirable in order to provide a better basis for the Authority's action in the area of labelling and to enable it to draw on the expertise of the Committee for the National Statistical Quality Label, which until then had been part of the CNIS and worked only on the labelling of statistical surveys.

In this context, the Official Statistical Authority was able to start its labelling activity in 2011.

From 2011 to 2013, a simplified procedure was introduced at the ASP's initiative for the processing of labelling applications. Only the labelling of the monthly statistics for jobseekers registered with Pôle Emploi was based on an assessment carried out by the General Inspectorates (IGF, IGAS, INSEE) to which the Authority has recourse.

In 2013, statistical governance was supplemented by a Decree of 10 January 2013, which organises the labelling of statistical processes implemented on the basis of administrative data and by an Order of 2 May 2013 on the organisation procedures for the Committee for the National Statistical Quality Label. This Order created a committee responsible for giving the opinions resulting from the assessment, on behalf of the ASP and at its request, of the operating and dissemination processes for administrative data. These opinions are sent by the Committee for the National Statistical Quality Label to the President of the Authority, who may award a label of public interest and statistical quality to the processes assessed, with reference to the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

#### The Labelling Procedure

The processing of a labelling application is based on two forms of expert assessment: an “internal” analysis based on the documentation provided by the organisation and an external analysis to examine consistency with other official statistics produced by other organisations.

The “internal” analysis is based on the following documents at least:

- the position and organisation of the body responsible for producing the statistics;
- a very precise list of statistics for which the label is sought (geographical level, sectors of activity, etc.);
- a description of the production process for the statistics for which the label is sought;
- a description of the dissemination framework for the statistics for which the label is sought;
- the response in the Code of Practice suitable for the labelling of statistical outputs resulting from administrative sources.

## *Labels Granted by the ASP since 2011*

### **2011**

- The labelling of the quarterly statistic for short-term accommodation prices in the Île-de-France region.
- The labelling of the ACOSS quarterly employment statistics produced at national level.

### **2012**

- The labelling of statistics on recipients of individual legal benefits from the National Family Allowance Fund (*Caisse nationale d'allocation familiale* - CNAF) (scope extended in 2018).
- The labelling of statistics from the State Pensions Service (*service des retraites de l'État* - SRE).

### **2013**

- The labelling of the statistics produced by the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (*Mutualité Sociale Agricole* - MSA).
- The labelling of road accident statistics produced by the French Road Safety Observatory (*Observatoire national interministériel de la sécurité routière* - ONISR).
- The labelling of statistical series from the National Old Age Pension Fund (*Caisse nationale d'assurance vieillesse* - CNAV).
- The labelling of the quarterly series on the private sector payroll and the quarterly series on hirings of members of the general scheme at national level produced by the Central Agency for Social Security Bodies (*Agence centrale des organismes de sécurité sociale* - ACOSS).

### **2014**

- The labelling of monthly statistics for jobseekers registered with Pôle Emploi.

### **2015**

- The labelling of monthly health insurance expenditure statistics produced by the National Health Insurance Fund for Salaried Workers (*Caisse nationale d'assurance maladie des travailleurs salariés* - CNAMTS).

### **2017**

- The labelling of data from the national database of causes of death produced by the Centre for Epidemiology on the Medical Causes of Death (*Centre d'épidémiologie sur les causes médicales de décès* - CépiDC).

### **2018**

- The labelling of the quarterly statistic for short-term accommodation prices outside the Île-de-France region.
- The labelling of the gross monthly data on medication expenditure produced by the National Health Insurance Fund (*Caisse nationale d'assurance maladie* - CNAM).
- The labelling of new series of data produced by the National Family Allowance Fund (*Caisse nationale des allocations familiales* - CNAF).