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Annual Report
of the Official Statistics Authority
2020

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Institutional Framework and Composition of the Official Statistics Authority

The institutional framework of official statistics in France was modernised by the Law on the Modernisation of the Economy (LME) of 4 August 2008. In addition, Article 1 of Law no. 51-711 of 7 June 1951 on obligations, coordination and confidentiality in statistical matters, as amended by Organic Law no. 2010 of 28 June 2010, established the Official Statistics Authority.

The institutional framework of official statistics in France is based on three pillars.

The National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS) provides a forum for users and producers of official statistics. In this way, it sheds light on new needs for information. It organises the programme of official statistics projects and suggests new avenues to ensure that societal issues are dealt with as thoroughly as possible.

The CNIS is chaired by Mr Patrice Duran.

The Official Statistical Service (SSP) drives the conception, production and dissemination of official statistics.

As at 31 December 2020, it comprises INSEE and 16 Ministerial Statistical Offices (MSOs). It is coordinated by INSEE.

INSEE is headed by Mr Jean-Luc Tavernier.

The Official Statistics Authority (ASP) ensures that official statistics are prepared in a professionally independent manner and according to the fundamental principles in the “European Statistics Code of Practice”: impartiality, objectivity, relevance and data quality.

It draws up an annual report on official statistical activity, which is submitted to the French Parliament and made public. This report covers 2020, the eleventh year of existence of the Authority.

Decree 2018-800 of 20 September 2018 amending Decree 2009-250 of 3 March 2019 relating to the ASP

Composition of the Official Statistics Authority

(notice published in the Official Journal of 24 February 2018)

Mr Dominique Bureau, President, appointed by a decree of the Council of Ministers of 9 April 2015

Mr Abdeldjellil Bouzidi, appointed by the President of the National Assembly

Mr Denis Badré, appointed by the President of the Senate

Ms Patricia Blanchard, appointed by the President of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council

Mr François Weil, President of the Statistical Confidentiality Committee, appointed by the Vice-President of the Council of State

Mr Éric Dubois, appointed by the First President of the Court of Accounts

Mr François Auvigne, appointed by the Department Head of the General Inspectorate of Finances

Mrs Anne-Marie Brocas, appointed by the Head of the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs

Mr Bruno Durieux, appointed by the Minister for the Economy and Finance

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Preface

Official statistics during the health crisis: initial lessons

The ability of INSEE and the Ministerial Statistical Offices to respond to the health crisis has been remarkable. The Official Statistical Service (SSP) worked tirelessly to provide the indicators needed to assess the situation and, more generally, to document its repercussions. However, apart from the well-deserved recognition, it is important to learn lessons for the future. In this regard, the following five lessons are worth noting:

1. In a situation as exceptional as the one we experienced in 2020, the ability to produce relevant and objective information, in accordance with the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP), was determined primarily by the quality of the organisations and the investments made before the crisis to leverage new data. INSEE and most of the Ministerial Statistical Offices were the driving force behind these efforts.
2. Responsiveness and commitment to good practice are not mutually exclusive. Complying with the principle of professional independence and observing the rules of best statistical practice in the design, production and dissemination of official statistics are even more crucial in a crisis situation if the public is to have confidence in the information produced, even though the circumstances are more conducive to a proliferation of unreliable information. In this respect, the SSP has endeavoured to supplement statistical results with information needed to understand them in this context. In addition, the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS) has systematically provided advice, as a matter of urgency, on modified or specific surveys.
3. The production of statistics in crisis situations creates specific problems in terms of organisation and methods for accessing data. Looking ahead, it will certainly be necessary to improve planning for such issues through risk mapping exercises, for example. At present, these issues are not addressed by the CoP, which considers the publication of preliminary results only to a limited extent; it attaches great importance to the efficiency of statistical production but little to the need to ensure its resilience. There are insufficient guarantees regarding access to the data needed in times of crisis. Therefore, changes to both the technical and legal frameworks must now be developed.
4. The crisis has also revealed certain weaknesses or shortcomings, primarily in terms of health statistics, which may not be limited to what are known as structural statistics. These health statistics need to be constructed, in particular through the labelling of data produced by different operators, which must be developed to expand the scope of official statistics in this field. More fundamentally, however, there is a clear need to define an overall project in this area, which must be led by the Ministerial Statistical Office concerned, in this case the DREES, whose role must be strengthened more generally.
5. The crisis underlines the need for coordination, cross-functionality and cooperation within the official statistics system and among its partners, to document the wide range of economic, social and environmental impacts. In this respect, the range of repercussions resulting from this epidemic has been extreme. However, the increase in public expectations for statistics that widen the scope of research and reflect the diversity of situations is a structural trend.
Furthermore, the crisis highlights the need for administrative or governmental authorities to make better use of official statistics to improve the effectiveness of public policies, while complying with the principle of professional independence. To this end, trust between the Statistical Offices and these authorities must be strengthened, especially as the authorities do not – or do not yet – fully understand the benefits that official statistics can bring to public policy.

The President of the Official Statistics Authority



J. Bureau

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The Authority's opinion on the production of official statistics

Overall assessment

Official statistics were faced with unprecedented challenges in 2020. On the one hand, the health crisis had a huge impact in demographic, economic and social terms, which had to be captured by data that objectified the phenomena. On the other, the production of statistics encountered general difficulties linked to lockdowns, but also faced more specific problems, particularly the inability to conduct face-to-face surveys, requiring changes to household and price surveys in particular.

Given this situation, the ability of INSEE and the Ministerial Statistical Offices (MSOs) has been remarkable. They were able to adapt their organisations and methods to ensure continuity in production, generally meeting publication schedules; utilise available sources or add questions to existing surveys to shed light on a particular situation; develop cooperative relationships, such as the EpiCov survey with INSERM (the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research), designed to provide information on the population's immune status; and leverage new data, particularly from high-frequency sources (bank card data, search engines, mobile phone data, etc.), whose long-term availability will need to be maintained.

As early as March, INSEE was able to provide estimates of changes in activity and excess mortality and then publish regular updates.

More generally, the Official Statistical Service (SSP) introduced several instruments to monitor the impact of the crisis, especially on the labour market and poverty, and to understand the repercussions of the crisis on individuals and businesses. These included surveys on how businesses organised themselves, on educational continuity and student assessment, and on cultural sectors. The 2020 edition of "France – Portrait Social" summarised the results in terms of the population's living conditions during the first national lockdown.

The way in which these projects were carried out appears to be exemplary in three respects:

- The CNIS has systematically provided advice, as a matter of urgency, on modified or specific surveys. In other words, the methodologies were validated and the public was consulted as required to best meet the SSP's needs.

- Communication was strengthened to inform the public of trends in the available statistics. Above all, the SSP has endeavoured to supplement statistical results with information needed to understand them in the context of this crisis, in particular to assess their reliability.

- The SSP has endeavoured to provide data at the regional and departmental levels.

Furthermore, many projects aimed at improving the design, production or dissemination of official statistics were able to continue despite the restrictions. However, some data collection exercises had to be postponed because it was not physically possible to conduct them under acceptable, safe conditions. In this respect, postponing the data collection for the annual population census survey affects one of INSEE's core missions. The relevant decision was taken after consultation with the National Population Census Assessment Commission (CNERP) and INSEE will, as far as possible, make up for the lack of information collected by making greater use of administrative sources to produce the official annual population estimates.

Lastly, the health crisis revealed certain weaknesses linked to problems in the organisation of official statistics. This is the case for the Armed Forces MSO (Economic Observatory of Defence (EOD)), whose statistical output stopped completely during lockdown. Consequently, the Authority considered it necessary for a joint audit to be conducted, under Article 1-6 of Decree No 2009-250, on the conditions for statistical production in the field of defence, in association with the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces and the General Inspectorate of INSEE.

Health statistics

The crisis has revealed an unsatisfactory situation in the area of population health statistics. Correcting this over the coming years needs to be a priority given what is at stake.

Firstly, the Official Statistics Authority noted that, unlike other countries, French official statistics did not provide information on causes of death during the crisis. In fact, causes of death, produced by the INSERM's CépiDC (Epidemiological Centre for Mortality by Medical Causes), only became available very recently, as only 25% of death certificates are currently sent in electronic form. Given this situation, the Authority welcomes the joint mission undertaken to optimise the statistical production of medical causes of death.

But this is not the only concern. While the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of health and social issues, the situation within the Health and Social Affairs ministries' MSO – the Department of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES) – appeared to be unique within the Official Statistical Service.

This Ministerial Statistical Office's remit is to provide public decision-makers, citizens and economic and social leaders with reliable information and analyses on populations and health and social policies. Major areas such as population health and health systems, or social protection and policies, require high-quality statistical information to describe the transformations under way in society, identify new dimensions – related to specific topics or geographical areas – that need to be observed, assist in decision-making and inform public debate.

The Authority has noted that a gap has gradually developed between the need to improve official statistics in this area and the resources available to the DREES. Since 2011, this MSO has lost 12% of its staff, and the rate of decline in staff numbers has increased in recent years, particularly in its external services (e.g. regional health agencies), seriously calling into question their ability to produce analysis. The frequency of certain statistical surveys, for example on health in schools, or their content, which is increasingly restricted to European requirements, has therefore been reduced. The Authority has also noted weaknesses in the ability to carry out foundational projects or ensure they are properly maintained so that the tools developed can function effectively. One example is the INES micro-simulation model, currently managed by the DREES and INSEE, which is used to assess reforms to social benefits and contributions and has no equivalent in the administrative sphere.

While the DREES has recently experienced a stabilisation in its overall budget, it has still fallen significantly over the last 10 years. This has occurred at a time when this MSO has continued to take on new responsibilities, including the national suicide observatory, the health survey (previously INSEE's responsibility), and support for experiments on new care organisations. This last example highlights the fact that the DREES has also had to strengthen the support it provides to the operational departments of the Social Ministries, particularly to improve the use of data. In this respect, mobilising 15 to 30 crisis management agents (in particular at the Health Crisis Centre) and strengthening the DREES' status as a reference centre for ensuring the quality and consistency of data for COVID management are certainly exceptional, but they are part of a trend. It must therefore be emphasised that this support function cannot be effective in the long term without consolidating statistical production and therefore the DREES' statistical programme, which necessarily form its

foundation because of the importance of the data produced and the combined expertise required to produce them.

Admittedly, many operators contribute to data production in the various fields concerned. The Official Statistics Authority, as part of its quality-labelling remit for series relevant to official statistics that are produced by public operators or by private bodies with a public service remit, encourages the improvement of official statistics in this way. It therefore systematically asked operators working in this field who had already submitted some of their data for quality-labelling to make more ambitious proposals to contribute to official statistics by expanding the scope of their quality-labelled data as well as endeavouring to comply with the code of practice for quality-labelled series. The process should involve all operators holding data of interest for official statistics, in particular Public Health France for morbidity data and risk factors (co-morbidities, exposures and behaviour).

This recommendation to expand the scope of quality-labelled series is now considered a top priority. However, it must be integrated into an overall project. For example, the data from the “Funds” typically only cover a partial field, whereas official statistics must consolidate and provide statistics that reflect developments as a whole and take account of the wide variety of situations.

Furthermore, statistics derived from management data, research data or theme-based data are either intrinsically limited in their ability to meet the constraints of statistical production (in terms of standardisation of production and dissemination procedures, relevance, reliability, consistency and comparability) or they can meet these constraints only after considerable work has been carried out by the MSO in collaboration with the data holders (e.g. Public Health France in the area mentioned above) to ensure their quality.

The quality-labelling process cannot therefore replace the implementation of a coherent project for official health and social statistics by the MSO concerned.

In this context, the Authority believes that strengthening the DREES, in terms of both human and financial resources, and defining an overall project for official statistics in the field of health and social welfare are prerequisites for the DREES to be able to carry out its remits. The joint mission requested of the General Inspectorates of INSEE and Social Affairs to draw up a map identifying the various places where data are produced within the Ministry and among its operators will contribute to this.

However, the Authority stresses that, in addition to identifying available sources and potentially harmful redundancies or dispersions, it is also important to identify any blind spots that are poorly covered by official statistics and assess how suitable the various data are for statistical purposes, by identifying the requirements for correcting their shortcomings. In this respect, the Authority emphasises that, when statistics are based on administrative sources, their definition and the concepts and procedures used must be compatible with those used in statistics (or must be adapted to be compatible with them) in order to ensure their quality.

Because its statistical production is by nature a multi-year activity – and, in addition, because this production is increasingly regulated at the European level – it is important that the DREES has multi-year visibility of its human and financial resources. The Authority therefore recommends that a multi-year employment strategy be defined for the DREES for the next three-year period from 2021 to 2023, and that the implementation of this strategy be initiated without delay.

Professional independence of the Official Statistical Service

In its annual report for 2019, the Authority stressed that the time was opportune to rewrite the

ministerial organisation decrees to specify the scope of statistics covered by each MSO, establish the principle of their professional independence and define INSEE's coordination role. In line with the principle that the professional independence of statistics must be enshrined in law, this is essential because the transparency of missions and organisations is a key factor in determining public confidence.

Although it slowed down for obvious reasons, this compliance process continued in 2020. The Foreign Trade, Civil Service and Public Finances MSOs have committed to amend their decrees accordingly. The respective drafts are being prepared and are currently undergoing the required consultations. The Ministry for Culture has finalised the process (Decree 2020-1831).

Within this framework, ten MSOs have achieved compliance or are in the process of doing so.

This clarity around the MSOs' mission statements and the conditions for implementing them should also be beneficial for internal management and the development of fruitful relations with other ministerial departments. But this alone is not enough, as the inspection missions launched for the Higher Education and Justice MSOs suggest: despite the visibility that official statistics had in 2020, there is still a lot to be done to ensure that its usefulness and principles are well understood in the ministries, without having to start from scratch each time.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that there were no major controversies or breaches of professional independence in 2020. Thanks to the systematic dissemination of explanatory documents by the ASP and the commitment from the heads of MSOs to remind everyone that the embargo rules are based on the principle of equal access for all to official statistics, any risks were avoided and, when necessary, appropriate solutions were found to prevent any confusion between government communication and the dissemination of official statistics.

In this respect, the newly launched INSEE blog has proved to be an extremely valuable tool for avoiding controversy through education: some thirty posts have been published to address current events and explain the figures. However, due care is required because, in this area, nothing can be taken for granted and the economic, social and electoral context of 2021 is intrinsically prone to tensions.

The Authority's opinion on compliance by the Official Statistical Service with the European Statistics Code of Practice¹

Principle 1: Professional Independence

Although there were fewer controversies for the SSP than in the previous year, INSEE and more generally official statistics were confronted with several controversies at the beginning of 2020. These concerned respectively the measurements of inflation and unemployment, how official statistics are structured in the field of internal security, and the possible role of INSEE in producing per capita income indicators under the pension reform project.

Although each had its own authors, context and particularities, the common feature of these controversies was that they moved away from argumentative criticism of methodologies or statistical results to instil a general unfounded suspicion of the objectivity, quality and independence of official statistics.

Accordingly, the Authority considered that it was part of its role to support the components of official statistics by publishing the following deliberation on 18 February 2020:

General principles applicable to official statistics

As official statistics are indispensable as a basis for decision-making and public policy and as a source of input to research and public debate, the Official Statistics Authority considers it necessary to reiterate the principles of objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of the data produced that govern official statistics and apply to the entire Official Statistical Service (SSP). In fact, Law 51-711 of 7 June 1951 establishes a general principle of professional independence that applies to both INSEE and the Ministerial Statistical Offices (MSOs). In this regard, statistics shall be developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner, including in relation to the choice of techniques, definitions, methodologies and sources to be used and to the timing and content of all forms of dissemination. These tasks shall be carried out without pressure from political groups, interest groups, government or public authorities at any level.

Monitoring carried out by the Official Statistics Authority

The Official Statistics Authority, created in 2009, is responsible for monitoring the implementation of these principles. It systematically examines all controversies concerning official statistics, bearing in mind that their credibility requires the most solid methodologies and appropriate statistical procedures. Criticism arising from public debate, when argued in relation to these criteria, is therefore a valuable source of improvement or enhancement.

The Authority shall report on the related investigations, in particular through the report, submitted to Parliament and made public, that Article 2 of Decree 2009-250 requires it to produce each year on the implementation of the work programme of those bodies producing official statistics in accordance with European recommendations on good statistical practice, based on the work programme of the bodies producing official statistics, the list of statistical surveys published in the Official Journal, and the publications and detailed assessment drawn up by the National Statistical Information Council.

Information on the points raised by the various controversies

In its 2018 annual report, the Authority noted that:

- the criticisms (repeated at the beginning of the year) accusing INSEE of systematically

¹ See the European Statistics Code of Practice on the Authority's website: <https://www.autorite-statistique-publique.fr/>

underestimating inflation on the grounds that the price indices include “quality of goods” effects were unfounded as the methods used were in line with best practices in this area and allowed for international comparisons in particular;

- the reconciliation carried out between the INSEE employment survey data and the Pôle Emploi jobseeker data, carried out at the Authority’s request by INSEE, the Directorate for Research, Studies and Statistics (DARES) and Pôle Emploi in order to understand the origin of the discrepancies between the trends in the various unemployment indicators, had confirmed the methodology used by INSEE’s “employment survey” and provided an explanation for the discrepancies in the trends with the jobseekers’ management figures from Pôle Emploi, identifying the populations at the root of the differences. These discrepancies are caused primarily by the fact that the administrative criteria used to register with Pôle Emploi do not correspond exactly with those defined in the survey, specifically in terms of lack of activity, job search and acceptability of a possible offer.

In addition, the Authority pointed out on 16 October 2019 that a Ministerial Statistical Office, in line with the organisational principles set out in the aforementioned 1951 Law regarding professional independence and coordination by INSEE, was established in 2014 to develop statistics in the area of internal security, the “Internal Security Ministerial Statistical Office (SSMSI)”. The MSO draws on administrative sources for recording complaints to produce sound statistics. On 19 December, it also published the results of the annual “Living Environment and Security” survey.

Lastly, the Authority notes that official statistics have helped to fuel the public debate on pension reform by providing the public with objective figures covering the various facets of the issues involved, so that everyone can form a judgement on the choices or make proposals in this area. Of course, it is not for INSEE to make such judgements, only to provide the appropriate statistics to inform them objectively.

As such, the government may ask it to produce the indicators required for the implementation of the reform as adopted by Parliament. This type of approach does not contravene the principle of independence of statistics, provided, of course, that the corresponding figures are established in accordance with the rules of official statistics, which there is currently no reason to doubt, but which the Authority will in any case verify.

The nature of the recent attacks on INSEE is not part of the normal, desirable debate on statistical production.

By mistaking statistical quality for the congruence of the results with people’s preconceived opinions, they invoke professional independence in order to put pressure on the agents and managers of official statistics, and thus in fact undermine it. This is particularly unacceptable when it comes to ad hominem criticism.

Under these conditions, the Authority endorses the positions expressed by official statisticians in connection with these various controversies and considers it useful to make this known formally, so that these attacks on the professional independence of official statistics may be halted.

The Authority also considers that the rules of neutrality that normally apply to all public agents are essential within the SSP to ensure confidence in its output. As such, official statisticians must refrain from using their position as an instrument of propaganda of any kind and avoid expressing any opinion that might undermine the authority of their position or the image of general government, with the obligation to maintain confidentiality being strengthened when there is a risk that such opinions could be spread easily and rapidly, particularly via social media.

Furthermore, availing itself of the opportunity provided by the publication of Circular 6144/SG of 17

February 2020 on the State's new branding strategy, the Authority considered it useful to reiterate the principles of strict separation between political statements and statistical publications. It therefore published the following deliberation on this subject on 14 April 2020:

Official statistics include those produced by the Official Statistical Service, which includes the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Offices together with output resulting from the use, for general information purposes, of data collected by general government departments, public bodies or private bodies entrusted with a public service remit. The design, production and dissemination of official statistics shall be carried out in complete professional independence, which implies in particular that statistical publications shall be clearly distinguished from political statements and disseminated separately.

Given the structure of our statistical service, which is also a source of many advantages in terms of the quality of output and the scope covered by official statistics, the implementation of the first principle of the European Statistics Code of Practice, that of professional independence, is particularly important.

Amended Decree 2009-250, which specifies the responsibilities of the Official Statistics Authority in relation to ensuring this professional independence, explicitly requires it to ensure that official statistical publications are disseminated separately from any ministerial communications.

In this respect, the Authority regularly notes, when it reviews Ministerial Statistical Offices or examines the quality-labelling of public statistics produced by operators, that progress is needed in this area. Depending on the case, a more visible separation is needed between official statistics and non-statistical data or between statistical publications and publications of another nature, particularly for Ministerial Statistical Offices that also perform other activities, such as monitoring, forecasting and consultancy studies, when these statistics are made available to the public on the same website.

Furthermore, it is important that the presentation of statistical publications be designed so that the public can identify their nature without the slightest ambiguity, with the need to guarantee their independence taking precedence over the promotion of the organisation that produces them. In this respect, INSEE, a Directorate General of the Ministry for the Economy, is exemplary and should serve as a reference.

The Circular of 17 February 2020, which aims to make action by the State more transparent and visible through a new branding and visual identity strategy for its departments and operators, has prompted a complete review of communications in Ministerial Statistical Offices. To the extent that the public's confidence in the independence of official statistics depends on their ability to play the role expected of them – to help everyone make decisions and inform public debate – this review also provides an opportunity to improve compliance with this essential principle of separation of statistical publications. Developing the State's new brand therefore reinforces the need to assert and promote the "Official Statistical Service" brand, which the public does not yet perceive as being of the same quality as that of INSEE.

Principle 2: Mandate for data collection

The SSP carried out ad hoc work directly related to the health crisis. Some of this work was based on private data, the vast majority of which was newly accessible but only on a limited use basis, for example mobile phone, electricity supply and bank card data.

However, the current framework of the Law for a Digital Republic is rather restrictive in that it only

provides for the use of private data when it replaces existing surveys.

The Authority considers that to better meet the public's expectations, the conditions for permanent access to these new sources of private data should be examined.

Principle 3: Adequacy of resources

INSEE, the Budget Directorate and the General Secretariat of the Economic and Financial Ministries signed a multi-year contract in February 2019. The Authority welcomes the very positive outcome of this process, in terms of both compliance with the milestones set for achieving the objectives and the progress made with regard to internal management.

With regard to the DREES, the Authority believes that strengthening it, in terms of both human and financial resources, and defining an overall project for official statistics in the field of health and social welfare are prerequisites for the DREES to be able to carry out its remit. Because its statistical production is by nature a multi-year activity – and, in addition, because this production is increasingly regulated at the European level – it is important that the DREES has multi-year visibility of its human and financial resources.

The Authority therefore recommends that a multi-year employment strategy be defined for the DREES for the next three-year period from 2021 to 2023, and that the implementation of this strategy be initiated without delay (see also the preface to this document and the DREES hearing in chapter 3.2).

Principle 4: Commitment to quality

The Authority commends the progress made with the quality procedures which continued in 2020, in line with the commitment made following the 2014 peer review, and the increased professionalisation of the quality advisers in INSEE's regional directorates and in the MSO.

Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity

In 2020, an embargo breach occurred on 7 August affecting foreign trade figures.

Following this incident, and even though there were no major embargo breaches in 2020, the Authority considered it useful to act preventively by drawing attention to the rules in this area in the note entitled "Dissemination of Official Statistics and Embargo Rules" published on its website. It will continue to do so on a regular basis.

Principle 7: Sound methodology

Given the health crisis, the Authority considers that the SSP's publications were accompanied by appropriate methodological precautions where necessary, in particular with regard to the significance of the unemployment rate during lockdown and changes to the consumer price index basket when not all products were available.

Principle 11: Relevance

The Authority highlights the high level of responsiveness shown by the CNIS during the health crisis. It systematically provided advice, as a matter of urgency, on modified and specific surveys, consulting the public as required to best meet its needs.

Principle 12: Accuracy and reliability

Following the incident recorded involving one of the CNAM's statistical series, the Authority reminds bodies whose series have been quality-labelled that they must endeavour to comply with the Official Statistics Code of Practice.

Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity

The Authority commends the efforts made by the SSP to communicate and educate during the health crisis, in particular via the INSEE blog, which was launched at the beginning of 2020 and which proved to be a particularly useful tool for informing and educating the public about the relevance and reliability of certain statistical indicators and the use of new data sources to monitor the economic situation.

The Authority highlights the value of grouping all statistical output produced by INSEE and the MSOs on one page of INSEE's website and having this page available specifically for statistics related to the health crisis.

More generally, it emphasises the need to present the public with a less fragmented view of official statistics. In this respect, the Authority welcomes the acceleration of modernising the SSP's means of communication, in particular through increasing its social media presence, increasing its use of videos, and entering into partnerships with media companies specialised in communicating socio-economic information to a wider audience.

1. Official statistics in France in 2020

1.1 Adaptations made by the SSP in the context of the health crisis

- *Working conditions and teleworking*

From mid-March, during the first lockdown, administrations reorganised their activities, prioritising those that were earmarked in the business continuity plan as being of greatest importance in a period of crisis. In addition, to carry out these activities, it was very strongly recommended that the majority of employees work from home.

As a result, INSEE and the Ministerial Statistical Offices were obliged to adapt their working methods. Most of their work could be dematerialised with continuity of service ensured for the most part under their working conditions. However, not all of the ministries were prepared for this large-scale use of remote working and some MSOs were obliged to make drastic reductions in their activity, especially the MSOs of sovereign ministries, not to mention the Defence MSO, which ceased activity completely.²

In contrast to the spring lockdown, business continuity plans for government departments were not implemented during the second lockdown. INSEE and the MSOs therefore maintained all their missions as far as possible. At INSEE, 100% teleworking was once again the general rule for employees. Most of the MSOs used a combination of teleworking and on-site working. This relative flexibility meant that work that had been halted during the spring lockdown could now be carried out, as the stricter conditions of access to the premises had now been relaxed. In particular, teams were able to return to the workplace to access databases containing confidential or sensitive data.

However, a few difficult issues remained, as some MSOs were not equipped for teleworking or providing remote access to servers, especially the Defence MSO and the MSOs of sovereign ministries.

- *Adapting existing statistical operations to the context of the health crisis*

Adapting data collection for surveys

Lockdown disrupted the collection of information for a number of **household surveys**. Online interviews with households are in fact still in the experimental stage. A certain number of household surveys require interviews to take place in the home, face to face with an investigator because of the length of the questionnaire. No survey of this kind could be carried out during March, April or May 2020, and all information collection was switched to telephone interviews when this was possible, or interviews were suspended, which could lead to disruptions in responses.

During the second lockdown, data collection for household surveys continued but exclusively by telephone or online. For some long and complex surveys, such as the Life History and Wealth Survey, switching exclusively to telephone interviews proved a little difficult, and a new collection method, by videoconference, was put in place from mid-November.

Within the SSP, many surveys were postponed or simply cancelled.

Specifically, the Living Environment and Security Survey (CVS), run by INSEE in partnership with

2 This situation raised some specific concerns, and this combined with the department's lack of attractiveness and a significant turnover during the last few years, resulted in the Director General of INSEE, at the instigation of the ASP, requesting a taskforce on optimising the production of statistics in the area of Defence (see chapter 1.4)

the National Observatory for Delinquency and the Criminal Response (ONDRP) and the SSMSI, could not be switched to telephone collection, and had to be cancelled in 2020. However, in order to produce some reliable statistics on victimisation, INSEE and the SSMSI have put several measures in place. First, INSEE carried out the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions Survey (SRCV) at the beginning of 2020, which included a module of questions on victimisation in 2019. Questions on security were also incorporated into the major INSERM-DREES survey (EpiCOV) on the state of health of the population and their living environment in relation to the Covid-19 epidemic. Importantly, this survey included questions on violence within the family and different types of victimisation (thefts, burglaries, fraud) and its results will be published. Lastly, two surveys planned for 2021 will include retrospective questions on victimisation and security relating to 2020, isolating the periods of lockdown, and to 2019: the 2021 CVS Survey, carried out by INSEE and the SSMSI, and the 2021 GENESE Survey (Gender and security) conducted by the SSMSI on European funding.

For **business surveys**, data collection was already conducted mainly online. This was therefore able to continue during the first lockdown, although response rates fell sharply. INSEE and the MSOs gave priority to producing short-term indicators, with collection for annual surveys often being suspended.

During the second lockdown, business surveys were maintained. There was a drop in response rates, but it was less than expected and importantly it never called into question the quality of the infra-annual indicators. Special efforts were put into getting responses from large companies and specific adjustments were made for this particular period using external sources to account for the activity of non-responding companies. Concerning structural surveys, data collection fell a little behind but the response rates turned out to be fairly good.

However, some surveys, especially those relating to businesses whose activity was suspended during lockdown or where activities were very much affected by the restrictions on mobility, were sometimes extensively revised (surveys of hotels and other themed surveys). Some of the businesses interviewed had great difficulty in responding from the very start of the health crisis, and were unable to respond within the desired time limit (this was the case, for example, for the Research and Development Surveys by the Higher Education and Research MSO).

Price readings in shops were suspended from mid-March and replaced when it became possible by online readings and telephone enquiries, but especially by the use of scanner data, which were used for statistical production from the start of 2020 (see chapter 1.3).

Price collections at points of sale were resumed in January 2021.

For more details on SSP surveys that were postponed or cancelled, see Annexe 2.

Postponement of data collection for the 2021 population census

Population census data were collected in 2020. However, the changing health situation caused INSEE to postpone the 2021 annual population census collection until 2022.

The collection of data in the field, which should have begun on 21 January 2021, requires a lot of journeys and many contacts with inhabitants, hardly compatible with the health context. The conditions were therefore not ideal for achieving high quality data collection.

The Association of Mayors of France (AMF) and representatives of municipalities belonging to the National Population Census Assessment Commission (CNERP) were consulted and supported this postponement.

Given this context, INSEE will adapt its methods in order to publish an update of the legal population

of each municipality on the planned date, in December 2021. Every year, these updates are already calculated from a combination of several sources: field surveys, but also administrative sources in municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants and a complete register of localised buildings (RIL) in municipalities with 10,000 or more inhabitants.

Exceptionally, these methods will be adapted slightly and more reliance will be placed on the administrative data. Methodological studies already carried out show good quality results. Statistical results for 1st January 2019 will also be released according to the usual schedule, in mid-2022.

Such adaptations are possible in order to fill in the gap resulting from a year of missing surveys. However, this solution cannot be repeated for several years in a row.

One exception to this postponement: the Annual Census Survey (EAR) 2021 will definitely take place in Mayotte. This will be the first annual census survey in this department, and any delay would have a damaging effect on the date for updating legal populations.³

Adding modules or questions to existing surveys

The health crisis has generated a need for new questions in addition to the usual surveys, in order to shed some light on public debate about the impact of the crisis. The questionnaires of some existing surveys have therefore been adapted in order to introduce questions specific to Covid or its repercussions, both at INSEE and in certain MSOs.

For example, every month, INSEE conducts a consumer confidence survey among households (CAMME Survey) to gather information on consumer behaviour and expectations in terms of consumption and savings. This survey was adapted in early May 2020 to include a module relating to Covid aimed at quickly describing the living conditions of households during lockdown: income, employment conditions, time spent on certain activities and organisational difficulties. This module of about twenty questions was drawn up in conjunction with INSERM, DREES, Public Health France and other MSOs.

Questions were also added to the Labour Force Survey and to the Life History and Wealth Survey.

INSEE will add two specific modules to the questionnaire for the 2021 Statistics on Income and Living Conditions Survey (SRCV) to shed some light on the impacts of the health crisis: an additional module of questions on changes in the household situation as a result of the crisis, with questions in a European framework, and an additional module of questions on administrative complexity and any difficulties associated with accessing entitlements.

The Youth and Sports MSO has also adapted the questionnaires in some of these surveys to analyse the effects of the health crisis, in particular on individual participation in community life.

For more details on the addition of modules or questions to existing surveys, see Annexe 2.

Publications

As far as possible, the SSP has disseminated all scheduled publications.

³However, the census survey in Mayotte did not really get started, because lockdown was declared on the second day of data collection and lasted until 12 March, bringing operations to a halt. They will resume as soon as the health restrictions are lifted.

INSEE was able to publish most of what was scheduled: around 70 *Informations Rapides*, including the monthly Consumer Price Index (excluding Consumer Price Indices for the French Overseas Departments (DOM), which could not be produced in April and May 2020), i.e. all the short-term indicators, in line with the usual publication calendar.

However, some publications were postponed, or even cancelled. This was notably the case for the publication of “The French Economy”, which was not published in 2020, whereas it usually comes out in June, and also a number of publications disseminated by the MSOs (see chapter 2.3 principle 13 Timeliness and punctuality).

The official statistical service was quick to produce and disseminate initial analyses of the economic, health and social situation, despite the rapid changes that were happening, in order to understand the health crisis and its consequences, and thus guide public decision-making. INSEE and the MSOs carried out specific studies during the crisis, some of which were innovative. The Institute also created a dedicated Covid page on its website to direct visitors to these studies.

- *Many innovations at INSEE...*

Faster, more frequent and more precise death statistics

Every month, INSEE publishes the number of births and deaths that have occurred during the previous month. The health crisis necessitated a change in the mode of operation, and from 20 March, at the request of the Ministry for the Interior, the Institute provided Prefects with a daily count of the number of deaths (from all causes) that had occurred up to ten days earlier, as municipalities have one week to send in their civil status documents. Deaths are registered in the municipality where they occur (and not in the place of residence).

INSEE wanted this information to be made public every week on insee.fr, at national, regional and departmental levels. The publication rate was adapted according to the pace of the epidemic (monthly or weekly).

Multi-annual comparisons complemented this information, which was incorporated into the *statistiques-locales* website, so that maps and reports could be produced on mortality statistics at every administrative level, from municipality to region.

A provisional estimate of all deaths occurring in 2020 in France was published on 15 January 2020 covering deaths up to 4 January.

In addition to monitoring daily deaths, INSEE published several studies, including: excess deaths linked with population density across the country; deaths according to country of birth; comparison of excess mortality in European countries and comparison of the number of deaths linked to Covid-19 with the situation during the 2003 heatwave. An article was published on the INSEE blog entitled

“*Covid et mortalité en Europe en 2020 : des statistiques à regarder de près*” (Covid and mortality in Europe in 2020: statistics for close examination).

INSEE’s dissemination of death statistics in virtually real time was all the more necessary since the monitoring of mortality due to Covid-19 by Public Health France was only partial. This raised the question of time limits for producing causes of death, which are provided in France by the CépiDC, part of INSERM. Statistics for causes of death are covered by the only European regulation for which the response is dependent on a department that is external to the official statistical service. The regulation stipulates transmission once a year of deaths during the previous year. France is one of the European countries that send in their annual cause of death statistics several months later than the prescribed dates. From March 2020, CépiDC disseminated data from which the number of deaths from Covid-19 could be monitored, however, these data were based solely on electronic certifications, which cover only 25% of deaths. It also disseminates provisional statistics enhanced by data from paper-format medical certificates, but these provisional statistics are released late: at the beginning of December 2020, numbers were available only up until the end of August 2020.

As a result, the Director General of INSEE requested that a mission on death statistics be given jointly to the General Inspectorates of Social Affairs, Education, Sport and Research, and INSEE. The main purpose was to analyse the process of producing death statistics, to clarify reasons likely to affect the exhaustivity of data or delays in production and dissemination of statistics on cause of death, and finally to formulate recommendations, considering examples from abroad if necessary, aimed at speeding up the availability of statistical results on deaths.

Short-term monitoring in real time during the crisis

The restrictive measures introduced to combat the Covid-19 epidemic, especially the lockdown of the population, created an unprecedented short-term situation, with the voluntary shutdown of a large part of economic activity, both in France and throughout the world. Under these conditions, and confronted with a very rapidly changing situation, INSEE decided, from mid-March, to defer publication of the *Economic Outlook*, and replace it with a bi-monthly evaluation of the economic situation.

To produce these evaluations, INSEE was able to innovate, by using “high-frequency” data, available practically in real time, and particularly useful when the economy suffers a sudden large-scale shock. Some of these data, such as electricity consumption, were already used by economic analysts. Others, like aggregated bank card transaction amounts for example, were brought in specifically to estimate loss of household consumption.

Scanner data from several major retail outlets were also used, which made it possible to refine estimates, or even significantly improve them in the case of spending on food.

INSEE also used information provided by professional federations, Banque de France, and Rexecode.⁴

The consistency of all these data enabled INSEE to produce estimates of the decline in GDP and household consumption that were more appropriate to the context.

INSEE also measured the impact of the crisis in the regions and the departments, resulting in press releases and publications by INSEE’s Regional Directorates, including those in the DOM, and a Focus on tourist activity published simultaneously for all regions in October 2020.

⁴Rexecode acted as intermediary for its members (professional federations such as France Industrie), who provided weekly information on their activity during the first lockdown. This qualitative information was used in conjunction with other sources (Carte Bleue bank cards, electricity consumption, etc.) to assess the scale of the economic shock.

Posts on the INSEE blog, opened in early 2020, concentrated on monitoring the economy in the period of crisis. They include, in particular: “*Nouvelles données pour suivre la conjoncture économique pendant la crise sanitaire : quelles avancées ? Quelles suites ?*” (New data to monitor the economic outlook during the health crisis: what progress? What next?) and “*-X % de quoi ? Quelle mesure de l’activité pendant la crise, quelle(s) mesure(s) pour l’après crise ?*” (-X% of what? What measure of activity during the crisis, what measure(s) after the crisis?).

An ad hoc survey of the impact of the crisis on businesses

INSEE decided to postpone the survey on subcontracting in businesses that was scheduled for the end of 2020 and replace it with an ad hoc survey on the impacts of the health crisis on the economy and the organisation of businesses, and on inter-business relationships, distinguishing between the period of lockdown and post-lockdown. The survey focused in particular on those factors that affected activity most, on the way businesses adapted and on State aid. The first results came out in December 2020 (along with the new edition of Companies in France in the *INSEE Références* series). Importantly, the study estimated the cost to companies of implementing preventive health measures.

A rapid operation covering household living conditions during lockdown

The lockdown measures put in place during March 2020 affected people differently, depending on the type of dwelling they were in or the composition of their household.

INSEE brought together various indicators at local level to shed light on some of the phenomena linked to overcrowding in housing, and the specific features of the households concerned (single-parent families, young children, single people, etc.). A national publication, *Insee Focus* “Lockdown conditions in France” was disseminated in April 2020 on insee.fr and sums up the main messages that these indicators can deliver. This information is available in the form of interactive maps, regional and departmental tables, downloadable annotated departmental sheets and as a downloadable database.

- ***....And also in most of the Ministerial Statistical Offices***

The DREES set up some original statistical operations:

A large-scale statistical and epidemiological survey (sample size 370,000) called *EpiCov* was conducted in partnership with INSERM, and supported by INSEE and Public Health France (SPF). The aim was to estimate the prevalence of the Covid-19 infection in the general population, at a detailed geographic level (departments and large urban areas), and to assess the impact of the pandemic on living conditions.

Two specific waves of the panel of general practitioners looked at the impact of the health crisis on the opinion of these health professionals regarding their activity and patient care during and after lockdown.

A flash survey was conducted on the functioning of child protection establishments during the lockdown associated with Covid-19, in order to be able to provide an inventory of the situation during the 3rd week of lockdown.

Every week from the end of October 2020 the DREES disseminated the number of PCR tests carried out per day from 1st March 2020 and the weekly change in time between sampling and test results from the beginning of June.

At the end of December 2020, the DREES published a monthly dashboard of solidarity benefits to gain a better understanding of changes in poverty linked to the health crisis.

The **DARES** launched initiatives from the start of the first lockdown, in particular:

- The establishment of a dashboard monitoring the labour market situation.

This tool was produced in collaboration with the DGEFP and Pôle Emploi, and ensured that information could be provided on a regular basis (every week, then every two weeks) on short-time working (or short-term unemployment), reorganisations, numbers registering with Pôle Emploi, numbers of jobseekers enrolling in training, numbers starting assisted contracts, online job offers, etc.

- On 1st April, the introduction of a new monthly survey monitoring activity and employment conditions (*Acemo-Covid*). It was able to provide information quickly and frequently on changes in the workforce and activity, employment conditions (use of short-time working, teleworking, etc.), prevention measures (problems in setting them up, effects of health measures, etc.).

- Another one-off survey, called “*TraCov*”, was set up at the end of 2020: it looked at the psychosocial risks and working conditions that workers (including the self-employed) were facing during the crisis, and developments, especially on the subjects of teleworking and the use of digital tools at work.

In May 2020, the **DEPP** launched *seven surveys* relating to lockdown and from July 2020 was able to publish the first statistics and analyses on this period.

The first effects of lockdown on students’ skills and on drop-out rates from high school classes were also presented in November 2020. These specific surveys were conducted on representative samples of families of secondary school pupils, their children, head teachers, primary and secondary school inspectors, secondary school teachers, principal advisors (CPE), primary school heads and teachers. The aim was to bring together several types of information on the experiences of all those involved in the educational system in order to assess the effects of lockdown by endeavouring to document the differences observed according to the socio-demographic characteristics of those interviewed and the characteristics of the schools concerned.

In the context of the health crisis and the exceptional lockdown measures that led to disruptions in the recording of complaints and to changes in behaviour, some unprecedented work was carried out by the **SSMSI**. Exceptionally, it published updates every week on eight indicators relating to crimes and offences recorded by the French police and gendarmerie forces, with two new indicators on intra-family violence, and on fraud and breach of trust.

In addition, it published a report on delinquency during the first lockdown and a targeted methodological document.

To assess the economic impact of the Covid crisis on cultural sectors, the **Culture MSO** published an analysis which was disseminated in July 2020. This was based on an *ad hoc* survey conducted by the MSO among 7,800 culture sector workers and various other sources of information (especially professional organisations, study data made available) to assess the extent of financial losses and the short- and medium-term consequences of the lockdown for employment.

The **Foreign Trade MSO** conducted a study on recent developments in foreign trade in products linked to the fight against health crises, published in August 2020.

- ***Internal requests within Ministries to shed light on the crisis***

INSEE and several of the MSOs were asked by their ministries to carry out simulations, data mining, qualitative studies and monitoring as part of crisis management support. These studies did not necessarily result in publications.

INSEE was approached to participate in the Economic Continuity Cell (CCE), created at Bercy to bring together representatives of all the ministries involved in the “economic” aspect of the crisis, and contribute to a working group on aid for businesses.

The **DREES** was very much involved in crisis management support from March 2020. In particular, it was invited to supervise Information Systems (IS) because of its database management skills and its ability to develop “flash” online survey questionnaires. At the height of the crisis as many as 15 people were mobilised to provide support directly to the health emergency crisis centre or in back-office functions, supporting business departments and some operators, mainly in providing contextual data, checking, adjusting, formatting, analysing and making data available from different ISs monitoring the crisis, producing indicators, interactive dashboards and projections, building *ad hoc* ISs and applications for operational purposes (e.g. distribution of respirators, knowing and anticipating testing capacities, etc.), simulating the impact that measures might have in the context of the “Sécur de la santé” consultation and the recovery plan.

The **DREES** participated in monitoring public schemes set up by the European Commission for coping with the impact of the Covid crisis (economic and social aspects), within the framework of the Social Protection Committee and transmitted administrative data on various schemes (sick leave for parents looking after children, extraordinary solidarity aid, payments for young people in precarious situations, extraordinary aid for students). At the same time, the **DREES** agreed to forward data on beneficiaries of many solidarity benefits in advance, within the framework of this same committee.

For the second wave of Covid, as part of a reorganisation of managing the crisis by the Ministry for Health, the director of the **DREES** was given a mission with the ministerial crisis directorate in early November 2020 to assist in decision-making.

The **DARES** responded to questions on figures and other requests from the office of the Ministry for Labour relating to the emergency measures.

In order to quantify additional costs on construction sites linked to the health crisis, the **Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO** was tasked with managing a multi-participant monitoring committee in order to propose quantitative reference elements on this subject, as the Government decided in June 2020 to take steps to assist companies in the building construction sector to compensate for their excess costs and accelerate the return to full activity in the sector.

The **Civil Service MSO** set up a first administrative survey in civil service human resource departments on the impact of the health crisis on the organisation of work, then a second weekly survey in September 2020, in government departments, at departmental level, on the development of the epidemic and the widespread use of teleworking.

Faced with the sudden shutdown of part of the economy as a result of the health crisis, the government put a certain number of emergency measures into action. In advance of the implementation of some of these measures, the **Public Finances MSO** at the Departmental Public Finances Directorate (DDFIP) was in great demand to complete costing work, then afterwards to monitor some of these systems. This work focused in particular on the solidarity fund created for the benefit of SMEs, reductions in corporate property contributions (CFE) after deliberations by the municipalities, and delays granted in the area of direct local taxation.

The **DGFIP**, through the **MSO**, has made every effort to ensure that tax data can be mobilised quickly within the framework of epidemiological surveys.

The **SSMSI** was asked to provide support for its ministerial departments in managing the crisis, as increased demand was placed on the office (including the ministerial office and General Inspectorates).

- ***An escalation in the use of private and administrative data to shed light on the crisis and beyond***

In addition to introducing new surveys, the official statistical service sought to mobilise as many private or administrative sources as possible, as they could be useful for a better understanding of the impact of the crisis and more generally to produce economic or social infra-annual statistics.

For official statistics, the health crisis has acted as a catalyst for opening up and mobilising data held by private energy companies, scanner data, and bank card data. The data sources and the methods used were somewhat experimental in nature, but the innovative skills developed at INSEE over the years made it possible to quickly put them to good use.

For the first time, evaluations of the economic situation were partly based on data from files held by private companies. There had been some contact between INSEE and these companies several months prior to the crisis. Unprecedented partnerships were quickly formed, especially with the Public Interest Grouping (GIP) “Cartes bancaires”. Some of these private sources were made available to the SSP for only a limited time.

➤ ***Exploiting private data***

Electricity data

At the start of the Covid crisis, because data on electricity consumption was available within a very short time frame, it was possible to appreciate very quickly where economic activity had declined.

Contact was initiated in May 2020 between INSEE and the RTE and Enedis operators, enabling the Institute to obtain data that were better adapted to its needs than those available in open data but which had a longer transmission time.

By comparing electricity consumption and production (via the Industrial Production Index) or turnover (via VAT data) it should be possible to identify those branches where variations in electricity consumption are most closely linked to variations in economic activity.

Scanner data from major retail supermarkets

The Digital Republic Law authorised the use of scanner data in the context of calculating the Consumer Price Index. With the agreement of some major chains, aggregated data from scanner data could be used for “nowcasting”, to estimate changes in volumes.

Agreements were drawn up with 4 major chains to use scanner data to calculate activity indices in retail trade.

Bank cards

From 16 March, the Carte Bleue Economic Interest Group (GIE) agreed to provide daily aggregated data according to department and sector of store. These data proved to be fairly reliable for measuring consumption and activity in the sectors concerned. By having these indicators available, it was possible to publish the figure of a -35% drop in GDP and also in consumption.

Analysis of the potential of bank card payment data to calculate early activity indices is ongoing, but the fact that INSEE does not have access to individual transaction data is slowing down this work.

In addition, INSEE informed the GIE of its wish to have (aggregated) data by cross-referencing with activity code and department, mainly in order to mobilise these data for the regional short-term economic diagnosis.

Mobile phone data

Since the start of the health crisis, mobile phone operators have received many requests from public action to provide indicators that could be useful for managing the crisis. To this end, and in addition to the research project MobiTic that is already underway with Orange and funded by the national research agency, INSEE contacted mobile phone operators to ask them for anonymous figures in order to be able provide information on the population and its distribution across the country, and thus provide information on the drop in activity, as measured by movement throughout the country. Three operators, Orange, Bouygues Télécom and SFR, replied favourably, on condition that this information should only be used for monitoring and managing the crisis.

In April 2020, INSEE was therefore able to propose the first experimental statistical results on movements generated by the announcement of lockdown and on the new population distribution in the country at departmental level, as a result of collaboration with Orange.

The analysis of population movements when lockdown was lifted was also conducted based on data from the three mobile phone operators.

Discussions with the operators are currently at a standstill, as acquiring indicators on the basis of a commercial proposal is not appropriate for INSEE.⁵

In addition, the possibility of using the operators' detailed data for statistical purposes could be in doubt, especially due to the ongoing European negotiations on the e-privacy directive (see chapter 2.2).

➤ *Exploiting administrative data*

Support measures for businesses

At the end of summer 2020, INSEE began the formalities for accessing different administrative data sources enabling them to document support measures available to businesses during the crisis: especially ACOSS for deferment of social contributions, the DARES for short-time working, and the DGFIP for the solidarity fund.

The aim was to carry out studies that would examine the effects of these support measures, especially a joint study by INSEE-Banque de France on the effect of this aid on companies' cash flow. This topic is intended to be useful for the work of the monitoring and evaluation committee for emergency economic measures, chaired by Mr Cœuré and reporting to the Prime Minister.

Concerning regional aid, the absence of any transmission of centralised administrative information means that it cannot be exploited at national level.

See also chapter 2.3, principle 10 on "Increased use of administrative files"

1.3 The main advances made by the SSP not directly linked to the crisis

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the SSP invested heavily in analysing the consequences of the health crisis, but this did not prevent the service from carrying out innovative work in parallel, and making some real progress.

5 INSEE obtained data from Orange free of charge from March to May.

- **At Insee**

First publication of the consumer price index (CPI) to use scanner data

Since the publication of the CPI in January 2020, scanner data from major retail outlets have been used to calculate the index within the scope of industrial food products, cleaning products and personal care and beauty products in Metropolitan France.

Nearly 80 million products are monitored each month under these headings, compared to about 30,000 monitored previously by INSEE investigators. This represents 1.7 billion price recordings per month, which are transmitted to INSEE on a daily basis, and exploited using Big Data technology.

Before scanner data were actually used, there was a long experimental phase to ensure that the data could be obtained effectively and securely, that the IT architecture required to process such a large volume of data was in place, and that the methodology was suitable for using these data while keeping the concept of the CPI constant. A double calculation was therefore performed throughout 2019 to measure in detail the impact of using scanner data and to ensure the robustness of the production process.

New study zones and a new definition of “rural”

Work has been going on since 2018 to revise the different areas of study, i.e. employment zones, urban units and urban areas.

The revisions are based mainly on definitions that have been harmonised at European level, so that comparisons can be made between European countries.

These new zones were rolled out in September and October 2020.

Employment zones are common to DARES and INSEE, in the way they divide up the country. This is the smallest zoning area for which INSEE disseminates unemployment rates and employment estimates. The revision of this zoning used an algorithm validated at European level.

The new employment zones divide France into 306 zones. Seven profiles can be defined, according to their main economic orientation.

The 2020 employment zones were disseminated on 10 September 2020.

Concerning *urban units*, the current definition, which remains unchanged since 1962, has been maintained, particularly in view of the many legal texts that make reference to it.

The revision of *urban areas*, now called *urban zones of attraction*, was based on a working group combining ministerial statistical offices, the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT), urban planning agencies, associations of elected officials and researchers.

This overhaul has been accompanied by a change in definition, which is now based on the European definition of functional urban areas, for the largest conurbations.

An urban zone of attraction defines the extent of a city’s influence on the surrounding municipalities. This zoning replaces the urban area zoning of 2010. It is made up of a centre, defined according to population and employment criteria, and an outer ring, composed of municipalities where at least 15% of the active population work in the centre. Urban zones of attraction were disseminated in October 2020.

In addition, within the framework of the rural Agenda, INSEE has led a working group to seek a consensual definition of rural space. This working group included INSEE (General Directorate and Regional Directorates), Ministerial Statistical Offices, the ANCT, associations of elected representatives (AMF and AMRF), urban planning agencies, CEREMA and researchers. It was decided that the rural space should be defined based on the density grid, which will ensure consistency with European analyses: rural municipalities are those defined as sparsely or very sparsely populated and which represent 30,800 municipalities and one third of the French population.

Local unemployment rate estimates extended to the DOM

Local unemployment rates have seen two changes, starting with the results for Q2 2020, published at the beginning of October 2020.

First, quarterly publications now cover the DOM (excluding Mayotte), where the continuous Labour Force Survey is relatively recent (2014). In each DOM, quarterly results will be consistent with existing annual publications.

Second, results by employment zone have switched to the new 2020 classification (see preceding point). The results for employment estimates and unemployment rates by employment zone have been backcast from the beginning of the current long series (1998 for employment and 2003 for unemployment).

A new application programming interface (API) to access the Macroeconomic Data Bank (BDM)

Indicators disseminated on insee.fr under the heading “Main indices and time series” are now accessible via API. This web service, called BDM, was added to INSEE’s API catalogue on 9 July 2020.

These data are distributed into about a hundred themed headings, often defined according to the source so that they can be calculated. The available data include the consumer price index, most of the indicators needed for a short-term diagnosis of the French economy, the annual national accounts and indicators related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Many new publications not related to the health crisis

Between mid-March and the end of May, INSEE produced about fifteen publications, including an *INSEE Références* on self-employed workers, perennial articles on employment, wages, and tourist accommodation, as well as one-off studies on retail trade, very high wages and very high incomes.

All the short-term indicators were published according to the usual publication calendar.

Regarding the national accounts, several INSEE publications focused on methodological discussions on the scope of the national accounts. An article by Didier Blanchet published on the INSEE blog discussed the challenge of this work: “*Autour et au-delà du PIB : questions pour la comptabilité nationale, nouvelles pistes de réponse*” (Around and beyond the GDP: questions to national accounting, new solutions). The dozen or so articles in the October 2020 issue of the journal “*Economics and Statistics*” covered several questions put to national accounting.

One issue of “*INSEE Analyses*” was devoted to environmental economic accounting, another “*INSEE Analyses*” called “From GDP to Real Feel GDP” shows the difference between growth in GDP and change in the standard of living as perceived by the population.

Concerning the productive system, INSEE published the 2020 edition of the *Insee Références* “Companies in France” which gives the most comprehensive overview of the productive system, also an “*INSEE Première*” on enterprise births in 2019.

Regarding subjects relating to living standards and poverty, INSEE released an advanced estimate of the poverty rate and inequality indicators in 2019.

The Institute analysed the trajectories of people living in poverty “*70% of poor people in 2016 remained poor the following year, a persistence that has increased since 2008*”.

The standard of living in the DOM was covered in several of INSEE’s regional publications and one national publication: “*significant poverty in the French overseas departments, particularly in French Guiana and Mayotte*”.

INSEE also analysed inter-departmental disparities in tax income over the last 30 years.

In terms of demography, an “*INSEE Focus*” analysed demographic growth in the different areas.

On 19 January, the Institute published its Demography Report 2020 (which notably included an estimate of the number of deaths, made in November 2020).

In addition to an overview of the social impact of the Covid-19 health crisis, the latest edition of the *INSEE Références* “France, Social Portrait” included six Focus studies on children in relation to social inequalities, and a joint INSEE-DREES article on the redistributive results of the 2019 socio-fiscal reforms.

- **In the Ministerial Statistical Offices**

In addition to publishing many documents linked directly to the health crisis, in 2020 the **DREES** published several “*Études et résultats*” (Studies and results) on general practitioners.

It also looked into the trajectory of people with disabilities.

The MSO also published the first results from data transmissions of the individual personalised autonomy allowance aimed at dependent elderly people.

In the **Agriculture MSO**, 2020 was spent preparing the agricultural census; data collection started in October 2020 and will continue into 2021.

Data collection for the ten-yearly agricultural census began in October using innovative methods, with the collection of basic data (called the “common core”) from approximately 350,000 farms, with priority given to online collection, but with additional telephone calls if necessary; data will also be collected from about 100,000 farms (a representative sample from Metropolitan France and all farms in the French overseas departments and Corsica) with more detailed questionnaires (common core and themed questionnaire).

In addition to its regular surveys, an aperiodic survey was carried out in 2020 on cultivation practices in viticulture, mobilised to assess various ministerial action plans (Ecophyto; Agro-ecology) and to

monitor European regulations on pesticides.

Within the **Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO**, and particularly regarding the environment and energy, monitoring the many public policies aimed at promoting an ecological transition required the dissemination of significant amounts of briefing information and help with interpreting major environmental issues and strengthened the need to consolidate observation and knowledge acquisition systems related to these issues.

For the first time in 2020, the sections of the energy balance relating to electricity and gas consumption were produced from local consumption data collected and disseminated under Article 179 of the Energy Transition Law of 2015.

The energy performance diagnostic database (DPE) produced by ADEME was used by the Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO, in combination with INSEE's Housing and Individual demographic files (Fidéli), to estimate the distribution of energy performance in the housing stock, resulting in the publication of a working document in September 2020.

Following the overhaul of the directory of road vehicles, due to be completed in H1 2020, and work on estimates of vehicle rolling stock, detailed statistical information will be available from 2020 onwards.

In 2020, in its "*Datalab essentiel*" collection, the MSO published a study on the carbon footprint of the French population and another on climate risks and France's energy balance for 2018.

In 2020, the **DEPP** continued to invest substantially in constructing a top-quality statistical information system and also continued to evaluate pupils, apprentices, teachers, administrative staff, institutions and territories.

The DEPP and the DARES have launched a joint project (over the 2019-2021 period) to measure the professional integration of young people completing apprenticeships or vocational training courses (InserJeunes) by creating a new information system, the result of matching up several sources, the two main ones being the DEPP's student database and the DARES' Workforce Movements (MMO) source. This project meets a pressing need for detailed knowledge of the integration of young people coming out of the educational system according to their type of training, the aim being to improve the management of training provision, and provide better vocational guidance services for young people and their families.

After a year of experimentation in 2019, the first results of the Inserjeunes system will be published officially in December 2020, mainly in the form of a website available to the general public where results can be consulted.

In 2020, the DEPP presented the results of its first school environment survey among secondary school staff in French National Education, and also the results of ICILS 2018, an international survey of teachers of 8th Grade students on the use of ICT.

In 2020, the DEPP published the results of the CEDRE evaluations in maths at the end of primary school and lower secondary school, revealing that results declined in this subject between 2014 and 2019.

In 2020, the **Higher Education, Research and Innovation MSO** (SIES) continued to work on monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the Student Success and Guidance ("Orientation et Réussite des Étudiants" - ORE) Law, which came into force in 2018. In 2020, resources were focused particularly on the "Parcoursup" scheme and measuring student success.

The law also provides for the creation of a National Observatory of Professional Integration, for which the implementing decree was published in April 2020, and for which the SIES acts as the general secretariat.

Concerning research, 2020 focused on preparation for the multi-annual programming law for research and its approval. The changes to provisions for researchers and professor-researchers that could arise from the new law have resulted in great emphasis being placed on studies relating to scientific employment, and particularly to retirement prospects, based on a new model developed by the SIES and applied to data from the State Pension Department (SRE).

In 2020, the SIES published a study on the study path and success of foreign students on international mobility.

At the **DARES**, following the overhaul of the classification of professions and socioprofessional categories (PCS), work on revising the classification of professional families (FAP) started in 2020, which will provide a link between the PCS and the Operational Directory of Professions (ROME) produced by Pôle emploi.

In close collaboration with INSEE, the overhaul of the employment zones was finalised in 2020.

The TRAJAM scheme (Trajectories of young people matched with active measurements of the labour market) which followed the professional trajectories of young people and their participation in active measurements of the labour market came to an end in 2020. With the resulting database it will be possible to respond to requests from the European Commission as part of the European Youth Guarantee initiative.

As previously announced, 2020 saw the handover to the DARES of the regular publication of quarterly data on workforce movements based on the Nominative Social Declaration (DSN). Monitoring of the DSN, to check the quality and adaptation of information systems (automated statistical processing, dissemination) continued into 2020. It was then possible to substitute some of the variables from the quarterly ACEMO survey. Other studies were carried out to use the DSN to enhance the ACEMO surveys (especially very small enterprises), but other surveys too such as ECMOSS (Labour Cost and Structure of Wages Survey).

In 2020, in close collaboration with the CASD, the DARES set up a system to monitor the professional trajectories of jobseekers, in the context of the Skills Investment Plan.

In addition, with a view to improving the measurement of job vacancies across as wide a scope as possible, studies were carried out as part of the European “ESSNet Big Data – Webscraping job vacancies” project sponsored by the European Commission (Eurostat Directorate). For the DARES, this has involved investment in “Big Data” approaches (using new data, webscraping, machine learning). These studies also use data from Pôle Emploi’s job aggregator and from the OFER survey.

In 2020, the **Justice MSO** began using a data file to analyse prisoner recidivism, in order to provide statistical data to the departments responsible for drawing up the report for Parliament, as stipulated in the 2018-2022 Programming and Justice Reform Law (LPJ). This work will continue, for publication in 2021.

In conjunction with the SSMSI, and despite being slowed by the health crisis, work on transposing the international classification of all types of offence (ICCS) and constructing a combined French classification of offences (NFI) has been able to make significant progress. A version zero of the NFI should be available in Q1 2021.

The Justice MSO continued to work on publishing prison statistics, as officially endorsed in the 2017 decision to transfer this activity, previously the responsibility of the Prison Service Directorate (DAP) to the MSO. In July 2020 for the first time annual statistics on open custody were published. Finally, the MSO took back responsibility for producing statistics on public ministerial officers, which are in the process of being finalised.

In the **Local Government MSO**, in the context of the Civil Service Transformation Law voted in 2019, work was carried out in 2020 to put in place an implementing decree for this law relating to the single social report (RSU) which, from 2021/2022, will replace the social reports. The MSO collects and exploits the relevant data in collaboration with management centres and the CNFPT (National Centre for Local Civil Service).

The MSO produced a focus study on the proportion of women on municipal councils in the wake of the 2020 elections.

In 2020, the **DGFIP MSO** began work to assess the shortfall in value added tax.

At the same time, assessment of the shortfall in the entire population is expected to be carried out using the same method as that selected for the report of the Court of Accounts, i.e. calculating the shortfall by extrapolating the results of checks carried out by the tax departments.

Given the prevailing uncertainty regarding post-Brexit regulations applicable in the United Kingdom in respect of personal data protection, the MSO – in agreement with the legal departments of the DGFIP – has decided, as a preventive measure, to suspend access to French tax data by researchers located in the United Kingdom. This decision is likely to change in line with regulations regarding personal data which eventually become applicable in the United Kingdom.

The end of 2020 was marked by the continuation of work to monitor the abolition of the local residence tax. 80% of main residences will be totally exempt by the end of 2020.

In 2020, the **Foreign Trade MSO** launched a survey on the use of administrative data for the purpose of detecting any anomalies in declarations for trade in goods (DEB) or estimating flows that were exempt from declaration.

Concerning the exchange of individual symmetrical data relating to intra-EU exports and imports from other member States, the approval of the project to secure data reception is coming to an end and should result in partial funding by the European Commission.

As part of the reengineering of the production process for foreign trade statistics, analysis of the existing system began in 2020. Reflection on the organisational situation is planned when the new French legal framework is determined.

In 2020, the **Civil Service MSO** published for the first time the list of civil servants in category A+ and in the senior supervisory and management grades.

The MSO put a comparison tool online in 2020 showing pay levels for men and women specifically for civil servants. This tool provides a better analysis of the effects of structure on the pay differences observed. It is used by employers to assist with their equality plan.

In the **Immigration MSO**, the change in Eurostat regulations on migrant integration statistics within the scope of the MSO mobilised the department to prepare new data collections, which are more detailed and appear more frequently than the previous ones. This work will continue into 2021.

Still in the international context, the introduction of a new information system on asylum at the DGEF

(Directorate for Foreigners in France) enabled the MSO to reply more comprehensively to Eurostat's requests for data on this topic. The change was accompanied by the necessary metadata and explanations.

Concerning assistance with managing public policies, a new monthly dashboard has been designed under the aegis of the MSO for dissemination to political decision-makers, from the Élysée Palace to the office of the Minister of the Interior.

Finally, the MSO worked on the Analytics project, intended to produce and disseminate management and analysis data on all areas covered by the DGEF in a uniform, secure and reliable way. This resulted in the launch of the first module in October 2020, covering foreign students, at the same time as a platform was set up to enable students to request a residency permit for France.

In 2020, the **Youth and Sports MSO** (MEDES) published the first results from the survey conducted in 2019 in association with the Civic Service Agency (ASC) of beneficiaries of the civic service scheme. This survey provides a better description of the profile of volunteers, especially their previous experience, and the content of the tasks.

In 2020, the INJEP and the DEPP published the first results from their joint survey conducted in 2019 of pupils on a panel run by the DEPP. This was the subject of a Focus report in the 2020 edition of "France, Social Portrait".

In 2020, the MSO looked at young people without a job, who are neither studying, nor in training and analysed their financial resources based on the national survey by the DREES on young people's resources.

Lastly, the MSO worked on the dissemination of local data on the topic of sport. In particular, it published information sheets on local sport.

The **Defence MSO** will soon be able to exploit the tax data provided by the file of the statement of fiscal income, called the POTE (DGFIP), the aim being to study the income of the households of military personnel and how it changes, this information is in addition to the only other known details of remuneration received by military personnel which are found in the RAE (Annual Census of State Employees).

It is the intention of the MSO to put in place an annual indicator for the statistical monitoring of "innovative" companies that supply the Ministry for the Armed Forces based on tax sources (data from the Research Tax Credit/Innovation Tax Credit (CIR/ CII)) and data from ACOSS on Young Innovative Enterprises.

In 2020, the **Culture MSO** published "*Cinquante années de pratiques culturelles en France*" (Fifty years of cultural practices in France), drawing on six surveys of cultural practices carried out since the 1970s.

In 2020, the **SSMSI** carried out preparatory work for the Gender and Security survey (GENESE), the MSO's first statistical survey, with on the one hand the pilot survey and on the other, the methodological studies to experiment with a new protocol for multimodal data collection in the areas of security and victimisation.

The issue of violence against women was established as a major national cause in 2018-2019. Consequently, cooperation between the SSMSI and the Ministry for the Interior's delegation to assist victims (DAV), resulted in 2020 in ensuring the consistency of the two approaches, with consolidated and harmonised statistics on the number of violent deaths within couples (distinguishing the gender of the victim).

For the first time, in 2020, the annual statistical report was presented in the form of two distinct publications. The first was a summary document and appeared on 16 January 2020 in the “*Interstats Analyse*” collection, with the very first snapshot of insecurity and delinquency during the previous year, describing the main indicators monitored monthly with their changes at national and departmental levels. A more comprehensive reference work, comprising the statistical report for the previous year, was due to appear on 31 March 2020 but publication had to be postponed until 30 September 2020 because of the health crisis. It contains in-depth analyses, both of victims and those implicated, and points of contextualisation, both at national and departmental level.

To complement this work, the chapter on compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice (principle 10) describes more achievements by INSEE and the MSOs that have been made possible as a result of the increasing use of administrative files.

1.4 Governance of the SSP and changes in the national framework

- *Change of status in the Ministerial Statistical Offices*

Reorganisation of the Public Finance DGFIP MSO

Until now, the MSO was simply an office but it has now become a department attached directly to the head of tax management (Department of Fiscal Statistical Studies following the decree of 3 December 2019 confirming this reorganisation).

The head of the department is head of the MSO. He manages two divisions, the first taking over activity in the area of “public statistics” and it alone will retain the status of MSO, while the second provides support functions for tax management.

A team will be created to take responsibility for studies and assessments of policies relating to fiscal matters.

This reorganisation will provide clarification for the separation between the department’s statistical activities and its other activities.

Reorganisation of the Directorate General for the Administration and Civil Service (DGAFP): impact on its statistical office

The Civil Service MSO has become a sub-directorate of the human resource policy management service following a decree of 18 December 2019 relating to the organisation of the DGAFP.

The mission of the Studies, Statistics and Information Systems Sub-directorate is to steer management of the programme of studies, research and statistics relating to the civil service and to disseminate results. It coordinates the activity of the interministerial centre of IT services relating to human resources and helps define standards for social declarations and monitor their implementation by the civil service. It also contributes to the move towards dematerialisation.

Reorganisation of the Ministry for Culture: impact on its statistical office

A reorganisation of the central administration of the Ministry for Culture took place in 2020, with a

two-fold impact on the Culture MSO.

The MSO will pool all of the central administration's available resources to be used for studies. It was also decided that the MSO would be responsible for all documentation functions, previously part of the mission relating to document policy.

As a result, the MSO will increase from 19 FTEs to 43 FTEs in January 2021.

- ***Compliance with decrees on the organisation of central administrations containing Ministerial Statistical Offices***

The Prime Minister's circular dated 5 June 2019 concerning the transformation of the central administration's plans to limit the provisions of organisational decrees to what is strictly necessary, with regard to the requirements of the decree of 15 June 1987 concerning the organisation of central administration services. In particular, it is requested that entities below the level of sub-directorate should no longer be mentioned in organisational texts and that the missions of entities that do not appear should no longer be stated.

As a result of this document, the missions of the 8 ministerial statistical offices that rank lower than a sub-directorate would not be covered by the regulations.

In December 2019, the ASP therefore decided to draw the attention of the hierarchies of the MSOs concerned and the SGG to the implications of this government decision. It requested that for these MSOs, the organisational decree should clearly specify the MSOs' missions (and also mention the statistical mission as defined by the 1951 Law), while stating that the MSO should carry out its activities in compliance with the principle of professional independence and that it recognises INSEE's coordinating role. More broadly, MSOs that are ONAs (Other National Authorities) should also mention this information.

On 17 December 2019, when the decree concerning the organisation of the General Commission for Sustainable Development was amended, the ASP published a notice on official statistics in the organisational decrees for central government. In this decree, the ASP extended its request for all MSOs to follow suit when revising their organisational decrees.

The majority of the MSOs concerned incorporated the information requested by the ASP when they amended their organisational decrees: this was done by the three Ministry for the Interior MSOs (Local Government, Immigration and Internal Security), the Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO, the Agriculture and Food MSO, the Youth and Sports MSO and more recently the Culture MSO (see the notice by the Authority of 15 December 2020 on the draft decree amending the missions and the organisation of the central administration of the Ministry for Culture and Communication).

The hierarchies of the Foreign Trade MSO, the Civil Service MSO and the Public Finances MSO have committed to the Authority that they will do this in 2021.

- ***Inspection missions concerning the ministerial statistical offices***

DREES: mission relating to the mapping of official statistics production in the field of solidarity and health

Within the framework of budget discussions, it emerged that it would be advantageous to map statistical productions and producers within the scope of the Ministry for Solidarity and Health ("who does what?" in terms of statistical production).

The joint mission with which the General Inspectorates of INSEE and Social Affairs were tasked was to endeavour to draw up a comprehensive map of statistics and those involved in their production in the social and health fields, and the related resources used. It should take a global approach, looking at major topics, to examine the relevance of the statistics that are produced in terms of the uses made of them and any redeployment and/or adjustments that could be made to address any shortcomings. It will be able to make recommendations to improve the overall efficiency of statistical production.

For further details of the context and importance of this mission for the DREES, see the hearing in chapter 3.2.

Defence MSO: Mission relating to the optimisation of statistical production in the area of defence

At the instigation of the ASP,⁶ a mission is currently underway to study and optimise the conditions of statistical production in the area of Defence. This mission will examine the various possible solutions for achieving this goal.

It should focus in particular on the following points:

- identification of statistical and economic needs that the Defence MSO should meet, both from the point of view of official statistics and that of the Ministry for the Armed Forces;
- the internal and external resources that it should be able to mobilise to complete its missions from both a qualitative and quantitative point of view and to ensure their continuity;
- access by the Defence MSO to data in the Ministry for the Armed Forces and other useful sources,;
- and more generally, the integration of the Defence MSO into the central organisation of the Ministry for the Armed Forces, and its coordination with other producers of data, both national and European, and their modes of cooperation.

The full report should be submitted in H1 2021.

Justice MSO

An inspection of the Justice MSO, and in particular an analysis of its positioning and relations with the Ministerial professional departments is expected to be launched in 2021.

- ***The activities of the National Observatory for Delinquency and the Criminal Response taken over by the MSO on Internal Security (SSMSI)***

As part of the implementation of the Prime Minister's circular of 5 June 2019 requiring a rationalisation of administrative organisations, it was decided in October 2019 that the National Institute for Higher Security and Justice Studies (INHESJ) – to which the National Observatory for Delinquency and the Criminal Response (ONDRP) was attached – should not continue in its present form beyond the end of 2020. Decree no. 2020-1591 of 16 December 2020 confirmed the dissolution of the INHESJ on 1st January 2021.

As noted by the Official Statistics Authority as far back as October 2015, the missions of the ONDRP, in relation to the design, production and dissemination of statistics and analyses in the area of internal security, should be taken over by the SSMSI, created in 2014, which would guarantee total professional independence.

The transfer of the activities of the ONDRP to the SSMSI took place as of 1st January 2021.

7 FTEs were transferred to the SSMSI, also the budget required to finance the annual Living

⁶ See the intervention by the Director General of INSEE on the work done by official statistics in the context of the health crisis, chapter 3.2

Environment and Security Survey (CVS), i.e. €1.17 million.

These transfers, along with an increase in its resources funded internally by the Ministry for the Interior, will contribute to scaling up the SSMSI with a view to developing its statistical and analytical missions, including at international level, by covering the entire scope of internal security. The aim is also to strengthen its scientific work, especially in collaboration with research teams, and carrying out communication and training support activities.

In particular, the SSMSI will be a reliable manager of the next victimisation survey from 2021, as part of the funding is already confirmed. Note that the cost of the survey in the future is estimated at between €2.2 and €2.5 million per year in total.

- ***The creation of an SSP datalab***

Dedicated to acquiring data science tools and prototyping new uses, the SSP Cloud has been open since 5 October 2020. The Cloud is accessible via internet at <https://datalab.sspcloud.fr>, to enable collaboration between those working on official statistics and also with their partners, on a shared statistical self-service platform.

In addition to its technical resources, the SSP Cloud represents an opportunity for official statisticians to adopt data science working methods on a cloud infrastructure: deployment of services on demand, collaborative work using a version control system and orchestration of data processing methods. In this way, users of the SSP Cloud are able to build sets of operations with an increased level of autonomy, and all in line with Open Science standards (open code and reproducibility).

To facilitate cooperation within the Official Statistical System, the SSP Cloud also includes a system for carrying out experiments on confidential data, subject to an appropriate framework (agreement and security notice).

In order to guide the development of this new facility and ensure its relevance as common resource, the SSP Cloud will be placed under the governance of INSEE and the MSOs.

The project has received funding from the ministerial transformation fund of the Ministry for the Economy and Finance and support from the Interministerial Directorate for Digital Affairs (DINUM) through the presence of three entrepreneurs of general interest.

The possibility of granting access to this platform to entities outside the SSP (e.g. members of the ESS, etc.) is also provided for in the case of collaboration with a member of the SSP or for the purposes of assessing the datalab.

While ensuring proper coordination with the Secure Data Access Centre (CASD), the arrangements for experiments on confidential data will also facilitate joint studies within the MSOs.

- ***Hearing of INSEE and the Ministerial Statistical Offices regarding the Bothorel mission***

In the context of the mission on public data policy, given to Deputy Monsieur Eric Bothorel on 22 June by the Prime Minister, INSEE and some MSOs attended a hearing to present their policy on open data and opening source codes, and on access to private data of general interest.⁷

This mission had two objectives:

⁷ Notably, this mission falls within the framework of the communication published by the European Commission for “A European strategy for data” where the EU would become a leading role model for a society for which data represent the means for making the best decisions, both in business and in the public sector. The challenge is to organise the opening up, the sharing and the exploitation of data and source codes, in order to stimulate innovation and competition.

- first, to analyse the strategic and financial opportunities and the obstacles to be removed to encourage the opening up of public data and codes by default, in accordance with the Digital Republic Law of October 2016;
- second, to determine the conditions for an acceleration of the policy of opening up data of general interest produced or collected in the private sector.

The final report of the work of the mission was submitted on 23 December 2020.

The SSP is cited several times as an example for its policy of openness and access to data, particularly for research.

However, the report generally questions the role of official statisticians in the State's HR policy in terms of data science skills and in the ability of the administration to adapt to using data to improve public action.

INSEE is ready to contribute, including the training of more managers who can be seconded within the administrations, but it does set out clear guidelines regarding the preservation of the resources needed for the SSP to operate and what can be part of the statistical services and what must be separate from it operationally.

On access to private data, INSEE considers that with Article 3 bis of the 1951 Law a good balance has been struck for official statistics, as demonstrated by the success of the "scanner data" project for the CPI; however, the Institute would like this access, which at present is only to be used as a substitute for existing surveys, to be available for exploiting new data sources too.

2. The European and international context, and compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice

2.1 Initiatives by the European Statistical System (ESS) in the face of the Covid crisis and the main challenges post-Covid

The Covid-19 epidemic posed some considerable challenges for the ESS. It had a significant impact on the compiling and dissemination of official statistics: lockdown in many countries and teleworking have had their effect on face-to-face household surveys, price collection, business surveys, etc. to different degrees depending on the country.

At the same time, there was a strong demand to publish certain statistics more quickly (e.g. deaths) and to assess the economic and social impact of the crisis by formulating early estimates.

European NSIs, like INSEE, adapted and managed the crisis while accelerating the ongoing transformations.

International organisations played an important part in helping NSIs to react to this crisis. The International Labour Organization set out a number of recommendations for measuring employment and unemployment during the crisis.

The United Nations Statistics Division created a portal on its website containing methodological recommendations and practices aimed at NSIs.

The OECD set up a platform for exchanges between statisticians.

Eurostat also played its part as coordinator of the ESS by defining a list of priority statistics for monitoring European policies, drafting a number of methodological notices and preparing a handbook of good practice at European level.

- ***ESS initiatives in the face of the Covid crisis***

To measure the economic and social impact of Covid-19, the work of the European NSIs came under four main headings:

- *adapting existing surveys, especially with regards to employment and economic outlook, and launching ad hoc surveys.*

Adaptations mainly concerned the European Union Labour Force Survey, where specific questions were added on employment, and in the case of Ireland, the addition also of questions on the impact of Covid-19 on personal life.

Italy, Ireland, and Portugal in particular surveyed businesses on the impact of the crisis on their activity, employment, etc.

Household surveys on the social impact of Covid were also launched, for example in Great Britain and Ireland.

Like France, several countries, notably Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom (England and Wales), also conducted large-scale epidemiological surveys, with support from the NSIs which were responsible

for constructing the questionnaire, selecting samples of individuals to be questioned, and the statistical analysis of the results.

- *publishing statistics with greater frequency*

This was particularly the case with death statistics, for which Eurostat started to disseminate weekly statistics for most European countries.

The United Kingdom's NSI was particularly successful in publishing weekly and daily statistics with very short time delays, and which differentiated according to cause of death.

Employment, unemployment and foreign trade were also covered by more frequent and faster statistics.

See also the INSEE blog article “Covid et mortalité en Europe en 2020 : des statistiques à regarder de près” (Covid and mortality in Europe in 2020: statistics to watch closely).

- *accelerating the use of private data*

As was the case in France, other NSIs also disseminated high-frequency indicators, as they had wider access to private data (usually free of charge) in many areas: rapid estimates of GDP, weekly bankruptcies, weekly energy consumption and weekly/daily transport indicators, are just a few examples.

Several NSIs produced maps of the daily mobility of the population based on mobile phone data. Spain, like France, is very advanced in this area and data cover 80% of users. The Spanish NSI prepared interactive maps to show people's daily mobility at very detailed geographic levels, even down to neighbourhood level.

Statistics on consumption patterns of specific goods were also produced using data from bank card transactions (Germany, Spain, Italy).

Electricity suppliers provided daily electricity consumption data (Denmark, Luxembourg, etc.).

Germany is one of the countries that disseminated the most “high-frequency” indicators: business bankruptcies, road transport, hotel occupancy, credit applications, etc.

- *informing users, partners and suppliers about changes caused by the crisis*

Informing users, partners and data providers in a transparent manner about the methodological changes that have been introduced and the fragility of the results in the context of the health crisis has been one of the main communication challenges that NSIs have faced since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The suddenness of the shock meant that the usual rhythm of measurements was of no use and face-to-face surveys became impossible, and this combined with the use of new data sources and a more frequent dissemination of statistics meant that NSIs had to communicate clearly about the loss of relevance of some indicators (e.g. the price index when shops were closed and some products could not be purchased).

The institutes made an effort to inform, adapting their communication, especially around short-term indicators, by supplementing their publications with more methodological information than usual. When a concept was disrupted by the extraordinary nature of the crisis, this was explained more

clearly (e.g. in the case of the unemployment rate).

Due to potential quality issues, the NSIs also communicated widely about the possibility of revisions at a later date. As they were expecting a temporary loss of precision in the statistics, they resorted to extra methodological commentaries and explanations. For example, information on flash estimates was adapted slightly by pointing out the higher degree of uncertainty surrounding these estimates.

Various means of communication were used, mainly the traditional ones: creation of dedicated web pages to explain the work being done in relation to the health crisis, press releases, press articles and announcements, e-mails.

A few NSIs posted videos online on social media sites or wrote *ad hoc* articles on their blog.

Some NSIs launched national communication campaigns aimed at survey respondents (businesses, households, etc.) encouraging them to participate in surveys and thanking those who continued to do so.

- ***The main post-Covid challenges for the ESS***

Ensuring the comparability of the main indicators

In many areas, the comparability of statistics between countries is by no means a given, as each country had to adapt and innovate in response to changing conditions which were often different from one country to another. The disruption in production processes could have had a negative impact on the comparability of data, as methodologies, concepts, and definitions may not be fully harmonised. The risk is even greater when data have been collected and produced by other national authorities (ONAs), i.e. authorities other than the NSIs.

Lower survey response rates, combined with the reduced availability of timely administrative sources have resulted in the wider use of imputation methods and estimates, especially when producing the first rapid estimates of key economic indicators such as GDP, inflation and some short-term indicators.

Concerning GDP, for example, the question arises as to whether the difference observed between countries in the first estimates of the national accounts for Q1 2020 indicates an actual difference in change in activity between countries or whether it is attributable to differences in the methods used to prepare the quarterly accounts.

In the case of death statistics, a comparison between countries is only possible if, in most countries, civil status documents are sent in quickly enough and delays in publication by the NSIs are very short.

In the area of employment, the fact that countries adopted different measurements for the labour market or regarding the severity of the lockdown disrupts any comparison between countries of indicators estimated in the Labour Force Survey,⁸ especially the unemployment rate.

The publication of Eurostat's methodological notes covering several fields during the Covid crisis was an attempt to maintain the quality of European statistics. Updating these guidelines was essential to ensure better comparability between countries.⁹

8 The Labour Force Survey is a European survey. Whereas at the start of the crisis, each country undertook to modify/adapt the survey, Eurostat then coordinated the different initiatives so as to have results that were comparable within the ESS.

9 For more details, see the article by the Director General of INSEE on the INSEE blog entitled "*La statistique publique à l'épreuve de la crise sanitaire*" (Official statistics sorely tested by the health crisis), especially point no. 3 on the challenges of international comparisons.

Retaining the same access to data as that granted during the pandemic

During the Covid-19 crisis NSIs had access to a number of new data sources, both public and private, in order to maintain or improve their statistics. To do this, many NSIs started to form new partnerships, with ministries, national central banks, national public health institutes, universities, tax administrations, as well as private sector data holders.

Bank card transaction data, electricity consumption data, road traffic data (private and public), toll data, retailer scanner data and mobile network operator data have all proved to be relevant sources of data for measuring the impact of Covid-19 on economies and European societies, even beyond the crisis.

The Covid crisis created the opportunity for lasting cooperation, especially with private operators. However, unlike public data, which are free, the cost of acquiring private data can be high; they also raise the question of the guarantee of protection for personal data. This is likely to be a consideration in the decision to make these data accessible to an NSI on a permanent basis.

Continuing with innovations and being even more relevant during the economic and social recovery

New requests for information have arisen in the context of the Covid-19 crisis which will continue to emerge at national and European levels in the months and years to come, as the European economy and societies prepare for recovery. The question is how are we to build on the wealth of national initiatives that have been launched so far and provide comparable statistics at EU level which will be relevant for European and national policies during the recovery period.

At the present stage, requests for information at EU level and national level suggest the following avenues, some of which aim to consolidate experimental statistics in order to better meet these demands:

- comparable key economic indicators supplied faster and more frequently (i.e. new estimates quickly or more frequent release of data);
- weekly death statistics broken down by age, gender and region;
- improvement in statistics on the public health system;
- more frequent dissemination of data on the labour market and working conditions on the basis of additional indicators to the main statistics from European Labour Force Surveys (LFS)
- the impact of Covid-19 on businesses in the EU based on new questions to complement existing surveys, highlighting the sectors most affected, such as tourism and transport, for instance;
- *the impact of Covid-19 on the household income situation;*

At the meeting of the Business Statistics Directors Group in June 2020, Member States indicated that they did not believe there was a possibility of increasing periodicity and improving the speed of mandatory transmissions, beyond the official legal requirements related to short-term indicators.

Regarding the labour market, the Social Statistics Directors Group agreed that, in addition to employment and unemployment indicators in line with those of the ILO, they would develop and disseminate additional Covid indicators.

Regarding improvement in health statistics at EU level, additional data, especially on healthcare resources, should be made available. Eurostat has also opened up a new web page devoted to healthcare services which gives information on their location, name, address, bed capacity, availability of emergency services, status (public or private) and contact details.

Finally, on the initiative of Eurostat and the German NSI,¹⁰ the European Statistical System Committee in early October 2020 decided that from December 2020 a *monthly European Recovery Dashboard* should be produced.

The first version of this dashboard was disseminated by Eurostat on 17 December 2020 and INSEE put it up on their website, on the dedicated Covid-19 page.

The aim of this dashboard is to improve the monitoring of recovery in the context of Covid-19. It covers a very wide range of topics (in particular economic, social and health).

The list of indicators is based on currently available European statistics. Eurostat hopes to extend it to include more experimental statistics (air quality, inequalities etc.) and to reduce delays in the publication of some indicators.

2.2 European news

- ***The next peer review***

The third peer review will take place in 2021 and will cover all the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice, in particular the principle of professional independence, the one on coordination and those related to the modernisation of the statistical service. It will also look at access to data, in particular private data, the commitment to quality, methodology, statistical procedures (revisions in particular) and accessibility to data, with additional topics related to metadata or statistical literacy issues.

The review will focus on INSEE and three MSOs selected according to criteria agreed upon at the European level (the Agriculture MSO, the Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO, and the DREES).

It will be based on a self-assessment questionnaire that will cover compliance with each of the 84 indicators of the CoP.

For the other MSOs, the questionnaire is shorter and focuses on a self-assessment of practices in relation to the 16 principles of the CoP.¹¹

- ***The adoption of two European regulations***

The amending Regulation 862/2007 on migration statistics was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 22 June 2020. It will be phased in from 1 March 2021.

It brings up to date the common and comparable legal framework for European statistics on migration and international protection. The update is intended to meet the changing needs for statistics on asylum applications (including statistics on returns, minors, resettlements, residence permits, etc.). The amendments are designed to provide more disaggregated, accurate and regular statistics on migration and international protection with a view to improving support for national and European policies in these areas.

¹⁰ As Germany holds the Presidency of the European Union Council during H1 2021

¹¹ A version of this questionnaire adapted by the ASP will be used to structure preparations for the Authority's MSO hearings.

The Single Market Regulation, which incorporates the European Statistical Programme 2021-2027, was adopted at the end of December 2020.

It reflects new European priorities. The first of the priorities set by the European Commission for 2024, the statistical monitoring of the Green Deal, will lead to an increased demand for environmental statistics. The legal framework for environmental statistics will undergo major changes in the coming years. The European Parliament has called for new statistics on climate change and waste recycling to be included in the multi-year work programme of the European Statistical System (ESS).

Other changes being considered include a revision of the regulation on environmental accounts (adding accounts for forests, water and environmental subsidies) and the regulation on energy statistics. The Environment DG is considering whether some of these new statistics could be produced outside the ESS, for example by the European Environment Agency.

- ***Regulations under negotiation, in connection with the European Data Strategy***

A regulation replacing the e-privacy directive is currently being prepared. Its purpose is to regulate the use of mobile phone data and to replace the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in this area.

In its current form, the Directive does not allow mobile phone operators' data to be used for research and official statistics purposes without the explicit consent of users.¹²

Negotiations on this regulation were interrupted in 2020 and will resume in 2021 under the Portuguese Presidency.

The regulation on the governance of common data spaces was submitted to the Council and the Parliament after its adoption by the Commission at the end of November 2020. It addresses the governance of EU-wide interoperable common data spaces in strategic sectors.

The Commission's objective is to create a common data space based on user trust and respect for European values, such as personal data protection. It should facilitate data sharing and portability between the public and private sectors.

The text sets out the conditions for the use of data, the governance of these common data spaces and digital altruism (promoting data sharing) and provisions that affect national statistical institutes both as producers and users.

In its current form, the draft does not contradict the June 1951 law on obligations, coordination and confidentiality in statistical matters and does not pose major problems for the SSP.

Lastly, *the Data Act* is currently being drafted and will establish the legal framework for access to private data.

Due to the increased use of private data in several countries since the beginning of the health crisis, the option of a specific statistical regulation does not appear to be ruled out at this stage.

¹² In this respect, it is essential that the future regulation include these purposes, which is why INSEE is keeping a close eye on future negotiations.

2.3 Compliance of the Official Statistical Service with the European Statistics Code of Practice

The implementation by the French Official Statistical Service of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice is central to the Authority's mission. The Authority's annual report provides an opportunity for the systematic analysis of compliance with these principles. This analysis is produced on the basis of the European Code revised at the end of 2017 (see the Authority's website: <https://www.autorite-statistique-publique.fr/>).

In contrast to previous years and given the unique and varied circumstances of 2020, the report reviews all the principles of the Code of Good Practice.

Principle 1: Professional Independence

The Official Statistics Authority (ASP) was created in 2009 to guarantee compliance with the principle of professional independence in the design, production and dissemination of official statistics, pursuant to Law 51-711 of 7 June 1951 and Regulation 223/2009.

Decree 2018-800 of 20 September 2018, amending Decree 2009-250 of 3 March 2009 relating to the Authority, reinforces the Authority's remit to ensure compliance with the principle of professional independence throughout the entire French Official Statistical Service.

At the beginning of 2020, INSEE and more generally official statistics were confronted with many controversies. These concerned respectively the measurements of inflation and unemployment, how official statistics are structured in the field of internal security, and the possible role of INSEE in producing per capita income indicators under the pension reform project.

Although each had its own authors, context and particularities, the common feature of these controversies was that they moved away from argumentative criticism of methodologies or statistical results to instil a general unfounded suspicion of the objectivity, quality and independence of official statistics.

In response to these controversies, the ASP reacted by publishing a deliberation on 18 February 2020 (see the Authority's opinion, Principle 1).

Furthermore, availing itself of the opportunity provided by the publication of Circular 6144/SG of 17 February 2020 on the State's new branding strategy, the ASP considered it useful to reiterate the principles of strict separation between political statements and statistical publications. It therefore published a deliberation on 14 February 2020 on this subject (see the Authority's opinion, Principle 1).

Lastly, the Authority ensured that the Minister for Housing had been reminded of the principle of professional independence, in particular indicator 1.4 of the Code of Practice "*The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases*", following her statements at the beginning of November 2020 on poor housing and the homeless survey carried out by INSEE.

Principle Ibis: Coordination and cooperation

Coordination

The Official Statistical Service (SSP) is defined by French Law 51-711 of 7 June 1951 on legal obligation, coordination and confidentiality in the field of statistics, and updated in particular by the Digital Republic Law 2016-1321 of 7 October 2016. It consists of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) and the Ministerial Statistical Offices (MSOs), which carry out statistical operations in their fields of expertise.

The MSOs are listed in the Appendix to the Decree of 3 March 2009, amended, on the Official Statistics Authority. This list is drawn up and updated by an Order of the Minister in charge of the economy,¹³ issued after consultation with the Official Statistics Authority. INSEE has been coordinating work on the production of official statistics by different MSOs for many years. This mission is defined by French and European legal provisions.

Decree 46-1432 of 14 June 1946, amended, stipulates that INSEE is responsible for “coordinating the statistical methods, resources and activities of general government and private bodies that are subsidised or controlled by the State, centralising their statistical and economic documentation and unifying statistical classifications and codes”. European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) 223/2009, amended in 2015, on European statistics, reinforces INSEE’s role in coordinating the development, production and dissemination of European statistics, especially regarding compliance with quality requirements. The Director General of INSEE is the guarantor of quality throughout the entire Official Statistical Service, and defines “national guidelines [...] to guarantee, within the national statistical service, the quality of all European statistics at the time of their development, production and dissemination”. Under the terms of Article 5 of Regulation (EC) 223/2009, and for European statistics, INSEE is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice within the Official Statistical Service.

The French Official Statistical Service has undertaken to conform to the principles of this code for national statistics that do not relate to European obligations, as an extension of Article 5 of Regulation (EC) 223/2009 as amended, and on the basis of the French legislation defining INSEE’s coordination role.

A new charter of the rights and duties of Ministerial Statistical Offices was drawn up in 2017 and updated in 2019. It formalises the framework within which the French Official Statistical Service operates. It clarifies the references common to all the Ministerial Statistical Offices associated with their affiliation to the Official Statistical Service. Furthermore, quality guidelines were defined by INSEE in 2017, in collaboration with the Ministerial Statistical Offices. These guidelines are a reference document defining the framework for the coordination of the SSP in terms of quality, and helping to guarantee the quality of key statistics¹⁴ in the spirit of the amended European Regulation (EC) 223/2009. These quality guidelines have enabled each MSO to draw up its own “Quality Roadmap”.

Lastly, to ensure the consistency of the embargo rules adopted by the MSOs and INSEE, a framework document was drawn up in 2017, in which the embargo rules for the SSP in relation to statistical indicators – mainly short-term and or European – are set out. As for INSEE, these rules, for each of the MSOs, are published on their websites.

The Director General of INSEE chairs the Statistical Programme Committee created in 2013, which

¹³ Who delegates its signature to the Director General of INSEE.

¹⁴ Key statistics can be defined as statistics that users expect to be disseminated, for which any production failure is highly detrimental to the producing service, and which require a quality procedure including a risk analysis to be applied to the production process in order to guarantee its quality. They include European statistics.

brings together all heads of MSOs and the majority of INSEE's directors. The coordination activities relate to different issues of a strategic or technical nature, which are of common interest to the entire Official Statistical Service (SSP). These issues may relate to current French or international legislative affairs, or to the details of audit conclusions, such as European Peer Reviews. They may also concern the management of human resources or changes to statistical production or dissemination tools. In addition to the plenary meetings of the Statistical Programme Committee, the general coordination role also consists of organising the network of heads of Ministerial Statistical Offices, who meet several times a year for meetings of a general nature, or for thematic meetings which are attended by fewer heads of MSOs.

Another governance body was defined in 2015 with the establishment of the Strategic Quality Committee, which oversees the implementation of the SSP's Quality strategy. Two heads of MSOs participate in this committee. The activities carried out by these two committees have consolidated the Director General of INSEE's role of statistical coordination with the SSP.

A Dissemination and Communication Committee (CODICOM) is also responsible for preparing the INSEE Management Committee's decisions on dissemination and communication policies and relations with users. In its SSP configuration, it deals with possible cooperation projects and coordination of activities within the SSP for the three policies in question.

In 2020, INSEE also opened a datalab – SSPCloud – for the entire Official Statistical Service. The aim of this datalab is to provide access, through an internet-based “cloud”, to the most modern data science technologies and working methods for projects and experiments (for more details, see Chapter 1.4).

In addition, INSEE is responsible for organising the coordination of international and European statistical issues, in light of the key issues at stake and the significant interactions with national statistics. The MSOs participate in committees and working groups on European and international statistics in their specific fields of expertise, and by doing so, contribute to their development. They also transmit the statistics mentioned in the regulations for their fields of expertise to the relevant international bodies.

INSEE's role also includes coordinating the harmonisation of classifications (PCS, zoning, NACE) and concepts, as defined by the Institute's establishment decree in 1946. The work carried out by INSEE and the MSOs as part of a network enables all producers of statistics to define and share concepts and classifications in order to compare their statistics at both national and international levels.

The mobility policy for managers within the French Official Statistical Service, all trained at the same school (Group of National Economics and Statistic Schools – GENES) also exerts a powerful influence on the coordination of the SSP. It makes a major contribution by propagating a shared statistical culture throughout the SSP.

Cooperation

INSEE's cooperation mission is defined in Article 2 of Decree 46-1432 of 14 June 1946, amended: “The National Institute shall liaise with similar bodies existing abroad and is authorised to participate officially in international meetings and conferences on statistics, documentation and economic research within its remit.”

Within the framework of its international relations, INSEE cooperates with organisations such as the OECD, the UN, etc. and with National Statistical Institutes. In this capacity, it contributes to the creation and implementation of the European statistical system and provides expertise required for the development and harmonisation of official statistics at the international level. In particular, INSEE is

engaged in collective projects involving other NSIs.

SSP Lab – the unit created at INSEE for the development of R&D in statistical production within the French Official Statistical Service – is another vehicle for cooperation. This unit’s mission is to create and coordinate internal networks within the SSP, but also to join external academic or international networks in order to benefit from their accumulated knowledge and contributions, while also enabling the pooling of investments. In 2020, the SSP Lab was at the forefront of many SSP innovations in the wake of the health crisis.

INSEE experts also take part in international conferences at which they present the Institute’s methods and best practices.

Principle 2: Mandate for data collection

In the course of its work related to the health crisis, as it was unable to use traditional methods, the SSP used private data sources as much as possible in 2020. These included scanner data, bank card data, electricity consumption data, mobile phone data and data from social networks. Article 3A of the 1951 Law allows the SSP to access these data, but only with the proviso that this access must replace existing surveys.

Principle 3: Adequacy of resources

With regard to INSEE

The 2020 Finance Bill is consistent with the budgetary trajectory set out in the four-year contract for 2019-2022 entered into in February 2019.

INSEE is the first central government body to opt for this new method of budget management. The contract was signed on 6 February 2019 with the General Secretariat of the Economic and Finance Ministries and the Budget Directorate.

This budgetary contract sets out a financial trajectory until 2022, both for personnel expenses and other expenditure, enabling INSEE to commit to its investment projects over a multi-year horizon with the assurance of having the necessary resources.

It also introduces flexibility into the management of the annual objective, but above all, it protects INSEE from “surprises” in the next Finance Laws, by providing certain guarantees regarding payroll and other resources.

In return, these commitments by the State require INSEE’s commitment to demonstrating responsible budget management and modernising its operations and activities.

To this end, the contract sets concrete objectives based on three main focuses, adopted in line with the INSEE 2025 strategic plan. They are divided into six projects that will be monitored via chronological milestones:

Modernising household and consumer price surveys

- *Project 1 – Change the Continuous Employment Survey to multimodal form*
- *Project 2 – Implement new samples for household surveys*
- *Project 3 – Incorporate scanner data into the Consumer Price Index*

Innovate and computerise to develop business statistics

- *Project 4 – Implement a new management mode for the SIRENE register of enterprises and establishments (SIRENE 4)*
- *Project 5 – Computerise the Tourism survey*

Bring the figures/statistics to life and reach out to all audiences

- *Project 6 – Step up video communication on the internet*

By providing a stable multi-year framework that defines INSEE's objectives and resources for INSEE through to 2022, this contract implements the recommendation of the "Public Action 2022" programme favouring multi-year public budgetary management governed by a signed contract.

The 2021 Finance Bill is consistent with the budgetary trajectory set out in the four-year contract for 2019-2022 entered into in February 2019. Under this new framework, INSEE had to report on its action at an annual meeting held in April 2020, which resulted in a very positive outcome of this process, in terms of both compliance with the milestones set for achieving the objectives and the progress made with regard to internal management.

For 2021, the annual variation in authorised employment stands at -67 FTEs (including investigators) and remains stable with respect to the targets set for 2019 and 2020. The corresponding payroll appropriations stand at €269.4 million, excluding the Earmarked Pension Account, compared with €268.5 million in 2019. These appropriations will be used to finance arbitrated category-specific measures.

The other appropriations amount to €66 million in payment appropriations (including €20.3 million for the lump-sum census award). Excluding the lump-sum census award, these appropriations are 5% higher than in 2020.

The implementation of the 2020 budget was affected by the health crisis. Operating and investment appropriations were not consumed to the same extent as the previous year. The carry-over of unused appropriations, for the amounts that exceed those guaranteed by the three-year contract, is requested for 2021.

With regard to the MSOs

The DREES has lost 12% of its workforce since 2011, and the rate of this decrease has increased in recent years. The Directorate has also suffered from job cuts in decentralised services over the same period. These services have, as a result, reduced their support for the DREES' statistical collections, leading to a growing burden on the Directorate and an increase in its subcontracting budget. At the same time, the DREES has been handed new ministerial remits in recent years, without any increase in its employment ceiling. These include the General Secretariat of the National Suicide Observatory, support for regional evaluation, and health data administration, to name only the main ones.

(For more details, see the DREES hearing in the chapter on the ASP's activities.)

Principle 4: Commitment to quality

The work on quality procedures continued unabated in 2020, and all statistical macro-processes are now covered, in line with the commitment made following the 2014 peer review. Many procedure documents were finalised relating to several production processes, including the population census, national accounts and business register.

The procedures are used to strengthen the documentation of processes, analyse their quality, implement an action plan to improve them and manage the risks associated with them. These procedures are increasingly used on projects. The summary sheets drawn up at the end of the procedures give them visibility and are useful for driving quality improvement.

Processes unrelated to statistical production have also been the focus of quality analysis. Work to

propose generic models for support and steering processes continued.

The process review protocol (following a quality procedure and supported by the project owners), defined in mid-2019, was activated in 2020 to conduct three reviews.

Fruitful cooperation continued within the network of regional quality advisers. A working group has produced tools to enable the Regional Directorates to map their own activities, in line with INSEE's process repository. Other work has been carried out with the Regional Directorates to test a protocol for analysing needs and provide insights and input into the organisation of work and the contribution that quality experts can make to knowledge transfer.

The professionalisation of the network of regional quality advisers and quality representatives in the MSOs continued in 2020. The regional quality advisers were trained to redeploy quality awareness initiatives at the local level. A shared quality awareness system was set up in the MSOs on a trial basis. Various sessions brought together many DREES agents and some agents from other MSOs. Discussions on the redesign of quality training courses and related materials continued, taking into account the lessons learned from the remote sessions held.

Some consideration was given to introducing awareness of the challenges and boundaries of quality into the training of attachés and administrators. In 2020, two specific modules were introduced into the programmes for trainee attachés. Work will continue in 2021, with ENSAI and ENSAE.

Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality and data protection

The way in which access for researchers is organised in France, characterised by the separation between statistics producers and researchers courtesy of two institutions – the Statistical Confidentiality Committee, with no authority over the data, and the CASD (the Secure Data Access Centre), with no authority over access authorisation – provides the guarantees that are absolutely necessary in terms of statistical confidentiality and data protection.

Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity

In 2020, an embargo breach occurred on 7 August affecting foreign trade figures. The French Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade and Attractiveness gave an interview on the foreign trade figures for the first half of 2020 to the newspaper *Le Figaro*, which was published at 8.30 a.m. on 7 August (and overnight for some subscribers), even though the foreign trade figures for June published by the French Customs MSO were under embargo until 8.45 a.m. on 7 August.

The ASP therefore questioned the Minister's Chief of Staff about the conditions under which this embargo breach had occurred, reminding him that the strictest compliance with embargo rules was crucial for public confidence in official statistics. The Chief of Staff confirmed the Minister's commitment to the independence of official statistics, recognising however that the timing of the event may have created some uncertainty around compliance with the rules for the release of official statistics.

Following this incident, a document on the dissemination of official statistics and embargo rules was published online on the ASP's website to provide better visibility regarding the rules in this area.

Principle 7: Sound methodology

- ***Many methodological developments linked to the health crisis***

During the health crisis, many methodological developments took place at INSEE and in the MSOs. These innovations emerged from adjustments made to processing and production chains for the usual outputs to overcome the problems associated with information feedback. They also involved the use of new data sources, the implementation of new surveys and the development of new tools to meet the challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis.

For example, INSEE, in this case the SSP Lab within INSEE, was able to propose an initial answer to the following question: How has lockdown (temporarily) affected how people are distributed across France? It was able to do this in particular because of the methodological expertise accumulated over several years in using mobile phone data.

Furthermore, when certain statistics or indicators were released that were deemed less relevant because they had to be compiled without the option of using traditional methods, the SSP, whenever it deemed it necessary, accompanied their publication with methodological warnings to explain that their calculation could be linked to data supply disturbances or to caution in interpreting the figures. This was the case in particular for the ILO unemployment rate, the monthly consumer price index, the GDP calculation and the labour cost indices.

- *And other developments outside the health crisis*

The dissemination of new zoning in 2020

For more details, see Chapter 1.3 on “New study zoning and a new definition of rural”.

Continued investment in survey techniques

INSEE is continuing to invest in survey techniques, in particular to develop panel and internet versions of the common core of household surveys.

INSEE is also continuing its work on the development of multimode surveys, in particular with a view to clarifying the underlying statistical concepts (population, sample units, weight sharing) for surveys conducted in multimode and the processing of results from the different modes to ensure consistency.

Investments related to the abolition of the housing tax on main residences: the construction of a system of statistical registers of individuals and housing

In connection with the abolition of the housing tax on main residences, INSEE is undertaking new work aimed at setting up, by 2025, a sustainable and scalable system of registers of individuals, households and residential premises, updated from various administrative sources.

The aim is to build up a body of high-quality information on households and housing.

The programme is an extension of the investment already made in the use of fiscal sources and is a key lever for transforming the demographic and social information system to make wider use of administrative sources.

Principle 8: Appropriate statistical procedures

Many of the economic and social indicators, developed during the health crisis, have been revised. With regard to the labour cost indices, for example, several revisions were made from the second quarter of 2020 onwards to indicators that were deemed “non-revisable”. These exceptional revisions

related to the hourly labour cost index (ICHT) and the Building and Public Works (BT/TP) indices.

Furthermore, following the 2014 peer review, INSEE undertook to publish its revision policy on insee.fr. This has been done since June 2019 and the document describing the “General Policy for INSEE Revisions” is available online at insee.fr.

In 2020, the MSOs formalised a common “Revision Policy”, based on INSEE’s, defined as follows: *“INSEE revises the values of its statistics in order to ensure that they reflect reality as accurately as possible and to guarantee their relevance and reliability. It uses well-established, standardised and planned procedures that follow international standards. It announces revisions at the time of their release or in advance according to a protocol adapted to the source of the revisions, their magnitude and the sensitivity of the published statistics. Any explanations required to clarify these revisions accompany the dissemination of the statistical sources concerned on the insee.fr website.”*

At the same time, INSEE has begun working with the MSOs to develop an error correction policy and protocol, which should be completed in 2021.

Principle 9: Non-excessive burden on respondents

The electricity and gas consumption components of the energy balance sheet were compiled by the Ecological Transition MSO for the first time this year, from local consumption data collected and released under Article 179 of the 2015 Energy Transition Act. This source has replaced the annual survey on electricity transmission and distribution (EATDE) and the annual survey on gas statistics (EASG), both of which have been discontinued.

The joint project launched by the DEPP and the DARES (over the 2019-2021 period) on measuring the professional integration of young people leaving apprenticeships or vocational training courses will enable the replacement of the “professional integration of apprentices” (IPA) and “labour-market integration” (IVA) surveys currently carried out by the DEPP, which are unable to produce these indicators at the desired level of detail.

Principle 10: Cost effectiveness

Increased use of online collections

The household and price survey collections, which were disrupted by the health crisis, continued, but using online responses where possible, particularly in November and December 2020.

However, the 2020 census campaign, which began on 16 January 2020, took place without incident. The non-response rate remained low at 4%, slightly higher than in 2019.

The online collection rate increased by 2 percentage points to 54% of households and 62% of individuals. The first lockdown occurred after the 2020 population census collection had been completed but at the start of post-census control operations, which normally involve a lot of fieldwork. These operations therefore had to be reorganised using remote working and checks made by phone. The field checks could only be resumed once the first lockdown was over and were scaled back compared to previous years.

At the DARES in 2020, the use of online collections for the ACEMO (activity and employment conditions of the workforce) and PIPA (statutory and discretionary profit-sharing, company savings plans and employee share ownership) surveys was further encouraged.

A survey of notaries who had recently set up a practice or who had decided not to do so was collected

online at the beginning of 2020 by the **Justice MSO**, in conjunction with the Directorate of Civil Affairs and the Seal (DACs), to gain a better understanding of the circumstances leading to their establishment.

In relation to energy, the **Ecological Transition MSO** (SDES) survey on energy renovation work in single-occupancy homes (TREMI), jointly managed with ADEME, was collected online from January to April 2020. The preliminary results of this survey were published in December 2020.

In relation to the environment, the survey on “The French and Nature” was collected online in March and April 2020 from a representative sample of 4,550 French people aged 16 and over. This survey was designed to examine the specific relationship between French society and its environment (natural environments, fauna, flora, etc.), by studying the diversity of individual perceptions. The main results of this survey were released in September 2020, accompanied by a graphical representation of these results.

Increased use of administrative files

At INSEE and the MSOs, the use of administrative files was stepped up significantly in 2020, both as part of work carried out on the health crisis and work not directly related to it.

At **INSEE**, as part of the work carried out during the health crisis, the DSN (nominative social declaration) was used intensively and rapidly to measure employment of less than 40 days (flash employment), obtain information on paid hours and the corresponding remuneration, and obtain information on short-time working.

The DSN was also used for the usual outputs on the labour market (employment, labour cost index), in other areas (industrial output index, tourism, accounts) and for the national (employment-unemployment forecasts in *Conjoncture in France*) and local diagnoses of business conditions.

As mentioned in Principle 7, the future system of registers of individuals, households and residential premises is an extension of the investment already made in the use of fiscal sources and is a key lever for transforming the demographic and social information system to make wider use of administrative sources.

At the **DREES**, a preliminary document was published in 2020 on matching social data from the permanent demographic sample (EDP) with data from the National Health Data System (SNDS), which aims to study social inequalities in health.

The MSO created a database of health expenditure and out-of-pocket payments for non-hospital and in-hospital treatment by major care category for all insured individuals who received treatment, based on data from the SNDS, data from the DCIR for non-hospital treatment, and then supplemented by hospital treatment data from the PMSI (Information Systems Medicalisation Programme).

In 2020, the DREES launched a new project to collect individual administrative data from the departmental councils on the support provided to those receiving the earned income supplement (RSA) allowance. These data will be cross-referenced with information from Pôle Emploi and the social security funds to create a database that will be used to analyse the pathways and socio-professional integration of recipients of minimum social benefits (the “RI-Insertion” project). The first set of data, for a few test departments, was received at the end of 2020.

An initial prototype of the database, which aims to consolidate the various administrative databases produced by the State or its operators on medical-social establishments and present these data in a format suitable for statistical use, was created in 2020 (BADIANE project).

A database containing panel data on supplementary organisations was created in 2020 from the accounting, prudential and statistical statements collected annually by the ACPR (the French Prudential Control Authority). The first release is planned for 2021.

As the health crisis interrupted work on creating a universal retirement system, the DREES undertook a complete overhaul of its TRAJECTOIRE career and retirement micro-simulation model in 2020. This project will continue in 2021.

In relation to agriculture, the system for measuring land cover and use, based on the Teruti survey, was thoroughly overhauled in 2017 by the **Agriculture MSO** with the mobilisation of a stratification of the national territory based on administrative data (RPG, etc.) and geographical data (BD-Topo, etc.), leading to increased observations in the strata with the highest probability of land cover change. The first three waves of this new observation system were collected in the period 2017-2019, providing precise results at the departmental level in 2020 by combining three consecutive collection years.

ADEME's database of energy performance diagnoses (DPE) was used by the **Ecological Transition MSO**, by matching it with INSEE's Fidéli file, to estimate the distribution of the energy efficiency of the housing stock, resulting in the publication of a working document in September 2020.

The biofuel sustainability declaration file of the Directorate General for Energy and Climate is now the reference source for estimating biofuel consumption, rather than the tax data relating to the incentive tax on the incorporation of biofuels (TIRIB). This change meant that producing the indicator for monitoring the renewable energy development target defined by Directive 2009/28/EC could be brought forward from September to April N+1.

At the end of January 2020, the Ecological Transition MSO and the Public Finances MSO signed an agreement on sharing individual data from tax files relating to income tax and its appendices. These data sources will be used by Ecological Transition MSO, following a matching exercise, to consolidate, correct and enhance databases, and perform calculations and analysis that will help to explain a number of issues related to housing and energy renovation.

To support the monitoring of the *baccalauréat* examination reform, the **DEPP** used data from secondary school management systems in order to report on developments at the start of the 2020 academic year in terms of the choice of specialised courses for pupils entering *Première* and *Terminale* years (corresponding to sixth form/years 12 and 13 in the UK), as it had done at the start of the previous school year for those in *Première*. The DEPP also continues to use in-depth data on examinations (*brevet*, *baccalauréat* and vocational examinations), from which it produces and disseminates statistical indicators and studies on success rates and their breakdown according to the socio-economic profile of candidates and graduates (age, gender and social background) and according to the region in which they are enrolled. These indicators, together with all the data disseminated, will be adapted to the new *baccalauréat* (2021 academic year).

The **Higher Education and Research MSO** has continued to use data from the Civil Servants Information System, which will lead in particular to the publication of studies in 2021 on gender pay inequalities and the diversity of researchers' salaries.

As announced, 2020 saw the resumption by the **DARES** of its quarterly publications of labour movement data based on the Nominative Social Declaration (DSN). The assessment of the DSN data, quality monitoring and the adaptation of information systems (automated statistical processing, dissemination) continued during the year. This resulted, in particular, in the substitution of certain variables in the quarterly ACEMO survey. Other work is being carried out to supplement the ACEMO surveys (particularly the micro-enterprise survey) with the DSN data, but also other surveys such as

ECMOSS.

The matching between the DSN data and DEPP data on apprentices and pupils in the second cycle (*lycée*) of secondary education leaving vocational training (InserJeunes project) was finalised and, at the end of 2020, led to the indicators provided for under the law on the freedom to choose one's professional future (schooling retention rate, professional integration rate, contract termination rate, etc.) being made available to the general public.

The Force system was gradually implemented during 2020. Its objective is to reconstruct the employment and training trajectories of job seekers. To achieve this, it matches the following files: the historical file of jobseekers (as well as satellite files) (FH), which gathers information for each jobseeker on the periods they were registered with Pôle Emploi; the labour movement database (MMO), which details each employee's employment contracts; the regionalised database of vocational training trainees (BREST), which includes the characteristics of the training courses taken by jobseekers; and the I-MILO database, which gathers information on young people in contact with a local mission and in particular in a strengthened support programme (*Garantie Jeunes*, PACEA, etc.). This system, which can be used by research teams undertaking a study or assessment of a Skills Investment Plan programme, is accessible through the Secure Data Access Centre (CASD).

As part of the reorganisation of the Ministry's General Secretariat, which took place in 2017, the transfer of prison statistics from the Directorate for Prison Administration (DAP) to the **Justice MSO** was agreed. The first quarterly statistics produced by the MSO on the open environment were released in July 2019 on the activity of the Prison Rehabilitation and Probation Services (SPIP). In July 2020, expanded annual statistics were published.

In addition, the MSO started to work on restarting output in the closed environment with the use of GENESIS (national management of detainees for individual monitoring and security) data. However, not all the progress planned for 2020 was achieved. In particular, expanding the scope of these statistics to the entire open environment had to be postponed to 2021, as did finalising work on the closed environment.

Article 2 of the 2018-2022 Programming and Justice Reform Law (LPJ) requires a report to be submitted to Parliament on the reoffending of prisoners following release from prison. In this context, in the first half of 2020, the MSO developed a new statistical database by matching information on prisoners recorded in GENESIS with information on convicted persons recorded in national criminal records, and then provided the prison service with the statistics required to draft the report in September 2020 (staggered schedule).

The production of statistics on regulated professions has until now been carried out by the Directorate of Civil Affairs and the Seal (DACS) using data from the OPM system, which is a key component of the interface between the management office for public and ministerial officials and the professions (notaries, bailiffs, judicial auctioneers, clerks of the commercial courts and legal counsels). However, extracting data from OPM for statistical production is complicated, and work on restructuring the data became essential. The DACS turned to the Justice MSO to carry out this work. In 2020, the MSO set up a system for feeding a statistical database from the OPM data, with the aim of producing official statistics and meeting the DACS' needs.

In applying the Civil Service Transformation Law, the **Civil Service MSO**, with the help of the DGCL (Directorate General for Local Authorities) for local government, has set up a system for collecting data on the publication by public employers of their ten highest salaries and the proportion of women among these civil servants.

The new system for collecting administrative data from competitions, which will eventually replace

the current “recruitment” survey, has been operational since January 2020.

Management of the Solidarity Fund for SMEs has been entrusted to the **DGFIP**. Article 6 of the Amending Finance Law of 23 March 2020 provides for the creation of a monitoring committee reporting to the Prime Minister, responsible for monitoring the implementation and assessment of financial support measures for companies affected by the epidemic. The Prime Minister wanted the committee to provide a detailed analysis of the effects of the shock on French companies, particularly in terms of their size, sector of activity and geographical location.

Detailed data will be made available to INSEE and researchers as soon as the formalities concerning personal data regulations have been completed, i.e. as soon as a favourable opinion has been received from the data protection officer of the Economic and Finance Ministries and from the Statistical Confidentiality Committee.

The Law of 23 October 2018 on the fight against fraud requires online platforms and marketplaces to send, by 31 January of each year, a statement of the transactions carried out and the gross amount received in this respect to each of their users and the tax authorities. These obligations apply to all platforms whose users reside in France or which sell or provide services in France. They also apply regardless of the country in which the platform is based and registered. At the beginning of the summer of 2020, the **Public Finances MSO** received the first set of data from these files, which proved to be very useful for assessing the economic activity carried out on these platforms (€38 billion declared, a large part by professional taxpayers). At this stage, however, it has only been possible to assign tax identifiers to individuals, based on the personal data sent by the platforms, for only one third of the tax filers.

Article 193 of Law 2018-1317 of 20 December 2018 on Finance for 2019 provides for the transfer of the management and collection of the general tax on polluting activities (TGAP) from the DGDDI (Directorate General for Customs and Indirect Taxation) to the DGFIP.

The implementation of a new information system on asylum at the DGEF (Directorate General for Foreigners in France) has enabled the Immigration MSO to respond in a more complete way to Eurostat’s asylum-related collections. This change was accompanied by the necessary metadata and explanations.

As part of the Analytics project, which aims to produce and disseminate control and analysis data on all the DGEF’s areas in a uniform manner, the Immigration MSO released to production, in October 2020, an initial module on foreign students, in conjunction with the implementation of the platform allowing students to apply for a residence permit while in France.

In 2020, the **Youth and Sport MSO** began an initial quality assessment of the database known as EAPS covering physical activity and sports establishments (APS) and sports instructors (including trainee instructors). This administrative database is used by the Directorate of Sports to monitor establishments and professional licences held by sports instructors that supervise sports-related activities on a paid basis.

Since 2020, the MSO has also been involved in the statistical exploitation of the census of sports facilities, spaces and practice sites (RES), which was studied on an ad hoc basis in the past. This involvement should lead to the regular dissemination of data for statistical purposes.

The **Ministry for Defence MSO** intends shortly to use tax data from the income tax file, known as POTE (DGFIP), to study the household income of military personnel and trends in that income. This goes further than the detailed information on military personnel remuneration contained in the RAE (Annual Census of State Employees).

It plans to set up an annual indicator for statistical monitoring of “innovative” supplier companies within the Ministry for the Armed Forces based on tax sources (CIR/CII data) and of ACOSS data on Young Innovative Companies.

The **Internal Security MSO (SSMSI)** is increasingly directly involved in the ministry’s major projects for changing or upgrading information systems, particularly in relation to applications for recording recorded crime by the security forces. In 2020, the following projects were able to continue despite the unfavourable conditions: the ongoing national police SCRIBE project, the THESEE project (online cybercrime complaints), the reporting of drugs use offences on tablet computers, the ongoing Main Courante project, and the programme for the computerisation of criminal procedure in conjunction with the Ministry for Justice and the Justice MSO. The SSMSI is in close contact with the project offices and IT departments to ensure that the data collected through these different collection methods are integrated into its statistical information system.

In response to the recommendations of the Mission report published in 2019 as part of the “Artists and Authors” Plan defined by the Minister, the **Culture MSO** has been instructed to carry out an in-depth analysis of the living conditions of artists and authors. This analysis continues and extends the annual exploitation of statistical data from the specific social security scheme for these populations (Maison des Artistes and AGESEA), carried out by the MSO over the past ten years. It will require setting up a partnership with ACOSS (the central agency for social security funds in France) in collaboration with the DGCA, which will soon be the sole manager of this scheme. At the same time, care must be taken to preserve the historical data available (going back to 1979).

In terms of observing the performing arts, the Culture MSO uses the entertainment licence databases to count employers in the circus sector. This work could be extended to other areas of the performing arts. The data will be cross-checked with the Pôle Emploi data source, which can be used to map intermittent workers to employers. The objective is to provide sector-specific observations, focusing first and foremost on describing the nature of employment structures.

Principle 11: Relevance

The CNIS

The work undertaken by the CNIS conforms to the principle of relevance. The CNIS is responsible for identifying new information needs and user concerns and bringing them to the attention of services that produce official statistics.

Despite facing an unprecedented situation in 2020 due to the health and economic crisis, the CNIS was able to adapt its activities and procedures to provide the best possible support for producers’ initiatives while continuing its dialogue with users.

This acceleration of procedures has given the CNIS a unique vantage point, through seeing requests for opportunities to record changes made to information systems, either for new surveys, for surveys enhanced to include a COVID-19 module or for surveys postponed to 2021.

See Annexe 7 for further details about the CNIS’s activities in 2020.

Satisfaction surveys

Satisfaction surveys set out to evaluate the quality of the information provided by INSEE in relation

to the public's expectations regarding the relevance of information, ease of access, choice of media, etc. These surveys focus on specific topics. They provide results that are compared with other information gathered elsewhere and can be used to formulate a corrective action plan.

In 2020, INSEE carried out or completed six satisfaction surveys on specific topics or on its public image and the credibility of the data it produces.

- A streamlined survey of “daily visits” to the insee.fr website, conducted on one day per month, provides information about user profiles and subjects of interest to them. In 2020, 84% of respondents found what they were looking for, either entirely (53%) or partially (31%). They were mainly looking for data (47%), publications or an index. These users use search engines – either external engines or the website’s own – to find the information that interests them. This success rate – stable compared with 2019, the first year of the survey – informs the transparency indicators of the quality and efficiency of public services.

To collect users’ opinions on the results of statistical surveys on specific topics and understand their needs, two satisfaction surveys were carried out, one on investment in industry to protect the environment (ANTIPOL) and the other on information and communication technologies in businesses (TIC Entreprises).

- The results of the ANTIPOL survey meet the needs of almost all respondents. The survey’s main modules, investments and studies, are used by 75% of respondents. Comparisons of ANTIPOL results over several years are in high demand (83%), as are comparisons with other surveys, with other administrative sources or with other data sources.

- The respondents were satisfied with the results of the TIC Entreprises survey, and they gave it an average score of 7.7/10. The topics presented cover almost all the respondents’ needs, with “Information Systems Security” being the most consulted (52% of respondents). The sectors of activity are sufficiently detailed (85%) and 63% of respondents compare results over several years.

- The COLTRANE (COLlecte TRANsversale d’Enquêtes) portal, which was designed to consolidate all surveys of businesses on a single site, currently collects data for some thirty annual, quarterly or monthly surveys. One satisfaction survey carried out on this portal showed that users are satisfied with both browsing the website and accessing the surveys or list of surveys that were relevant to them. They are also satisfied with browsing the questionnaire, sending it out and providing proof of answers.

Finally, two surveys were conducted on INSEE’s image – an annual occurrence since 2009. One concerned the institution’s image as perceived by the general public, and the other as perceived by visitors to the insee.fr website.

- In 2020, the survey of the general public’s image of INSEE was conducted online: the Institute’s twelve image attributes were tested, along with the eight economic indicators. Conducted in October, it concerned knowledge and opinions of INSEE, its image, the credibility of eight indicators (unemployment rate, growth rate, consumer price index/inflation, birth rate, rent reference index, population census data, purchasing power and government debt), and confidence in the published figures.

Awareness of the Institute remained high in 2020: 96% of people interviewed said they were familiar with INSEE and 73% knew “what it does”. The favourable opinion of the Institute among the French remained stable at 74%. The credibility of the indicators tested, i.e. the fact that they reflect “what is really happening in France in the field”, improved in 2020. Confidence increased by three to seven points for all leading indicators except for the birth rate and population census data, which remained

stable. Confidence in economic statistics increased by five points among the French public: 56% of respondents trusted “the published statistics and data on the French economic and social situation”.

- As in previous years, internet users visiting the insee.fr website had a good or very good opinion of the Institute. Nearly all of them considered it useful (92%) and thought that it inspires confidence (88%), while 82% considered that it accomplishes its mission effectively. As in previous years, the impression of independence from the political power was both the subject that received the lowest approval level (62% in 2020) and that which received the largest number of “don’t knows” (21%). For the indicators, there was no significant change in credibility in 2020, except for the Rent Reference Index (IRL), the growth rate and the CPI, which each fell by between 2 and 3 points. Two questions in this survey act as transparency indicators of the quality and efficiency of public services.

Since 2017, the main results of the satisfaction surveys conducted by INSEE have been published on www.insee.fr, at the following address:
<https://www.insee.fr/fr/information/2129030>

List of the 12 image attributes:

INSEE is a useful organisation; one that inspires confidence; one whose mission I understand well; one that effectively fulfils its mission; one that provides clear information about its activities;

INSEE produces and disseminates information that I find interesting; indispensable for analysing the economic and social situation in France; reliable concerning the French economy; easy to understand; easy to find; reflects reality; and independent of the political power.

Principle 12: Accuracy and reliability

European Statistics must accurately and reliably portray reality. However, the lockdowns imposed during the health crisis have led to the relevance of some statistics and indicators (e.g. unemployment, price index) being diluted. This has required additional educational efforts when disseminating them (see Principle 15).

The work on the validation of aggregated data, which began in 2019, continued during 2020. INSEE used information obtained from interviews with various producers combined with indicators from the European Statistics Code of Practice and criteria set out in the European Handbook on data validation to develop a checklist comprising seven criteria aimed at ensuring the quality of the verification and validation processes for aggregated data. The aim is to improve practices, in particular by clarifying what level of quality is expected and how this is communicated to users (response rate in relation to the reliability of the statistics, accuracy of published statistics, robustness of the data, etc.). This level of quality is assessed in relation to the uses of the process and the needs it meets.

However, in 2020, the Authority noted a failure to comply with the principle of accuracy and reliability in relation to the dissemination of series that had been quality-labelled.

The Authority was informed by a user of the French Health Insurance Fund (CNAM) statistical series of the inconsistency of a table relating to the series of reimbursements for non-hospital treatments produced by the CNAM’s statistical department. This series had been quality-labelled by the Authority in 2015.

The Authority subsequently asked the CNAM’s statistical department for explanations and received the following replies: “*The introduction by Executive Order of pharmacists’ dispensing fees from 1 January 2019 (expanded on 1 January 2020) meant that it was no longer possible to track drug reimbursements by reimbursement rate. In order not to create a break in the field between years, the department decided to group all reimbursements of medicines, whatever their reimbursement rate, under a single line (line 18 “including medicines reimbursed outside hospitals”).*”

This change in presentation was correctly specified in the event log for the January 2019 data presented by date of care (March 2019 for data presented by reimbursement date), but unfortunately the department did not make

this new line “clear”. As a result, as reported, the sum of the medicines (line 17) does not match the sum of the “including” sub-lines displayed. However, if hidden line 18 is taken into account, line 17 is correctly the sum of the sub-lines. Therefore, while the presentation of the table is indeed approximate, the quality of the data provided is not compromised. We noticed this inaccuracy for the May 2020 data presented by date of care and have “re-displayed” line 18 since then.

The Authority reminds all producers that the production and dissemination of quality-labelled statistics must comply with the European Statistics Code of Practice as soon as they fall within the scope of official statistics. This is a commitment made by all organisations wishing to obtain a quality label for their data.

Principle 13: Timeliness and punctuality

INSEE published the usual short-term indicators used to analyse changes in France’s economic situation in accordance with the planned publication schedule, including during the lockdowns.

Some MSOs experienced difficulties in producing their short-term indicators during the first lockdown, but these have been published within the planned timeframe since summer 2020.

The monitoring of punctuality issues concerning publications in the dissemination schedules

Following the ASP’s 2016 recommendation, the MSOs are interviewed by INSEE every year to assess the punctuality of the publications they announce in their dissemination schedule. This is to determine the rate of punctuality observed and the reasons for any discrepancies if the statistical offices have remained in charge of the production of the publications and the dissemination of their statistics.

The scope of this monitoring of punctuality covers all publications that were disseminated in 2020 and which were announced in a calendar. Punctuality is measured in relation to the last dissemination date announced.

In this respect, no publications were delayed due to an intervention by a competent ministry that cast doubt upon the independence of the MSOs. There were some delays in proofreading by the business directorates that delayed the release of some Defence MSO publications.

The health crisis disrupted MSO publications to varying degrees. Several managed to release all those announced on time (or made slight adjustments to their publication announcements, with publications slightly delayed or announced with less detail). By contrast, others experienced (more or less significant) delays for a (sometimes substantial) number of their publications or had to revise the announcement of a significant number of them. Some MSOs also had to forego some of their publications. Conversely, some MSOs issued publications that were not planned (in particular to meet information needs that became apparent during the crisis).

Due to these disruptions, the punctuality rates for 2020 publications are difficult to compare with previous years. Nevertheless, they remain high, despite the difficulties.

The reasons given to explain the delays not related to the health crisis were mainly:

- Difficulty in obtaining source data
- Defects in the data requiring methodological adjustments or investments
- Excess workload
- Researchers leaving or job vacancies.

Announcements are sometimes revised due to errors in preparing the dissemination schedule.

NOTE: The effort taken to publish on time is not the same for all MSOs:

- The release date is announced with varying degrees of advance notice.
 - The precision of the release date announced varies: exact date, week number or quarter.
 - The percentage of publications announced in advance varies.
- Some publications are not announced at all.

Additional information:

DREES: Of the 18 publications announced, one was slightly ahead of schedule, one was delayed due to late delivery of data because of the crisis, one was delayed to avoid media competition with another DREES publication and one was delayed to avoid it being published at the same time as a government report.

DARES: Two planned publications were not released because the Q1 ACEMO survey was replaced by a flash survey on the health crisis.

DEPP (Education): Four publications were published in 2020 following a revision of the release announcement.

NOTE: In 2020, the DEPP announced the release quarter.

(Out of scope of the analysis): For two publications planned in 2020, a new announcement was released for Q1 2021, and one publication announced for Q4 2020 was not published by 20 January 2021. All delays are due to the health crisis.

Local Authorities MSO: Three publications announced for December 2020 will be published in Q1 2021 due to a job vacancy. Two other publications announced for November 2020 will be published by the DGFIP. Two other publications announced for 2020 will not be published due to the health crisis (for one of them, a full report is available).

Public Finances MSO: Three publications announced for 2020 were not released on 11 January 2021 due to the health crisis.

Youth and Sport MSO: One publication on the final results of collective childcare facilities for the 2018/2019 school year was cancelled because the revision of the provisional 2018/2019 data was finally deemed unnecessary at this stage.

Defence MSO: Four unscheduled publications were released in 2020.

Higher Education and Research MSO: Two publications announced for 2020 are expected to be published in February 2021. This is due to poor data quality identified during proofreading and a job vacancy.

Internal Security MSO (SSMSI):

NOTE: From 30 November 2020, the release schedule (including publications) is posted on Interstats at the end of each month for the next four months: <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Interstats/Calendrier-de-diffusion>. One publication announced for December 2020 will not be published as the survey did not take place due to the health crisis. Thirteen exceptional weekly publications were issued to report on the state of delinquency recorded by the French police and gendarmerie during the health crisis.

Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO: Ten publications announced for the period from March to June 2020 were not released due to the health crisis.

Principle 14: Coherence and comparability

Some statistics and indicators developed specifically for the health crisis, for example those

developed with “high frequency” data,¹⁵ will need to be reconciled over time with those calculated using traditional methods. More generally, any statistical anomalies in 2020 will need to be integrated into long-term analyses.

Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity

Efforts by the MSO to improve the accessibility and visibility of its work continued, which were even more important during the health crisis

During the health crisis, the INSEE blog, which was launched at the beginning of 2020, was a particularly important tool for communicating and explaining the relevance and reliability of certain statistical indicators or the use of new data sources to monitor the economic situation. A large number of informative blog posts were published to stimulate and inform the economic and social debate.

In addition, since 22 April 2020, all the statistical output produced by INSEE and the MSOs has been consolidated, for greater visibility, on one page of INSEE’s website specifically for statistics related to the health crisis.

In general, modernising the SSP’s means of communication has accelerated with the increase of its social media presence, its more frequent use of videos, and the entering into of partnerships with media companies specialised in communicating socio-economic information to a wider audience.

At INSEE

In 2020, INSEE offered new services to improve its offer and reach out even more to all audiences.

The open data strategy highlights the importance of application programming interfaces (APIs) as a channel for accessing data. There is now a dedicated catalogue available at api.insee.fr, and the first dissemination APIs (local data, metadata and macroeconomic data bank) were made available in 2020.

New materials have been made available online to explain and illustrate the concepts of inflation and unemployment in the new “Key Facts on...” collection. This collection includes key data, a question-and-answer section providing more specific insights, methodological details and links to publications by INSEE and other organisations. It is also complemented by Key Facts on each of the 18 regions in France.

In 2020, INSEE also made available a booklet containing all the infographics that summarise the works in the INSEE References collection. This educational booklet, available in hard-copy format or as a download from the website, is intended in particular for use by teachers and their pupils.

In addition, to make it easier for internet users to find information on the insee.fr website, INSEE revised the parameters of its website’s search engine, delivering fewer and more context-specific results, and improved how the interactive frequently asked questions are displayed on the page using a specially designed tool known as a widget to provide easier access to the most frequently sought information.

15 See Chapter 1.2.

In the MSOs

In 2020, the **DREES** developed its new website, independent of the Ministry for Solidarity and Health's portal, to provide easier access to its work. This website, which went online in January 2021, provides a single interface for accessing studies, data (Opendatasoft solution) and data visualisation tools (Rshiny solution). The aim is to make it easier to browse and search for online publications and to improve access to data and referencing of the work carried out by the DREES, in particular by developing a high-performance search engine. Restructuring the content will be accompanied by the development of a web editorial charter that is suitable for the dissemination of statistical work.

Since October, in response to the health crisis, the DREES has published a weekly data visualisation, accompanied by a press release providing updates on the time taken to obtain RT-PCR test results.

In 2020, the DREES also signed an agreement with the CASD for the dissemination of extremely detailed data files.

The DREES also began work on creating fully anonymised databases from some of its sources so that they can be made available as open data, particularly for students or researchers who are interested in exploring them before embarking on the cumbersome process required to access them.

In 2020, the **Higher Education and Research MOS** deployed the INES web service. This is a new system that expands the effective scope of the RNIE (the French national register of pupil, student and apprentice identifiers) to higher education.

At the start of the 2020 "Parcoursup" campaign, the MSO made a new data visualisation tool available to the public. This tool provides a series of summary data for each course offered, taken from the previous year's campaign. This serves as an additional tool to help students in the second cycle (*lycée*) of secondary education with their course choice, allowing them to easily identify various key characteristics of each course, describing the profiles of those admitted and indicating the time taken for them to be offered the course they ultimately choose.

In November 2020, the CurieExplore outreach tool (<https://curiexplore.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/>) was launched, providing the public with a qualitative and quantitative view of the higher education and research system in all countries and ranking France in relation to other countries. This tool is based on public data available internationally and on regular feedback from diplomatic postings.

Lastly, in 2020 the MSO signed an agreement with the CASD to develop secure access for researchers to personal data from higher education and research.

In 2020, the project to redesign the **DARES** website made good progress, and the project to redesign the data visualisation tool continued. In addition, work began to update the statistical profile of professions and revamp the way it is made available on its website, by developing a data visualisation function.

In September 2020, the **Local Authorities MSO** started work on the launch of the "open authorities" portal designed to bring together all statistical information on local authorities. This was in response to the recommendations of the CNIS. At the same time, a project to overhaul the collectivites-locales.gouv.fr website was launched at the beginning of 2021 jointly with the DGFIP. This is expected to be completed in spring 2021.

As part of the process for making available local consumption data provided for in Article 179 of the

2015 Energy Transition Law and its implementing texts, the **Ecological Transition MSO** released address-based consumption data for gas and electricity for the first time in 2020. In addition, the IRIS and municipal data are now broken down by sector at division level.

A new annual publication (in the Essential Datalab collection) on the prices of petroleum products, which provides the results for the previous year in April, now complements the MSO's energy price analysis package.

To support the plan to reduce the use of pesticides (e.g. Écophyto II+, glyphosate), the MSO has developed a data visualisation tool for data on the sale of phytosanitary products and made it available online at the beginning of 2020. The tool can drill down to view data at the local level.

Following publication of the report on the environment in France in October 2019 and the Focus on health and the environment published in June 2019, a Focus on “natural resources” was published in May 2020. At the same time, numerous additions were made to the State of the Environment Report website <https://ree.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/> (EDD1).

The national and regional indicators for the development objectives were updated and made available on the INSEE website. A major project in 2020 was to present these indicators in the best way possible using data visualisation techniques. This should lead to a new dissemination product in early 2021. This data visualisation solution highlights the key figures and the progress made in achieving the targets for each indicator.

The **Defence MSO** is improving its communications through the use of animated videos. The objective is to produce videos on defence economics topics, initially covered in the EcoDef bulletin collections, and make them available online to the general public. Four animated videos have already been produced and made available.

In addition, the Economic Observatory of Defence (EOD) website has been enhanced with an “Infographics” section.

The **Youth and Sport MSO** has redesigned its Key Figures publications to incorporate a new method of dissemination, combining online tables and a composite publication using infographics, which is available in paper format and on its website. This dissemination approach better meets the needs of the different types of users, whether they are looking for detailed data or a consolidated view.

Following the publication in 2019 of the Key Figures on Youth, which are due to be updated in early 2021, and the Key Figures on Community Life, which are due to be updated every three or four years, the Youth and Sport MSO began work in 2019 on the Key Figures on Sport. In an approach similar to the other outputs in this series, the MSO, in collaboration with the Directorate of Sport, assessed all existing sport-related data sources. All the data will be consolidated into an online dashboard, while the publication in Key Figures format provides an illustrated summary of the most relevant indicators.

These Key Figures on Sport were published at the end of 2020.

In September 2020, the MSO published for the first time the “Regional Sport Fact Sheets”. The aim of this new dissemination product is to make regional and, to a lesser extent, departmental data available to local stakeholders. These fact sheets are compiled using data from the National Barometer of Sports Activities (regional level), the Census of Sports Licences (INJEP-MEDES) and the Census of Sports Facilities, Spaces and Practice Sites (RES – Directorate of Sport).

In conjunction with the Directorate of Sport, the MSO is also preparing for the online launch of a regional sport observation tool (carto.sports based on the Géoclip tool), which will be used to disseminate regional indicators on sport.

To improve the accessibility and visibility of the work of the **Agriculture MSO**, the new AGRESTE website, started in 2018, went online in March 2020.

From 2021, the dissemination of statistical tables and data by the **Public Finances MSO** will be complemented by the publication of commentary notes. This will be achieved through a new internet platform yet to be created.

In autumn 2020, the **SSMSI** began a major statistical dissemination project to design its dissemination service and decide on how it will make this available to two different types of audience: internally for the police and gendarmerie services and prefectures (prefects are responsible for steering departmental security policy); and externally via its Interstats website.

The new statistical metadata system now supplies data to the INSEE website

The Statistical Metadata Standard (RMÉS) project now supplies data to insee.fr. It contains concepts and definitions, classifications, dictionaries of variables, and descriptions of statistical operations. It is intended to incorporate other statistical metadata, including geographical classifications and a description of survey questionnaires from 2020 onwards. Although certain management applications are still under development, it is now possible to search for, create and update the metadata contained in the reference standard. Some of the web services for applications that reuse metadata are operational, while others are under development or being designed.

The proposal to establish a Metadata Editorial Board was approved in March 2019. This board will be responsible for the continuous improvement of the quality of statistical metadata. It will have the authority to prioritise the work, decide on the content of the reference standard and, if necessary, approve proposals for attributing certain concepts to a given service.

As the Statistical Metadata Standard (RMÉS) is now used by several INSEE applications, extensive work must be planned to ensure that its content is continuously improved in terms of completeness and compliance with the data description rules. To this end, a board responsible for steering this improvement in the quality of the standard and the metadata it hosts (Comet) was set up in September 2020. Several activities have already started, such as bringing the documentation of the Permanent Facilities Database (BPE) into the European format (SIMS) or revising all the concepts as part of the overhaul of the “French Economy Tables” (TBEF) publication, which should be completed in early 2021. As part of the work carried out on the dissemination of the accounts, a huge project to review national accounting concepts has also started and should be completed in 2021. This will result in updates to the definitions published on Insee.fr.

INSEE has also continued its efforts to support users of the RMÉS Standard, in particular by providing several training courses on management applications.

The K’RMÉS communication initiative, open to everyone in the SSP, was organised by videoconference on 14 October 2020.

3. Activity of the Official Statistics Authority in 2020

3.1 Sessions of the Authority

Given the situation with the health crisis at the beginning of 2020, the Official Statistics Authority's session of 1 April was held by electronic consultation in accordance with Article 6 of the ASP's Internal Regulations of 22 June 2016.

The other three sessions of the Authority were held in person and by video conference. Their agendas are described below.

1 April 2020

- Deliberation on statistical publications in connection with the State's new visual style guidelines;
- ACOSS: Opinion of the Authority on the renewal of the quality-labelling of the quarterly series on workforce size, payroll and new hire declarations at national level and on the quality-labelling of the series on workforce size and payroll at local level produced by ACOSS (the central agency for social security funds in France);
- Approval of the Authority's 2019 annual report.

17 June 2020

- Presentation by Mr Jean-Luc Tavernier, Director General of INSEE, on the work carried out by the Official Statistics Authority in relation to the health crisis;
- The Ministerial Statistical Office for Foreign Trade: Hearing of Ms Isabelle Braun-Lemaire, Director General of Customs and Indirect Taxation, accompanied by Mr Raoul Depoutot, Head of the Statistics and Economic Studies Department;
- The Ministerial Statistical Office for Local Authorities (review): Hearing of Mr Stanislas Bourron, Director General of Local Authorities, accompanied by Mr Luc Briere, Head of the Local Studies and Statistics Department.

21 October 2020

- Department of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES): Hearing of Mr Fabrice Lengart, Director of the DREES;
- Secure Data Access Centre (CASD): Hearing of Mr Kamel Gadouche, Head of the CASD;
- Presentation of the report and action plan on geographical economic studies at INSEE by Mr Stefan Lollivier, Inspector General of INSEE, and Mr Michel Duée, Head of the Regional Action Department at INSEE.

8 January 2021

- Hearing of Mr Patrice Duran, President of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS);
- Hearing of Mr Jean-Luc Tavernier, Director General of INSEE.

The subjects covered during these sessions were subject to the recommendations set out below, in the concluding paragraph (3.5).

Pursuant to Articles 1, 3 and 4 of amended Decree 2009-250 relating to the Official Statistics Authority, the ASP also issued the following opinions in 2020:

- an opinion, on 18 February 2020, on the professional independence of official statistics;

- two opinions, on 24 April and 8 September 2020, on the draft orders amending the list of Ministerial Statistical Offices;
- an opinion, on 14 April 2020, on the statistical publications of the official statistical service (SSP);
- an opinion, on 15 December 2020, on the draft decree modifying the remits and organisation of the central administration of the Ministry for Culture and Communication.

Lists of the decisions made in the sessions and the different opinions issued by the ASP are available on the Official Statistics Authority's website at the following address: <http://www.autorite-statistique-publique.fr/asp>

3.2 Hearings of producers of official statistics

At the request of the ASP, the work carried out by the Official Statistical Service during the health crisis was addressed specifically by the Director General of INSEE in June 2020.

As it does every year, as part of its remit to ensure the compliance of the MSOs with the European Statistics Code of Practice, the Authority conducted a hearing of three Ministerial Statistical Offices: the Foreign Trade MSO, the Local Authorities MSO as part of a review, and the Department for Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES).

Since it is identified as an ONA (Other National Authority) at European level, as are the MSOs, the Authority also heard from the CASD (Secure Data Access Centre).

Lastly, the report by the INSEE Inspectorate General on geographical economic studies was presented to the Authority.

- ***Presentation by the Director General of INSEE on the work carried out by the Official Statistics Authority in relation to the health crisis***

The Director General presented the impacts of the health crisis on the working conditions of the MSOs and INSEE. He then described the original work related to the health crisis and its repercussions, carried out by the Official Statistical Service since March.

The use of teleworking had varying levels of success. In some MSOs, the teleworking culture was quite well developed. However, other MSOs were forced to reduce their activity, in particular the Justice, Local Government and Immigration MSOs.

The Director General reported on the situation at Defence MSO, which raises particular concerns. In addition to equipment issues, there are confidentiality issues which prevented MSO staff from accessing their work email remotely (outside the MSO's premises) during the lockdown and after it, until the end of June. These difficulties are compounded by structural problems. The Defence MSO has experienced high staff turnover and an inability to attract new staff for several years. After meeting with the head of the MSO, the Director General wondered whether it could even produce publishable statistics and, more generally, whether its duties and responsibilities as a Ministerial Statistical Office were viable. This is why he thought it appropriate for the ASP to refer the matter to the INSEE and Ministry for the Armed Forces Inspectorates General to conduct a joint audit of this MSO's operating conditions.

The Director General indicated that most of the MSOs and INSEE had managed to work under degraded conditions. Continuity had been maintained in most cases, with a fairly large number of publications. INSEE published most of what it had planned, including around 70 Quick Facts, an INSEE Reference on the self-employed, and one-off studies.

However, it was not possible to continue some work during the lockdown, and some publications and productions were cancelled. INSEE will not publish its "French Economy in 2020" report and is questioning, in a more structural way, whether it will publish it at all. The consumer price indices for the French overseas departments could not be produced in April and May.

By the end of June, activity should be back to 100%, both on-site and teleworking. Teams need to be fully prepared to achieve this target. However, there will be delays to some activities, and it will not

be possible to catch up on some of them.

The keeping of registers of persons and companies was maintained. INSEE encouraged municipalities that had not yet computerised the sending of their civil status declarations to do so. Some 8,000 municipalities were already doing so and nearly 5,000 new municipalities switched to computerised systems during the period. However, the majority of them still send out their declarations in paper form.

There were many changes to collections. The pilot of the PIAAC survey was postponed to 2021. The ICT and CVS (victimisation) surveys will not be conducted either, as it is not possible to switch them to the telephone. The Ministry for the Interior has been informed about the CVS survey. The second phase of the TeO (Territory and Origins) survey is behind schedule, as the face-to-face survey was supposed to have been launched in the spring. The collections have switched to telephone interviews as much as possible, especially for the Employment and SRCV surveys, but the exercise is still complicated. These surveys are not designed for telephone or internet interviewing. As a result, the response rate has decreased over the crisis period. The pilot for the internet-based Employment survey started on 1 January in order to control passing trends and identify possible biases. This pilot continued during the crisis. However, the Director General does not know whether it will be possible to draw as many lessons from it as he had expected.

For companies, data collections were already mainly carried out via the internet. They were therefore able to continue, but the response rates fell sharply. For the April business tendency surveys, for example, the rate was 40%. Price surveys in shops were suspended in mid-March. INSEE used scanner data and data from websites. Surveys were carried out on an experimental basis in shops over a two-week period. INSEE is also considering the resumption of face-to-face surveys, again on an experimental basis. In Europe, most national statistical institutes do not envisage a return to normal before the autumn.

The health crisis also called into question the relevance of certain statistics and indicators. During the lockdown, INSEE communicated widely on the fact that the ILO unemployment criteria were losing their relevance and that the fall in the unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2020 was misleading, citing the concomitant increase in the halo of unemployment. Some questions were also raised about the weighting of the price index. INSEE published methodological notes and built, on an experimental basis, a Paasche index to take into account price changes and the structure of household consumption as it was during the lockdown.

INSEE and the MSOs carried out specific work during the crisis to shed new light on its effects. This included some innovative work. INSEE also created a COVID-19-specific page on its website to direct visitors to this work.

Each month, INSEE published the number of births and deaths that occurred during the previous month. The crisis meant that working methods had to be adapted. From 20 March, at the request of the Ministry for the Interior, the Institute sent the prefects a daily count of the number of deaths that had occurred up to ten days earlier, with the municipalities having one week to send in their civil status records.

The Director General wanted this information to be made public every week on Insee.fr, at national and departmental level, with a comparison with previous years. Over time, this publication has been expanded with tables broken down by gender, age and type of place of death (hospital, retirement home, home). The exercise required considerable work, especially following the cyberattack on the city of Marseille, whose figures have been unavailable for three months. INSEE has also published two blog posts on the subject and a more specific study on the link between deaths and population density. Another study is planned on deaths and background. Communications to the prefects has

since returned to a weekly basis. Excess mortality has disappeared since 1 May.

Causes of death are a particular problem. This is the only European regulation for which the response depends on an external service, outside official statistics. The regulation requires that deaths for the previous year be reported once a year. However, the INSERM's CépiDC codes the cause of death with a slight delay each year due to a lack of resources. However, some information on certificates sent electronically has already been published, without knowing the reliability in terms of "ethnic group". Only 25% of death certificates are sent electronically, with paper certificates taking two to three months to be sent via the regional health agencies. It is also not guaranteed that all doctors code in the same way. Unlike INSEE, which does not have information on cause of death, the UK's statistical office does have all this information and has already published very comprehensive statistics on COVID-related deaths, examining in particular whether the Black ethnic group is more affected.

The Director General proposed that the IGAS carry out a joint study with the General Inspectorate of INSEE on statistics and causes of death and the limits of international comparisons in this area.¹⁶

The Director General pointed out that a journalist had noted that certain municipalities in the Paris area had an excess of deaths at home. However, it appeared that in these municipalities, civil registrars tended to record deaths that occurred in care homes as deaths at home. INSEE therefore had to clarify instructions in this area.

Several MSOs were also asked to carry out simulation and monitoring work during the crisis.

The Civil Service MSO launched an administrative survey among ministerial HR departments on the consequences for the organisation of the increased use of teleworking.

The Culture MSO assessed the impact of the crisis on cultural sectors.

The DREES made some of its statistical staff available to the Health Crisis Centre.

The DARES publishes a weekly labour market report. The use of short-time working is a significant issue. The figure initially put forward by the authorities (13 million) corresponded to a theoretical use and gave the impression that all employees in the commercial sector had been placed on short-time working. The DARES estimated the use of short-time working in April at 8.6 million employees for 2.8 weeks.

For six weeks, the SSMSI published a weekly dashboard on the status of criminal activity recorded by the police and gendarmerie forces, with a focus on domestic violence, scams and breaches of trust.

INSEE also produced dashboards for use by prefects to assess the situation in the regions before the easing of lockdown and collected indicators of household living conditions at local level to shed light on the phenomena linked to lockdown (over-occupation of housing, single-parent families, single people, etc.).

Regarding estimates of the loss of economic activity, five *Points de Conjoncture* have been produced so far. The sixth was published on 17 June at 6 p.m. The Director General had decided to postpone publication of the *Conjoncture in France* planned for a few days after the lockdown ended and replaced it with fortnightly *Points de Conjoncture*. Producing these briefings required an innovative use of data from professional associations and high frequency data. Electricity, a frequently used indicator, remains a highly aggregated indicator. INSEE used information on rail freight and data from Google Mobility. However, it was unable to obtain data on road freight because it was unable to

¹⁶ Following this hearing, a study on death statistics was launched. This is a joint effort involving the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs, the General Inspectorate of Education, Sport and Research, and the General Inspectorate of INSEE.

collect information from motorway companies. By contrast, Germany has very robust administrative data on road transport thanks to its eco-tax.

In addition, INSEE collected daily bank card data by retail sector. These data proved to be fairly reliable for measuring consumer spending and activity in these sectors. The availability of these indicators meant that the figure of a -35% fall in GDP and also in consumer spending could be published, which was a reasonable estimate at the time.

During lockdown, INSEE continued to produce and release industrial production and turnover indicators. The results seemed less negative than expected in relation to services to businesses, so the fall in activity could be revised for April and the second quarter of 2020.

The Director General of INSEE had decided that the procedure for sending out the embargoed *Points de Conjoncture* would be the same as those for the Quick Facts rather than those for the *Conjoncture in France* briefing (sent at 9 p.m. to the Director of Cabinet for publication at 7.30 a.m. the following day). This procedure went smoothly.

For this exercise, INSEE used data held by public and private companies (e.g. RTE and Enedis), scanner data to analyse volumes, bank card data and mobile phone data. There had been cooperation in this area for a long time, but it was still difficult to implement. To be able to calculate the required capacity of health services, it was important to identify those areas in lockdown. In response to this request, Orange decided that the data from its Flux Vision subsidiary would be sent free of charge for three months to any government authority that requested it. Bouygues Telecom eventually provided its own internally generated data. Thanks to this information, INSEE was able to produce a lockdown map and determine in particular the number of Parisians who had left the metropolitan area. In the 6 p.m. publication, INSEE also examined the sharp decrease in commuting during lockdown and its more gradual recovery since lockdown ended.

Specific surveys were also conducted over this period.

The DARES used the infrastructure of the ACEMO survey to question companies on a monthly basis on how they were adapting their workforces as a result of the crisis (changes in headcount, activity, teleworking, short-time working, prevention measures, etc.). The very reliable results could be used for the *Points de Conjoncture* exercise.

The DREES conducted a flash survey with a panel of general practitioners and another on the functioning of child welfare services.

INSEE added questions to the monthly household tendency survey (CAMME) on living conditions in lockdown. The subcontracting survey planned for the end of the year was postponed and replaced by a one-off survey on the impact of the crisis on the economy and on company organisation, the cost of health measures, etc.

Lastly, INSEE worked with the DREES on an epidemiological and statistical survey to determine the immune status of the population. The EPICOV survey was launched in mid-April by INSERM on a representative sample. It targets 200,000 people in an initial wave of questionnaires before a blood sample is taken at home to determine the prevalence rate of the virus in the population. The results from this survey are eagerly awaited.

In conclusion, the Director General referred to discussions at European level. After a brief period of bewilderment, Eurostat stepped up to the plate and issued guidance notes to clarify whether questionnaires needed to be modified during the crisis. Many countries modified their surveys or conducted one-off surveys. Motivated by INSEE's use of bank card data, many countries also tried to

use high frequency data to which they had not previously had access, re-igniting the debate on the advisability of adopting European legislation in this area.

The Director General drew attention to the issues regarding comparability. It is difficult to accept that the accounts for the first quarter are comparable from one country to another, and the same will probably be true for the second quarter. He also felt that Eurostat should publish a note on excess mortality at European level, with comparable data. The Director General was supported by many of his counterparts on this issue.

- ***The Ministerial Statistical Office for Foreign Trade***

Discussions have recently been held on the remit of the customs service, and the production of foreign trade statistics has emerged as an essential task that is consistent with the economic measures taken by the customs service. The service has embarked on the reengineering of its statistical production chain. This project is also an opportunity to resolve the legal issue concerning the status of the data and must fit into a European timetable that is difficult to meet.

Statistical production in the area of foreign trade has been operating in much the same way since 1993. At that time, it had a significant lead over its European statistical counterparts in terms of monitoring trade within the EU. By combining the Intrastat statistical statement with the summary VAT procedure, the system has retained a great deal of persuasive power over businesses. In 1993, France was the only country to publish monthly data within the standard deadlines. This situation has strongly shaped the history of the statistical system. However, what was gained in 1993 by sticking very closely to tax and customs information has also resulted in a static situation where we talk about *statements* of trade in goods in France while other countries talk about *surveys* on intra-EU trade in goods.

The Foreign Trade MSO, because of its location within the DGDDI (Directorate General of Customs and Indirect Taxation), has the organisational power of a reviewing authority, with an extremely powerful litigation department. However, this situation somewhat limits the ability of statisticians to make approximate estimates. The information collected should be as close as possible to the monthly CA3 VAT return. In practice, however, it is not fully aligned. It is difficult to question businesses about the fact that their VAT return and their statements of trade in goods do not really tally without giving the impression that a tax audit is being conducted. Even if the customs service responsible for statistics certifies that this information is requested for statistical purposes, businesses often defer to their legal advisers. Where the regulatory authority sets a full compliance requirement, it is not possible in practice to make comparisons or ask businesses for simple estimates for statistical purposes. In the case of INSEE, where the situation is similar, comparison of intra-EU trade in goods declarations with annual surveys means that estimates can be made fairly easily by contacting businesses. In our case, companies fear a tax or customs audit and endeavour to do all the checks. There is ambiguity on both sides, as statisticians sometimes see themselves as auditors.

The Customs Code states that any customs inspector may, on their own initiative, report any anomaly that they detect to the DGFIP. This approach is contrary to statistical ethics and is not compatible with European legislation. The MSO, and particularly the departments used to produce foreign trade statistics, are therefore confronted with two contradictory cultural and legal bodies. A change of culture within these departments would be welcome to improve the consistency of the statistics produced, but it requires the status of the data to be clarified.

The European regulation on business statistics will repeal the French legislation governing data collection. It is therefore an opportunity to overhaul the status of data relating to trade with the EU.

This regulation, which integrates virtually all business statistics, approaches intra-EU trade with a somewhat idealistic vision of the future, consisting of no longer collecting information on trade flows. Furthermore, to make progress and reduce asymmetries, the ability to contact companies to question them about discrepancies between declarations in the two Member States will be required. EU law obliges Member States to share this data from 2022 onwards. However, it does not give them the right to contact companies to ask for clarification about any discrepancies, even for statistical purposes. This is a major obstacle, especially since in a similar area, the MSO is currently working on a small pilot sample where statistical statements that diverge from the CA3 VAT returns. Furthermore, it is clear that the companies contacted can only find the inconsistency in their transactions if the MSO itself informs them of the amounts involved in the discrepancies.

Eurostat's overall approach in proposing this *integrated* regulation on business statistics was to provide simplifications for European purposes. Accordingly, the only requirement of the regulation is to collect information on one flow and to upload the data to a data sharing system to allow Member States to produce their statistics on the other flow by mirroring. If Member States wish to collect information on both flows as at present, they must introduce *national* legislation to complement this arrangement. Furthermore, the requirement to collect certain variables is no longer carried at the European level for reasons of simplification, notably the regional breakdown. To maintain this, a national legal basis will again have to be established.

This regulation will improve the interconnection between intra-EU and extra-EU external trade statistics: for extra-EU trade, the regulation allows the same sharing of data between Member States' statisticians as for intra-EU trade. French companies make extensive use of Northern European ports. When a product leaves for the Netherlands, the statistics cannot determine whether it is exported onwards or not. If it is, the company makes a customs declaration in the Netherlands. French customs statisticians will therefore be able to obtain the amount of exports by companies domiciled in France and the country of destination from this information sharing. Today, the analysis of flows from France to Canada via the Benelux countries, for example, can only identify what is exported directly via French customs. What transits through Benelux remains unknown.

All Member States were equally interested in understanding their own statistics. They urged Eurostat to include in the regulation this provision on the sharing of certain types of customs data between Member States' statisticians, thereby improving the usability of national statistics.

However, the regulation did not address some issues that pose important problems and that could have been effectively dealt with jointly. In particular, statistics analysing external trade according to the characteristics of exporting or importing companies encounter a common and recurring difficulty. All Member States have adopted a collection system based on the administrative organisation of intra-EU VAT data, which allows for a high degree of consistency in VAT returns. However, as soon as there are somewhat ad hoc administrative arrangements, special provisions have to be made in the statistical production to ensure that the statistics released are relevant. This is the case for companies that can declare themselves as exporters in, for example, France, without having any business premises in France. These companies are responsible for 15% of flows. Researchers are unable to match these flows with structural data on production capacity and express their surprise.

The Foreign Trade MSO would like to conduct a pilot survey in France to analyse these entities. The aim would be to follow the same approach as other French structural statistics, i.e. group companies into economic enterprises and then use conventional categorisations (large enterprise, intermediate-sized enterprise or SME). Currently, these companies fall outside the INSEE statistical register because of this artificial phenomenon linked to VAT and customs regulations.

Apart from the changes introduced by this new European regulation, the challenge for the MSO is also to modernise production itself, by embarking upon a project of cultural change and modernising

its systems to process data in a more integrated, efficient manner and introduce external controls that could detect any oddities. At the moment, the controls occur at the end of the process with the national accounts. To understand imports and exports in aeronautics, for example, the method involves taking account of the statistical convention applied to foreign trade. This recognises the amount of trade each time the flows cross the border and values it each time based on the total value of the product and not based on the value added. When there is integrated production on both sides of the border, the exercise results in excessive amounts on both flows, and it is sometimes difficult to reconcile them with the data from the companies themselves.

These consistency analyses must be carried out at the production stage to improve this coordination. It is also important to effect a cultural change to explain to companies that these are not administrative controls but rather a matter of checking the plausibility of the information. Lastly, the MSO must adapt its IT system to obtain a security accreditation so that it can receive data from statisticians in other Member States and carry out its own production tests using mirror data.

Regarding the analysis of globalisation, the French system is powerful, but it is fragmented. The Banque de France is responsible for analysing income related to globalisation (capital income, trade in services, patent income, etc.). INSEE surveys are used to identify foreign establishments and their activities (FATS – Foreign Affiliates Statistics), while the customs service is responsible for the flow of goods. Three years ago, in the pharmaceutical sector, the Banque de France, INSEE and customs worked together to try to understand the business practices of pharmaceutical multinationals. The exercise revealed that production was relocated abroad, that goods were imported and that patent revenues offset the trade in offshored production. This required a great deal of work, as files had to be matched, numerous subsidiaries had to be reallocated, etc.

During the crisis, the customs service monitored import flows to clear them through customs. It used management statistics, leveraging the customs declaration databases to monitor the arrival of equipment by examining the sources. It noted that there was a lack of detail on equipment in the declarations and had to invent classifications more suited to the health crisis (health masks, non-health masks, tests, etc.). Measuring the impact of the crisis on trade raises the same classification issue as the health aspects were less significant before the crisis.

The MSO would like to expand beyond its current publications, for example by conducting surveys. This expansion would also show that the MSO's work is not just about accounting and would encourage people to join. The MSO could also do more work on the actual management of customs. Studying administrative processes could also prove useful.

Lastly, it was pointed out that the organisational decree had been amended to specifically introduce the professional independence of the MSO.

- ***The Ministerial Statistical Office for Local Authorities***

Because this was a review, the DGCL (Directorate General for Local Authorities) tried to provide a number of answers to the questions that had been asked at the previous hearing.

As the President of the Republic recently reminded us, local authorities play a major role in local democracy and public policy in the broadest sense, since they account for a significant share of public revenue and expenditure. It is therefore entirely appropriate to have a clear vision of their activities from a financial perspective and through their achievements. This vision provides an insight into how public policies are implemented. It is also a way of providing information to the local authorities

themselves, so that they can assess their own situation, as can citizens.

The Directorate General for Local Authorities is not the only player in the world of local authorities. Legislation gives it a main cross-cutting role, but the MSO is modest in scale, particularly in comparison with the departments that manage the business world within INSEE. If the office is to have ambitions that go beyond the current few topics, the question of the human resources made available to it will no doubt also have to be addressed.

This MSO should not only be focused on producing figures related to public policy. It is an integral part of the Directorate General for Local Government. It is a fully fledged player and must provide support for the preparation of decisions taken by the political authorities on local government issues. To do this, it must objectively evaluate the financial, budgetary and statistical data proposed to the minister when a decision is to be taken on local finances, local government, regional structures, etc. During the two waves of reform of inter-municipal structures, in 2010 and 2015, it was the MSO that carried out the work to identify the target of the legislative measures and their effects. Fully involved in policy, the office must also produce statistics for users and its thoughts and analysis on local data to inform public debate.

The variety of local authorities is, however, a challenge. This world is made up of 50,000 different entities with different competences and organisations. The differences in terms of management and operation between the municipalities alone, depending on the number of inhabitants, are considerable. Furthermore, the municipalities do not use the same accounting standards. This extremely varied world is also based on the constitutional principle of self-government, which allows for considerable flexibility in the way they act. Given the lack of unified accounting standards and data processing mechanisms and the extraordinary variety of HR management practices, it is difficult to give an accurate account of this variety of public policies. The 1.9 million local government officials include situations, job categories and job functions that are even more varied than those of the State civil service. Furthermore, restatement at the national level is proving to be exceptionally complex given that reporting obligations are being met with varying degrees of diligence.

As a result, data is not always reported as it should be.

The MSO is therefore endeavouring to focus on particular work themes and improve its performance in core areas. The aim is to achieve faster production times for a relevant release of figures, to consolidate the accounts, to deal with the cross-relationships between the different levels within local authorities, with financial and statistical flows that are difficult to analyse, and more generally to use a slightly new approach to studying the economic dimension of local authorities in an attempt to create typologies that could then be used by local stakeholders to assess their status.

The DGCL has been working on four areas over the past two years: analysis of local authorities as economic agents, highlighting the high quality of the statistical office's output, improving performance by improving production times and expanding content, and modernising thinking to inform policy choices.

For the past two years, the MSO has been carrying out unprecedented work to highlight the economic role that local authorities play.

Five separate studies were conducted. The first study on the investment behaviour of municipalities sought to determine the extent to which State subsidies can have a knock-on effect on municipal capital expenditure. Using an econometric model, the MSO was able to show an effect of around 2.2. If a municipality receives a subsidy that is €10 higher per inhabitant than another municipality of the same size and profile, its capital expenditure is €22 higher than the capital expenditure of this other and otherwise similar municipality. The leverage effect is even stronger for municipalities with low debt and a low savings rate.

The MSO also analysed the situation among municipalities by distinguishing five main categories of economic and budgetary behaviour based on socio-economic, budgetary and financial variables.

The MSO also highlighted the disparities between local authorities in terms of revenue from property tax on developed land in the context of the local residence tax reform.

For the first time, the MSO was also able to perform an aggregated consolidation at the level of each region, eliminating cross-flows and highlighting behaviour across municipalities aggregated at the regional level. In doing so, it noted a trend towards greater harmonisation of budgetary and economic behaviour between regions over the period 2014-2018. Lastly, one study highlights the use of expenditure by function in municipalities and their groupings, also taking into account related budgets.

In its 2019 annual report, the ASP highlighted a number of improvements, including access to the MSO's output on the Ministry for Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities' website. The DGCL depends on this ministry to implement public policies.

This access is complementary to the standard local authority web portal. The DGCL was also a winner of the EIG (General Interest Entrepreneurs) 2020 projects. This work will be used to respond to a CNIS observation made in autumn 2019. Starting in the autumn, two general interest entrepreneurs will be tasked with developing, over a period of ten months, a web portal designed to bring together local authority information that is currently scattered across the various websites of ministries or other public institutions (Court of Auditors, Caisse des Dépôts) or public companies (Banque Postale).

The MSO also committed to consolidating its production deadlines by improving the timing of certain deliveries. The pre-report for the Local Public Finance and Management Observatory (OFGL) is now released a month earlier. In September, for the first time, the initial budgets were published nine months ahead of schedule. For local government, the MSO is in a position to provide a report on staffing as at 31 December of a given year in December of the following year.

Similarly, MSO was able to produce the results of the social audits much earlier, with a focus on contractual workers in the civil service, a subject highlighted in last year's Civil Service Transformation Law.

In terms of regional structures, the MSO publishes the statistical assessment of inter-municipal associations as at 1 January each year in February of the same year and updates its BANATIC database every quarter. Furthermore, the statistical yearbook is published in May, and the MSO aims to continue consolidating the work of this yearbook.

Lastly, the MSO hopes to develop other projects that could be completed in 2021. The aim is to analyse local authorities as economic agents by studying variations in their behaviour.

In 2021, it will also be possible to produce a statistical assessment of the effect of the crisis on local authorities, highlighting the fact that not all local authorities have been affected by the crisis in the same way due to their different situations prior to the crisis at the end of 2019.

Some work has already begun, particularly on local public-sector enterprises, with a working group, including INSEE, created before lockdown. In 2019, a CNIS working group had asked for a project to be initiated to gain a better understanding of these local public-sector enterprises, which lie on the boundary between the market and non-market sectors and which represent a significant amount of funding in the world of local authorities.

The MSO also intends to strengthen the "Studies and Analyses" component of its statistical yearbook

by supplementing the statistical tables with studies and files.

Lastly, a project on local government is now under way. This project aims to make use of new household sources, such as the INSEE employment survey and the DARES working conditions survey, to work on issues that have not been explored up to now.

The DGCL states that these tracks of work are not exhaustive, but the MSO has only nine employees. In the world of local authorities, statistical production raises a fundamental issue of quality and reliability. The team works on this on a daily basis. This quality is not totally guaranteed because of the way the information is reported. Nevertheless, statistical processing is carried out with consistency and precision and is used very carefully by stakeholders.

The MSO is also faced with the challenge of administrative structures that are continuously being updated. It must adapt to the needs and changes in its ecosystem. As part of this adaptation process, it must make further progress in simplifying both the reporting and computerisation of data. The DGCL has made efforts to introduce computerisation into the workflow to prepare local authority budgets to avoid re-entering data. This computerisation of processes to capture data directly is a complicated exercise, especially as not all local stakeholders are willing to connect to the large national systems.

The MSO also needs to think about the issues that it wants to address on a regular basis. In addition to the monthly production of a number of study documents, such as *Local Authorities in Figures*, a reference tool in the local authority world, or the report of the Local Public Finance and Management Observatory, the MSO must also identify those subjects where progress is required, such as local public-sector enterprises. This field has grown extremely rapidly in recent years. Various laws have created new opportunities for them, particularly to become involved in areas where local authorities have only partial authority.

The MSO must obtain the data needed to explain this world to all public- and private-sector stakeholders.

- ***Department of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES)***

The DREES is the Ministerial Statistical Office attached to the Ministry for Solidarity and Health. The directorate is of respectable size, with 170 employees. It is unique in that it is the only directorate to cover all of the Ministry's policy areas within the scope of its remit.

Furthermore, official statistics on solidarity and health far outstrip the statistics produced and published by the DREES. This area covers many operators, such as the social security funds and Public Health France. The DREES is therefore intended to cover the entire field, but it is very far from producing all the statistics that fall within this field. In particular, the DREES has never been responsible for health monitoring, which is the responsibility of Public Health France. As a result, the DREES does not publish sub-annual, monthly or even daily statistics, whereas Public Health France does.

The resources that the DREES has are relatively limited. In ten years, the directorate has lost 25 positions, and the rate of decline in staff numbers has increased in recent years, with the loss of five FTEs in 2019. The DREES has not been particularly badly treated compared with other directorates. Nevertheless, this decline is ultimately causing a number of difficulties. For its statistical production activities, producing surveys and statistical results is a multi-year process, and it is difficult to adapt when staff numbers have to be reduced year after year. These 25 positions were essentially eliminated not within the DREES core operations, i.e. the offices responsible for production, but among the staff

counted in the employment plan and made available to decentralised services such as the Regional Health Agency (ARS) and the DRJSCS (Regional Directorate for Youth, Sports and Social Cohesion). Ten years ago, the network of statisticians was relatively well supplied. Today, there are three positions left in the ARS and two in the DRJSCS. These positions are therefore being phased out. Cross-functional and support functions have also been reduced (assistants, HR, publications).

However, the DREES has now reached the end of its downsizing exercise, especially as certain responsibilities have been added over the years, such as the creation of the National Suicide Observatory, which was entrusted to the DREES without it receiving any additional resources. Similarly, with the development of field experiments in the health system to try to design slightly different care organisations associated with innovative approaches to financing, the DREES has been called upon to provide support without receiving any additional resources. From a financial point of view, between 2011 and 2018, the DREES budget fell by 24% in nominal terms.

Since the health crisis, the situation has become clearer, but more complex. While at the beginning of 2020 the DREES was supposed to continue cutting jobs in line with its employment plan, it was notified that its workforce would remain stable for the year. In addition, over the course of discussions with the General Secretariat of the Social Ministries, the Budget Directorate has accepted a fairly substantial increase in the budget beyond Q2. The DREES should therefore see an increase in its budget in 2021, amounting to €10.7 million in payment appropriations. This 20% increase should enable it to finance additional operations. The Budget Directorate has stated that it understands the need to put resources back into information systems and statistical production, but it has added a request for greater clarity on the mapping of statistical production in the sphere of solidarity and health. It also requested a joint mission by the General Inspectorates of INSEE and Social Affairs in order to provide a more holistic view.

Beyond 2021, the DREES has expressed its desire to sign a three-year contract with the Budget Directorate, as INSEE did, in order to benefit from visibility over a three-year period. As part of this process, the DREES has requested additional staff. Additional staff have also been requested to enable it to better perform its core functions.

In addition, there is a willingness to streamline the statistical production landscape in certain areas. For example, the Court of Auditors and the Inspectorate General of Social Affairs (IGAS) have stated that statistics on child protection would be improved if they were entrusted to the MSO. If operations of this type were to take place, the aim should be both to achieve overall efficiency gains and to strengthen resources in the DREES.

It also appears that, during the health crisis, the DREES was tapped for its human resources and special skills in the management of information systems and the statistical exploitation of data. In addition to its two traditional remits, the DREES can be asked to carry out a third, one that extends beyond the health crisis: that of supporting the operational directorates (the DGS, DGOS (Directorate General for Care Provision) and DGCS) in handling and making better use of the data. If this remit were to be recognised, the number of DREES staff would also have to be increased slightly.

When the Health Crisis Centre was set up within the DGS in February, it quickly became apparent that there was a shortage of data analysts. The departments contacted the DREES to request that it make available human resources from the MSO, which it did in March. During lockdown, the DREES sent around fifteen people to the Health Crisis Centre. It also sent people to the ANSM (National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products) when an information system had to be set up to try to manage the shortages of resuscitation drugs.

The DREES also mobilised some fifteen people remotely to support this crisis management effort. These 30 people came mainly from the Under-Directorate for Health Observation and Health Insurance, which has 45 employees.

The DREES conducted online surveys to question health care facilities about their respirator equipment and to collect information from laboratories before the National Screening Information System (SI-DEP) was set up to plan for potential problems in test production capacity.

The MSO also helped the DGS and DGOS to configure information systems used in emergency situations, in particular the Operational Directory of Resources to monitor the availability of beds on the ground and the Information System for Monitoring Attacks and Exceptional Health Situations (SI-VIC) to monitor the registration of COVID patients admitted to hospital. These systems were not fully configured from the outset. The information was returned via health care facilities and the ARS using non-harmonised file formats. The teams helped to structure the information.

Over time, the DREES teams have been assigned a special role. The Crisis Centre includes an indicator unit whose remit is to consolidate all the data used to monitor the health crisis onto a single platform. An officer at the DREES specifically designed this platform.

In addition, the DREES has produced additional statistics and conducted exceptional statistical initiatives, in particular the EPICOV survey, jointly managed with INSERM and actively supported by INSEE and Public Health France. Launched among the general population during lockdown, this initiative surveyed, online and by phone, a very large sample on the population's health status, potential symptoms and lockdown conditions. This was combined, for the first wave, with a subsample of serological tests. The preliminary results were published in October 2020. They provided a measure of the prevalence of COVID-19 among the French population in May 2020. The second wave, with a much larger number of tests, will provide an estimate of the prevalence not only at the national level but also in each *département*.

The DREES also used a long-established panel of general practitioners to ask them about their medical activities and practices during lockdown and after lockdown had ended. Six publications were produced from these specific surveys.

The DREES conducted a flash survey of child protection facilities and services. It also conducted a statistical study on the pathways of patients hospitalised with COVID-19 during the first wave, which led to the publication of a working paper.

The crisis will also affect the DREES' work programme in the months and years to come. The survey of health care facilities carried out every year will include a specific module to survey facilities on the additional resources dedicated to COVID patients that they have had to mobilise during the crisis.

In the 2020 Social Protection Barometer, a survey of public opinion on social protection in France, there is also provision for an increased number of respondents to examine the health crisis in more detail.

This additional work has had an impact on the rest of DREES' output. Some studies or outputs had to be postponed (preliminary results of the 2018 Health Survey, for example).

- ***Secure Data Access Centre (CASD)***

The Official Statistical Service measures socio-economic phenomena and produces data from these measurements in various areas. These data are then used by INSEE or the MSOs. For the past ten years, they have also been shared with researchers through the CASD. They are used to better understand socio-economic phenomena, to evaluate public policies and public decision-making and to

inform the media and citizens.

There are several categories of data based on the confidentiality of that data. European Regulation 557/2013 defines three categories of data:

- Public use files or open data;
- Scientific use files, i.e. anonymised data for which there is no 100% guarantee that they are fully anonymised and which are therefore restricted, such as the research production files disseminated by the Quetelet network;
- Secure use files, i.e. raw data from which only the direct identifiers have been removed.

France has a two-tier governance model. A committee is responsible for defining authorisations and another institution is responsible for practical access. This system is very effective since a user's authorisation to access the data is not dependent on their quality of service requirements. For example, a user could complain about quality of service without compromising their current or future authorisations. This is not the case in other countries, where the producer certifies and provides the service itself and users cannot complain about the service without the risk of having their access requests refused or current access denied.

The CASD is an operator that works in support of research and official statistics. It is a public interest grouping (PIG) created on 1 January 2019 that brings together INSEE, the GENES, the CNRS, HEC Paris and the École Polytechnique. It comprises 25 people, 300 data sources and 500 user institutions, including universities, research centres, the National Assembly and the Court of Auditors for the evaluation of public policies. It has registered more than 250 scientific publications.

In France's two-tier governance model, the CASD acts as a trusted third party between data producers and users. An agreement between the producers and the CASD governs the terms of access. A contract between the users and the CASD sets out the quality of service commitments. When the CASD was created, its mode of operation was described as a secure bubble model. A patented mini-computer provides end-to-end security. To access the CASD and work on the data remotely, a smart card and fingerprint are required. This access system is designed specifically for this purpose and is regularly audited.

The data is located on the CASD server that is hosted in a dedicated cage with biometric access control at a data centre on a highly secure former military site. This rented data centre space can only be accessed by authorised CASD staff. If a researcher needs to introduce a script or a classification, they must obtain permission from the CASD, which will ensure that the associated files contain no viruses. Similarly, at the end of their work, the researcher can retrieve the results only once the CASD has checked that they comply with statistical confidentiality and therefore do not contain any confidential data.

The access procedure requires that the researcher submit a request to the Statistical Confidentiality Committee, which in turn issues an opinion. If personal data are involved in the processing, the researcher must submit a request to the CNIL. The user then contacts the CASD. Before any access is granted, the researcher must attend a face-to-face enrolment session reminding them of the obligations and penalties relating to the duty of confidentiality and making them aware of statistical confidentiality. The user is only then given a card with their fingerprint on it so that they can connect remotely.

In 2019, the CASD obtained GDPR compliance certifications from Bureau Veritas, a CNIL authorisation (for the use of biometrics in particular), an ISO 27001 Information Security certification and an ISO 27701 Personal Data Protection certification. The CASD is also certified as a health data host and approved for the National Health Data System (SNDS). Technical audits are carried out periodically. These include attempts to break into the system to retrieve data. In all cases tested, the

ethical hackers did not succeed in breaking into the system or extracting data.

The available data include all data from the Official Statistical Service, public-sector data (ACOSS, CNAF, etc.) and health data (the volume of which is constantly increasing). At the request of the Director General of INSEE, the CASD has designed a system that can be used to display, via the website, the links between the research projects carried out, the sources used, and the publications produced from these sources. This information is useful for producers who can see all the uses made of and publications produced from their sources, but also for researchers who can identify all those who are conducting projects on similar data. The CASD has also worked on associated documentation.

The number of users has continued to grow. There are currently 1,500 users. Over time, the number of result outputs decreases as users become accustomed to working within the secure bubble in an interactive way. This was the goal when the CASD was created. Many transnational projects involve researchers from several countries working on French data. The CASD regularly evaluates user feedback on its services through surveys, with very positive results.

The CASD's remit is to secure and widen researchers' access to data according to Principle 5 of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The CASD was created based on the recommendations arising from a peer review. For the CASD, this review focused on matching, certification of research results, ISO certification, the partnership with INSEE for the development of documentation tools, and feedback from researchers.

Lastly, the CASD is coordinating a project for a European Secure Access Centre, which would allow researchers to work simultaneously on data from several countries from a single location.

- **Geographical economic studies at INSEE**

Geographical economics has undergone some relatively recent developments following Krugman's questioning of free trade theory, arguing that trade does not necessarily benefit everyone, contrary to the claims of Ricardo's successors. Trade also occurs mainly between rich countries. Furthermore, the production process is marked by economies of scale and a taste for consumer diversity. Increasing returns to scale imply concentrations and thus a metropolisation of productive activity.

In a service economy, the tendency to concentration is even stronger than in an industrial economy because R&D is more efficient the more concentrated the partners are. Economic base analysis suggests that this concentration of productive activities is geographically counterbalanced by residential activities. But this productive-residential system is not always satisfactory in terms of income dispersion across the regions. Added to this is a polarisation of jobs, which is also characterised geographically. To understand economic and social phenomena, it is therefore essential to look at how they are distributed across the regions. When considering a potential relocation, knowledge of local assets is needed to effectively relocate production.

Geographical economic studies are supposed to be a simple description, possibly mapped, statistical analysis for the general public, or more academic studies. Several organisations are working in this area, including CGET, which has communicated effectively and clearly on these geographical issues.

France Stratégie has also published well-received studies on social ascension based on the INSEE employment survey.

INSEE publishes many recognised regional studies and a few national studies generally carried out by

its regional centres. In fact, there are many regional studies produced by INSEE, but there are very few at the national level.

The rapporteurs have made recommendations aimed at making better use of the studies, improving communication, pooling, training staff in spatial statistics, familiarising them with study zoning, facilitating work with classifications and environmental variables, entrusting INSEE's regional action departments with national geographical studies, and finally increasing the profile of regional action work. Lastly, the rapporteurs note that the geographical analysis of income disparities is based on the assumption that consumer prices are homogeneous, whereas they vary from one territory to another.

The action plan will focus on three areas: the production and dissemination of data on the regions, the production of studies and analyses on the regions, and the visibility of productions.

In terms of production and dissemination, initiatives are under way as part of the overhaul of the TEF (French Economy Table), which will be driven by the theme "Regions, Cities and Neighbourhoods". This revised table will have one entry per region, allowing regional disparities to be presented. The dissemination of new study zoning in 2020 will also be an opportunity to produce a certain amount of information.

A procedure is in place to identify regional studies that can be replicated as national studies. To improve the way in which the regional dimension is taken into account, training courses are being offered on mapping tools and the use of the regional dimension.

The health crisis was an opportunity to launch initiatives that are in line with the General Inspectorate's report.

Work has also been carried out on the economic consequences of the crisis at the national level, and regional variations have been included in the national publications, in particular the indicators of loss of activity by *département* or bank card payment volumes. New sources of data, such as electricity consumption, mobile phone data and the nominative social declarations have also been used.

This presentation was not discussed.

3.3 Quality labelling of statistical uses derived from administrative sources

From 2011 to 2013, the preparation of quality-labelling applications was subject to a simplified procedure at the initiative of the ASP. Only the labelling of the monthly statistics on jobseekers registered at Pôle Emploi was based on an examination carried out by the general inspectorates (IGF, IGAS, INSEE) which the Authority could call upon. In 2013, statistical governance was completed by a Decree dated 10 January 2013, which organises the quality labelling of statistical processes carried out using administrative data, and by an Order dated 2 May 2013 on the conditions of organisation of the official statistics Quality Labelling Committee. This Order set up a committee with authority to issue opinions resulting from the examination, on behalf of the ASP and at its request, of the processes of exploitation and dissemination of administrative data. These opinions are transmitted to the President of the ASP, who can issue a public interest and statistical quality label to the processes examined, with reference to the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The Quality Labelling Committee, which previously only examined survey data, can now also examine data from administrative files. The ASP therefore bases its deliberations for the quality-labelling of statistical series produced by organisations that do not belong to the SSP on this examination by the Quality Labelling Committee.

- ***Renewal of the quality labelling of the quarterly series on workforce size, payroll and new hire declarations at national level and on the quality labelling of the series on workforce size and payroll at local level produced by ACOSS (the central agency for social security funds in France)***

The statistical data produced by ACOSS have been quality-labelled on several occasions in the past:

- *ASP opinion, Official Journal of 22 November 2011: Quarterly employment statistics produced at the national level.*
- *ASP opinion, Official Journal of 28 December 2013: Quarterly series on private-sector payroll at the national level and monthly and quarterly series on single declarations of new hires by members of the general French Social Security scheme at the national level.*
- *ASP opinion, Official Journal of 16 November 2016: Renewal of the quality labelling of quarterly series on workforce size.*

A two-year review mechanism was planned, to examine the stabilised system, due to the transition to Nominative Social Declarations (DSN) at source. Given the gradual integration of DSNs, a postponement from 2018 to 2019, requested by ACOSS, was granted by the ASP in April 2018.

The request for renewal and extension in 2019 relates to all the series already quality-labelled and to a more detailed breakdown of some of these series.

In a letter dated 26 July 2019 addressed to the President of the ASP, ACOSS requested the renewal of previously quality-labelled series:

- Quarterly series on workforce size at the national level.
- Quarterly series on private-sector payroll at the national level.
- Monthly and quarterly series on new hire declarations by members of the general French Social Security scheme at the national level.

In this letter, ACOSS also requested the extension of the quality labelling for the following series:

- Breakdown of private-sector payroll and workforce size to more granular levels: NACE17*département, NACE38, employment zones.

The ASP has assigned the consideration of these quality-labelling requests to the official statistics' Quality Labelling Committee. The Quality Labelling Committee asked ACOSS to prepare an application. This application was sent to the Secretariat of the Quality Labelling Committee in December 2019, and the Quality Labelling Committee met on 26 February 2020.

Due to the health crisis, ACOSS could not be heard by the Authority on 1 April 2020. Exchanges between ACOSS and the Authority took place electronically as provided for in Article 6 of the ASP's Internal Regulations.

After examination and consideration, and following its February committee meeting, the Quality Labelling Committee issued the following opinion:

I. On the Workforce

Recommendation 1: The work related to the joint production of the quarterly employment estimates planned in 2016 was completed and has been implemented since 2017 within a precisely defined contractual framework. The joint production covers the x A17 and A38 *département* levels (and above). In view of the quality control work carried out within this framework, the Quality Labelling Committee is in favour of *extending the quality labelling of the ACOSS workforce series on the private sector to these geographical and sectoral levels.*

The Quality Labelling Committee is also in favour of *extending the quality labelling to the employment zones*

level, as the series at this level are de facto less volatile than the series at the level of the x A17 *département* combinations. The extension of the quality labelling could however be implemented after a probationary period allowing the three partners to manage adjustments in terms of possible additional controls and organising the dissemination.

Recommendation 2: With the completion of the deployment of the DSN in the private sector, the estimates of quarterly statistical workforce levels can now be stabilised, as the declarative impact now seems sufficiently remote. The Quality Labelling Committee approves ACOSS' proposals to backcast all the series produced by correcting the declarative defects of the BRCs (summary statements of contributions) identified since the transition to the DSN. A detailed note will need to be sent to the ASP on all these processes, and educational explanations will need to be provided to users.

Recommendation 3: The Quality Labelling Committee also recommends that the production of campaign assessment reports tracking the effect of their various stages and the volume of processing, whether automated or manual, be systematised. This will ensure that the quality of the process is maintained as the regulations or management practices change and that there is interaction, where necessary, with the collection business directorate with a view to improving the quality of declarations earlier in the process. These assessment reports are for internal use by those partners in the joint production process.

Recommendation 4: With the completion of the roll-out of the DSN, the Quality Labelling Committee recommends that consideration be given to reducing release times, within the agreed joint production framework. This reduction must include regional releases, which currently take place at around 90 days.

In the slightly longer term:

Recommendation 5: The Quality Labelling Committee makes a strong recommendation in relation to completing the work on defining the statistical workforce with the aim of making full use of the potential of the DSN with a view to better understanding the concept of end-of-month employment. The Quality Labelling Committee strongly recommends that this work continue to be developed, while ensuring that it is coordinated and consistent with the agreed joint production framework. It also recommends that the calculation of average statistical workforce be studied within this framework (see Recommendation 7 on payroll).

II. On Payroll

Recommendation 6: The Quality Labelling Committee recommends that the *early payroll estimates published by ACOSS* be included in the scope of quality labelling. This implies, in return, that an analysis of their revision be carried out when the detailed figures are published.

Recommendation 7: The Quality Labelling Committee notes the priority given by ACOSS to expert assessments of the workforce and recommends that expert assessments be continued for calculating the payroll estimates based on individual declarations. This will ensure greater consistency with the workforce estimates (which would eventually lead to a more robust average wage per capita).

III. On New Hire Declarations

Recommendation 8: The Quality Labelling Committee proposes to renew the quality labelling of the monthly and quarterly pre-hiring declarations at the national level.

IV. On Dissemination

Recommendation 9: The Quality Labelling Committee recommends that the quality-labelled series be made available on its new website dedicated to open data (*open.urssaf.fr*) as well as in its more conventional publications.

With regard to the availability of individual data from the DSN, it asks that care be taken to ensure that they are complementary to and linked with those provided by INSEE/DARES, so that researchers are duly informed of any differences between the sources.

V. Other

Recommendation 10: The current series covers France excluding Mayotte. The feasibility of including Mayotte should be explored for the next renewal of the label, within the agreed co-production framework.

- ***Renewal of the quality labelling of statistical series produced by the French National Retirement Pension Fund (CNAV)***

The CNAV has requested the identical renewal of the quality labelling of the statistical series that were first quality-labelled by the ASP in December 2013 (letter sent to the President of the ASP on 26 April 2019). The ASP has assigned the consideration of this request to the Quality Labelling Committee in accordance with amended Decree 2009-318 of 20 March 2009 on the National Statistical Information Council, the Statistical Confidentiality Committee and the Official Statistics Quality Labelling Committee.

The consideration file requested by the Quality Labelling Committee was received on 31 July 2019. The constraints linked to the pension reform did not allow available experts to be approached in the second half of 2019, which caused the consideration to be postponed to the first quarter of 2020. The expert assessment report was sent to the CNAV on 7 February 2020. The CNAV responded on 5 March 2020. As it was not possible to organise a discussion meeting with the CNAV in mid-March 2020 due to the health crisis, a supplementary set of questions was sent on 15 April. The CNAV sent its answers on 12 June 2020.

In this context, the Committee met in a deliberative format on 9 October 2020, without an oral hearing with the department (which had already been asked twice, following the expert assessment report and then to answer additional questions).

Reminder of previous ASP decisions and monitoring

In an opinion dated 18 December 2013, the ASP announced that two types of statistics produced by the French National Retirement Pension Fund (CNAV) had been quality-labelled as official statistics for a period of five years:

- The series on the total population of retirees under the general scheme in receipt of payments as at 31 December of the year (known as the “stock” series).
- The series on new retirees under the general scheme during the year, as of the effective date (known as the “flow” series).

This opinion was accompanied by two requests to the CNAV:

1. To broaden access to its individual data files through a secure access centre, which could be the GENES secure data access centre (CASD).
2. To improve the quality of its accounting data.

Regarding point 1 on access to individual data, the CNAV makes its data available to supply individual databases for all schemes, in particular those of the DREES (Inter-scheme Sample of Retirees, Survey of Recipients of the Statutory Minimum Income, etc.) or of INSEE (FILOSOFI, for information on incomes and living standards). It also responds to requests for samples from INSERM or Public Health France.

Regarding making data available to researchers, the CNAV states that these are most often specific requests, which require one-off extracts to be created or sometimes direct collaboration with researchers due to the complexity of the data.

The Quality Labelling Committee takes note of the active contribution made by the CNAV to official statistics operations. This contribution is vital for producing detailed information on retirees’ incomes. By contrast, the CNAV’s own files only provide a partial view of this information, which evolves over time due to changes in scope and legislation.

However, it considers that researchers’ access to individual databases is not yet organised in the way requested by the ASP. This point was also identified during the discussion on pension information systems held at the CNIS in October 2020 (CNIS Public Services Commission).

Recommendation 1: The Committee notes the CNAV's commitment to supplying inter-scheme samples and databases, particularly those used for official statistics. Regarding the access of researchers to meet more specific needs, it recommends that the CNAV provide a regular report on the access requests that it has approved or rejected. It asks that there be more visibility on the access procedure and the options available. The SNSP database (or an extract from it with the qualified variables used to produce the quality-labelled statistics) should be made available via the CASD, together with the related documentation.

On point 2 concerning the quality of its accounting data, the CNAV states that the Court of Auditors certifies the accounting quality of its accounts. However, the Court's certification is qualified by reservations, for example because of a high error rate on wind-ups (of between 5 and 10%). The CNAV notes that the financial impact rate (FIR) remains low and that the errors that may have a positive or negative impact do not compromise the statistical analyses.

Recommendation 2: The Committee notes that the quality-labelled statistical series relate to entitlements actually paid on a given date, according to the "in receipt of payments as at 31 December" concept, which, taken literally, does not justify the publication of revised entitlements after corrections for undue payments. However, given the potential importance of these undue payments, particularly in the case of wind-ups and certain more complex categories of entitlements, the Committee recommends that periodic impact studies be carried out on the extent of revisions to entitlements, particularly in the case of new retirees, and that they be published in methodological documents. If such revisions are significant, revised series should be published.

1. Renewal of quality labelling (2020)

The CNAV's request for renewal relates to the series that were quality-labelled in 2013, with no changes. The CNAV states that it does not wish to put forward any other series for quality-labelling as it needs to modify its information system to integrate the population of self-employed workers into the general scheme. The CNAV states that it will be in a position to put forward new series for quality-labelling once these modifications have been completed.

Relevance of quality-labelled series

The quality-labelled statistics are counts from the SNSP statistical databases, taken directly from the end-of-year files (or over three years for new retirees). As stated above, their main objective is to provide raw data that closely reflect the general scheme's management system. These statistics can be produced very quickly.

This adherence to the management system inevitably makes the series produced dependent on changes in legislation and in the scope of the general scheme in particular. The CNAV points out that entitlements are calculated according to the scope of the general scheme and the management rules in force at each date. The stock or flow data therefore relate to all members of the general scheme at a given time, regardless of changes in the population covered by the general scheme. For example, in the recent period, the introduction of the single settlement of pensions for those with multiple pension schemes (LURA) automatically reduced the number of members of the general scheme by around 8%. At the same time, the average pension has increased. The membership of self-employed workers to the general scheme is expected to have a similar impact but in the opposite direction. The file did not contain any information on impact studies in this area. Impact analyses are carried out during studies, but they are not "attached" to the quality-labelled series.

Recommendation 3: The Quality Labelling Committee regrets that the only quality-labelled series from the CNAV are limited to management data from the scheme. These series cannot be easily interpreted when there are major changes in legislation or scope.

As a priority, the Committee asks that the most important changes be clearly identified as breaks in the series in the users' documentation as soon as they are published, with explanatory notes on their impact. These impact studies may take time to produce. They may therefore be published after the series' initial publication date, but they must ultimately be referenced in the documentation of the quality-labelled series.

Furthermore, the Committee regrets that, since 2013, the CNAV has not given any thought to extending its quality-labelled series (or, if necessary, eliminating some of them) in order to provide new series meeting the needs of its partners or users.

Recommendation 4: The Committee suggests that the CNAV consider, with its partners (the COR, the DREES and the DSS in particular), extending its quality-labelled series to provide more economically meaningful series or series based on sub-categories that are relevant to users. These enhanced series, requiring other modes of

validation, could be produced within a less restrictive timetable than the raw series, allowing their dissemination to be supplemented by analyses that help to explain them.

Dissemination of quality-labelled statistics

Recommendation 5: The Quality Labelling Committee recommends that the CNAV ensure that there is an educational aspect to the series released by explaining, for a non-expert audience, the meaning of the categorisations adopted and by ensuring that changes are easily understood, using appropriate comments accompanying the release of the quality-labelled series.

The link between the quality-labelled series and the results of the annual review would seem appropriate, both in terms of timing and content.

In summary:

The Quality Labelling Committee has proposed that the ASP renew the quality labelling of the two types of statistical series (stocks and flows) for the general scheme.

However, with the experience of the major changes that have occurred since the last quality labelling (LURA, social security for the self-employed), it appears that the CNAV's quality-labelled series may be prone to significant breaks. The Committee qualifies its recommendation with a reservation concerning the accompanying dissemination: the consequences of the main changes in scope or in the method of calculating entitlements must be more clearly explained on the website where the labelled series are disseminated; impact analyses must be attached to the quality-labelled series (R3).

With regard to the ongoing merger of the social security system for the self-employed with the general scheme, an impact note on this subject should be sent to the ASP.

The Committee makes other short-term recommendations aimed at increased openness of databases (R1) and improved education of users (R5). With regard to methodological aspects, it would like to see greater transparency on the effects of revisions to the entitlements paid (R2). Lastly, in the slightly longer term, it recommends that thought be given to extending quality labelling to series that have a more economic meaning or that are based on sub-categories that are relevant to users (R4).

3.4 Recommendations of the Official Statistics Authority

The Authority issued a number of recommendations following each of the hearings that it conducted with official statistics producers and as part of quality-labelling operations concerning statistical exploitations of administrative data sources or on any other subject it deemed useful.

On the presentation by the Director General of INSEE on the work carried out by the Official Statistics Authority in relation to the health crisis

Following the presentation by the Director General of INSEE, the Official Statistics Authority noted that:

1. Most of the MSOs and INSEE managed to maintain the continuity of their activities, despite difficult working conditions, by switching as much as possible to phone-based collection for household surveys and by relying on online collection for business surveys.
2. The SSP, noting in this context the limited relevance of certain statistics and indicators particularly in terms of activity and the labour market, endeavoured to use alternative sources and provide the educational information needed to understand the figures, both in its publications and its blog posts. This proved to be very useful in this context.
3. In addition to ensuring the continuity of the usual information in the economic, social and

demographic fields, the SSP carried out specific work to shed light on the various aspects of the health crisis, including some very innovative work (use of “high frequency” data available in near real time, conducting flash surveys, etc.).

4. However, the health crisis revealed certain weaknesses linked to problems in the organisation of official statistics, in two areas in particular:

- Causes of death, produced by the INSERM’s CépiDC (Epidemiological Centre for Mortality by Medical Causes) only became available very recently, as only 25% of death certificates are currently sent in electronic form. Unlike in other countries, French official statistics did not provide this information during the crisis.
- The way in which the Armed Forces MSO (Economic Observatory of Defence (EOD)) operates. This is the only MSO whose statistical output stopped during lockdown.

The ASP considers that the situation in these two areas is not satisfactory.

The situation in regard to causes of death should be remedied through means to be specified with INSERM.

With regard to the way in which the EOD operates, the ASP considers it necessary for a joint audit to be conducted, under Article 1-6 of Decree 2009-250, as amended, of 3 March 2009 on the Official Statistics Authority, on the conditions for statistical production in the field of defence, in association with the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces and the General Inspectorate of INSEE.

On the Ministerial Statistical Office for Foreign Trade

Following the statements of the Director General of Customs and Indirect Taxation and the Foreign Trade MSO, the Official Statistics Authority took note of the fact that the rewriting of the decree defining the remits of the Foreign Trade MSO will henceforth mention the principle of professional independence, and it welcomes this.

It considers that the project to re-engineer the production and dissemination of foreign trade statistics is extremely important, in particular to implement the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

The Authority will closely monitor the effective launch of this project and its implementation.

On the Ministerial Statistical Office for Local Authorities

Following the presentations by the Director General of Local Authorities and the Head of the MSO, the Official Statistics Authority notes that the MSO has developed a coherent project to implement the recommendations of the ASP from 2018 and those of the CNIS working group from 2019.

It notes the significant progress made in terms of production time, consolidation of accounts, analysis of the diversity and behaviour of local authorities, and the visibility and accessibility of statistical production, particularly as a result of setting up a web portal providing a means to consolidate all existing statistical information on this production.

This project, which may require an increase in the MSO’s resources, suggests that the representation and analysis of local authorities in France by official statistics will be improved.

Given the importance of local authorities for public investment, taxation and the production of public services, the Authority will continue to monitor the implementation of this project closely in its annual reports.

In addition to making statistical production more reliable, clear and transparent, it is important that it improves the analysis of local authorities' resources and their disparities in terms of geography and composition by looking at how the structure of their resources has changed over time.

Statistical production must also continue to develop in terms of functional analysis of expenditure. However, progress in this area remains conditional on accounting instruments, particularly cost accounting.

This does not depend on statistics alone, but statistics can contribute, in particular through their methodological capacities, to stimulating the changes needed to remove the obstacles that remain in this respect.

On the Department of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES)

As the Ministerial Statistical Office of the Health and Social Ministries, the remit of the Department of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES) is to provide public decision-makers, citizens and economic and social leaders with reliable information and analyses on populations and health and social policies. Major areas such as population health and health systems, or social protection and policies, require high-quality statistical information to describe the transformations under way in society, identify new dimensions – related to specific topics or geographical areas – that need to be observed, assist in decision-making and inform public debate.

The Authority notes that a gap has gradually developed between the need to improve official statistics in this area and the resources available to the DREES. While the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of health and social issues, this situation appears to be unique within the Official Statistical Service.

Since 2011, this MSO has lost 12% of its staff, and the rate of decline in staff numbers has increased in recent years, particularly in its external services (e.g. regional health agencies), seriously calling into question their ability to produce analysis. The frequency of certain statistical surveys, for example on health in schools, or their content, which is increasingly restricted to European requirements, has therefore been reduced.

The Authority also notes some weaknesses in the MSO's ability to carry out foundational projects or ensure they are properly maintained so that the tools developed can function effectively. One example is the INES micro-simulation model, currently managed by the DREES and INSEE, which is used to assess reforms to social benefits and contributions and has no equivalent in the administrative sphere.

While the DREES has recently experienced a stabilisation in its overall budget, it has still fallen significantly over the last 10 years. This has occurred at a time when this MSO has continued to take on new responsibilities, including the national suicide observatory, the health survey (previously INSEE's responsibility), and support for experiments on new care organisations. This last example highlights the fact that the DREES has also had to strengthen the support it provides to the operational departments of the Social Ministries, particularly to improve the use of data. In this respect, mobilising 15 to 30 crisis management agents (in particular at the Health Crisis Centre) and strengthening the DREES' status as a reference centre for ensuring the quality and consistency of data for COVID management are certainly exceptional, but they are part of a trend. It must be emphasised that this support function cannot be effective in the long term without consolidating statistical production and therefore the DREES' statistical programme, which necessarily form its foundation

because of the importance of the data produced and the combined expertise required to produce them.

The DREES therefore works in an extremely broad field, with modest means. Admittedly, many operators contribute to data production in the various fields concerned. The Official Statistics Authority, as part of its quality-labelling remit for series relevant to official statistics that are produced by public operators or by private bodies with a public service remit, encourages the improvement of official statistics in this way.

However, this quality-labelling process cannot replace the implementation of a coherent project for official health and social statistics undertaken by the MSO. In fact, statistics derived from management data, research data or theme-based data are either intrinsically limited in their ability to meet the constraints of statistical production (in terms of standardisation of production and dissemination procedures, relevance, reliability, consistency and comparability) or they can meet these constraints only after considerable work has been carried out by the MSO in collaboration with the data holders (e.g. Public Health France in relation to health) to ensure their quality. Furthermore, the data from the “Funds” typically only cover a partial field, whereas official statistics must consolidate and provide statistics that reflect developments as a whole and take account of the wide variety of situations.

In this context, the ASP believes that maintaining adequate human and financial resource capacity at the DREES and defining an overall project for official statistics in the field of health and social welfare are prerequisites for the DREES to be able to carry out its remits.

Given this situation, the ASP welcomes the joint mission undertaken to optimise the statistical production of medical causes of death and the joint mission requested of the General Inspectorates of INSEE and Social Affairs to draw up a map identifying the various places where data are produced within the Ministry and among its operators. However, the ASP stresses that, in addition to identifying available sources and potentially harmful redundancies or dispersions, it is also important to identify any blind spots that are poorly covered by official statistics and assess how suitable the various data are for statistical purposes, by identifying the requirements for correcting their shortcomings. In this respect, the Authority emphasises that, when statistics are based on administrative sources, their definition and the concepts and procedures used must be compatible with those used in statistics (or must be adapted to be compatible with them) in order to ensure their quality.

Because its statistical production is by nature a multi-year activity – and, in addition, because this production is increasingly regulated at the European level – it is important that the DREES has multi-year visibility of its human and financial resources. The Authority therefore recommends that a multi-year employment strategy be defined for the DREES for the next three-year period from 2021 to 2023, and that the implementation of this strategy be initiated without delay.

On the Secure Data Access Centre (CASD)

Created in 2010, the Secure Data Access Centre (CASD) is responsible for providing researchers with access to data collected by the Official Statistical Service under secure conditions to ensure that these data cannot be used in a way that is detrimental to the public or by an unauthorised person. Although it does not produce data directly, the CASD has been designated as an “other national statistical authority” under European regulations.

The Official Statistics Authority agrees with this decision because the CASD, together with the Statistical Confidentiality Committee, is an essential instrument for the implementation of Law 51-711 on official statistics, which was amended in 2008 precisely to allow researchers access to data on

individuals and households. In this respect, the European Official Statistics Code of Practice states that strict protocols must apply to external users accessing statistical micro-data for research purposes.

The Authority notes the rapid growth in the amount of data deposited with the CASD and its use by researchers, with the technical solutions for ensuring its security being certified and regularly checked, which is essential. It also highlights the importance of the Centre's role as a trusted third party in exploiting the possibilities of matching these data for research and statistical studies.

The way in which access for researchers is organised in France is characterised by the separation between statistics producers and researchers courtesy of two institutions: the Statistical Confidentiality Committee, with no authority over the data, and the CASD (the Secure Data Access Centre), with no authority over access authorisation. The Authority notes that this unique organisation is a real asset, reducing costs for data producers, facilitating access to data for researchers, and providing the guarantees that are absolutely necessary in terms of statistical confidentiality and data protection.

On the renewal of the quality labelling of the quarterly series on workforce size, payroll and new hire declarations at national level and on the quality labelling of the series on workforce size and payroll at local level produced by ACOSS (the central agency for social security funds in France)

The Official Statistics Authority announces the renewal of the quality labelling for the following series for a period of five years:

- Quarterly series on workforce size at the national level.
- Quarterly series on private-sector payroll at the national level.
- Monthly and quarterly series on new hire declarations by members of the general French Social Security scheme at the national level.

The Official Statistics Authority announces the extension of the quality labelling for the following series for a period of five years:

- Breakdown of private-sector payroll and workforce size to more granular levels: NACE17*département, NACE38 and employment zones.

The Official Statistics Authority announces the quality labelling of the early payroll estimates for a period of five years:

Note that the early payroll estimates are also quality-labelled.

An annexe provides the definition of the corresponding statistical series.

The Authority asks ACOSS to take into account all the recommendations contained in the opinion of the Quality Labelling Committee of 10 March 2020.

The Authority will hold a hearing with ACOSS and other relevant departments within one year to review the progress of work on:

- defining the statistical workforce with the aim of making full use of the potential of the DSN with a view to better understanding the concept of end-of-month employment. The corresponding work must be developed, ensuring that it is coordinated and consistent with the agreed joint production framework. It is also important that the calculation of average statistical workforce be studied within this framework:

- expert assessments for calculating the payroll estimates based on individual declarations.

This will ensure greater consistency with the workforce estimates (which would eventually lead to a more robust average wage per capita).

On the renewal of the CNAV's statistical series

The Official Statistics Authority renews unchanged for five years the quality labelling of the CNAV series that it quality-labelled in 2013, noting that their publication date will now be postponed to the end of February to allow for better validation of the data.

It asks the CNAV to take into account the recommendations of the Quality Labelling Committee and adds a “review” clause to this quality labelling in 2022, to examine the implementation of the quality labelling and the commitments made by the CNAV in its note of 15 December, attached to this deliberation.

At that time, the Authority will also examine the procedures in place for researchers to access these data, based on a report to be produced by the CNAV on the requests that it has approved or rejected to which it has or has not granted access and on the visibility of the access procedure and the opportunities afforded in this area.

The ASP also calls for an impact study, as suggested by the Quality Labelling Committee, on the extent of revised entitlements.

The CNAV's note of 15 January 2021 is attached as Annexe 5.

3.5 Monitoring of recommendations in the 2019 Annual Report of the Authority

In its 2019 annual report, the Authority made a certain number of recommendations for implementation in 2020. It analyses to what extent and in what form these recommendations have been taken into consideration.

These recommendations were addressed to the following organisations:

- The Caisse centrale de la mutualité sociale agricole (CCMSA – central agricultural mutual social insurance benefit fund) (see Annexe 3)
- The Ministerial Statistical Office for Justice (see Annexe 4)

Only the recommendations to be implemented in 2020 are mentioned in this report.

3.6 Communication of the Authority

All the annual reports of the Authority since its creation are accessible in French and in English on the Authority's website <http://www.autorite-statistique-publique.fr>.

The 2019 report was widely disseminated (see Annexe 1 for the list of recipients).

Minutes of all the sessions and the opinions issued by the Authority sessions are also accessible on its website.

The 2019 report, as with previous reports, was widely disseminated (see Annexe 1 for the list of recipients).

In 2020, the President, accompanied by the ASP rapporteur, presented the 2019 report to Ms Dorothée Rouzet, Macroeconomics Adviser to the Minister for the Economy, Finance and Recovery.

Discussions focused in particular on the dissemination of official statistics and the Official Statistical Service's embargo rules.

4. Annexes

Annexe 1 : Recipients of the report

“This report is submitted to Parliament and made public” (Article 2 of the Decree of 3 March 2009, as amended, on the Official Statistics Authority)

As each year since 2009, this report shall be submitted:

- *to Parliament*: to the Presidents of the National Assembly, the Senate and their commissions
- *to the representatives of the Nation*
 - President of the Republic
 - Prime Minister
 - Minister for the Economy and Finance
 - Minister for Public Action and Accounts
 - President of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council
 - Secretary-General of the Government
 - Ministries responsible for the Ministerial Statistical Offices
- *to the major French State bodies*
 - First-President of the Court of Auditors
 - Head of the General Inspectorate of Finances
 - Head of the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs
- *to the representatives of French official statistics*
 - President of the CNIS
 - INSEE Director General, heads of the Ministerial Statistical Offices (MSOs), INSEE Regional Directors
 - Banque de France and other producers
 - Members of the INSEE board
- *to the representatives of European official statistics*
 - President of the ESGAB (European Statistical Governance Advisory Board)
 - Members of the ESGAB
 - Eurostat
 - European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC)

Annexe 2 : Surveys, publications or other work planned for 2020, cancelled or postponed due to the health crisis; Existing surveys expanded by adding a module or questions specific to COVID-19

1. Surveys, publications or other work planned for 2020, cancelled or postponed due to the health crisis, within the SSP

At INSEE

Surveys and publications cancelled or postponed

Collection of the 2021 population census has been postponed to 2022.

Collection of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) household survey was scrapped in 2020.

The CVS (Living Environment and Security) survey conducted with the SSMSI did not take place in 2020 (see SSMSI).

Not published: The consumer price indices for the French overseas departments could not be published in April and May 2020.

The *Économie française* journal, which is usually published in June, was not published but was replaced by 12 *Conjoncture in France* notes or *Points de Conjoncture* reports over the course of 2020.

The pilot of the PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) survey was postponed to 2021.

The spatial price comparison survey was postponed to 2021.

In the MSOs

Cancelled or postponed surveys or work

DREES

The school health survey has been postponed by a year.

The delivery of the first results of the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), planned by the European regulation for September, has been postponed by two months.

The childcare survey has been postponed to 2021, and the family carer survey has also been postponed to 2021.

Postponement of the collection for the survey on the health of children in the last year of nursery school is under consideration.

The PHEDRE survey on disability compensation benefits has been postponed.

DEPP

The DEPP was not able to carry out its annual survey on information and communication technology equipment in schools (ETIC), which describes the equipment in schools with digital tools. However, in 2020, it did work to replace this survey with a rapid survey on ICT.

Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO (SDES)

Production activities in the areas of construction and transport were the most affected, with major interruptions or slowdowns in the collection of certain recurring operations between mid-March and mid-May, including the monthly survey of activity in the building and public works sector, a source used to calculate the construction production index; town planning authorisations (Sit@del); the survey on the cost prices of new housing (PRLN), a source used to calculate the construction cost index (CCI); updates to the social rental stock register; updates to the road vehicle register; and the survey on the use of road freight vehicles (TRM).

The health crisis has also had an impact on the progress of certain operations specific to 2020, causing in particular a significant delay in the collection of the national housing survey (ENL 2020), which had been planned as a face-to-face survey.

Work on several statistical systems has also been slowed down by the health crisis (design of the sheltered housing registration system (SELFy); overhaul of the road vehicle register) or has been postponed to 2021 (tachograph survey).

SIES

Companies were not able to respond to the R&D surveys within the desired time frame.

DARES

The Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) was delayed.

Justice MSO

The health crisis, and beyond that the significant involvement of the MSO in supporting the ministry's departments in preparing the juvenile justice reform, has had an impact on its capacity to develop and relaunch the juvenile panel.

The monitoring and adaptation of the statistical processing and dissemination chains following the implementation of the measures contained in the 2018-2022 Programming and Justice Reform Law (LPJ), in particular relating to the regional organisation of justice, has been delayed.

Progress monitoring of the Portalis project (which ultimately aims to overhaul all civil applications), which was due to be completed by the end of 2020 as far as industrial tribunals are concerned, and the adaptation of the statistical chains that it requires had to be suspended following the postponement of the ministerial project, which is now scheduled for 2021.

- The adaptation of sub-national dissemination to the new regional organisation of justice, and the increase in the volume of sub-national data made available in a reusable format could not be continued beyond its analysis phase. It will now have to be completed amid the recently launched redesign of the ministry's website.

Restarting output in the closed environment has begun, however, although this has been delayed by the health crisis.

Immigration MSO

Collection from the second wave of the ELIPA survey (Longitudinal Survey of the Integration of First-time Arrivals) was postponed.

Defence MSO

The survey on reservists (Operational Reserve Force) and the survey on direct defence suppliers' cybersecurity were suspended.

Culture MSO

The Ministries of Culture and Education, through their respective MSOs, decided to cancel the survey on "how artistic and cultural education is received" that had been planned for 2020. It was considered that this large-scale survey in schools and among families could not be carried out under safe conditions during the pandemic, especially as it concerned artistic and cultural education activities that were heavily affected by the health crisis.

SSMSI

The SSMSI's statistical information system was hit hard by the health crisis with the cancellation of the CVS 2020 survey, which could not be conducted face-to-face by INSEE, even though the SSMSI and INSEE set up alternative arrangements to produce reliable statistics on victimisation in 2019 and during lockdown.

In addition, some projects were suspended or could not move forward as quickly as planned, especially inter-departmental or inter-ministerial cooperation projects.

2. Existing surveys expanded by adding a module or questions specific to COVID-19

At INSEE

The Employment survey, in the health module, was expanded to include questions on working conditions.

Two specific modules were added to the 2021 SRCV (Statistics on Resources and Living Conditions) survey questionnaire to provide information on the impacts of the health crisis, in particular in relation to changes in the situation of households as a result of the crisis, questions proposed in a European framework, administrative complexity, and difficulties in accessing rights.

In the MSOs

DREES

- A one-off module on hospital capacity made available during the crisis has been included in the SAE 2020, which will be collected in early 2021.

- A one-off module will also be added to the survey on childcare facilities for young children, asking retrospective questions on childcare during lockdown.

DARES

Questions specific to COVID-19 or its repercussions were included in the ORIPA survey on guidance and learning pathways conducted with the DEPP and SIES.

DEPP

Questions specific to COVID-19 or its impact were included in the survey of families in the Primary School Pupil Panel recruited in 2011.

Youth and Sport MSO

The 2020 edition of the National Barometer of Sports Activities, which was collected in June 2020, gathered information on sports practices during lockdown. This lighter survey, designed to measure changes in sports practices (following a more cyclical approach) was adapted to specifically identify the sports activities practised before, during and after the lockdown of spring 2020. The preliminary results from this survey will be published in early 2021.

The questionnaire for the survey on community involvement and donations was adapted to identify the effects of the health crisis on the participation of individuals in community life, both in terms of donations and volunteering. The collection is due to take place in February-March 2021.

Annexe 3 : Monitoring of recommendations on the renewal of quality labelling for data produced by the Caisse centrale de la mutualité sociale agricole (CCMSA – central agricultural mutual social insurance benefit fund)

Recommendations in the ASP 2019 annual report

The Authority asks the CCMSA to implement all the recommendations made in the Quality Labelling Committee's opinion of 10 January 2019 (see below).

In order to assert professional independence in the production of its statistics, the Authority advises the CCMSA to ensure the greatest possible clarity, including in the organisation chart for the Directorate for Statistics, Studies and Funds (DSER), so as to identify statistical activities in such a way as to distinguish them clearly from the Directorate's other activities.

The recommendations of the Quality Labelling Committee are as follows:

Recommendation 1 – Although the dissemination calendar for statistical series is widely disseminated, it remains low-profile and is not always followed. For 2018, in addition to payroll employment, this is considered to apply to the series on accidents at work and occupational diseases. Consequently, the Quality Labelling Committee asks the CCMSA to display the dissemination calendar more prominently on its website and improve its communication concerning any delays to dissemination and their causes.

Recommendation 2 – The metadata accompanying the dissemination are accessible and organised in DDI format. The Quality Labelling Committee recommended the addition of several items or clarifications. Most of these remarks were taken into account by the MSA in a very responsive manner, during the examination of the quality-labelling application file. As a residual measure, the Committee recommends systematically ensuring clearer mentions of the data extraction dates and of the “final” or “provisional” nature of this data (also see point 6).

Recommendation 3 – Whether for legislative reasons or due to IT system redesign, the MSA's statistical series may be subject to series breaks. In general, the Committee requests that the CCMSA continue to provide information about these breaks, highlight them in the metadata and, if possible, quantify their consequences. In the payroll employment field, a break in the series on 24 January 2019 for 2013/2014 was noted, partly due to the behavioural effects of the actors. The Quality Labelling Committee encourages the CCMSA to document these effects in studies associated with the dissemination of the series.

Recommendation 4 – The Quality Labelling Committee has taken note of the cessation of publication of the payroll employment series following the difficulties arising from the introduction of the DSN (nominative social declaration). At present, the series published on the CCMSA website stop at Q4 2016. The CCMSA indicates that the first publications resulting from the data consolidation and processing activities will be published in March 2019. The Quality Labelling Committee requests that this publication of series be accompanied by any information relevant to the proper interpretation of a probable break in series linked to this change in the system for the statistical collection of data from the agricultural payroll employment scheme.

Recommendation 5 – Following discussions with the Quality Labelling Committee, the CCMSA will issue a new series on the number of retirees by effective date, which may take account of management time frames. The first such series will be disseminated on 31 March 2019. In general, the Quality Labelling Committee would like to see all series continue to be subject to a “quick” provisional dissemination, as per the current calendar. However, where possible, it is requested that the series be eligible for consolidated processing. The “provisional data/final data” dissemination system should be used for the dissemination of each series when relevant.

Recommendation 6 – The Quality Labelling Committee recommends moving towards a complete geographical scope (Metropolitan France) for all series. The CCMSA is thus committed to disseminating the results of the Alsace and Moselle agricultural accident insurance funds (CAAA) in the series on occupational accident declarations as of 31 March 2019.

Recommendation 7 – Concerning the new monthly sickness expenditure series, the Quality Labelling Committee confirms the value of providing quick and consolidated data. It invites the CCMSA to publish a series of detailed raw data in $m+2$ by reimbursement date, and a series of data by date of care supplemented and corrected for the effects of seasonal variations and business days in $m+4$; this series is then revised in the margin each month. A table specifying the volume of monthly corrections may accompany the dissemination of the series by date of care, following the example of the CNAM's publications on the same subject.

Response of the CCMSA:

Recommendations implemented:

Recommendation 1: The publication calendar of the quality-labelled series is now visible on the home page (top left) of the website <https://statistiques.msa.fr/>.

Recommendation 2: The data extraction date and the “final” or “provisional” nature of the series have been added to the documentation disseminated.

Recommendation 3: Series breaks have been explained in the documentation. For example, in relation to “self-employed agricultural workers”, the documentation states that the implementation of the new rules for membership of the agricultural scheme led to a doubling between 2015 and 2016 of the number of co-contributors who became heads of farms or businesses under the agricultural scheme. Regarding the family branch, the documentation mentions the introduction of PREPARE, the activity bonus and the MSA’s management of benefits and their effects on the number of recipients.

Recommendation 5: The series on the number of retirees by effective date is disseminated according to schedule.

Recommendation 7: The monthly series on health expenditure by date of care are supplemented by a table specifying the volume of monthly corrections, following the example of the CNAM’s publications.

Recommendations currently being implemented:

Recommendation 4: Regarding payroll employment, the DSEF’s contributions department is currently working on the final consolidation of the 2019 data. It was proposed that the provisional data be released 75 days after the end of the quarter relating to the period of employment and that the final data be released annually on 15 June. Due to IT reconciliation issues, some of the data have not been sent to the DSEF and therefore cannot be used. Because the data at 75 days are not complete, it is proposed that the final quarterly data be made available in month M+5 and the final data for a year Y in June Y+1.

The statistical series will now be produced on a regular basis, thereby enabling us to satisfy this recommendation by the end of November 2020. This will be clarified when the data series are made available.

Recommendation 6: Regarding work-related injuries and illnesses, the recommendation was implemented in 2019: the series relating to 2018 were published in 2019 and the geographical scope was Metropolitan France (including Alsace-Moselle). However, despite our repeated reminders, the CAAAs did not send updated data for 2019 in 2020. An agreement between the CCMSA’s Occupational Health and Safety Department and the CAAAs is to be finalised this year and includes the provision of claims data for year Y in September Y+1. Pending signing of this agreement, a letter from our Director General is being sent to the CAAAs to obtain these data by the end of October 2020.

To reflect this situation, we have modified the series and indicated that the scope is the MSA (excluding Alsace-Moselle) for the entire column. When the CAAAs provide us with the data, we will add a tab to the workbook published with 2018 and 2019 data.

From next year onwards, we should be able to publish the data on work-related injuries and illnesses on 31 March covering the MSA (excluding Alsace Moselle) and the data covering the whole of France (including CAAAs and GGSSs) in October.

Lastly, the organisational structure of the Directorate for Statistics, Studies and Funds (DSEF) was changed from 1 October 2019. This reorganisation clarified the role of my Directorate in data analysis and statistical work. In particular, the department previously misnamed “Risk Management and Anti-Fraud” has been integrated into the Summary department to create a “Financing and Risk Management” department. It is responsible for managing statistical work on demographic and financial forecasts for the Social Security Audit Committee and statistical work on risk analysis for the preparation of the annual report on costs and revenues submitted to Parliament. There is therefore no longer any ambiguity about the nature of the work carried out: it is statistical production work and not work that is directly operational.

Annexe 4 : Monitoring of recommendations for the Justice MSO

Recommendations in the ASP 2019 annual report

After hearing representatives of the General Secretariat of the Ministry for Justice and the Justice Ministerial Statistical Office, the Official Statistics Authority drew attention to the quality of the work carried out by the statistical office (SDSE) and noted that the integration of prison statistics is proceeding as planned.

However, the Authority noted that the Justice IT services, which are heavily involved with the Ministry for Justice's different ongoing projects, cannot meet the SDSE's daily needs. This is undermining its ability to ensure the proper production of statistics. It is therefore important to remedy this situation, with due recognition of the importance of statistical production in this area and the challenges facing it.

The Authority also invites the SDSE to continue the work undertaken on removing any remaining obstacles to access to individual criminal data in the CASSIOPEE system. It also invites the Commission to liaise with the competent authorities (CNIL, Council of State) in order to define a clear rule on access to data for researchers.

It encourages the statistical office to increase the visibility of its activity, both within the Ministry for Justice and externally. A higher profile should help to increase its attractiveness.

Lastly, the Authority observes that since their removal from the judicial sphere, it is no longer possible to count the number of divorces pronounced in France today, and it is concerned that this type of situation may be extended to mediation and conciliation in the future. It therefore invites the MSO to anticipate the development of alternative modes of justice.

Response from the Justice MSO:

On access to criminal data

Article 85 of Law 2019-222 of 23 March 2019 on 2018-2022 Programming and Justice Reform (known as LPJ) amended Article 48-1 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in a way that now allows the MSO to be the recipient of nominative data from the CASSIOPEE application: "The information contained in the automated national registry is accessible only to the judicial authorities, except in cases involving non-nominative data used for statistical purposes, information covered by Article 11-1 **or nominative data used for statistical purposes by official statistics departments reporting to the Ministry for Justice.**"

The question of researchers' access to criminal data was settled after investigation by the Ministry's Data Protection Officer. The national criminal records' statistical file has been filed with the CASD since the end of February 2020. A new team is working on this file following a favourable opinion from the Statistical Confidentiality Committee at its meeting on 11 October 2019.

Annexe 5 : CNAV Statistical Series: Details and planned changes following remarks made during consideration of the application for renewal of quality labelling

The CNAV is requesting the renewal of the quality labelling of the series already quality-labelled in 2013. The purpose of these annual open data series is to provide information on the beneficiaries of pensions under the general scheme and their entitlements and thereby shed light on changes in spending in the main pension scheme (more than €120 billion per year and 5% of GDP).

As a pension scheme, the primary objective of the general scheme is to publish data on all its retirees and the pensions it pays out (i.e. on the coverage it provides). It clearly follows that any changes in the scope of the scheme decided by the legislator must be incorporated as soon as possible. From 2020, the general scheme includes the social security of the self-employed, and its statistical production will be gradually adapted to reflect the changes in the management system.

Considerable work has already been carried out to ensure that key series can be published quickly for this expanded scope. Accordingly, the quality-labelled series for 2020 will be published for the general scheme's expanded scope from 2021 for all retirees in receipt of payments and from 2022 for new retirees, in line with the respective publication schedules for these series. The series covering this expanded scope will also be back-calculated to the end of 2019. The data for 2019 will then be presented for both the former scope and the extended scope, providing an understanding of the impact of extending the scope. To achieve these objectives, given the production and validation times required in an environment where exogenous modifications involving changes to the production chains now occur almost every year, the CNAV would like to shift the publication date of the annual quality-labelled series to the end of February starting with the 2021 publication.

Furthermore, the presentation of the series and the information contained in the downloadable Excel files will be completed from 2021 in order to provide more detailed and integrated information on the scope of the data and its changes.

Quality-labelled series to understand the importance of the pension benefits paid by the general scheme for the retired population and to shed light on changes in its expenditure

The general scheme is the main French pension scheme in terms of both the amount of money paid out and the population covered. It pays out more than €120 billion in statutory retirement benefits each year, which represents around 5% of GDP. In 2018, 83% of the 16.3 million retirees in a basic scheme received a direct pension from the general scheme, which paid out 39% of all direct and derived rights pensions. These figures illustrate the importance of the benefits paid by the general scheme for the retired population, which is what the series quality-labelled by the Official Statistics Authority in 2013 aim to reflect. In accordance with this objective, they cover the entire retired population under the general scheme. These series can also shed light on changes in the main expenditure items of the general scheme, based on changes in the population of pension recipients paid by the scheme and the average levels of these pensions. They allow all users specifically interested in the general scheme to have access to quality-labelled series as open data (auditors, public institutions, legislators, etc.), tracking the entitlements delivered by this scheme and the population covered. In this way, they also help to increase transparency around the benefits managed and make available to the public the factors that explain the resulting substantial financial sums involved.

In line with the above objectives, the series change only slightly with the legislation governing the scope of the general scheme (or the rules of jurisdiction between schemes in terms of pension payments). Whatever the changes in membership or jurisdiction rules decided by law, the CNAV's quality-labelled series are by their very nature based on a population subject to a single piece of basic pension legislation, that applying to the general scheme. As a result, series can be made available detailing pension entitlements or arrangements governed by a set of standard rules in the observed population.

In summary, these series aim to provide information on pension beneficiaries under the general scheme and to shed light on changes in its expenditure. They are an important part of the statistical information system on pensions and retirees in terms of the pensions paid by the main pension scheme (in relation to the socio-demographic characteristics of its population and its methods of calculating entitlements). These series, and the data on which they are based, therefore play a major role in the development of the DREES' statistical system covering all schemes. The quality-labelling for these series guarantees that they meet the quality and good practice standards required not only for their own purposes, but also for their major impact on the statistical output of all official statistics schemes (and mainly those of the DREES).

The series quality-labelled in 2013 and for which a renewal of the quality labelling is requested consist of annual series starting in 2003, covering, firstly, retirees in receipt of payments at the end of each year and, secondly, new beneficiaries of a pension from the general scheme. For these two populations, these series provide data on the number of people, average age, average pension amount and data on the characteristics of the entitlements or retirement supplements linked to the legislation applying to the general scheme (pension supplements, discount or premium, etc.).

Changes proposed by the CNAV following the remarks made during consideration of the renewal of quality labelling

Two main remarks were made during consideration of the renewal of quality labelling, concerning respectively the information on the series made available to users and the management of the expansion of the general scheme's scope to include the self-employed. This note specifies the responses that the CNAV will provide in this regard.

1) Improving the presentation and meta-information available to series users

The consideration process highlighted the potential variety of needs of users of pension-related statistics likely to access

series disseminated as open data and the associated risks of misinterpreting the series consulted and of a response that is unsuited to the initial need, following, for example, difficulties in providing user guidance regarding the overall available supply of official statistics on pensions.

In order to better reflect the diversity of needs and limit the risks of misinterpretation, the overall presentation of quality-labelled series on the CNAV website will be improved, in particular by specifying the purpose of the series and how they are linked to other official statistics sources. An explanatory note, based on the text below, will be added as soon as the data are next updated:

These series describe the retirees under the general scheme and the pensions paid by this scheme, which is the leading pension scheme in France in terms of population covered and pension amounts paid. They report on changes in the population of beneficiaries of a pension under the general scheme, their main characteristics and their entitlements. They therefore present the main factors that shed light on changes in pension expenditure under the general scheme. However, by their nature, these series do not include pensions paid by other basic schemes or by supplementary pension schemes. Statistics covering all schemes are published in detail by the DREES, the statistical office of the Ministry for Social Affairs. In the same vein, starting with the next edition, all downloadable files will be updated to improve the information provided to the user in the files themselves (and therefore likely to be used independently of the information provided on the website). The aim will also be to use this information to make the scope (supplementary pensions not taken into account, etc.) and the concepts used more explicit and to highlight the main scope/series breaks.

2) Management of the expansion in scope of the general scheme to include former self-employed pensioners.

Following the abolition of the RSI (French social security scheme for the self-employed) at the beginning of 2018, the Social Security for the Self-Employed (SSI) took over the RSI's activities for a two-year transition period. In January 2020, the SSI was integrated into the Social Security General Scheme. Under the law, former employees and former self-employed people are now covered by the same basic pension scheme. As a result, the management of the entitlements related to these two types of professional activity is gradually being unified, and there is no longer any separation between the basic entitlements acquired as employees and those acquired as self-employed. The vast majority of former self-employed retirees (more than 95%) are also already retired from the general scheme as former employees. This helps to explain why the two schemes are being brought together and why it is not appropriate to maintain the separation between the two populations in the same way. In this context, the main objective for the statistics and quality-labelled series for the general scheme is to produce data that cover its full scope, consistent with the financial sums involved in the scheme, with comparisons, and with the fact that the average pension can no longer be broken down exactly into retirement as an employee and retirement as a self-employed person.

In terms of concepts, the scope of the series will therefore remain unchanged and continue to reflect that of the people receiving a pension under the general scheme (even if the boundaries of the scheme change with legislation). However, in order to take into account the fact that the "economic" scope of the scheme is changing, the CNAV will strive in its main publications to alert the reader to the change in the scheme's scope and describe the main impacts linked to the inclusion of the SSI.

Accordingly, the data at the end of 2019 will be produced both on the scheme's historical scope and on its expanded (full) scope. This will provide readers with an understanding of the impact of the expansion of the scheme's scope and allow them to assess changes based on both a constant (unexpanded) scope up to the end of 2019 and the expanded scope from 2019 onwards. A note will describe these impacts and will be made available to users on the CNAV's statistics and research website.

The timetable for making data available on the full scope is constrained by the timetable for the development of the statistical information system (itself dependent on the ongoing development of management systems). It must also be consistent with the methods and deadlines for calculating the data disseminated and must in particular take into account the fact that the series on new retirees in year Y are published at the beginning of Y+2 to ensure that retirees whose pensions for year Y were awarded in Y+1 (due to late filings, settlement deadlines, etc.) are included.

Substantial work has been undertaken to ensure that the key series on this expanded scope can be published quickly, with significant priority given to making the key series available to avoid delaying publication for the years expected. The data on the expanded scope will therefore be made available in two stages:

- In early 2021:

. the publication of the series on new retirees in 2019 will still (logically) be based on the historical scope of the scheme (i.e. scope before integration of the SSI at the beginning of January 2020);

. the series on all retirees at the end of 2020 will be published based on the full scope, and the data already published for 2019 will be supplemented by back-calculated data at the end of 2019 so that users can understand the impact of the change in scope.

- In early 2022:

. the data on new retirees in 2020 will in turn be published based on the full scope, and will be back-calculated on the full scope for 2019.

Both the overview provided on the series and the files containing them will alert users to the expansion in scope of the general regime. However, the impact of the expansion in scope will be limited for most of the series. For example, the total number of retirees will increase by about 2% simply because of the expansion in scope (the number of self-employed retirees who are not already included in the 14.5 million retirees under the general scheme is fewer than 300,000). This two-percentage-point increase is not exceptional when compared with other changes observed since 2003: the number of retirees

has increased from year to year by between 1% and 3% (also a two-percentage-point difference), depending on the size of the generations entering retirement, reforms shifting the retirement age and other factors affecting the retired population.

Date of availability of quality-labelled series.

Up to now, the quality-labelled series have been made available in January. This timing was the result of a desire to publish the data as soon as possible. However, it was based on the premise that the publication process would be “steady-state”. Recent experience shows that many reforms (single settlement, etc.) or management changes (changes in variables, formats, bases, etc.), even if they have no impact on how the published series is defined, require annual adjustments to the programmes designed to reconstruct the concepts of the published series based on very detailed management data. They also require additional checks on the consistency of the data and their changes. The data publication schedule is extremely tight in a rapidly changing environment, and it puts too much pressure on the time available for production and verification at a particularly busy time of the year. This is why the CNAV would like to push out the publication date of the quality-labelled series to the end of February to provide time for a more comprehensive approach to data validation, capitalising on the in-depth validations carried out on the statistical data produced to populate the annual statistical reports and the <https://www.statistiques-recherches.cnav.fr> website. Publication at the end of February remains consistent with the annual periodicity of the series and with their structural rather than cyclical nature.

Annexe 6 : The Ministerial Statistical Offices as at 31 December 2020

DREES	Ministry for Solidarity and Health Ministry for Labour Minister for Public Action and Accounts Department of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics
SSP	Ministry for Agriculture and Food Secretariat-General Department of Statistics and Forward Studies
SDES	Ministry for the Ecological Transition General Commission on Sustainable Development Data and Statistical Studies Department
DEPP	Ministry for National Education and Youth Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation Department for Evaluation, Forward Studies and Performance
SIES	Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation Directorate General for Higher Education and Professional Integration, and Directorate General for Research and Innovation Under-Directorate for Information Systems and Statistical Studies
DARES	Ministry for Labour Department for the Coordination of Research, Studies and Statistics
Justice	Ministry for Justice Secretariat-General Under-Directorate for Statistics and Studies
Local Authorities	Ministry for Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities Directorate General for Local Authorities Department of Local Studies and Statistics
Public Finances	Minister for Public Action and Accounts Directorate General for Public Finances Office of Fiscal Statistical Studies
Customs	Minister for Public Action and Accounts Directorate General for Customs and Indirect Taxation Department of Statistics and Foreign Trade Studies
Civil Service	Minister for Public Action and Accounts Directorate General for the Administration and Civil Service Department of Studies, Statistics and Information Systems
Immigration and Integration	Ministry for the Interior Directorate General for Foreigners in France Department of Statistics, Studies and Documentation
Youth and Sport	Ministry for National Education and Youth National Institute of Youth and Popular Education Statistical Surveys, Data and Studies Mission
Defence	Ministry for the Armed Forces Directorate of Financial Affairs Economic Observatory for Defence

Culture	Ministry for Culture Cultural Policy Coordination and Innovation Department Department of Studies, Forward Studies and Statistics
Internal Security (SSMSI)	Ministry for the Interior Ministerial Statistical Office for Internal Security under the Central Director of the Judicial Police

Annexe 7 : 2020 Review of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS)

The situation in 2020 was totally atypical, due to the health and economic crisis we are experiencing.

In this environment, marked by unprecedented changes in social and economic behaviour, the statistics produced have proved to be very valuable in informing public policy, and the Official Statistical Service has been asked to respond accordingly.

To cope with the demand, producers' initiatives have grown in number, most of the time as a matter of urgency. The CNIS has therefore had to adapt its activities and procedures to best support producers' initiatives while continuing to consult with users.

This acceleration of procedures has given the CNIS a unique vantage point, seeing requests for opportunities to record changes made to information systems, either for new surveys, for surveys enhanced to include a COVID-19 module or for surveys postponed to the following year.

Furthermore, after the cancellation of the spring commissions, the work of the autumn commissions proceeded "almost" normally, except for the fact that they were held via Zoom videoconferencing. They therefore dealt with more structural subjects, in accordance with the opinions set out in the 2019-2023 medium term plan.

The CNIS report is presented in two parts. The first part deals with the adaptation of its operations to support changes to the information system linked to the health and economic crisis, and the second part deals with some of the subjects addressed with by the thematic commissions and the opinions they have issued.

1) Adaptation of CNIS operations

- Two main principles determined the adaptation of the procedures put in place as a result of the health crisis. The first was the continuation of consultation despite the cancellation of the spring commissions, with the introduction of a new consultation method. The second was the desire to support producers in the changes required to the information system.

1.1) Following the cancellation of the spring commissions, the consultations that should have been carried out in commission were carried out electronically.

They concerned requests for opinions on opportunities and requests for access to administrative sources (under Opinion 7A of the 1951 Law) and gave rise to consultation reports which were put online on the CNIS website, reflecting our commitment to transparency, since these consultations involved specific and targeted communication.

In the end, 15 requests for opportunity and 4 requests for access to administrative data under Opinion 7A were approved.

The autumn commissions conducted other types of consultation under the aegis of the CNIS.

- A consultation held over Zoom, involving the three Chairs of the Enterprise Market Strategies, Financial System and Financing of the Economy, and Environment and Sustainable Development Commissions, with economists, researchers and professional bodies, to identify the priorities for the 2021 work programme for business statistics, which contributed to the selection of the CAM survey on Global Activity Chains and the expansion to the national level of the long-standing Aeronautics survey in the greater southwest region.

- In the social field, and to support finalising the questionnaire for the DARES survey on psycho-social risks ("RPS 2020"), a consultation led by the Chair of the Employment Commission brought together experts in this field, as an extension of the Employment Commission.

With regard to the population census, two exceptional consultations of the National Population Census Assessment Commission (CNERP) took place in June and November.

- A written consultation in June on the possible pooling of resources for the 2021 census of homeless people in Paris with the Night of Solidarity scheme organised by the Paris City Council (and which encouraged INSEE to pursue convergence) with a view to improving the coverage and quality of data on both sides and limiting collection costs.

- A consultation on 18 November, held over Zoom videoconferencing, which focused on the arrangements for conducting the 2021 census survey and contributed to the decision to postpone the 2021 census survey to 2022, which will be discussed by Jean-Luc Tavernier.

As part of the consultation process, the seminar on the questionnaire and dissemination of the population census

took place on 7 October.

This seminar was held face-to-face, at the Bercy Conference Centre, and by web-conference accessible simultaneously. The face-to-face session was limited to 22 people, but the remote, web-conference session was very well attended, with 130 people connected. This seminar, organised with INSEE, was a follow-up to the CNIS 2011 report on the dissemination of the statistical results from the population census and to the 2013 report on changes to the census questionnaire.

Discussions revolved around the different items on the agenda, including the changes to the individual questionnaire, possible changes to the housing sheet, with a focus on households' digital equipment.

Some of the proposals for changes are in line with work in progress at INSEE, in particular the transformation of sub-municipal dissemination to make it more accessible and effective, the introduction of dissemination at the 200-square-metre grid level, and the European request for dissemination at the one-square-kilometre grid level. Other suggestions provide further food for thought, such as the demand for geolocalised data, the matching of the census with other sources (FILOSOFI and the employment survey), the demand for multiscale data for understanding and monitoring social and economic phenomena at different scales, and the need for analysis and commentary on local data in addition to the accessible data tables.

A colloquium on panels and cohorts was planned for 24 November, for which 250 participants had registered. This colloquium had to be postponed to a later date in 2021. Much is expected of this colloquium for the future work of the CNIS, in particular in terms of increasing transparency for users around numerous statistical operations now carried out without surveys but solely by means of matching longitudinal administrative sources.

1.2) The other aspect of the CNIS approach involved supporting changes required to the information system so that producers could quickly provide insights into the health, social and economic consequences of the pandemic, particularly at the time of the first lockdown.

1.2.1) This resulted in the CNIS issuing urgent notices of opportunity on new surveys according to a procedure provided for in Article 2 of the Decree of 20 March 2009 on the organisation and operation of the CNIS, which states: "In an emergency situation recognised by the President of the CNIS and after receiving the opinion of the Chair of the relevant thematic commission, a survey may be conducted, even in cases where it has not been included in the year's programme, after it has been submitted to the Quality Labelling Committee with a view to obtaining the approval provided for in Article 2 of the Law of 7 June 1951."

This provision was activated for four surveys:

- The DARES ACEMO-COVID flash survey
- The Monthly Household Economic Outlook Survey (CAMME)
- The EPICOV survey, jointly managed by the DREES and INSERM
- The INSEE survey on the impact of the health crisis on the organisation and financial situation of companies.

The descriptions of these surveys, the decisions of opportunity and the notices of review issued by the Quality Labelling Committee were published online on the CNIS website in the usual way, before the fieldwork was carried out, within a very tight timeframe. This timeframe ranged between one and two weeks, from the initial contacts with the producers to the launch of the fieldwork, with all the documents being published online beforehand. These emergency procedures were announced in the News section of the CNIS website. Furthermore, a newsletter containing all the procedures for the first three surveys was sent to all contacts.

1.2.2) In addition to these urgent notices of opportunity for new and one-off surveys, several ongoing notices of opportunity were modified at the request of producers, either to take into account the addition of a COVID-19 module to existing surveys or to postpone surveys by one year.

• The surveys expanded by adding a module or questions specific to COVID-19 included:

- the INSEE survey on household resources and living conditions
- the one-off module on accidents at work and other work-related health problems, which is the add-on module to INSEE's 2020 Employment survey
- the DARES "Apprenticeship Pathway" survey
- the DEPP 2020 Family survey of the 2011 panel.

Finally, several notices of opportunity were extended to accommodate postponements of surveys from 2020 to 2021. This is the case for eight surveys within the SSP, two in the business field and six in the social field, some of them involving COVID-related changes to their questionnaires.

Overall, users of statistics – including in particular members of the CNIS Bureau – were unanimous in their praise of the SSP's significance and responsiveness throughout 2020.

The new surveys and sources used by the SSP to provide insights into the crisis situation and its impacts clearly demonstrated the contribution that official statistics make to informing decision-makers and the public. The

researchers' representatives also thanked the producers and the Statistical Confidentiality Committee for lifting the restrictions on accessing CASD data from home during the lockdown, thereby ensuring that researches could continue their work.

During this period of dynamic statistical production, the CNIS has also shown great flexibility and responsiveness in fulfilling its role of consulting with and supporting the Official Statistical Service in its initiatives. These successful and effective adaptations to current operations warrant being continued on a more permanent basis. The CNIS guidelines for 2021 have been updated to reflect this.

2) Activity of the Commissions

In the social field:

The Employment, Skills and Income from Work Commission investigated statistical measures of the pressures on the labour market with, in addition to a presentation of the various sources available (presented by the producers INSEE, the DARES and Pôle Emploi), a presentation of the forward-looking exercise on trades and qualifications (PMQ), presented by France Stratégie, and the perspective of a sectoral user of data produced by official statistics, the French Union of Metallurgy Industries and Trades (UIMM).

The CNIS emphasises the wealth of available sources. However, due to the number of sources and the diversity of their respective approaches, it recommends that a map be drawn up to facilitate the appropriation of data and encourage consistency across sources.

The Public Services and Services for the Public Commission addressed matching during the spring session and the progress of the statistical information system on pensions during the autumn session.

Regarding matching, the CNIS welcomes the initiatives presented by the Official Statistical Service's producers, including the initiative to rationalise the matching chain led by INSEE, which should lead to the development of new statistical sources in a harmonised manner and within a reasonable timeframe, and the generic tool made available to the public through the "InserJeunes" project, led jointly by the DEPP and the DARES, which performs the statistical matching of files on directly identifying data.

In the interests of harmonising methods and increasing transparency, the CNIS would like the SSP to ensure greater visibility of future matching.

The review of the statistical information system on pensions showed that the system has been significantly improved since the last Commission on this subject in October 2016, particularly in terms of changes and improvements to surveys and studies.

In particular, the CNIS highlights the various bridges created between data producers and the synergies between approaches. It encourages the implementation of tools that provide an overall view of the careers of insured individuals, such as the single career management directory (RGCU) or the creation by the CNAV of a database of retired employees and self-employed people.

It considers, however, that existing administrative data are an under-used source and would like to see their statistical use increased, for the benefit of both statistics and management.

The Demographics and Social Issues Commission examined the statistical monitoring of the elderly, defined as those over 80 years of age. Population growth is highest in this age group.

It has been noted that while the population census provides detailed information on the number of elderly people and how this is changing, general population surveys provide little data on the elderly, partly because of the size of the samples and partly because some of them live in care homes.

The CNIS therefore encourages existing projects that match management data from the various residential care facilities to describe the population of dependent elderly people.

To monitor the elderly population as a whole, the CNIS recommends that this population be appropriately represented in general population surveys.

In the economic and financial field:

The work of the Enterprises and Market Strategies Commission focused on the statistical system used to measure energy consumption by businesses and, more generally, the carbon footprint of the production system.

The work highlighted the complementary approaches of inventories, on the one hand, which measure the quantities of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted in France, and the carbon footprint, on the other, which measures the emissions associated with final domestic demand and takes into account the indirect emissions associated with the production of imported goods and services.

The calculation of the carbon footprint is based on a significant number of assumptions, in particular regarding imported emissions. Methodological changes are underway, and the SDES has initiated a consultation process on this subject with the various stakeholders concerned through a working group.

The CNIS strongly supports the setting up of this working group. It would like to be kept informed on a regular

basis of the results of the group's work.

The Financial System and Financing of the Economy Commission focused on recent developments in access to granular financial data, i.e. individual banking and financial information.

Making these data available raises two challenges for official statistics: access and international standardisation. In terms of access, the Banque de France and the CASD (Secure Data Access Centre) are working on a project to reconcile data access.

At the international level, the European Union's AnaCredit (Analytical Credit Datasets) project aims to store credit register data from the various EU Member States in a central data pool.

The CNIS strongly supports these initiatives. It would like to be kept informed of progress on work in this area, particularly on the investigation of legal issues relating to researchers' access to data and protecting data confidentiality during use.

In the environmental field:

The Environment and Sustainable Development Commission focused on assessing the cost of natural disasters. It has become apparent that the statistical machinery is currently rather poor in terms of assessing this damage, especially as new categories of damage are emerging.

There is therefore a need to identify areas at risk but also a need to anticipate future damage in relation to climate change.

The CNIS highlights the need to extend statistical work so that adaptation to climate change and its linkage with mitigation policies can be quantified in as much detail as possible. To ensure the current momentum continues, it recommends even closer collaboration between professionals in the sectors concerned and official statistics.

Following the recommendations of the CNIS working group report on the French version of the sustainable development goal indicators published in 2018 and the introduction of indicators at the sub-national level, territorial sustainable development indicators (ITDDs) were developed and have been available on the INSEE website since September 2020 at seven geographical dissemination levels. It is planned to update these indicators annually, but also to add additional indicators and a data visualisation tool to view them.

On territorial aspects:

The work of the Territories commission focused on data and the use of land and property prices. This work included the presentation of an exhaustive experimental database of the prices of property and real estate assets, compiled from five administrative sources.

The CNIS recommends that further work be carried out to make this database more reliable. More generally, it encourages multidisciplinary approaches to analyse how local property and land markets work.

Following the recommendations of the CNIS working group report on statistical data on local authorities in October 2019, which encouraged the implementation of a dedicated portal to consolidate, optimise and update the data available on local authorities, the "Open Collectivités" project, is being undertaken by the Directorate General for Local Authorities (DGCL) and its ministerial statistical office (DESL). The specific aim of this project is to set up a web portal to consolidate economic and social (especially financial) information and statistics on local authorities with a view to facilitating their re-use by improving transparency.

To conclude, the CNIS would like to outline the approaches it has adopted for 2021, in light of the observations made in 2020.

In view of the fragility of surveys, particularly face-to-face surveys, the crisis period has accelerated the SSP's use of new sources, whether big data sources or the exploitation of administrative data.

1) Regarding big data sources, it will probably not be possible to use them all on a permanent basis. However, the question of how to capitalise on the statistical work that uses them has been raised, and we have adopted as an approach the principle of making certain innovative statistical work permanent.

2) Regarding the use of administrative data, the potential of these sources now lies in thematic cross-referencing, via the matching of multiple sources, as is also encouraged in the CNIS 2019-2023 medium-term plan. The transparency of statistics derived from the processing of administrative sources must be equivalent to that of statistics derived from surveys.

The objective for the CNIS is to facilitate this transparency by informing the public about the statistical processing that will be carried out using these administrative sources and by expressing an opinion on their appropriateness, if necessary.

3) Lastly, the recent period has been marked not only by new work, but also by the availability of the results of this work via appropriate communication tools, such as summary dashboards (in particular those of the DARES or the SSMSI) or the use of the INSEE blog to communicate informally and provide commentary on the methods and standpoint of statisticians.

Generally speaking, all users appreciated the educational aspects that these communications provided. In the view of the CNIS, these educational efforts on official statistics must be continued to ensure they are easier to understand.

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