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Annual Report of the Official Statistics Authority 2019

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April 2020

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 the 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.

On 31 December 2019, 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 all professional independence 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 2019, the tenth year of existence of the Authority.

Decree No 2018-800 of 20 September 2018 amending Decree No 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 Jean-Éric Schoettl, 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

M. 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

Preface

This report has been written in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, which is causing heavy losses and has plunged our country into a major economic, financial and social crisis. The availability of economic, social and health statistics will be crucial for determining the conditions for recovery after the crisis and enabling the State to play its role in ensuring macroeconomic stabilisation and providing systemic insurance, in order to compensate for the loss of income of a large number of households and enterprises, and limit the irreversible damage this could cause to the French economy.

However, the production of these statistical data has become very complicated, despite the increased computerisation of the management of many surveys and the agile use of new data sources by statisticians. First and foremost, we should acknowledge the commitment of the Official Statistical Service to ensuring the continuity of statistical outputs and the timely production of statistics that are indispensable to short-term outlook diagnoses, while limiting the burden on respondents.

However, it would be unfortunate if this context were to overshadow the findings of this report, which notes that much progress was made in 2019, both in terms of output and in implementing the principle of the professional independence of official statistics.

Some of this progress, such as the changeover to scanner data for price index calculations, has been covered by the media. Other progress has been made in more internal, but nonetheless essential, aspects of the production process, such as advances in Quality procedures and metadata standards, but also in embargo and statistical revision practices.

Among these different advances, two publications – admittedly technical but promising major breakthroughs for the future – are particularly worthy of mention. These are studies that matched data, firstly between the Employment Survey and the monthly job-seekers' statistics (DEFM) on unemployment, and secondly, between the DEFM and the administrative sources used to measure employment. In fact, the availability of different data for the measurement of complex issues is usually beneficial. However, any differences between sources must be reconciled so that they are clearly seen as complementary. It is also important to identify their strengths and weaknesses, to understand any discrepancies between them, and to go beyond their standards in order to study comparative developments.

This type of exercise is therefore extremely valuable and should be repeated regularly, in this case to assess any changes to them. It should also be transposed to areas other than labour market statistics whenever problems of comparability or data reconciliation arise.

2019 also brought opportunities to measure progress made on the professional independence of official statistics, ten years after the creation of the Authority. In this respect, the decision by many ministries to rewrite their organisational texts was constructively used as an opportunity to clarify the implications of this principle for Ministerial Statistical Offices at this level. Indeed, as emphasised in the European Statistics Code of Practice: “institutional and organisational factors have a significant influence on effectiveness and credibility”.

Effective professional independence is an absolute prerequisite for the successful fulfilment of the official statistical system's mission, but there is no guarantee that the public will perceive it. In this regard, it should be noted that social networks are now putting confidence in public statistics under great strain. It is therefore crucial to bolster the Official Statistical Service's communications in order to raise its profile, publicise its outputs and meet the public's need for clarification. The actions undertaken in this area should be continued and consolidated.

The President of the Official Statistics Authority


A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Bureau", with a horizontal line underneath it.

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The Authority's opinion¹ on the production of official statistics

First of all, the Official Statistics Authority (ASP) notes that 2019 was marked by progress in many areas: business statistics, calculation of the consumer price index, local statistics, SSP Lab experiments, etc. These advances are the fruit of a general approach to mobilising innovation, which has also been extended to the use of new data sources, administrative data and the computerisation of surveys.

The Authority also notes the relevance of the subjects covered by the SSP in the light of current events, and its responsiveness to them.

Finally, very satisfactory progress appears to have been made in the “Quality” action plan drawn up following the 2014 peer review. In particular, the review carried out highlights major progress in Quality procedures, the Statistical Metadata Standard and more isolated, but still essential, improvements, notably concerning the formalisation of embargo and revision practices, which reflect the continuous improvement of processes.

However, four issues raised need to be noted, and require great vigilance.

Professional independence of the SSP

The first concerns the professional independence of the Official Statistical Service (SSP), and more particularly that of the Ministerial Statistical Offices (MSOs), which should be recognised as applying the principle of independence with the same rigour as INSEE, and are therefore worthy of the same trust.

Indeed, doubts are still frequently raised about their independence, as was the case for the Ministerial Statistical Office for Internal Security (SSMI) in the context of the Government's decision to abolish the National Observatory for Delinquency and the Criminal Response (ONDRP). In this respect, the ASP wishes to draw attention to the progress made since its creation in 2014 and the importance of internal security topics for official statistics, for which the "Living Environment and Security" survey is an essential output. Indeed, the ASP is responsible for lending its support to the SSP when doubts about its independence are wrongly raised by the media.

However, the MSOs need to focus on increasing awareness of how they carry out their missions in complete independence, which requires them to improve their communication on their statistical production. The clarity of their mission statement in the organisational texts of central government bodies also plays an important role, both for internal management and for the development of fruitful relations with other departments in the ministries, and with the public. Indeed, the transparency of missions and organisations is an important factor in building public confidence in official statistics.

In this regard, the simplification of procedures sought by the Government has not raised any major difficulties, but it does highlight the need for MSOs to make it clear at the regulatory level that in addition to the statistical scope covered by each MSO, their missions are carried out in accordance with the principle of independence, with INSEE providing coordination. In these circumstances, certain adjustments seemed to be required, in particular for MSOs that are not an Under-Directorate or a hierarchical entity with organic autonomy.

The decision to rewrite certain ministerial organisation decrees provided a timely opportunity to make these modifications. This decision was made by the Ministry of the Interior for its three MSOs (Internal Security, Immigration and Local Authorities), and also by the Ministry for Ecological and Solidarity Transition for the SDES (Data and Statistical Studies Department).

Customs will also incorporate these elements. This will constitute a major step forward since professional independence will now be an objective for all “small” MSOs, which are also designated producers of European statistics (“ONAs”).

¹ This opinion summarises the information presented in Part 1 of the Official Statistics Report in 2019.

Communication in response to controversies

The second point addresses the ever-increasing criticisms and controversies encountered, with the increasingly influential social networks targeting certain methodologies and results of official statistics. Although the SSP provides appropriate explanations for the issues raised, usually in a responsive manner, certain criticisms are becoming recurrent, such as questions about the discrepancy between the measurement and perceptions of purchasing power. As these are complex subjects, it is essential to adopt an educational approach. From this perspective, the ASP encourages the SSP to continue its efforts to modernise and develop its communication procedures. In particular, it approves of the introduction of a “blog” by INSEE to combat the spread of false or misleading information, and to help fuel public debate by striving to address an uninformed public.

However, the ASP will also closely monitor actions to raise INSEE’s public profile and improve confidence in economic statistics, noting that both were down in 2019 compared to 2018, albeit in a general context of strained confidence in institutions.

Adequacy of means

The third point concerns risks related to the adequacy of the budgetary means made available to the SSP for the performance of its missions.

Guaranteeing the resources allocated to INSEE is essential. On this subject, the Authority has welcomed the signature of the four-year contract of objectives and means by INSEE, the Secretariat General of the Ministries for Economics and Finance, and the Budget Directorate because it gives the Institute a sufficient degree of budgetary clarity.

The Authority also regularly highlights the need for the SSP to continue its efforts to identify and optimally exploit any possible productivity gains, which will enable it to operate within the imposed budgetary constraints, without jeopardising its missions.

For all that, the Authority observes that INSEE can still only conduct one “non-recurring” survey per year, and that it is increasingly struggling to find external sources of funding for household surveys. The situation is even more worrying for certain MSOs, especially the Directorate for Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES), which will find it difficult to maintain its scope of activities if its financial and human resources continue to be reduced.

Statistics and local authorities

Lastly, with regard to an issue raised by the Authority on several occasions – concerning the dearth of statistical output on local authorities – the Authority endorses the recommendations made by the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS) working group established at its request: to increase the awareness and visibility of the existing statistics on local authority data, create a dedicated portal, and identify and provide information about local public-sector enterprises. It also endorses the request for the active participation of local authority representatives in efforts to improve knowledge of these local authorities’ data, with a view to developing a clear, robust and long-lasting statistics reference framework pertaining to their realities and actions. It stresses the need to act upon these recommendations without delay.

The Authority's opinion² on compliance by the official statistical service with the European Statistics Code of Practice

The Official Statistics Authority emphasises that, in general, the entire Official Statistical Service (SSP) complies with the principles of the European Code of Practice. In particular, the Authority's analyses of the various controversies did not reveal any breaches of the Code. The implementation of the Quality Plan resulting from the 2014 peer review is driving progress.

Principle 1: Professional Independence

In 2019, the Authority noted numerous criticisms or controversies that were liable to undermine the professional independence and credibility of the SSP.

Concerning the question of the independence of internal security statistics linked to the decision to abolish the National Observatory for Delinquency and the Criminal Response (ONDRP) by 2020, and its consequences for the future of the “Living Environment and Security” (CVS) survey, the Authority considered that supporting those components of official statistics which, in its view, have been wrongly called into question by the media, was consistent with its role.

It therefore issued the following judgement:

“Following the Government's decision in principle, made in the context of the rationalisation of administrative structures, to abolish by 2020, in its present form, the Institut de Hautes Etudes de la sécurité et de la justice to which the ONDRP is attached, some fears may have arisen concerning the possible implications of this decision for the long-term future of the "Living Environment and Security" victimisation survey, or for the independence of information about internal security produced by official statistics.

It is not appropriate for the Authority to pass judgement on the organisational choices made by entities that do not belong to the Official Statistical Service as defined by Law No 51-711 of 7 June 1951, which organises official statistics: INSEE and the Ministerial Statistical Offices. However, the public needs to be reassured that the design, production and dissemination of official statistics are carried out in complete independence. This principle of professional independence is enshrined in the law and structures the regulations in force. (...)

In this general context, the Official Statistics Authority wishes to point out that:

- the CVS survey is an official statistics survey that has been carried out by INSEE since the outset (<https://insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/source/serie/s1278/>). This survey, which makes an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of delinquency and the perception of insecurity, especially because it provides knowledge about facts that have not been reported to the police or gendarmerie, cannot be abolished. This does not prevent it from changing, like any statistical survey, in order to improve its accuracy or effectiveness or to better identify the social phenomena concerned, but – as for any statistical survey – any change to this survey needs to be reviewed by the CNIS (National Council of Statistical Information), which is responsible for consultation and dialogue between the producers and users of statistics.

- official statistics has been organised to ensure proper coverage of the field of internal security by creating a dedicated MSO in 2014, under conditions approved by the Official Statistics Authority. On 3 October 2019, in the context of the expansion of its activities, the SSMSI (Ministerial Statistical Office for Internal Security) obtained a favourable opinion from the CNIS to conduct the “Gender and Security” survey (GENESE) – a general population survey defined at the European Union level in order to implement Article 11 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and to provide reliable and comparable statistics on gender-based and sexual violence.

² This opinion summarises the information presented in Part 2, relating to the Official Statistical Service's compliance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

Regarding the controversy that arose with the Minister for Urban Affairs and Housing, over INSEE's estimate of the 2018 poverty rate in the context of the personalised housing aid (APL) reform, the Authority first approved the clarifications made by INSEE's Director General in his letter to the Minister. However, the Authority made a point of meeting with the Minister's Chief of Staff on this subject, to explain the methodological choices on which the statistical analysis of inequalities is based, and to dispel any suspicions of methodological bias. During this interview, the Authority observed:

- on the one hand, a need for education on the rationale behind the calculations of income poverty rates before and after transfers, and on the manner in which they are supplemented by "Living Conditions" surveys, bearing in mind that this is an elaborate architecture designed in response to methodological problems that are not always perceived by the public;

- on the other hand, the need to explain that although official statistics are intended to inform choices, they cannot be expected to directly provide results on the impacts of reforms in contexts in which multiple factors are driving change, especially when these reforms combine transfers and accompanying regulatory measures whose outcomes depend on the reactions of markets or economic players. Specific impact studies, which fall within the scope of public policy evaluations, are required in this case. Statistics contribute by providing increasingly rich data, but the specific advisory and evaluation activities are of a different nature, although they share the requirement for rigour.

Departments that carry out both types of activities must endeavour to show that they are committed to observing the rules of best statistical practice at all times, because the public cannot conceive of the same department respecting or disregarding these rules depending on the subjects it covers. At the same time, they must clearly inform the public about the specific studies they carry out in order to identify or shed light on projects to reform statistical production.

In this respect, the controversy over the estimation, by Pôle Emploi (the French unemployment agency, which operates outside the SSP but contributes to the production of quality-labelled unemployment series), of the share of jobseekers likely to receive a net monthly allowance that is higher than the average net monthly salary earned during the period of affiliation³ is particularly pertinent.

Indeed, the controversy over this subject developed without the publication of a sheet describing the method of calculation and explaining to the public that this was a specific study commissioned by the Ministry of Labour. Nevertheless, this sheet could have provided even further clarification, to enable the public to fully understand the differences between the chosen concepts of replacement rates and the results already published by the Official Statistics Authority on unemployment benefits.

In view of what is at stake, the Authority encourages those responsible for official statistics in this field to specify the additional results that may be incorporated, and the conditions under which the principles of relevance, consistency and comparability, accessibility and clarity attached to them are fully ensured.

The Authority also monitored the controversy created by two Members of Parliament who were appointed by the government to conduct a mission on social security fraud. However, it did not intervene, firstly because the subject concerned an INSEE mission that was not related to statistics, given that there could only be an indirect link with statistics through the general credibility of the Institute, and secondly, because an appropriate response was provided very quickly, with the publication of a press release by the three partners involved in this controversy: the SSD, the CNAM, and INSEE, which cleared up any ambiguity in this regard.

Principle 3: Adequacy of resources

In its deliberation issued during its meeting on 27 March 2019, the Authority "*welcomed the signature of the contract of objectives and means between INSEE, the Secretariat General of the Economic and Finance Ministries and the Budget Directorate. Indeed, in its 2017 report, the Authority had expressed concern that the effort required of INSEE in terms of the annual reduction in its number of employees could undermine its ability to fulfil its mission of objectively informing the public debate*

³ This is known as a "monthly" replacement rate since benefit amounts are based on the period of activity rather than solely on the number of days worked.

and clarifying public and private choices. It also stressed the need for long-term visibility on jobs in order to manage long-running projects, and therefore advocated the signature of multi-annual agreements describing the objectives set and the resources allocated in the medium term. The four-year multi-annual contract signed in 2019, while recognising the professional independence of INSEE, provides the budgetary clarity that the Institute requires.” From the Authority's standpoint, this four-year contract helps to reinforce INSEE's professional independence.

However, regarding the programming of household surveys, the Authority notes that INSEE is still only able to conduct one additional survey per year, on top of its recurring or contractually scheduled surveys.

It also notes that it seems to be becoming increasingly difficult to find external sources of funding for national household surveys⁴ if they are not based on European regulations, especially from public partners which are feeling the effects of their budgetary constraints, particularly the MSOs.

The ASP also notes a deterioration in the budgetary situations of certain MSOs, including the DREES. This context has aroused considerable concern.

In a report published in 2018, the Court of Auditors had drawn attention to the fragility of the DREES' financial and human resources in relation to the diversity and scope of the subjects covered by this MSO. If its workforce continues to be reduced at the same pace as in 2018 and 2019, the DREES will be unable to maintain its current scope of activity. The Authority points toward the major risk of numerous public health operators conducting an increasing number of partial surveys because they have more generous budgets.

However, in the current household survey context, the Authority is pleased to note the efforts being made to republish surveys that are still in very high demand.

INSEE has indeed begun to reflect on a possible reissue of the 2012 “Homelessness” survey, by examining relevant methodological changes to this survey.

To facilitate its future implementation, the SDES will oversee the performance of an “intermediate” housing survey in 2020, while working on the development of a new collection protocol requiring fewer investigators, in preparation for a Housing survey that could be conducted between 2023 and 2024.

The Authority encourages the SSP to keep seeking ways to optimise the use of its resources, such as the possibility of staggering partners' funding for household surveys over several budget years, linking new modules to existing surveys, reducing sample sizes, etc.

It urges the SSP to identify productivity gains in its activities that could enable it to meet the budgetary constraints without jeopardising its missions.

Principle 4: Commitment to quality

The ASP welcomes the 2019 review of the Quality action plan, which reflects the very satisfactory progress made in the work carried out by SSP as a whole since the last peer review.

It strongly encourages the process of optimising the preparations for the next peer review in 2021, with the firm belief that these reviews are a powerful development driver for the SSP, in compliance with all the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity

The Authority noted an embargo breach of government origin in 2019, concerning the third quarterly national account estimate for Q4 2018.

⁴ This does not apply to surveys whose regional scope extends to the French Overseas Departments (DOM).

Following this embargo breach on 26 March 2019, the Authority approved INSEE's proposal to align the embargo-lifting times for all indicators that are scheduled for release on the same day in order to avoid the recurrence of such an incident.

Principle 11: Relevance

Regarding the results of surveys conducted on INSEE's image as perceived by the general public and visitors to the insee.fr website, the Authority notes that although the Institute's reputation remains high, it is down by 3 points on 2018, that public confidence in economic statistics is also slightly down, and finally, that the impression of independence from political power is the subject that receives the lowest approval level from Internet users visiting the site.

The ASP will be closely monitoring actions designed to bolster INSEE's reputation and confidence in its main economic indicators. As for the feeling of independence from political power, the Authority will be doing its utmost to convince the public of the separation between statistical matters and politics.

Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity

The Authority commends all of the SSPs efforts to modernise its means of communicating with all audiences: redesigning websites, increasing and professionalising the presence of services on social networks, increasing its use of videos, entering into partnerships with specialised media, targeting young audiences, etc.

The Authority appreciates the SSP's role as a provider of expert advice, with the ability to meet the needs of public players, often within very short timeframes.

It encourages the SSP to continue its efforts, as the rapid rise in the number of distribution channels requires ever-increasing vigilance and responsiveness at a time when the media are being invaded by "fake news" and having to quench the thirst for immediate information. In a digital world that is increasingly permeated by a culture of doubt, the Authority believes it is essential to "prove what we say and justify what we do" in order to "make ourselves understood" by users, whoever they may be. Consequently, the ASP approves of INSEE's introduction of a "blog" with a view to curbing the spread of false or misleading information, and helping to fuel public debate by striving to address a lay public.

1. Official statistics in France in 2019

1.1 Overview

To celebrate its ten years in operation, the Official Statistics Authority held a colloquium on 27 November 2019. This anniversary provided an opportunity to exchange views on two issues: the professional independence of official statistics in France and the conditions for establishing confidence in official statistics. The Authority's main activities since its inception were presented and put into perspective with the key issues related to these two themes.

The Official Statistical Service (SSP), whose missions include collecting the data required for the production of its disseminated results, producing statistics that inform the public debate, and analysing detailed figures, was particularly innovative in 2019 in terms of its statistics, studies, working methods and public relations, in an effort to remain in tune with current societal debates.

Advances and innovations in the production and publication of SSP statistics

Without aiming to be exhaustive, numerous advances and innovations can be highlighted in 2019:

- the first-ever publication of structural business activity statistics according to the economic definition of an enterprise, to provide a more relevant vision of the French productive fabric,
- using retailers' scanner data to replace some of the prices recorded by investigators in consumer price index calculations,
- disseminating statistical data at the grid level for the precise observation of the population in highly targeted geographical areas,
- shorter publication lead times: at INSEE, with the publication schedules for the quarterly national accounts and for the years of dissemination of several key figures on immigrant and foreign populations being brought forward, at the DREES, with the production of the provisional version of the social protection account being brought forward in response to a request from Eurostat,
at the Local Authority MSOs, with the publication of the preliminary report for the Observatory of Local Government Finances and Management being brought forward,
- innovative statistical experiments conducted by the SSP Lab, in charge of Research and Development for the Official Statistical Service.

Repercussions on SSP governance

Firstly, the Prime Minister's Circular of 5 June 2019 on the transformation of central government, providing for the limitation of the provisions of organisational orders to those that are strictly necessary vis-à-vis the requirements of the Decree of 15 June 1987 on the organisation of central government departments, has implications for the functions and conditions for the exercise of a certain number of Ministerial Statistical Offices. This increases the importance of the ASP's request for MSOs to specify their missions, carry out their missions in accordance with the principle of professional independence and recognize INSEE's coordinating role.

Secondly, the Government's announcement of the abolition of several observatories, or their merger with other bodies in the context of the rationalisation of administrative structures, has repercussions for the SSP's activities, particularly in terms of handovers.

Increasing investment in new data sources

At the European level, National Statistical Institutes are cooperating to explore the potential of big data – especially mobile phone data – in statistical production, in order to gain long-term access to these data. At the national level, innovative methodological work has been undertaken with a view to testing the use of scanner and bank-card data for the production of flash estimates of turnover indices in the retail trade, and to consider their use in wholesale trade price indices (trade margins).

INSEE is also involved in a MobiTic research project that has been selected for funding in the framework of the French National Research Agency's generic research projects, geared towards producing indicators of people's presence and mobility by combining recent mobile phone data (including signalling), other digital data and traditional data.

1.2 The main progress made by the Official Statistical Service (SSP)

- *A more relevant vision of the French productive fabric for economic analysis*

Since 2013, INSEE has adopted the definition of enterprises in the economic sense for the compilation of annual business statistics. This approach is consistent with the Law on Modernisation of the Economy (LME) and a European regulation.

For the first time, in accordance with the commitments made to Eurostat, data on the accounting and financial characteristics of enterprises in 2017 will be exclusively disseminated according to this approach.

For many years, statistical institutes in Europe, including INSEE, used a definition of enterprises in the legal sense: an enterprise was defined as any "legal unit" – i.e. any entity with a SIREN registration number – but this vision is becoming increasingly irrelevant as more and more enterprises are being bought out and consolidated, or are creating subsidiaries. However, legal units with no decision-making autonomy can hardly be considered as fully-fledged enterprises. Corporations and subsidiaries of groups have therefore been wrongly qualified as enterprises, even if they have been established on an intra-group basis, with transactions carried out within the group.

A CNIS working group has been set up to support the new approach to disseminating structural business statistics. It submitted its report in October 2019⁵.

INSEE now disseminates the accounting and financial characteristics of enterprises after removing irrelevant intra-group flows, which may previously have altered the vision of the economy.

This definition, which is more relevant in terms of economic analysis, will improve the understanding of the productive fabric and its transformations.

INSEE Résultats "Caractéristiques comptables, financières et d'emploi des entreprises en 2017" ("Accounting, financial and employment characteristics of enterprises in 2017) and the associated key figures were thus published on the insee.fr website on 18 October 2019. This dissemination was accompanied by a [methodological document](#) explaining this new approach. [Press sheets](#), containing infographics and question & answer sections, were also published online.

- *The use of mass retailers' scanner data to calculate the consumer price index*

Since January 2020, scanner data provided by mass retailers have partially replaced prices recorded by INSEE investigators for the calculation of the consumer price index (CPI) (corresponding to 11% of the index). The prices replaced in this way are those recorded in the scope of food, cleaning, and health and beauty products purchased in supermarkets, hypermarkets and multi-store outlets in Metropolitan France.

When compared with the results of the traditional CPI, published on a monthly basis, those of the CPI incorporating scanner data are very similar. The index produced with scanner data is more accurate and the product coverage more comprehensive. In addition, scanner data enables the integration of special offers that did not apply to all consumers.

5 <https://www.cnis.fr/instances/groupe-de-travail-diffusion-des-statistiques-structurelles-d-entreprises/> .

- ***Statistics located at the most detailed geographical level, based on new gridded data***

INSEE provides socio-economic information on 28 million households and disseminates this information at different levels, including on the smallest scale: that of a 200-metre grid.

These local statistics enable the detailed observation of the socio-economic situation of the population in very precisely targeted geographical areas.

These new data are derived from the FILOSOFI system, which was implemented to provide indicators of living standards, inequality and poverty at the local, infra-departmental level. The data relating to 2015 were published on the insee.fr website in June 2019, in the form of downloadable databases enhanced with maps. In addition to the databases available on the INSEE website, information can be viewed directly on a map or an aerial view via the National Geographic Institute (IGN) Geoportal and, in part, in INSEE's local statistics area.

Tests have been carried out to ensure the robustness, consistency and confidentiality of the data produced. The system may be further enhanced with data from the population census or other sources relating to the social sphere.

These data represent a valuable source of information to help anticipate inhabitants' and economic actors' needs and support the implementation of public policies.

- ***Reduction of release times by bringing forward the publication schedule***

Since Q2 2019, INSEE has simplified and brought forward the publication of quarterly national accounts: agent accounts (household purchasing power, corporate margin rate, quarterly public deficit) are now available 60 days after the end of the quarter, instead of 85 days previously.

Information received after 60 days is incorporated into the first estimate of the next quarter. This new schedule is based on the results of tests conducted since 2015, which have demonstrated the robustness of agent account estimates based on information known after 60 days.

In addition, INSEE has also brought forward the release years for several "Key Figures" publications on immigrant and foreign populations by two years. Consequently, the estimates for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 were released in June 2019.

At the DREES, the production of the provisional version of the social protection accounts has been brought forward in response to a request made by Eurostat. It is based on a renewed methodology using additional extra-accounting data.

At the Local Authorities MSO, the publication of the preliminary report for the Observatory of Local Government Finances and Management in June 2019 was brought forward by more than a month in relation to the usual schedule.

- ***Statistical innovations by the organisation responsible for developing Research and Development for the Official Statistical Service (SSP Lab)***

In 2019, three innovative experiments were conducted by the SSP Lab.

The first consisted in using a text field from the national register of associations to assign a field of activity to each association for direct use in the sample design of the Associations 2019 survey.

The second experiment enabled the collection, by Web harvesting, of the precise characteristics of electronic products in addition to their prices, in order to improve the monitoring of changes in prices at constant quality.

Finally, in collaboration with the Internal Security MSO, the third experiment set out to explore the potential of text-analysis methods for measuring the proportion of crimes and offences recorded by the Ministry of the Interior's security forces that relate to cybercrime.

1.3 Governance of the Official Statistical Service (SSP)

- *Indirect impacts of processes related to State reform on the functions and operating conditions of Ministerial Statistical Offices*

The Prime Minister's Circular of 5 June 2019 on the transformation of central government provides for the limitation of the provisions of organisational orders to those that are strictly necessary vis-à-vis the requirements of the Decree of 15 June 1987 on the organisation of central government departments. In particular, it is requested that entities below the under-directorate level be no longer mentioned in the organizational texts and that the missions of entities no longer appearing in the texts be omitted.

This text would imply that the missions of the eight Ministerial Statistical Offices ranked below the under-directorate level would not be covered by regulatory texts.

In December 2019, the ASP therefore decided to make the hierarchies of the MSOs concerned and the SGG aware of the implications of this government decision. It requested that for these MSOs, the organisational decree should clearly specify the MSO's missions (and mention the statistical mission as defined by the 1951 Law), while stating that the MSO carries 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.

The majority of the MSOs concerned have already included this information in their organisational decrees, including the three Ministry of the Interior MSOs, the Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO, the Agriculture and Food MSO, and the Youth and Sports MSO. Others, such as the Customs and Culture MSOs, have pledged to do so in the near future.

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

- *Abolition of observatories and commissions: consequences for the SSP*

As part of its rationalisation of administrative structures, the Government has announced the abolition of several observatories or their mergers with other bodies. This process indirectly affects the Official Statistical Service.

Abolitions of observatories

The *National Observatory of Poverty and Social Exclusion (ONPES)* will thus be merged with the National Council on Policies to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion (CNLE).

The remit of the ONPES includes helping to improve knowledge of phenomena related to poverty and social exclusion. An annual report and a monitoring dashboard on these themes were produced by the ONPES, based on data mainly produced by the SSP. The Observatory has also made a major contribution to knowledge of phenomena related to poverty and social exclusion by initiating research drawing on official statistics surveys.

The DREES is expected to publish the report on 2019 and to complete the study program approved by the ONPES board in 2019. It will continue its efforts to improve knowledge of these issues, in particular by developing panels of beneficiaries of statutory minimum incomes.

The announcement of the abolition of the National Observatory for Delinquency and the Criminal Response (ONDRP), linked to the abolition of its parent structure – the INHESJ⁶ – at the end of 2020, as a public institution attached to the Prime Minister's office, raises the question of the transfer of ONDRP's researchers

⁶ Institut national des hautes études de la sécurité et de la justice

and missions. One of the ONDPR's main missions is the collection of statistical data on delinquency. It has played an important role in disseminating the "Living Environment and Security" survey. The creation of the Ministerial Statistical Office for Internal Security (SSMSI) in 2014 and its consolidation have led to a redefinition of the respective roles of INSEE, the SSMSI, and the Observatory. This redefinition, also linked to the fact that INSEE no longer had the means to conduct the survey every year with its network of investigators, led to the decision to transfer the design of the Living Environment and Security (CVS) survey to the SSMSI as of 2022.

These decisions have raised questions about the independence of internal security statistics and the future of the CVS survey (see Chapter 2.2 on the principle of professional independence).

Abolitions of commissions

These changes also impact the accounts commissions. The Service Accounts Commission was defined in a decree on the National Services Committee. However, this committee is being abolished. INSEE will continue to produce and disseminate the current publications. The same problem arises for the Transport Accounts Commission, the Housing Accounts Commission and the Environmental Economic Accounts Commission. The General Commission for Sustainable Development (CGDD) proposes that the reports on the accounts concerned be examined by a corresponding thematic unit of a Commission for the Economics of Sustainable Development.

- ***Adoption of the Law on the Organization and Transformation of the Health System***

The Law on the Organization and Transformation of the Health System was adopted in July 2019.

The Health Law amends the French Data Protection Law by easing the obligations concerning official statistics in the health sector: the Official Statistical Service will no longer need authorisation from the French Data Protection Authority (CNIL) to carry out its processing. In this area, departments need to be particularly vigilant about analysing the impact of the planned processing operations on the protection of personal data, the recording of processing operations in the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and respect for individuals' rights.

The Law also provides for the extension of the National Healthcare Data System (SNDS) to all health data associated with an act covered by health insurance.

It has also created the Health Data Hub⁷. This structure dedicated to the provision of health data takes the form of a Public Interest Grouping (GIP), which takes over and extends the missions currently carried out by the National Health Data Institute (Institut national des données de santé). The DREES represents the SSP within this GIP.

An approval procedure for the hub is underway to enable the launch of the first projects already selected in H1 2020.

- ***Handover of statistical production and tourism studies to INSEE***

As part of its transformation, the Directorate General for Enterprise (DGE) has significantly revised its strategy and positioning and wishes to withdraw from its statistical production activities and descriptive studies of tourism. The DGE formerly managed two survey schemes in collaboration with the Banque de France: the monitoring of French tourist demand (STD) by a monthly and annual survey system covering the "demand" section of the 2011 European regulation on tourism statistics, and the foreign visitors survey (EVE) system measuring the arrivals and overnight stays of foreign visitors.

Data obtained from the exploitation of these surveys are transmitted to Eurostat and included in publications.

⁷ See Chapter 3.4 for further details about the Health Data Hub

The DGE was also responsible for producing the tourism satellite account for Eurostat and the World Tourism Organization.

Given the DGE's desire to withdraw from these activities, INSEE and the Banque de France were asked to take over the surveys and related activities. INSEE agreed to take over the SDT survey and the response to the "demand" component of the European regulation, as well as the tourism satellite account, as of 1st January 2020.

INSEE is therefore in charge of France's overall response to European Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of 6 July 2011 on European tourism statistics. This strengthens INSEE's position as a player in the observation of this sector.

- ***Changes to the organisation of the MSOs***

Reorganisation of the General Commission for Sustainable Development (CGDD)

The CGDD, which includes the MSO for the Ministry for Ecological and Solidarity Transition, was reorganised in 2019. The MSO is only marginally affected by this reorganisation. It is now known as the "Data and Statistical Studies Department" (SDES). The IT and dissemination activities, which are currently carried out by one of the MSO's under-directorates, will come under a cross-cutting under-directorate that reports directly to the Commissioner. Statistical activities and interfaces with ministerial directorates are not impacted, given that the ministry's Communications Directorate reports to the General Secretariat rather than the CGDD.

On 17 November 2019, the ASP gave a favourable opinion on the draft decree amending the CGDD's organisational structure.

Reorganisation of the Ministry of Culture

Launched at an "Action Publique 2022" (Public Action 2022) Committee Meeting, and then given further impetus by the announcement of a Transformation Plan, the reorganisation of the ministry has become a government priority. A priority focus of this Transformation Plan has been defined, covering studies, evaluation and forecasting. The desire to transform these aspects is based on the observation that study functions are too widely dispersed throughout the business directorates, and on the need to strengthen the Culture MSO's resources in order to extend the scope of its activities.

These observations have fuelled discussions that should be concluded in 2020.

Changes in the missions of the Internal Security Ministerial Statistical Office (SSMSI)

In the wake of the IGA-IGPN-IGGN audit report on the recording of complaints by internal security forces and the reflections in progress within the Ministry of the Interior, an inter-directorate working group led by the head of the SSMSI has submitted an initial resource-pooling project following a hearing of all departments that perform related functions within the Ministry. This will increase the SSMSI's operational resources and extend the scope of its missions.

1.4 Surveys and publications

- *Activities, surveys and new publications on topical issues*

In the MSOs...

The DREES launched a number of important statistical operations in 2019. The Population Health Survey (EHIS 2019) of 11,000 households began in April. The survey of establishments and support services for the disabled covering the situation in 2018, and the survey of the inter-scheme sample of contributors (data up to 2017), were collected in 2019. New statistical operations were launched: a survey of foster carers, the 4th wave of the survey of Childcare Provision for Young Children, and the Autonomy survey.

In 2019, data from the DREES were incorporated into analyses and summaries relating to reform projects and interministerial strategies, including in the framework of the implementation of the “universal activity income” (*revenu universel d’activité*), pension reform, the Old-Age Solidarity Plan (*plan solidarité grand âge*) and the project to transform the health system. These analyses and summaries were then sent to the DREES’ three supervisory ministries.

In addition, in 2019, the DREES proposed for the first-ever estimate of the number of people covered by private insurance organisations according to specific social risks. This study highlights the extent of the phenomenon of multiple coverage of certain risks.

Finally, in response to a request made by Eurostat, the production of the provisional version of the social protection accounts was brought forward, based on a renewed methodology that makes greater use of extra-accounting data.

At the Department for Evaluation, Forward Studies and Performance (DEPP), 2019 stood out as a year marked by a greater number of publications than had initially been planned, but which responded to needs that emerged during the year, i.e. knowledge of salaries, the school climate, territories, schooling conditions (class sizes), pupils’ competencies, the multiple facets of digital technologies, knowledge of pupils with disabilities, teachers’ practices, and disparities according to social origin, gender or place of residence. The DEPP thus developed and published numerous analyses of pupils’ competencies in relation to the growing number of assessments it carries out: national and international assessments, sample assessments and exhaustive assessments, including its first-ever study of the competencies of pupils with disabilities in its panel.

In 2019, the DEPP also focused on the territorial dimension, which is essential to understanding education policies and their results, and also to their coordination. It developed a typology of rural and urban municipalities adapted to the education system, and developed a “remoteness from secondary schools index”, which summarises the notion of remoteness for a given institution.

In 2019, the DEPP helped further the knowledge of teachers' practices by disseminating the results of the OECD's international survey of teachers – TALIS 2018 – which it had conducted in 2018.

To develop a better understanding of the school climate in institutions, the DEPP conducted its first survey of secondary school personnel in the French national education system, in the spring of 2019. The purpose of this survey was twofold: firstly, to assess the school climate and working conditions in schools since the beginning of the school year, and secondly, to measure any harm suffered by staff, irrespective of whether such acts had been reported within the institution or to the academic, police, judicial or administrative authorities. This operation supplements the school climate and victimisation surveys of pupils in the first cycle (*collège*) and second cycle (*lycée*) of secondary education, which have been conducted by the DEPP at regular intervals since 2011.

Finally, the extension of the national pupil identification number (INE) to apprentices in 2018 was further extended to pupils in agricultural education in 2019.

In addition to its regular surveys, three aperiodic surveys were collected by the Statistical Office of the

Ministry of Agriculture (SSP, Department of Statistics and Forward Studies) in 2019. The first two surveys were designed to measure phytosanitary treatments in market gardening and in fruit, as part of the crop management survey system used to evaluate miscellaneous ministerial action plans (Ecophyto; Agro-ecology) and to monitor the European regulations on pesticides. The third survey concerned the fish farming and algaculture survey, whose previous edition was conducted in 2007 and covered a narrower scope.

Work on preparing for the 2020 agricultural census was stepped up. In terms of studies, the regular analytical activities on agriculture and the agri-food industries (innovative behaviour, use of information and communication technologies, energy consumption, expenditure on environmental protection, etc.) were accompanied by more novel activities: international comparisons of farm and agri-food industry results based on the European FADN and ESANE files, and new matches between tax sources and crop management surveys to analyse the links between phytosanitary treatments and economic performance.

At the DARES, 2019 was marked by the evaluation of schemes, the monitoring of labour market policy implementations, the pursuit of the reform agenda (apprenticeship, integration through economic activity) and the development of new surveys:

- Evaluation: “Territoire zéro chômeur de longue durée” experiment designed to eradicate long-term unemployment in given areas; “Emplois francs” experiment designed to stimulate job creations for disadvantaged young people.
- Monitoring the implementation of employment and training policies: rollout of new subsidised employment contracts (“Parcours emploi compétences”) and the Skills Investment Plan (“Plan investissement dans les compétences”).
- Reform of integration through economic activity and apprenticeships.

In 2019, the DARES launched a field survey on the implementation of Professional Equality Index and continued the activities carried out by the committee appointed to evaluate Labour Law orders (Comité d’évaluation des ordonnances sur la loi Travail) whose secretariat is provided by France Stratégie, the DARES and the Directorate-General for Labour. A second call for research projects was published in 2019 to finance evaluations of the impact of the orders on the labour market.

The DARES also carried out a study of seasonal workers in France, based, for the first time, on the use of the Nominative Social Declaration (DSN), which provided a novel snapshot of this population.

The Ecological and Solidarity Transition (SDES) MSO was assigned a new mission in 2019, with the CGDD taking over the management of the National Observatory for Energy Renovation. These duties, in addition to the management of the observatory, led to reflections on the feasibility and expediency of a new survey on energy renovation works in collective accommodation.

In 2019, the SDES signed a grant agreement with the EU on developing the periodic production of actual-date estimates of permits and building starts for non-residential premises.

The SDES launched its new “Focus” collection, based on the report on the state of the environment in France. The first edition, on Health and Environment, focuses on how environmental degradation affects human health. This joint publication provides an overview of the main sources of environmental contamination affecting human health. Without claiming to be exhaustive, it aims to provide insights to promote a better understanding of the major environmental health challenges for France in 2019. It meets international obligations on public access to environmental information under the Aarhus Convention.

Since 2019, the Higher Education and Research MSO’s activities have included monitoring, and even evaluating, the Student Success and Guidance (“Orientation et Réussite des Étudiants” – ORE) Law, which came into force in 2018. As such, the department has devoted significant resources to the “Parcoursup” scheme and to the measurement of student success. New indicators have therefore been examined, for reporting on the progressiveness of success, and with a view to enhancing the measurements (success by discipline, value added for BTS programmes, measurement of the ECTS ⁸, in particular).

⁸ Created in by the EU in1988, the ECTS (European Credits Transfer System) aims to facilitate the academic recognition of studies abroad, particularly in the context of Erasmus programmes.

On 13 December 2018, an order was issued on “experimenting with new ways of bringing together, grouping or merging higher education and research institutions”. The aim is to give higher education institutions the opportunity to experiment with new organisational and operational modes, new methods of territorial coordination and new means of integration, under the status of a temporary public institution (“établissement public à caractère temporaire”). This order calls for the commitment of the Ministerial Statistical Office for Higher Education and Research (SIES) to monitoring the shifting scope of the operators established in this way, and to the production of associated indicators.

In addition, a far-reaching measure promoted by the Prime Minister, the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) and the Ministry for Europe and European Affairs (MEAE) was launched at the end of 2018 and rolled out in 2019, with a view to attracting foreign students to France by offering differentiated tuition fees for non-European students and promoting the international mobility of young French people. The SIES provided substantial volumes of data and helped to validate projection models for the numbers of foreign nationals concerned.

In addition, the changes to the provisions for researchers and research professors that could arise from the new multiannual research programming law have placed great emphasis on studies of scientific employment, notably the work on retirement prospects, based on a new model developed by the SIES and applied to data from the State Pensions Department (SRE).

At the Justice MSO, the year was marked by the adoption of the 2018-2022 Programming and Justice Reform Law (“Loi de programmation 2018-2022 et de réforme pour la justice”) on 23 March 2019. This law covers civil procedure, criminal procedure and penalties, in particular, but also encompasses the organisation of the judicial system. Its implementation, in a staggered schedule, will fundamentally transform the Ministry of Justice's information system on which the MSO's statistical production is based. The MSO has participated in the preparatory work and is now involved in monitoring the implementation. It must also anticipate the impact of the changes on all statistical production chains, according to a tight schedule and with the implementation of the law not necessarily being accompanied by immediate adjustments to information systems. The 2018-2022 Programming and Justice Reform Law includes a very important point for the MSO, since it makes the latter a possible recipient of nominative data from the CASSIOPEE application, thus paving the way for the revival of the minors' panel that has been in the pipeline for several years.

The Internal Security MSO embarked on a major challenge in 2019, consisting in leading the reflections requested by the CNIS on adapting the overall arrangements for the annual “Living Environment and Security” survey (CVS) to the dual requirement of providing trend and structural data, in the context of INSEE's decision to withdraw from the current operation by 2022.

The issue of violence against women was enshrined as a major national cause in 2018. Consequently, the SSMSI focused on this subject repeatedly in 2019: publication of a new monthly indicator for recorded sexual violence; specific publications on sexism and conjugal violence; contributions and provision of key figures for the “Grenelle des violences conjugales” (Forum on conjugal violence) from September to November 2019; methodological comparisons with the Justice MSO on the issue of conjugal violence.

In addition, the experimental system for geolocating addresses at which crimes and misdemeanours are committed, introduced with INSEE's participation in 2018, produced its first deliverables in 2019: indicators for the neighbourhood police force (*police de sécurité du quotidien*) and urban policy, a publication on burglaries, and methodological work on heat mapping. These activities hold great potential in the field of territorial analysis.

In 2019, the Youth and Sport MSO, in conjunction with the DEPP, carried out a survey of pupils in the DEPP panel with the aim of developing a better understanding of activities carried out by young people outside secondary school, which are not currently covered by statistical information systems.

On the subject of youth-oriented studies, the MSO and the Civic Service Agency (ASC) conducted a survey of participants in the civic service scheme in 2019 in order to examine the profile of volunteers. Finally, the MSO published a new edition of the atlas of professional federations in 2019.

Also in 2019, the work of the Ministry of the Economy and Finance (DGFIP) MSO was influenced by far-reaching legislative changes affecting taxation, notably the gradual abolition of the housing tax on main residences, the introduction of taxation at source, the transition from the wealth tax (ISF) to a property tax (IFI) and the almost concomitant creation of a committee to assess the reform of capital taxation.

In addition to these legislative changes, 2019 was marked by a significant increase in the number of questions sent to the MSO by Members of Parliament, who are increasingly calling for access to a tool that would allow them to carry out tax simulations independently.

On the dissemination side, requests for access to detailed tax databases increased rapidly, both from researchers and institutions (INSEE, SSM, IGF and the Court of Auditors, in particular). This implies the acquisition of new databases, the compliance of processing operations with the GDPR concerning personal data, and the drafting of protocols governing the transfer of such data.

With regard to researchers, particular attention has been paid to the impacts of Brexit on the provision of tax data to researchers located in the United Kingdom.

Following the signing of the agreement on professional equality at the end of 2018, the Civil Service MSO has developed a tool for all civil service employers to enable the quantification of pay gaps between male and female civil servants (or equivalent employees).

The MSO has worked with INSEE on producing a publication on high pay levels in the civil service, which led Members of Parliament to request, in the Civil Service Transformation Law, the annual updating of the key elements of this publication in the annual report on the state of the civil service.

Within the Culture MSO, 2019 was marked by the exploitation of the ten-year survey on cultural practices, whose results are still eagerly awaited.

In addition, the MSO published its first-ever study of Arts and Cultural Education policies in 2019. The figures from this study now inform one of the two OVQ⁹ (everyday objects) used to monitor the Ministry of Culture's activities.

As a result of its hearing by the ASP in June 2018, the Local Government MSO ensured that it was able to produce the results relating to local authority finances for the past year at an earlier stage than in previous years. In this way, the first edition of a preliminary report for the Local Public Finance and Management Observatory (OFGL) in 2018 was published at the beginning of June instead of in mid-July. In another area, as an extension of the ASP's deliberations on the subject of local authority-related data, the MSO was involved in the activities put in place by the CNIS with a view to responding to the ASP's observations. Finally, and for the first time, the MSO published regional indicators on consolidated local authority accounts (also see Annexe 5).

In April 2019, the Defence MSO launched a new *Ecodef Références Défense* collection. The first edition looks back at the 15 *Rencontres Économiques de la Défense* (conferences on defence economics) which the MSO organised between the end of 2015 and March 2019. It summarises the MSO's findings on defence economics, divided into five topics: innovation, research and development in defence; the fields of defence; new technologies; the Ministry of the Armed Forces and its suppliers; the military profession.

For the Immigration and Integration MSO, 2019 was marked by the implementation of the Law of 10 September 2019 on controlled immigration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration. This led to the reform of the "Republican Integration Contract (Contrat d'insertion républicaine – CIR) which took place during the collection of the ELIPA survey (Longitudinal survey on the integration of newly arrived migrants - persons with a residency permit), which was conducted in the field in 2019.

2019 also stood out for the launch of a major investment in the Ministry's information systems (ANEF programme - Digital Administration for Foreigners in France), for which the MSO is the lead organisation for the "Analytics" component.

Much of the Foreign Trade MSO's work in 2019 was devoted to the implementation of Brexit.

⁹ A list of several dozen OVQs was drawn up in February 2019 to closely monitor the implementation of the Government's reforms in the field.

At INSEE, 2019 was also a particularly eventful year and specific publications were produced to inform the economic and social debate.

INSEE also published specific studies in early 2019, in response to the “yellow vests” social movement. The most widely consulted publications, which received numerous press mentions, include an *INSEE Focus* entitled “Sept salariés sur dix vont travailler en voiture” (Seven out of ten employees travel to work by car) and another *Insee Focus* on “Satisfaction dans la vie” (Satisfaction in life), as well as an *INSEE Première* on “Les hautes rémunérations dans la fonction publique” (High pay levels in the civil service).

In collaboration with five MSOs, Etalab, and the Banque de France, INSEE also published an *INSEE Référence* that is totally innovative in both content and form, and which brings together official statistical data reflecting the economic and societal changes brought about by digital technology.

In terms of content, this is the first time that such a broad spectrum has been studied: the book examines how households and businesses relate to digital technology.

In terms of form, the book is available in fully electronic version on the INSEE website, enriched with four videos of interviews with experts and directly integrated infographics.

The *INSEE Références* “Les entreprises en France” (Enterprises in France) is the first publication for the general public based on the economic definition of enterprises, resulting from the 2008 Law on Modernisation of the Economy. In addition to providing a general overview and thematic information sheets, the book explains the transition from the legal definition to the economic definition of enterprises, and how this change renews our picture of the production system.

In collaboration with six MSOs, CREDOC, CNAF, CREST and the Banque de France, the 2019 edition of the *INSEE Références* “France portrait social” (Social portrait of France), provides, inter alia, five insights into 40 years of changes in French society.

It also contains a special report on measuring purchasing power, which revisits the discrepancy between the measurement and perception of purchasing power, which is a recurrent subject of controversy.

The *Insee Références* entitled “La France dans l'Union européenne” (France in the European Union) focused, inter alia, on the subject of “Who is poor in Europe?”, examining poverty from two perspectives – from a monetary standpoint and according to material and social deprivation.

Lastly, a special edition of *Économie et statistique* was also published in late 2019 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the journal, and looks back over five decades of changes in such varied and significant areas such as income, employment, growth, and gender equality.

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

2.1 The European and international context

- *The next peer review*

The peer review schedule will be finalised in September/October 2020. France, which will take over the EU presidency in H1 2022, expressed its desire for the review of the Official Statistical Service to be conducted in 2021.

The main principles of the selected methodology have been adopted by the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC): the review will cover the 16 principles of the Code of Practice and will assess the progress made since the previous review in 2014.

It will be based on a self-assessment questionnaire (a shorter questionnaire will be proposed to the ONAs) and a peer visit. In each EU country, the review will focus on the national statistical service, i.e. the National Statistical Institute and a selection of other national statistical authorities (known as ONAs) that develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics. The National Statistical Institutes will decide which ONAs to choose for the self-assessment phase and for the peer visit, according to criteria currently being defined at European level. The National Statistical Institutes will send Eurostat a note explaining the reasons for their choice. There is unlikely to be any exhaustive dissemination of the responses to the questionnaires, but the ESSC has decided to compile a report on best practices at the European level based on these responses.

The European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) underlines the importance of the peer review in the recommendations for its 2019 report (see Annexe 12).

- *Two European framework regulations have been adopted and two other sectoral regulations are under discussion*

Over the past few years, there has been a recasting and an expansion of European legislation on statistics, with the preparation of framework regulations intended to cover the major fields of European statistics (enterprises, social issues and agriculture). These new legislative formats often provide for recourse to delegated¹⁰ acts, formally introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, which enable them to be supplemented or amended without recourse to the legislative procedure. The framework regulations, combined with implementing acts that describe their implementation, form the new legal basis for the statistical field.

One of the next major subjects relating to the European regulations is the revision of the population census regulations. Within Eurostat, there is a clear tendency to promote the use of administrative data and population registers.

The IESS (Integrated European Social Statistics) framework regulation covers seven major areas of the French Official Statistical System's household surveys. Published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 14 October 2019, the IESS must enable better coordination and harmonization between household surveys, improve the speed of the provision of poverty statistics, enable the use of modelling-based estimation methods, provide a legal framework for the monthly European unemployment indicator, and improve the comparability of quarterly and annual unemployment statistics. From INSEE's perspective, this regulation represents an improvement for European social statistics, even though requirements for the accuracy of statistics at the regional level will require investment in methodological developments (including small-area estimations). The framework regulation will enter into force on 1st January 2021 (and on 1st January 2025 for the "Consumption" and "Time Use"¹¹ fields). The first delegated acts and implementing acts for the IESS were adopted at the end of 2019.

¹⁰ Delegated acts reinforce the roles of the European Parliament and Commission while reducing the influence of the National Statistical Institutes, which nonetheless still have an important role to play, by supplementing and adapting the provisions of the framework regulations in response to the constantly changing demand for statistics.

¹¹ This "Time Use" field is not mandatory, unlike all the others.

The FRIBS (Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics) should facilitate a more integrated and harmonised approach, by replacing ten current regulations or sectoral decisions. This framework regulation must provide greater flexibility to promote adaptation to economic changes and new needs for business statistics. The FRIBS Regulation was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 17 December 2019. The FRIBS Framework Regulation will enter into force on 1st January 2021 (in 2022 for statistics on intra-Community imports and exports of goods). The delegated and implementing acts for the FRIBS will be adopted in H1 2020. Most of the changes requested in this framework regulation have already been anticipated and implemented in France. For the first time, this Regulation provides for compulsory transmissions of micro-data on intra-European trade in goods between national statistical institutes.

The regulation amending Regulation 862/2007 on migration statistics brings up to date the common and comparable legal framework for European statistics on migration and international protection. This 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. The text is expected to enter into force in Q1 2020 for effective application in 2021.

The European Statistical Programme 2021-2027 is incorporated into the regulations for the “Single Market Programme 2021–2027”. Annexe II of the Regulation lists the areas in which statistics must be produced, making a clear distinction between two categories of areas: those in which statistics are available and those for which feasibility or exploratory studies must first be carried out. Trialogues began at the end of October 2019 in an attempt to strike an agreement between the Council and Parliament, but were suspended in early December pending the finalisation of the multiannual financial framework.

- ***A revision of the Statistical Classification of activities in the European Community (NACE)***

Eurostat is considering a complete revision of the NACE, as the 2006 version which is currently in force is no longer fully adapted to the current economic context (e.g. concerning digital technology).

As part of its reflections, Eurostat launched a consultation of business associations at the European level in the summer of 2019. INSEE has adapted this consultation to the national level and approached the professional federations with which the Institute is in contact. In return, these professional federations have sent INSEE numerous proposals for revisions, which have been passed on to Eurostat.

Updates on this revision process will be regularly submitted to the CNIS “Enterprise and Market Strategy” Commission.

The majority of statistical institutes (including INSEE) have expressed strong reservations about the feasibility of carrying out a complete revision of the NACE in time for it to be fully operational in statistical operations and national accounting before the next change in the national account base, which is scheduled for 2024¹².

- ***An International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)***

Activities to enable the implementation of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes in the Official Statistical Service’s output is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

These activities involve INSEE, the two Justice and Internal Security MSOs, the Directorate of Criminal Affairs and Pardons of the Ministry of Justice, and the General Directorates of the Police and National Gendarmerie of the Ministry of the Interior.

The ICCS is expected to become the reference classification for the production of national statistics in the fields of insecurity, delinquency and penal response. Its use will facilitate international comparisons.

¹² At the European Statistical System Committee meeting of 12 February 2020, Eurostat understood this message and decided to remove this requirement for implementation in time for the next change in the national account base.

2.2 Compliance of the Official Statistical Service with the European Statistics Code of Practice¹³

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 Annexe 13).

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 no. 51-711 of 7 June 1951 and Regulation no. 223/2009.

Decree No 2018-800 of 20 September 2018, amending Decree No 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.

A number of controversies arose in 2019, which called into question the professional independence of official statistics or threatened to discredit it among its users.

A governmental decision in principle, made in the context of the rationalisation of administrative structures, gave notice of the abolition, by 2020, of the Institut national des hautes études de la sécurité et de la justice (INHESJ) to which the Observatory for Delinquency and Penal Response (ONDRP) is attached. This decision has been opposed by critics who have suggested that it could call into question the independence of statistics on internal security, adding that the same decision could jeopardize the Living Environment and Security" (CVS) victimisation survey, an official statistics survey currently jointly managed by the ONDRP, INSEE and the Ministry of the Interior's Ministerial Statistical Office on Internal Security (SSMSI) and whose procedures are due to change as of 2022.

The ASP intervened to defend the professional independence of the SSMSI (also see Chapter 1.3).

Another controversy concerned the quality of the maintenance of the National Register for the Identification of Natural Persons (RNIPP). The challenge came from a parliamentary mission appointed by the government to investigate tax evasion. Even though its report had not been submitted, a conference was held without INSEE's participation. The documents issued to journalists showed a lack of understanding of how the register operates, casting doubts upon the work carried out by INSEE. The parliamentary mission indicated that three million centenarians were registered in the RNIPP, each constituting risks of potentially fraudulent health insurance cards (*cartes Vitale*).

Within 24 hours, a DSS/CNAM/CNAV/INSEE press release was issued, explaining that the RNIPP is a civil status register, that deaths occurring abroad are not recorded and that the different social security funds have carried out their own checks and identified only 10 to 20,000 centenarians receiving benefits.

When questioned by the television news programme "20 minutes" in November 2019, about the reform of personal housing benefit (APL), the Minister for Urban Affairs and Housing expressed profound concern about a methodological bias in INSEE's estimate of the poverty rate for 2018. According to the Minister, this bias stemmed from the fact that it is not possible to assess the redistributive impacts of reforms such that of the APL on the basis of changes in the usual standard-of-living indicators after redistribution, since support measures for the reform were implemented, as was the case in 2018 with the reduction in the level of rents in social housing stock. However, INSEE had calculated two poverty rates for the flash estimates of the poverty rate and inequality indicators, published in October 2019. The first rate was calculated according to the methodological principles laid down at the European level, and increased by 0.6 points in 2018. This rise was partly explained by the drop in housing allowances in social housing stock in 2018, with standards of living not taking account of the equivalent reduction in rent. The second rate was calculated by neutralising the effect of the drop in APL in social housing stock, and in this case, there was a more moderate increase in poverty in 2018 (0.2 points). Clarification was provided in a letter from the Director General of INSEE to the Minister.

¹³ This report only mentions the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice that attracted particular attention during 2019.

Another controversy arose between Pôle Emploi and the UNEDIC unemployment scheme over the estimated number of jobseekers receiving an average allowance exceeding their average monthly salary (measurement of the net replacement rate). Indeed, the controversy over this subject was exacerbated by the absence of an information sheet describing the calculation method and explaining to the public that this was a specific study commissioned by the Ministry of Labour.

Principle Ibis: Coordination and cooperation

Coordination

The Official Statistical Service (SSP) is defined by French Law No 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 No 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 economy¹⁴, 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 No 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) No 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 statistics¹⁵ in the spirit of the amended European Regulation (EC) No 223/2009. These quality guidelines have enabled each MSO to draw up its own “Quality Roadmap”. These individualised roadmaps clearly set out the quality commitments for each MSO up to the end of 2019.

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 brings

¹⁴ *Who delegates its signature to the Director General of INSEE.*

¹⁵ 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.

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 in 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 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. Indeed, 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 No 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 (for further details, see Chapters 1.2 and 3.5).

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

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 contractualised, multi-year public budgetary management.

For 2020, the annual variation in authorised employment stands at -67 FTEs, including investigators, and remains stable with respect to the target set for 2019. Non-salary appropriations are down 7% on 2019 (excluding the lump sum census allocation).

Concerning MSOs

Since 2011, the DREES has lost a third of its budget in constant euros, and 12% of its workforce. This reduction in resources – particularly human resources – even though the European and national demand for the MSO’s services remains high, has only been absorbed through rationalisation efforts which are no longer effective, to the detriment of actions to promote decentralised offices, in particular.

At the Ecological and Solidarity Transition (SDES) MSO, 2019 was marked by mounting tensions on human resources and by the insourcing of activities that had previously been outsourced to external operators. Some of Customs MSO’s activities (including statistical reengineering) had to be postponed because of the resources allocated to the preparations for Brexit.

Principle 4: Commitments to quality

To close the 2014 peer review, INSEE sent Eurostat the results of the action plan defined in 2015 for the entire Official Statistical Service. This review highlights major advances in quality approaches, the Statistical Metadata Standard and specific improvements, notably in terms of the formalisation of embargo practices and revisions.

With regard to the progress made in Quality procedures, the objective of covering all statistical production is expected to be achieved in 2020; nine initiatives have been completed, four are in progress and six are planned for 2020. Collaboration with INSEE's Regional Directorates was consolidated in 2019 with the participation of Regional Directorates in national Quality procedures to define a map of the directorates' activities linked to the process repository.

A major project on the validation of aggregated data, derived from administrative data and surveys alike, is underway. This project sets out to avoid or minimize any production incidents, identify best practices, and issue recommendations in order to raise producers' awareness of the validation of aggregated data, including checks on consistency with external sources.

In preparation for the next peer review in 2021, and in line with its commitments, INSEE has redesigned the Quality pages on the INSEE website, insee.fr.

Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality and data protection

The "Access to public data" page on insee.fr was updated in 2019 to inform users that they must comply with the GDPR when using files containing personal data, and that they must declare their processing operations. Following the 2014 peer review, INSEE had committed to clarifying and publishing the conditions of access to micro-data files: "*Information about the special access procedures for each type of data, an exhaustive list of files that INSEE is responsible for disseminating and a link to partner sites (Quételet network and CASD) for other research data files, will be published on the INSEE website.*"

In addition, the current French legislation on confidentiality, which provides for the automatic lifting of secrecy in criminal cases and in cases relating to the heritage code (national archives), should be reviewed in order to bring it in line with the European Union legislation designed to increase confidentiality in criminal proceedings and inheritance law.

With regard to criminal proceedings, Article 6 of the 1951 Law on legal obligation, coordination and confidentiality in the field of statistics, refers to obsolete articles of the French Code of Criminal Procedure in matters pertaining to the lifting of statistical confidentiality. As the "special" laws take precedence over the General Code, the 1951 Law takes precedence over the Code of Criminal Procedure.

In the case of estates, the time limits for the lifting of statistical confidentiality have not been extended and remain 75 years of age for natural persons and 25 years for legal entities.

Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity

A breach of embargo concerning the third estimate of the quarterly national accounts for Q4 2018 was committed by the Minister for Public Action and Accounts (MACP) on 26 March 2019. The President of the ASP therefore questioned the Minister's former 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 MACP's commitment to the independence of official statistics, and recognised that, as such, compliance with the embargo rules was an absolute requirement to which there could be no exceptions whatsoever. Nevertheless, he wished to stress that a combination of circumstances needed to be taken into account in this case: "the fact that the embargo had just been lifted on Public Finance

data and that other macroeconomic data were under an embargo that was just over an hour longer.¹⁶

The President and the rapporteur of ASP met with his successor a few months later, who has shown an understanding of the problem, but has nonetheless been informed that such an incident must not happen again.

Principle 7: Sound methodology

A redesign of the Employment Survey

A redesign of the Employment Survey is currently underway at INSEE. This redesign places particular emphasis on adapting the questionnaire to enable greater consistency between countries in relation to the Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) regulation.

In France, the redesign also focuses on weightings and on the survey protocol, with the introduction of the Internet as an additional mode of collection for re-questioning.

The testing of multimodal collection was carried out in 2019. The pilot survey, which will cover one quarter of the current Continuous Employment Survey sample, began on 6 January 2020 under exactly the same conditions as the future survey.

The pilot survey should enable the estimation of the break in series caused by the redesign on the main labour market indicators – particularly the unemployment and employment rates – in order to prepare for the availability of the main backcasted series for the publication relating to Q1 2021. To this end, an additional oversample has been introduced in order to have a complete control sample available in Q1 2021. The pilot survey aims to secure the entry into force of the future survey in early 2021.

The recasting of zoning into urban areas and urban units

The recasting underway at INSEE concerning the definition of new zoning in the form of urban areas and urban units should be completed by early 2020. Zoning is revised approximately every ten years.

Urban units are defined as municipalities in which more than half of the population is situated in a continuous built-up area with at least 2,000 inhabitants. Continuity is defined in relation to buildings and as a distance of less than 200 m between buildings; the current definition – unchanged since 1962 – will be maintained, particularly in view of the many legal texts that refer to it.

Urban areas consider cities to be a zone of attraction for human activities. Urban areas as defined in 2010 consist of a centre, defined as an urban unit with more than 1,500 jobs, and a “peri-urban ring” corresponding to municipalities under the influence of this unit, with this influence measured by the number of commuter journeys.

Compared to the definition adopted in 2010, the 2020 definition of urban areas will change and be based on the European “functional urban area” concept defined in the TERCET Regulation (2016). The zoning derived from this new definition will be renamed as “urban zones of attraction” (*aires d’attraction des villes*).

This recasting of urban areas is based on the European “Cities” definition: the establishment of a centre based on the population density per kilometre grid, and then its catchment area based on commuter journeys. In addition to the 69 European functional urban areas associated with the “Cities” definition, INSEE has extended the method to define smaller centres based on the same density grid, but with lower population thresholds, and with an additional criterion of a minimum number of jobs (1,500) in the centre in order to neutralise exclusively residential areas. In the zoning of urban zones of attraction, the centres are supplemented by their catchment area as measured by commuter journeys.

¹⁶In fact, there had been two consecutive embargoes on the same day: the first at 7.30 a.m. for the first 2018 results of the national accounts of general government; the second at 8.45 a.m. for other macroeconomic data, including detailed results of the quarterly national accounts.

Principle 8: Appropriate statistical procedures

Following the 2014 peer review, INSEE undertook to publish its revision policy on insee.fr. This has been carried out since June 2019. The revision policy is 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.”

A protocol for announcing and communicating revisions¹⁷ has been developed: the protocol implements this policy in a more operational way. It provides a detailed description of the procedure for announcing revisions and for optimal communication with users when disseminating revised statistics. It is more specifically aimed at people responsible for the production of statistics subject to revision who want to or have to announce their revisions.

Principle 9: Non-excessive burden on respondents

INSEE will not be renewing the Retail Outlets Survey of legal units in the retail trade for shops and commercial handicrafts, which set out to collect information about the commercial area, turnover and the workforce of each establishment.

Access to the Corporate Real Estate Tax (CFE) database, its coverage rate in relation to the Retail Outlets Survey, the quality of the new data available and their annual frequency, mean that data from the survey can be replaced by tax data. This data must then be supplemented by an estimate of the turnover of establishments not included in the administrative sources (a quarter of the population) by mobilising other sources such as the nominative social declaration (DSN).

In addition, experiments with the use of scanner and bank card data planned by INSEE from 2019 onwards could, depending on their findings, lead to the eventual reduction or elimination of the monthly survey on the activity of food supermarkets.

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 DEPP, which are unable to produce these indicators at the desired level of detail.

In the agricultural field, after consultations with the agricultural profession, the publishers of private plot management software were contacted in order to assess the possibility of reducing the collection burden in crop management surveys. The aim is both to pre-complete certain sections of the questionnaire (the longest sections on treatments applied to plots) and to see whether these data could make it possible to increase the intervals between crop management surveys. An initial assessment of the available information is under way, with the matching of data derived from this software for a sample of farms participating on a voluntary basis, with data collected from the survey of arable crop management practices.

The availability of new administrative data sources will enable the Ecological and Solidarity Transition MSO to eliminate or streamline certain statistical surveys from 2020 onwards. For example, it has been decided to abandon the annual survey of electricity transmission and distribution, which will be replaced by the data collected under Article 179 of the Energy Transition Law. The annual survey of gas statistics could be discontinued in a similar manner (subject to further expertise). As for the annual survey of electricity production, it will no longer cover wind and hydropower (except in the case of self-consumption), due to the exploitation of data from the register of power generation facilities managed by RTE.

¹⁷ Revisions do not include corrections of production errors, which are carried out in a manner that is appropriate to the nature and extent of the correction.

Principle 10: Cost effectiveness

Online collections continue to be rolled out

The census collection in 2019 was conducted without technical difficulties. The non-response rate remained low at 3.9% and the online collection rate increased by 3.4 percentage points to 51.8% of dwellings and 60% of individuals. The changes underway seek to optimise online collections in order to reduce costs. The 2019 collection led to the implementation of computerised collection for non-main residences that were previously exclusively processed on paper.

2019 was also the first year for the collection of the Annual Sectoral Survey (ESA) (the largest business survey) via the INSEE online collection platform (Coltrane), concerning the collection of data for the 2018 financial year. This operation was a success, with an online collection rate of over 75%.

All business tendency surveys were also switched over to Coltrane in 2019. In 2018, this switchover had involved three initial surveys (surveys on property development, the building trades and the construction industry). In 2019, this changeover was completed for the remaining surveys (monthly surveys in industry, services, the retail trade, wholesale trade, and the quarterly industrial investment survey).

In 2020, the collection of the common core of the next agricultural census of 350,000 farms will be carried out by multimodal means.

The use of new administrative sources is increasing

In the health field, the DREES is continuing to exploit administrative data and data from matching activities, in particular for the development of social samples and the EDP (Permanent Demographic Sample) for Health, in an unprecedented operation to match data from the Permanent Demographic Sample with data from the National Healthcare Data System (SNDS), which will be widely used in the evaluation of the National Health Strategy and the ÉNÉAS panel (intended for monitoring the autonomy and accommodation pathways of elderly people), and for the transmission of “RI-insertion” data (individual transmissions for beneficiaries of the RSA (earned income supplement) allowance).

In 2019, to support the monitoring of the Baccalauréat examination reform, the DEPP exploited data from secondary school management systems in order to report on developments at the start of the 2019 academic year in terms of the choice of new options.

The DEPP and the DARES have launched a joint project (for the 2019-2021 period) to measure the professional integration of young people leaving apprenticeships or vocational training by creating a new information system derived from the matching of several sources (the two main sources being the DEPP’s student database sources and the DARES’ Workforce Movements (MMO) source). This project meets a pressing need for detailed knowledge of the integration of young people leaving the education system according to their type of training, with the aim of improving the management of training provision, and providing better guidance services for young people and their families. This future information system should eventually enable the dissemination of integration rates at the training establishment level (apprentice training centres and vocational colleges) provided that it covers sufficient numbers of students.

At the Ministry of Agriculture’s Statistical Office, as part of the preparations for 2020 agricultural census, many administrative files on the agricultural sector (files from the CAP, BDNI, CVI, MSA, INAO, IFCE, Resyral file on veterinary inspections, micro-BA tax files, etc.) were evaluated in order to enhance the registry of farms. Matching was carried out in order to more precisely define the scope of the farms to be surveyed, obtain variables that can be used to stratify the sample of farms that receive a more detailed questionnaire, and pre-complete certain variables of the agricultural census questionnaire in order to reduce the burden.

For the first time, tax files on actual agricultural profits were matched to the survey on arable crop management practices in order to analyse the link between phytosanitary treatments and economic performance. This exploratory work will be published in 2020.

At the DARES, DSN (Nominative Social Declaration) data are now exclusively used to reconstitute workforce movements (MMO) and produce temporary employment statistics as part of the co-production of payroll employment statistics with ACOSS and INSEE. The assessment of data, quality monitoring and the adaptation of information systems (automated statistical processing, dissemination) continued in 2019.

The DARES exploited the file derived from matching the historical file for jobseekers and the Employment survey (FH-EEC) in order to shed light on the discrepancies between the statistics on jobseekers registered at the end of the month (DEFM) and the ILO unemployment statistics derived from the Employment survey. In this way, it contributed to the publication of a study document and a dossier in the INSEE Référence document on Employment, Unemployment and Earned Income, both published in 2019.

In addition, the DARES now has regular access to matched data from the historical file for jobseekers and the file of declarations prior to recruitment (FH-DPAE), transmitted by Pôle Emploi. This was used for studies on returns to work, which, in particular, enabled the provision of tools for the production of local information on returns to work.

For the DGFIP MSO, the introduction of taxation at source in January 2019 has opened up several new opportunities to exploit administrative files for statistical production. The MSO uses the SACRE-SRE file which contains data declared by third-party collectors (net remuneration paid by third-party collectors to natural persons, rate applied for the month of payment, professional identifier of natural persons, etc.).

It also uses information contained in the “R-taux” reference standard. The data contained in this standard includes all data concerning the income tax rate (personalised rate, individualised rate, neutral rate).

To estimate the impact of the Low Emission Zone policy, according to their “Crit'air” air quality category, the SDES (Data and Statistical Studies Department) matches vehicle registration data and roadworthiness testing data. It also exploits data from the Banque Nationale on sales made by distributors of phytopharmaceutical products in order to obtain statistics on the use of glyphosate in France.

The Justice MSO exploits the APPI source (on the sentence enforcement, probation and integration), which covers the enforcement of prison sentences, in the context of the handover of statistics concerning the prison service to this MSO. It also collects judgments handed down by the criminal courts, criminal appeal courts and courts of assizes in order to study the grounds for sentences. Initial work was carried out on the Genesis source concerning the monitoring of people committed to prison in order to continue the resumed publication of prison statistics covering the scope of secure custody.

In 2019, the Defence MSO developed a statistical indicator to identify and analyse “*innovative*” suppliers of the Ministry of the Armed Forces based on fiscal and administrative sources and survey results.

The Higher Education and Research MSO has begun to exploit the data source derived from information systems covering civil service employees. Methodologies have already been developed in other ministries (including the Civil Service Ministerial Statistical Office) in order to devise a statistical monitoring system based on these sources.

Unprecedented activities were launched or completed at the Internal Security MSO in 2019: the first exploratory work based on the illicit online content reporting platform (PHAROS) for the measurement of cybercrime; publication of data on sexual violence recorded in public transport; efforts to devise appropriate indicators for evaluating the neighbourhood police force (*police de sécurité du quotidien*) based on offences that impact daily lives, as part of the Lab PSQ laboratory's remit.

At INSEE, the planned abolition of the housing tax on main residences has prompted the Institute to start looking for alternatives, in view of its key role in many outputs. Most of the solutions considered remain focused on the exploitation of tax-based databases.

The INSEE General Inspectorate is extending its long-term forecasting activities and honing its methods

In 2019, the General Inspectorate continued its methodological investigations by exploring two subjects in particular in greater detail: the quality of recommendations and the composition of audit files. In both cases, comparisons with the work of other inspectorates, and a historical analysis of the missions carried out, played a major role. As a methodological component, the use of international comparisons has also become more systematic.

Le courrier des statistiques magazine, launched in 2018, continued at a half-yearly rate, containing a greater number of articles with a strong educational orientation, several of which were of interest to the ASP: for example, the December issue contained an extensive report on European regulations, and an article on the use of scanner data to create the price index.

The missions were particularly varied, as is the case every year, both in terms of the topics covered (surveys, research, information systems, organization, management) and the nature of the missions (audits, consulting, foresight). Examples include:

- an audit on the efficiency of thematic surveys of enterprises;
- a report on INSEE's positioning vis-à-vis the academic world, in the context of weaker links with GENES (Group of National Economics and Statistic Schools) and the professionalisation of the research sector;
- a forward-looking analysis that directly concerns the ASP, on "new statistics of general interest", which also addresses the problem of the approval of statistics produced outside the SSP;
- a report on GENES' accession to "greater responsibilities and powers"
- at a time when researchers are increasingly calling for the cross-referencing of data, a report on the matching of individual data within the SSP: methods, tools, legal aspects;
- a report on geographical economics studies at INSEE, mentioning the great abundance of localised data and the need to optimise their use;
- an audit of telephone surveys conducted at INSEE – a subject that has received little attention;
- a report on the governance of "shared tools" – IT applications that are increasingly vital to the Institute's production processes.

In addition, in the wake of the report on data matching, a discussion paper was written on the exploitation of administrative data for statistical purposes. This is an increasingly important subject for all NSIs, with institutional, methodological and practical consequences that also relate to IT tools.

Principle 11: Relevance

Two mechanisms ensure the relevance of French official statistics:

- the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS) organises the dialogue between users and producers of official statistics.
- a permanent satisfaction or opinion survey scheme monitors user satisfaction retrospectively.

The CNIS

The CNIS' work conforms to the principle of relevance. Indeed, the CNIS is responsible for identifying new information needs and user concerns and bringing them to the attention of services that produce official statistics. These needs are expressed in a rapidly changing economic and social context (development of digital technology, internationalisation of activities and interactions, increased demands vis-à-vis sustainable development issues, etc.).

See Annexe 11 for further details about the CNIS's activities in 2019.

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 2019, INSEE carried out or completed seven satisfaction surveys on specific topics or on its public image and the credibility of the data it produces.

Two years after a new version of the macroeconomic database was made available on the INSEE website, a specific satisfaction survey was conducted to gather users' opinions on the consultation of indices and time series. The respondents were satisfied with the access to indices and series (66%). The headings and documentation were considered clear and understandable. The respondents were less convinced about the browsing experience and the search for series that replace discontinued series (55% and 46%). The CSV download format was considered suitable (85% of respondents) but the Excel format was in high demand.

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 2019, 84% of respondents found what they were looking for, either totally (53%) or partially (40%). They were mainly looking for data (44%), an index or publications. These users use search engines – either external engines or the site's own – to find the information that interests them. The success rate informs the transparency indicators of the quality and efficiency of public services.

Following the improvements made to the presentation of legal populations on the insee.fr website, two satisfaction surveys were carried out to evaluate satisfaction with the availability of legal populations and the statistical results of the population census.

Legal populations interested respondents mainly for personal reasons (54%). The availability of data was considered satisfactory (rated at 7.7/10). 46% of respondents found what they were looking for very quickly and the same did so after a few searches. One in two respondents was not familiar with the concept of "population counted separately". Those looking for definitions (39%) found them understandable. When it was consulted (41%), the documentation was deemed appropriate.

The census results interested the respondents for professional reasons (68%). Their availability was considered satisfactory (rated at 7.6/10). 44 % of respondents found what they were looking for very quickly and 45% did so after a few searches. The geographical levels and topics proposed met expectations. The municipality, and the "population changes and structure" topic aroused the most interest (80%, 87%). An improvement in the freshness of data was desired by 28% of users. The quality of the data was recognized: it was ranked last of all the issues to be improved.

With a view to developing a web service (API) to enable the provision of information from the Refigeo geographical reference standard, user needs regarding the distribution of geographical codes and other geographical classifications were evaluated via a satisfaction survey. 72% of the respondents – mostly professionals – were looking for more than one zoning category, with the municipality being the most consulted zoning category (85%) and the recent period (less than two years) being the most popular time frame. To access the zoning categories, 62% of respondents performed downloads with which they were satisfied. They were also satisfied with the proposed file formats (83% for CSV) and the annual frequency of updates (71%).

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 2019, the survey of the general's public's image of INSEE was a comprehensive survey: the Institute's ten image attributes were tested¹⁸, along with the eight economic indicators. Conducted in October, it concerned

18. List of the 10 image attributes:

INSEE is a useful organisation, which effectively fulfils its mission, which inspires confidence; which provides clear information about its activities; INSEE produces and disseminates information that is indispensable for economic and social analysis of France; reliable concerning the French economy; easy to understand; easy to find; independent of the political power; and reflects reality.

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 dropped by two points in 2019 but remains high: 78% of people interviewed said they were familiar with INSEE and 59% knew “what it does”. This is accompanied by a two-point increase in the favourable opinion of the institute among the French (82%). The credibility of the indicators tested, i.e. the fact that they reflect “what is really happening in France in the field”, improved in 2019. Confidence increased by one to six points for all the leading indicators except for the Rent Reference Index (IRL) and public debt, which remained stable. Mistrust of economic statistics declined slightly among the French public: 48% respondents trusted “the published statistics and data on the French economic and social situation”, against 49% in 2018.

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 (93% and declared that it inspires confidence (89%, while 83% considered that it accomplishes its mission effectively. The impression of independence from political power was at once the subject that received the lowest approval level (64%) and that which received the largest number of “don’t knows” (21%). For the indicators, there was no significant change in credibility in 2019, except for purchasing power, which decreased by two 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>

Principle 13: Timeliness and punctuality

The monitoring of punctuality issues concerning publications in the dissemination calendars

Following the ASP’s 2016 recommendation, the MSOs are questioned by INSEE every year to assess the punctuality of the publications they announce in their dissemination calendar. 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 2019 and which were announced in a calendar. Punctuality is measured in relation to the last dissemination date announced.

In this respect, one publication was delayed due to an intervention by a competent ministry that cast doubt upon the independence of the services. This concerns the Defence MSO, which has nevertheless improved the punctuality of its publications, from 56% to 87% of on-time publications.

The vast majority of the DGFIP MSO’s publications were delayed due to severe strains on resources.

Twelve of the sixteen MSOs have a punctuality rate topping 90% for publications announced in dissemination calendars (they were released on time or before the last announced dissemination date). However, the punctuality efforts required of all MSOs vary according to the length of the announced publication period and whether the dissemination date is divulged a long time or a short time in advance. On occasion, certain publications are not announced.

Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity

Redesigns or changes to enhance and facilitate the browsing experience on the SSP’s websites

In order to improve the accessibility and visibility of the activities of the Agriculture Ministerial Statistical Office (MSO), the redesign of the Agreste website has continued with a view to opening the new website in H1 2020. This redesign is part of the continued renovation of the “Agreste Données en Ligne” (Agreste Online Data) website that began in June 2018 and aims to facilitate the provision of multidimensional tables.

The new dissemination website of the Ecological Transition MSO was launched in early 2019. The organisation of the contents and their editorial presentation have been completely overhauled in order to facilitate browsing and research for Internet users and provide new access to statistical studies and data on climate change, energy, environment, transport and housing.

In addition, a website dedicated to environmental reporting in France was launched in October 2019.

In 2019, the Internal Security MSO began redesigning its “Interstats” site with a view to modernizing and enriching it (newsletter subscription, user-friendly display of tables and figures, website architecture) by enhancing and clearly identifying the SSP’s output, in cooperation with the Immigration and Local Authority MSOs.

Continuation of the SSP’s efforts to improve access to statistical data and improve their clarity for users

In 2019, the DEPP initiated reflections on how to improve the dissemination of data on its website, with the emphasis on accessibility in order to optimise the response to user demands, and is considering the revision of its reference standard for certifying the response to demand. These reflections include the provision of detailed data at a detailed level, the provision of data in thematic sections of the website (these data are currently mainly accessed via publications), the provision of the history of publications via document-management software, the process of responding to specific detailed requests and the provision of more data in open-data format.

The DEPP has also published new collection of methodological documents online.

Easier access to the work of the Local Authorities MSO on the website of the Ministry of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities has been operational since the summer of 2019, increasing the visibility of the MSO’s outputs on this website on which they appear for the first time.

The Youth and Sports MSO has redesigned its “Key Figures” publications to incorporate a new method of dissemination, combining online tables and a composite publication using computer graphics, which is available in paper format and on its website.

In the context of the publication of its annual report, the Civil Service MSO is working with Datagora to modernise its visibility (video and computer graphics on different online media).

The Justice MSO’s website has been reorganised for easier browsing, with thematic and product-specific key areas.

At the DREES, an indicator-mapping project has been carried out to meet stakeholders’ and researchers’ needs for data on ecosystems and health indicators, and to provide reliable and easily accessible indicators, including for the general public. A single portal referencing all health indicators has been made available online.

To target young audiences, INSEE is active on Twitter with 69,000 subscribers and 2,400 subscribers to the Regions and Indian Ocean accounts. The Institute is also present on YouTube, with 800 subscribers.

To communicate in a social network-friendly manner, INSEE produces images and photographs: Conjoncture in France reports are accompanied by videos, and the Twitter feed includes more and more computer graphics, which are often animated.

An INSEE Références has been devoted to the digital economy, with specific infographics. A motion design video (animated film) presenting the “Entry into the World of Work” survey has been produced to explain and encourage young people in the panel to participate in it.

Several INSEE Regional Directorates have also produced videos to promote their studies.

INSEE is also present on the Datagora platform along with many MSOs. It has signed a partnership with Economitips, and in 2019, 90,000 subscribers received eight short letters drawn up with INSEE, which show that statistics cover subjects with an impact on citizens’ lives.

INSEE is a partner of Brief Eco media which reaches thousands of students and their teachers. It also takes part in a large number of educational events.

Finally, the Institute launched a blog in 2020 to develop a less rigid and more responsive approach to communication. The aim is to use a new dissemination channel to increase the Institute's capacity to fulfil its mission, which is to shed light on the economic and social debate, highlight the lessons to be learned from the exploitation of statistics and their limitations, raise awareness of the Institute's activities outside the circle of its usual users, and combat the spread of false or misleading information.

INSEE also plans to make better use of experts and train them to publicise their initiatives on social networks, particularly on topical subjects and those that are frequently targeted by purveyors of "fake news".

The Director-General of INSEE has also requested that bibliographies be sent to the press on topical subjects of a sensitive or controversial nature, to help explain the difference between individual perceptions of purchasing power and its statistical measurement, for example.

In July 2019, INSEE also posted a bibliography of publications on seniors and pensions on its website.

Lastly, INSEE has carried out specific studies in response to the "yellow vests" social movement. An *INSEE Focus* entitled "Satisfaction with life" revealed very consistent responses from one territory to another. An *INSEE Focus* on home-work mobility and an *INSEE Première* on the highest pay levels in the civil service were also published.

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

The Statistical Metadata Standard (RmèS) 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.

Over 300 data sources made available to more than 1,500 users via the Secure Data Access Centre (CASD)

The Secure Data Access Centre (CASD) is a service that allows researchers to work remotely, in a secure manner, on highly detailed individual data subject to confidentiality.

2019 was the first year of the operational operation of the CASD's new administrative structure. On 29 December 2018, the CASD became a public interest grouping (GIP) bringing together INSEE, the GENES, the CNRS, École polytechnique and HEC Paris. Formerly an entity attached to the GENES (and before that an INSEE entity), the CASD has now been established as a public entity with financial and administrative autonomy. This change of legal status allows the CASD to have its own staff and dedicated accounts. This first year of activity was devoted to the implementation of personnel management and accounting management procedures. In 2019, the revenue generated by the invoicing of researchers enabled the CASD to attain its goal of financial equilibrium as this revenue was supplemented by contributions from members of the GIP.

In 2019, the CASD was certified according to ISO 27 001, the international information security standard. This certification concerns the provision of secure services – "secure bubbles" – by data-hosting infrastructure via biometric access control and encrypted connection – using a dedicated box – the SD Box – installed in institutions that have signed a contract with CASD.

The CASD has also been granted “Health data host” status by ASIP Santé (the public operator responsible for rolling out e-health in France), thus extending the scope of the health data made available to the CASD. These certifications are in addition to the CASD’s approval in compliance with the Health Data Security Standard, obtained in 2018, which enables it to provide data from the National Health Data System (SNDS).

CASD has enhanced its website with a more detailed presentation of available data sources (dictionary of variables), integrated in such a way as to enable browsing between the research projects, data sources and scientific publications produced (<https://www.casd.eu/projets-de-recherche/>).

The CASD continues to coordinate the implementation of a collaborative scheme involving French, British, German and Dutch secure access centres in relation to the IDAN project (<https://idan.network/>). The aim is to facilitate access to these countries’ data for researchers by eliminating the need for them to travel and making it easier for them to use data from several countries. This enables researchers working at one centre to access the data kept at other centres. <https://idan.network/>

In line with its policy of opening up access to data for research purposes, INSEE has decided to authorise secure access to data for researchers in the United States and Canada. The Ministerial Statistical Office of the Ministry for Agriculture has also decided to follow suit. In 2019, this authorisation enabled access from these countries to be granted on several occasions.

In 2018, the CASD gave over 1,500 users secure access to more than 300 data sources originating from INSEE, the Ministry of Agriculture (SSP), the Ministry of the Economy and Finance (DGFIP), the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of National Education (DEPP), the Banque Publique d’Investissement, the Ministry for Labour (DARES), the Central Agency for Social Security Bodies (ACOSS), the General Commission for Sustainable Development (CGDD), the SDES, the ATIH (hospital stays-PMSI), the DGE, ANIL, ODR, MSA, IRDES, and ARGIRC-ARRCO.

The Certification Agency CASCAD and the CASD have jointly proposed a procedure for certifying the reproducibility of research on confidential data. CASCAD-CASD certification allows researchers to report to their peers on the reproducibility of their research on confidential data hosted at the CASD. CASCAD is a non-profit research support structure (UMS CNRS 2007), funded by various French institutions including the CNRS, HEC Paris and the University of Orléans. CASCAD-CASD certification guarantees the reproducibility of the numerical results (tables and graphs) of a scientific publication, based on a set of digital resources (computer codes and confidential data) used by the researcher. The partnership between the CASD and CASCAD aims to establish secure certification environments that enable a specialised rapporteur to run the code on precisely identified confidential data (sources, products, version, DOI) and verify the results obtained. The Statistical Confidentiality Committee and data producers welcomed this initiative. A pilot project was carried out in 2019 for three certifications and met with the researchers’ complete satisfaction.

2019 was also marked by the opening of the CDAP (Confidential Data Access Portal) to researchers by the Secretariat of the Statistical Confidentiality Committee. This is an application that enables the online submission of requests for access to confidential data under the Committee’s jurisdiction, making it possible to monitor each request which is directly accessible via the interface (status of the request, history of previous requests, etc.), gain access to a register of available data sources, and provide a single confidentiality commitment for researchers covering statistical, fiscal and administrative data, which is valid for all requests submitted.

3. Review of the Authority's ten years of activity and perspective of key issues

Professional independence and confidence in official statistics, a look back at the Authority's 10 years of activity

Introduction

To mark its 10 years of activity, the Official Statistics Authority organised a symposium on 27 November 2019 featuring two round-table discussions led by journalist Jean-Marc Vittori, a columnist for the newspaper Les Échos.

This event provided an opportunity to discuss the professional independence of official statistics in France, and the conditions for establishing confidence in official statistics – the topics of the two round-table discussions at the colloquium.

The Official Statistics Authority was created by the Economic Modernisation Act of 4 August 2008 and given the remit of ensuring compliance with the principle laid down by the 1951 Law, which organises the official statistical service in France and states that “*the design, production and dissemination of official statistics shall be carried out in complete professional independence*”.

The ASP was set up in 2009 under the chairmanship of Paul Champsaur. This creation stemmed from a pragmatic approach recognising the achievements of the official statistical system, which is committed to excellence, and based on expertise found within the administration. It therefore seemed relevant to assert its professional independence more forcefully and to clarify this issue, particularly in view of the reinforcement of European requirements in this area.

Regulation 2009-223, which was being drawn up at the time, recommended that each Member State should set up a national body responsible for ensuring the professional independence of producers of European statistics. France is one of the few countries to have implemented this recommendation. At the national level, this creation sought to prevent the occurrence of destabilising crises such as the 2007 controversy over unemployment figures and the Employment survey.

For the performance of its missions, the 2009 decree allows the Authority to issue and make public any opinion that it considers useful for compliance with the principle of professional independence. In the majority of cases, the mere threat of publicity has enabled organisations to be “brought into line” when necessary.

The Official Statistics Authority's activities can be divided into four main areas.

The first of these areas concerns breaches of embargo, controversies and confusion between government announcements and statistical publications. The 2009 Decree, revised in 2018 to bolster the ASP's powers, is clear about the need for absolute separation between government communications and statistical publications.

These incidents and the way in which the official statistical service manages them are examined by the Authority with a view to preventing unnecessary misunderstandings and controversies, and identifying rules that will be recognised by all and prevent the recurrence of such incidents. Over the past ten years, undeniable progress has been made in terms of compliance with timetables and in meeting publication deadlines, in particular.

To formulate its opinions, the Authority places particular emphasis on the European Statistics Code of Practice, which specifies the concept of professional independence, the institutional environment and the basic principles: objectivity, equal treatment of users, reliability, confidentiality, efficiency, sound methodologies, documentation of sources and results, etc. This Code also breaks down these 16 principles into precise indicators. For example, indicator 11.3 indicates that user satisfaction is verified at regular intervals. Indicator 14.3 states that statistics from different sources are compared and reconciled.

The second focus of the Authority's work is on identifying emerging issues. Quality is often associated with this area. Indeed, quality is the main asset of official statistics in a world in which the proliferation of information can make proof of quality a secondary issue, to the detriment of properly clarifying public debates and public and private choices. In this respect, the Authority has encouraged the performance of the methodological activities required to understand discrepancies between the Employment survey and the monthly jobseekers' statistics (DEFM). These activities have led to advances in the understanding of the labour market.

The third focus of ASP's work, with the investigative support of the Quality Labelling Committee, concerns the quality labelling of all series that are relevant to official statistics and originate from public operators or private bodies with a public service remit, such as notaries, with whom very solid work has been carried out on defining price indices that reflect the diversity of housing characteristics.

Finally, the Authority monitors the quality of the statistics produced and disseminated by Ministerial Statistical Offices. The fact of rendering an opinion on the capacity to act as Ministerial Statistical Office has undoubtedly contributed to improving the consistency of the Official Statistical Service while driving quality upwards.

In this way, the Authority's activities extend beyond crisis situations to take in more structural developments in official statistics. The scale of the transformations underway is due to many factors: the emergence of new data, changing societal expectations calling for indicators of sustainable development or in the sovereign realms of internal security, and the development of new uses for data, particularly through research.

As highlighted in the 2018 report of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB), the way in which we deal with information has changed radically over the last decade. 'Fake news' and misinterpretations of evidence and statistics are more widespread in the public discourse than ever and often enter the political arena, placing new and demanding responsibilities on statistical authorities. All stakeholders in official statistics have a role to play in rising to these challenges.

I) Review of the ASP's ten years of activity

Rather than providing a flat assessment of the Authority's activities since its creation, the purpose of this note is to show, based on a certain number of non-exhaustive but significant examples, to what extent the Authority's work has contributed to the progress of the Official Statistical System: firstly, in relation to the principle of professional independence, which ensures the credibility of the statistics (first part of the note), and secondly, in relation to user confidence (second part of the note). Indeed, user confidence relies not only on professional independence, but also on the objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of the data produced by the Official Statistical System.

In addition, it depends on the context in which the Official Statistical System operates, which has been marked by major upheavals over the last ten years: demand for the broadening of indicators to meet public expectations in line with the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report; development of public policy evaluation and exploitation of micro-data through research; new types of data, a source of opportunities to better meet these user expectations and respond to challenges, for example to correct their bias or to ensure their protection; proliferation of data, requiring confirmation of the place of official statistics, which is unparalleled in many respects; growing public mistrust of things that are official or refer to scientific standards.

1- Monitoring compliance with the principle of professional independence: situations encountered and results obtained

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

The Ministerial Statistical Departments (*services statistiques ministériels* - SSM), for their part, are in an ambiguous situation: they contribute more broadly to the steering of their ministry's public policies and this activity may make impartial and independent work difficult. They may be subject to pressures of various

kinds that would lead them not to publish the official statistics for which they are responsible in a timely manner. For example, the ministerial officials to whom they report may give priority to other work or may wish to postpone publications that they do not consider politically expedient.

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

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

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

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

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

Since its establishment, the Official Statistics Authority has always paid great attention to ensuring that the Official Statistical System is able to carry out its work and dissemination programme in complete professional independence, which is reflected in the very concrete elements described hereinafter.

- *The Announcement of the Dissemination Schedules*

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *Embargo breaches by the government*

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *The conditions for the approval of Ministerial Statistical Departments*

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

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

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

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

- *Compliance with the Authority's Opinions*

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

Following the abolition of the Ministerial Statistical Department for Fishing (see above), the statistical activities of the latter were transferred to the Statistical Service of the Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition of France, as decided by INSEE. The ASP held a hearing for this SSM in June 2017. It then discovered that the assumption of the activities of the former SSM for Fishing and Aquaculture by the Statistical Service of the Ministry of Ecology was well under way, but had not yet been completed; it therefore requested that any new potential organisation relating to those activities not be considered before the current restoration is fully completed, so as to ensure compliance with the principles governing official statistics. In fact, at the hearing, the ASP found that the quality of the data on aquaculture could largely be improved and that pre-litigation proceedings had been initiated by Eurostat due to failure to send that data within the specified time limits.

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

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

- *Delays in the publication of statistical information*

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

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

The President of the Authority has asked the Director-General of INSEE to refer the matter to the General Inspectorate of INSEE so that it may examine the situation concerning these publications with regard to the

2011 DEPP work schedule. The conclusions of the report from the General Inspectorate revealed that the delay from the first three quarters of 2011 had been reduced. The work and publication schedule were then made public by the DEPP for 2012 and the latter's hearing made it possible to verify that the situation was then satisfactory.

2- To strengthen confidence in Official Statistics

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *The labelling of Official Statistics derived from the use of administrative sources produced outside of the Official Statistical System*

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

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

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

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

For producers whose data are labelled, the labelling is a strategic choice which must result in professional independence in the selection of methods for compiling and disseminating statistics and a continuous improvement system for statistical production processes and a dissemination policy that takes into account user requirements to the extent possible.

Since its creation, 14 labels have been granted by the Authority for a fixed duration, generally five years. These labels include, for example, the labelling of monthly statistics concerning jobseekers registered with Pôle Emploi, granted by the Authority in 2014.

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

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

- *The Authority's contribution to better understanding, use and reliability of official statistical data*

Clarification in the dissemination of labour market statistics

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

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

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

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

The work to explain the discrepancies between the DEFM statistics and the ILO unemployment statistics

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

Work on matching between the DEFM history file and the Labour Force Survey, conducted by DARES in partnership with INSEE, was carried out in 2019. In particular, a dossier was published in the INSEE References *Employment, Unemployment and Earned Income* in June 2019 and a working document entitled "Matching between the Labour Force Surveys and the Historical File from Pôle Emploi over the period 2012-2017 - Method and first results" was published in July 2019, with a view to clarifying the origin of the discrepancies.

The publication of "DEFMs"

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

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

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

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

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

Employment statistics

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

- *Making crime statistics more reliable through the creation of the Ministerial Statistical Department for Internal Security (service statistique ministériel sur la sécurité intérieure – SSMSI) within the Ministry of the Interior*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *Incorrect use of figures, disagreements: a very careful watch, sometimes with direct action by the Authority*

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

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

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

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

This was the case in June 2011: a fierce controversy, which was covered significantly by the press, was

triggered by the statements of the then Minister for the Interior on the statistics relating to the estimated academic failure of children of immigrants. Numerous comments in the press raised questions regarding INSEE's figures.

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

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

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

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

II) Overview of the key issues

Where do we stand on the independence of official statistics?

The independence of our statistical system has been built on two pillars: the professional ethics of statisticians, who attach more importance to the approval of the quality of their work by their peers than by any other authority, whether governmental or parliamentary; and, via the CNIS, a framework for structured and rigorous dialogue with users, whose effective involvement is indeed crucial.

Underpinned by these two pillars, official statistics has built a deserved reputation and gained international recognition, although this has not prevented controversies, some of which have become very heated, as was the case in 1978 for the unemployment trajectory. However, they have been confined to the level of the publication and interpretation of figures, and have not cast serious doubt on statistical methods. In this particular situation, the statement by the Director General of INSEE had put an end to any uncertainty in this respect: in the case at hand, "INSEE was not mistaken".

The ASP was established at a time when the context was changing, with expectations of more acute pressures on guaranteeing this professional independence in the future, since the authority of experts is challenged much more vociferously, even when they proceed with the utmost rigour. Furthermore, statistics, like the rest of the economy, are being revolutionised by digital technology.

The public's expectations are also much more diverse. Official statistics are expected to provide detailed data, including outside the demographic, economic and social fields, on delinquency and sustainable development, for example. In addition, the public has access, in all fields, to substantial volumes of data other than those produced by Official Statistics, which requires the latter to convince the public of their relevance or added value, even when these alternatives are highly biased. This significantly increases the need for clarity.

Two subjects that have strongly mobilised the ASP over the past ten years are illustrative of these issues:

- the crime statistics. Whereas, in the case of the budget deficit, for example, public controversies have been confined to the timeliness and evaluation of measures to be implemented, the discord over security was not only particularly intense at the time of the ASP's establishment, it also called into question the very

measurement of the phenomena, with a recurring suspicion of manipulation of the figures. Following an “umpteenth crisis” – this time as a result of technical problems – the lack of professional independence associated with the production of the figures supplied to the public in this field seemed to call for immediate action. The need to entrust their production and dissemination to Official Statistics then prevailed, which led to the creation of a Ministerial Statistical Office in 2014, with all the guarantees of independence that this implies, particularly as regards publications. The realisation that unnecessary controversies could be avoided in this manner gradually took precedence over the remaining fears within departments concerning this independence

- discrepancies between the different sources for unemployment figures: between those originating from the management of job seekers by Pôle emploi (DEFM - monthly jobseekers' statistics) and those from the INSEE Employment survey. At the time in question, the general public and the press tended to favour the former. However, the quality of the figures is not judged by the congruence of the results with people's preconceived opinions, but in terms of their relevance to the phenomenon that needs to be measured. In this respect, being registered at Pôle Emploi does not necessarily mean being unemployed according to the strict criteria of absence of activity over a certain period, commitment to job seeking, and acceptability of possible job offers. It therefore appeared necessary to move from the presentation of divergences to the reassessment of the different sources and methodologies in relation to the requirements for official statistics. After the quality labelling of the “DEFM”, which failed to dispel all doubts, exacerbated by the emphasis on this figure in the political debate, a more detailed analysis of discrepancies was undertaken, which made it possible to specify how they relate to the diversity of situations within the “halo” of unemployment. Although some aspects still need to be better understood, such as the volatility of the DEFM, and certain biases in the evaluation of employment in surveys, for example, great progress has undoubtedly been made in the use that can be made of the different sources for labour market diagnoses. This has been the fruit of a long process, always guided by the shared recognition of the need for professional independence in the production of official statistics.

Is the establishment of an independent Authority a necessity?

No clear conclusions can be drawn from examining the situation in other countries. Indeed, very few countries have established such an instrument, and those that do use it, such as Greece or the United Kingdom, have often created it in a context of heightened controversy over the trust that could be placed in their statistical institute. In this respect, France is therefore an exception, with the creation of the ASP intended to increase the independence of the entire Official Statistical Service and put it in the best position to meet future challenges, by relying on existing organisations that are recognised for their stringent quality requirements within the central administrations of the ministries, first and foremost at the Ministry of the Economy and Finance.

However, the exceptional nature of the ASP should be put into perspective by the fact that in different countries, the directors-general of statistical institutes are assisted by advisory boards with similar remits, partly composed of users. However, others argue that in their countries, the creation of a body such as the ASP, instead of defending the official statistical system, would be a gesture of distrust towards it, whose primary responsibility is to ensure compliance with the Code of Good Practice in Statistics, but whose strength and accuracy are unanimously acknowledged.

Is this about pragmatism or burying one's head in the sand? This undoubtedly needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, it being noted that the aim is clearly not to create unfounded suspicions but rather to improve confidence in statistics, and that different questions may arise if the statistical institute is more of a summarising body than a direct producer. However, when mapping the risks to statistical systems, managers must fully integrate the extent to which professional independence poses major risks if it is called into question, hence the importance of access to any resources that can contribute to it.

From this perspective, an external guarantor such as the ASP is valuable, if only because it acts as a bulwark against misunderstandings or unnecessary controversies. It is also a means of speeding up the resolution of unsatisfactory situations (because some will inevitably remain) that are difficult to reform without external pressure to act. An extreme example is the revamping of fisheries statistics imposed by the ASP, which had requested the abolition of the dedicated ministerial statistical office, which seemed to be operating in a non-reformable context. By providing an external perspective, the ASP can also help to raise awareness of the need for progress in certain areas, as is still the case for local authority statistics.

In this respect, it should be more stressed more generally that although professional independence is essential vis-à-vis the users of statistics if rigorous expertise is to be considered authoritative for on opinions in key areas such as public finance or immigration, it is also essential for access to data.

This guarantee was an important factor in convincing mass retailers to commit to the project on improving the calculation of the price index by using scanner data. Indeed, this required a real partnership between INSEE and these companies for whom “receipts are their lifeblood”. Protecting the confidentiality of data was therefore at the heart of firstly, the experimentation and secondly, the large-scale implementation of the process, which today opens up the possibility of new applications, concerning the publication of economic outlook indices, automatic data transmission and extension to the “non-food” sector. As the future of official statistics will rely on the mobilisation of such data sources (or in some cases the development of registers) it must be anticipated that their production will require more extensive interactions with private enterprises or individuals, for whom the guarantees provided on independence will be crucial.

Public confidence in official statistics today

Public confidence is a matter of concern for the people in charge of official statistics in all countries, even when the usefulness of statistics is not challenged, as is the case for INSEE in France. Indeed, official statistics has a responsibility to contribute to confidence and the robustness of democratic debates in a media context in which the requirements for truth are undermined by interest groups spreading false information, oversimplifications and distortions of the truth.

Admittedly, opinion rates in satisfaction surveys on official statistics remain stable, but confidence in democracy has dramatically declined, and confidence is also very low for political parties, the media and social networks. Moreover, negative opinions on official statistics often seem to be linked to a more general problem of confidence, in any expertise, any authority, or public institutions.

However, this context of mistrust, from which there is no hope of escaping in the foreseeable future, as shown by the work of France Stratégie, affects statistics. Its mission is precisely to ensure that this mistrust is contained, with debates on collective choices being informed by objective figures. Furthermore, this objectivity must be recognized if these figures are to underpin public debate.

In this respect, the fact that there are broad disparities according to occupational categories, levels of education and age, is an important issue. Indeed, the satisfaction rates for public statistics vary by a factor of two between the wealthiest social categories, on the one hand, and the unemployed, pensioners and people with the lowest level of education, on the other, who above all call into question the fact that the statistics do not reflect what they perceive in their daily lives.

However, following the 2008 financial crisis, INSEE significantly enriched its statistical output in order to provide detailed data and information on the diversity of income and poverty situations, according to different territories and by evaluating unavoidable expenditure, with a view to reporting on trajectories.

The difficulty then relates to the fact that that the corresponding publications do not reach the most mistrustful members of the population. In this regard, the problem does not stem from in the way in which the traditional media pass on the figures, but from the fact that these media have an increasingly small audience due to the influence of social networks, on which denials are shared six times less frequently than false information (e.g. the fact that INSEE was omitting three million dead centenarians who were defrauding the Social Security system!) ...

Moreover, this mistrust does not so much concern the figures themselves as the arguments developed by political authorities and interest groups on their basis. As they monopolise the communication or fuel the confusion between statistical observation and the evaluation of public policies, the public tends to believe that numbers can be made to say anything.

Meeting these challenges requires action at several levels, from continuing to broaden the fields covered in order to shed light on subjects that citizens identify with, to teaching different audiences and journalists about statistics, while also improving the clarity and homogeneity of official statistics, which are not limited to INSEE.

However, the major issue that emerges concerns the appropriability of the figures by the different audiences,

and communication. In this respect, the experience of different media in reconnecting with audiences that are more mistrustful than previous generations, by awakening their critical faculties, by showing them how facts are checked or by developing new instruments such as “news games”, can be a source of inspiration. Indeed, in striving to meet these challenges, it is important for statistical offices to be responsive and active on the new communication channels, and to avoid being on the defensive.

For further details about on the colloquium to mark the tenth anniversary of the ASP, see the programme in Annexe 10 and visit <https://www.autorite-statistique-publique.fr/colloque-10ans/>

4. Activity of the Official Statistics Authority in 2019

4.1 Sessions of the Authority

The Official Statistics Authority met four times in 2019 with the agendas described below.

27 March 2019

- The Ministerial Statistical Office for Justice: Hearing of Mr Sébastien GALLOIS, Head of the Expertise and Modernisation Department at the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Justice, accompanied by Ms Christine CHAMBAZ, Head of the Statistical Service;
- Presentation by INSEE's General Inspectorate of the report entitled "Towards a global strategy for relations with influential players";
- Presentation of the Authority's 2018 Annual Report, by Ms Claudine Gasnier, ASP Rapporteur.

19 June 2019

- Presentation by INSEE's General Inspectorate of the report on new statistics of general interest.

16 October 2019

- Renewal of the quality labelling of road accident statistics produced by the National Interministerial Road Safety Observatory (ONISR): Hearing of Mr Emmanuel BARBE, Interministerial Delegate for Road Safety, accompanied by Ms Manuelle SALATHE, Secretary-General of the ONISR;
- The Ministerial Statistical Office for Immigration (Department of Statistics, Studies and Documentation attached to the Directorate General for Foreigners in France): Hearing of Mr Pierre-Antoine MOLINA, Director of the Directorate for Foreigners in France, accompanied by Mr. Jean-Baptiste HERBET, Head of the MSO.

8 January 2020

- 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 No 2009-250 relating to the Official Statistics Authority, the ASP also issued the two following three opinions in 2019:

- an opinion on the professional independence of official statistics on internal security;

- an opinion on 10 December 2019 for the Hearing Committee concerning the appointment of the Director of the DREES;

- an opinion on 17 December 2019 for the draft decree amending the organisation of the CGDD (General Commission for Sustainable Development) and more generally on official statistics in the organisational decrees for central government bodies.

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>

4.2 Hearings of producers of official statistics

In 2019, as part of its missions to ensure the compliance of MSOs with the European Statistics Code of Practice, the Authority conducted a hearing of two Ministerial Statistical Offices: the Justice MSO attached to the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Justice, and the Immigration MSO attached to the Directorate for Foreigners in France.

- ***The Ministerial Statistical Office for Justice***

The Ministerial Statistical Office for Justice (SDSE- Under-Directorate for Statistics and Studies) operates in a ministry of legal specialists with little expertise in statistical matters, but which has high expectations for statistics.

After two years of reform of the General Secretariat and a full year of activity within the new organisational structure, and in view of the elements put forward in the ASP opinion of 2017, the MSO's independence is totally guaranteed. All decision-making players in the Ministry are committed to this.

Access to data may have caused controversy in the past, but this issue is now settled. Recently, the possibility of the SDSE gaining access to the nominative data contained in the CASSIOPEE file (the file of all criminal sentences handed down by the courts) was included in the Justice Programming Law .

The Ministry unanimously commends the quality of the MSO's output – both its regular and its commissioned output – particularly the work carried out prior to the programming law and its impact assessment.

There are high expectations in terms of management control. Conflicts of scope or jurisdiction may arise between matters that are purely statistical and those relating to the decision-making field. However, the scope of the SDSE and its authority are not contested. On the contrary, the SDSE's position in the ministry is now securely established.

The Ministry of Justice is at the dawn of a massive digital transformation. In five to ten years, all of the department's information technology systems will have been replaced. The MSO must define its place within this digital transformation in order to benefit from the tools it needs in its daily activities and ensure that the statistical dimension is automatically taken into account in the ministry's future systems. This means highlighting statistical needs, which ultimately prove to be just as essential as other business needs that may initially seem more important or more urgent.

In addition, the SDSE needs to raise its profile within the department and externally. The monthly *Infostat* publication is known and appreciated by all French courts. The other publications are mentioned just as positively. However, the online publication procedure does not yet conform to current standards and some of the processes used to present the MSO's output could be modernised. The MSO will be working on these areas in 2019-2020.

The MSO has about sixty officers working on two sites (Paris and Nantes), with just over thirty grade A managers. One third of the staff are INSEE employees. The service may experience some problems related to attractiveness, especially in Paris. Other units carry out statistical exploitation activities and studies within the ministry. The SDSE is centrally positioned among these units and statistical activities within the ministry. Most of its work is carried out by mutual agreement during the year. A coordinating body – the Council for Statistics and Studies – meets once a year to compare the projects undertaken by the various offices and examine new requests. The Schools for the Judiciary, Court Clerks and Prison Service participate in this council. Research organisations are also involved, in addition to INSEE.

The MSO was established in 1973. Its activities have diversified over time. Initially specialising in the production of activity-monitoring statistics, it is now also embracing the production of statistics focusing on

people subject to trial. Until now, the MSO has counted cases; henceforth, it must count perpetrators. In the absence of having a unique identifier or of knowing the surname and first name of these people, the MSO had no way, until now, of reconstructing their pathways other than their criminal records.

The new interest in people subject to trial was made possible by access to detailed data. Today, the MSO has access to a growing number of individual data sources. The resistance that had originally emerged has disappeared. However, more technical difficulties may remain, particularly in mobilising the IT teams monopolised by major projects. It is essential for the MSO to strengthen its links with IT in order to ensure that it will have access to all the data required for the production of official statistics and the evaluation of the law.

The diversification of activities presupposes developing the officers' competencies. For a long time, the SDSE included a large pool of Category C staff who monitored the reporting of statistical aggregates from the courts. Today, it needs more managers capable of producing statistics on complex individual data. The MSO is currently working to develop a number of positions to meet this objective.

Access to data is being increasingly established in principle. The MSO is striving to adopt a process of regulated access under the 1951 Law. Access by mutual agreement continues for civil data. For criminal data, the SDSE has proceeded through the CNIS and has files with official statistics status. Eventually, once the legal issues have been settled, it will therefore be able to grant researchers access to these data under the 1951 Act. Until now, analysis of the French Data Protection Law has prevented the MSO from making this criminal data available to researchers. However, it would like to undertake a more detailed analysis on the subject, possibly with the help of the Statistical Confidentiality Committee, in order to settle this uncertainty once and for all.

The recovery of prison statistics was officially endorsed in the reform of the General Secretariat in 2017. The SDSE worked in conjunction with the Prison Service Directorate, which had previously produced all prison statistics. By July 2019, the MSO will publish all statistics on open custody. Statistics on secure custody will follow. The transfer of jurisdiction has been initiated. The SDSE has left the field covered by the DAP (Prison Service Directorate) and eventually hopes to take in the activity of the sentence enforcement services, in order to go beyond exclusively monitoring the activity of one directorate.

In terms of matching, the office will benefit from new capacities in the criminal field thanks to the opportunity for the MSO to access personal data in the CASSIOPEE application, under the terms of the Justice Programming Law. This change of context could enable the MSO to break new ground and access data on the civil field in order to produce broader analyses, possibly using external sources. Strictly in the criminal field, matching will enable the monitoring of longer trajectories. Eventually, this could even include monitoring the trajectories of people subject to trial from the security field through to the end of the criminal sphere by implementing cross-cutting management systems covering both ministries.

Today, the SDSE and the Internal Security MSO (SSMSI) are working on transposing the international classification of all types of offences, with a view to creating a French classification of offences that is perfectly consistent with the international classification, pursuant to a medium-term recommendation of the CNIS. Both MSOs are also carrying out joint work on comparing statistics (litigation on drugs, domestic violence, etc.). By working on the same concepts and the same field, the two MSOs can identify possible sources of divergence.

The most comprehensive publication is *Références statistiques Justice* (Statistical References for Justice). Created three years ago, this publication presents, at the end of each year, the figures for the previous year with an aid to interpretation and an explanation of the different concepts.

- ***The Ministerial Statistical Office for Immigration (DSED: Department of Statistics, Studies and Documentation)***

The Immigration MSO is attached to the Directorate for Foreigners in France (DGEF) which is responsible for all migration policies concerning Foreigners (entry into France, residence, asylum, integration, fight against illegal immigration). These subjects are amongst the foremost concerns of French citizens. This means that considerable political exposure is given to issues covered by the Directorate in a context that is generally marked by heated exchanges. In this environment, the figures are often instrumentalised and controversial. In this context, the ministerial statistical office is an extremely important asset that helps to rationalise and take the heat out of the debate, thus developing the capacity to design and implement public policies. The clarification of removal statistics by distinguishing between forced removals, removals linked to assisted returns and spontaneous removals, has provided an objective view of the situation.

The ministerial statistical office has been exempted from employment plans. Its workforce is currently at a low point and should not be reduced.

The organisational structure has been modified to separate the MSO from the International and European Affairs Department, which had been combined to form the Department of International Affairs and Strategy since 2013. The MSO now reports directly to the Director General and is one of the three cross-cutting departments of the Directorate for Foreigners in France, along with the Control and Information Systems Department and the International and European Affairs Department.

The MSO is also called upon to provide control data, take part in the activities of the European Migration Network, and participate in the OECD's activities. However, this second activity should not take precedence over statistical activity.

The MSO currently devotes considerable time and resources to both projects. Firstly, an ELIPA survey has been revived. The first edition of the cohort study on the integration of foreigners had covered the 2010-2013 period. Although the ELIPA 2 survey is taking a toll on the MSO's resources, it is very useful for measuring the impact of public policies. Secondly, the Analytics project is one of the components of the Digital Administration for Foreigners in France in France (ANEF) programme, which sets out to overhaul information systems. The application for managing the files of foreign nationals in France (AGDREF) currently lacks the powerful statistical capabilities required to supply data to an infocentre, which is why Prefecture surveys are used. The Analytics project should make it possible to generate more reliable, more frequent and richer data.

The General Directorate for Foreigners in France (DGEF) is responsible for addressing all administrative issues related to migrant pathways, from visas to the acquisition of French nationality, including entry and residence, for example.

The role of the Immigration-Integration MSO is to inform the public debate in compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice. The MSO is one of the ONAs (Other National Authorities) responsible for migration statistics, and also hosts the DGEF documentation centre. It is also the statistical reference body for the DGEF, with the aim of ensuring the consistency of statistical output.

The MSO has 20 officers, 15 of whom cover the scope of the MSO's activities, i.e. six INSEE grade A managers (including two senior administrators), eleven grade A managers from the Ministry or contract staff, two grade B managers from the Ministry of the Interior, and one grade C manager from the Ministry.

The sources used by the MSO are the major statistical surveys (census, Employment Survey, Housing Survey) in addition to specific surveys, particularly the TeO (Territory and Origins) survey and the ELIPA survey. The TeO survey is an INED/INSEE survey for which the MSO provides funding. It covers all immigrants and the native population. The ELIPA survey is a cohort survey of 6,500 recruits. It is conducted in three stages: in the months following the issue of the first residence permit, one year after the issue of the permit and three years afterwards. This three-stage survey is used to assess the integration capacity of people. Only newly arrived migrants are eligible for this survey. Students are excluded from its scope. ELIPA is the only survey featuring a questionnaire on the language skills of the foreigners questioned. The MSO also draws on the administrative sources of the Ministry of the Interior, namely the AGDREF directory of

residence permits, the global visa network (RMV), the asylum information system for asylum (SI-Asile), the information system on the acquisition of French nationality (ANF) and “ad hoc” Prefecture surveys for persons subject to the “Dublin” procedure, prison leavers, removals, failed removals and consular *laissez-passer* travel documents. These investigations were initiated by the MSO because administrative sources prevented it from meeting all requests for statistics, particularly from Eurostat.

The information system on residence permits and documents enables the counting of flows and stocks according to nested classifications set up and managed by the MSO, which distinguish between reasons (family, economic, student, humanitarian, miscellaneous). Within the economic category, the system distinguishes between employees, temporary workers and researchers. The information system also provides information about permit holders (gender, age, nationality, place of residence, etc.) and information about the document itself (type, validity date, etc.). The same type of information is collected for visas. The information system also monitors flows of asylum applications (first applications and re-examinations) according to their characteristics and especially according to the applicant’s country of origin and characteristics (adult, unaccompanied minor, accompanied minor). At the same time, the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA) and the National Court for Right of Asylum (CNDA) transmit the number of persons protected under asylum at both first and second instance. Flows for the fight against illegal immigration are monitored via the number of departures from the territory according to their nature (removals, forced, assisted and spontaneous departures). The system also counts the number of people who acquire French nationality (by decree, declaration or without formality).

These data are intended to inform two types of instruments: those designed to provide statistics and those of an explanatory nature. In both cases, publications may provide a quick overview of information or more in-depth information. The publication entitled *l’Essentiel de l’immigration* (Key Information) is the document in which statistics are published in mid-January and mid-June, showing the numbers of residence permits, asylum applications, removals, etc. On the studies and explanatory side, the *Infos Migration* (Migration Information) publications are four-page documents focusing on subjects of interest. For example, the last edition of *Infos Migration* focused on links between qualifications and migration. More in-depth information is also available. On the statistics side, the *Data Migration* (Migration Data) publications are mainly Excel files providing detailed data. On the research side, the *Dossiers Migration* (Migration Files) provide more detailed analyses. The *Clefs pour comprendre la migration* (Keys to Understanding Migration) supplement these materials and may include glossaries, documentary collections or studies by the European Migration Network.

Regarding the prospects for the MSO, and the ANEF-Analytics project in particular, the MSO is project leader for the Analytics part. The aim is to put in place an efficient instrument for the production of official statistics, within a time frame that could be shortened. This instrument should generate productivity gains for the production of dashboards and reporting tools. The successful completion of this project could lead to the production of more reports at a controlled cost or to the reallocation of resources to more in-depth studies. ANEF-Analytics should also reduce the reporting burden on prefectures. Prospects also include the ELIPA 2 survey, whose timetable overlaps with the implementation of the new Republican Integration Contract (Contrat d’insertion républicaine). This timetable will enable comparisons of the situation before and after its implementation, but also raises methodological questions since consistent questions will need to be asked before and after the restructuring of the integration contract. Upcoming challenges also include the redesign of the Ministry’s website. The MSO will participate in the updating of the website in close cooperation with the Internal Security MSO.

The development of publications is also one of the challenges that lie ahead. The production of publications now stands midway between the historical ELIPA 1 and TeO 1 surveys which have been widely exploited, and investment projects such as ELIPA 2 and ANEF-Analytics. The available output (report to Parliament, parliamentary questions) should also be used to produce fact sheets or content for publication on the website. Co-publication projects are underway with the Internal Security MSO and with INSEE. Lastly, a call for projects could be issued to exploit the results of the ELIPA 2 survey. This choice had been made for ELIPA 1. This information hearing did not give rise to a deliberation by the Authority.

4.3 Quality labelling of statistical uses derived from administrative sources

In 2011, with a view to improving the information provided to users, extending the scope of statistics and increasing its contribution to the public debate, the ASP decided to establish a labelling procedure for official statistics emanating from the exploitation of administrative sources and produced outside the Official Statistical Service (SSP). The aim of labelling is to guarantee compliance with the principle of professional independence in the design, production and publication of these statistics as well as with the principles of impartiality, relevance and quality of the data produced.

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 as well as 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 road accident statistics produced by the National Interministerial Road Safety Observatory (ONISR)***

This hearing was organised to examine the request to renew the quality label for road accident statistics produced by the ONISR, bearing in mind that the ONISR series were first labelled in 2013. The Quality Labelling Committee for official statistics, which was not involved in the deliberations for the awarding of the 2013 label (see above), was asked to rule on the data proposed for the renewal of this label in order to verify that they conformed to official statistics standards.

Road safety is a field that is frequently subject to controversy, with each citizen possessing a personal opinion on the subject. Any figures put forward are almost systematically challenged and criticised, especially since many people are self-proclaimed experts on road accidents. In this environment, there is substantial interest in the renewal of the quality labelling of road accident statistics because this renewal of labelling makes it possible to distinguish the ONISR's published results from those posted by much less organized or controlled sources. The statistical freedom of the ONISR is respected. Consequently, there has never been any more pressure than usual from the political authorities to adjust the figures. However, in a turbulent environment, any approach that could increase the independence and robustness of the ONISR is worthy of consideration. The stakes involved in the renewal of the quality-labelling scheme are high. This project ensures that the ONISR will do everything in its power to conform to the standards that apply to the discipline.

The ONISR, which reports to the Interministerial Delegate for Road Safety, is responsible for collecting, editing, interpreting and disseminating French statistical data relating to road safety. It centralises accident data collected by the police in a national database. The ONISR coordinates the study and research programme financed by the delegation for road safety. It is an instrument at the service of the public road safety policy and obeying the principles of evidence-based policy to ensure that policy-makers rely on facts rather than presuppositions.

The indicators labelled in 2013 were ATBH data from the BAAC (Personal Injury Accident Report) files. ATBH data cover the following situations: personal injury accidents (A), fatalities (T), and injuries (B), which include in-patient injuries (H). The quality-labelled indicators are those that divide ATBH data into fields that are specifically monitored by the control chain.

In terms of timing, quasi-final estimates of the main indicators are published in January of year N+1 based on the BAAC file. Between publication at the end of January in year N+1 and publication at the end of May in year N+1, the differences are minimal. The estimates published at the end of January can therefore be used for communication purposes. The database is finalised at the end of April for publication of the final results in May N+1. This database is used by local observatories to conduct analyses at the departmental, regional or national level. The final report is disseminated from September onwards: 4,000 copies are distributed to departmental councils, major cities, prevention and road safety associations, and to government departments interested in road accidents. An export of non-sensitive data in the database is carried out in open-data format before the end of October.

The ONISR website does not distinguish between quality-labelled and non-quality-labelled data. This is an area for improvement. However, since the labelling procedure was underway and the website had been redesigned, it was considered preferable to wait for the ASP's deliberations before carrying out specific configurations of the labelled indicators.

During the first quality-labelling procedure in 2013, the ASP had asked the ONISR to improve its governance. Since then, the founding texts have been reissued, the Advisory Board's missions have been established, the ONISR has been organised into two offices (statistical production and studies & research), the editorial guidelines for the BAAC file have been approved, an integrated information system has been implemented, and an independent website has been set up.

The founding texts of the ONISR are two decrees and one order. Decree No 2016-1511 of 8 November 2016 stipulates that the Observatory shall be assisted by an Advisory Board which approves the methodology used for statistical collections and analyses, in addition to the Observatory's studies. Decree No 2017-667 of 27 April 2017 concerns the organisation of the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Overseas France. The Order of 27 April 2017 covers the internal organisation of the road safety delegation and specifies that the National Inter-ministerial Road Safety Observatory enjoys professional independence, which ensures the impartiality and objectivity of the data that it collects. This independence was already proven before the publication of the 2017 decree, but this text reinforces this position.

The National Road Safety Council was established in the 2000s. It is composed of some 60 members. The newly created Advisory Board is not intended to replace the National Road Safety Council. The National Council has an Expert Committee that had previously served as the ONISR's governance body. Following the investigation conducted in 2013, it was found that this Expert Committee was capable of addressing research issues, but that it had shortcomings specifically at the statistical level. It was therefore decided to establish a dedicated Advisory Board for the ONISR. This Advisory Board held a preparatory meeting but did not proceed any further, considering that it was preferable to wait for today's hearing.

The ONISR leads a network of regional and departmental road safety observatories. Most of the regional observatories are based at the Regional Directorates for the Environment, Planning and Housing, while the departmental observatories are housed at the local Departmental Directorates or at prefectures. The local observatories need consistent data to define action plans, particularly for the improvement of road conditions.

The ONISR consists of two offices. The office in charge of statistical production works with the CEREMA's South-West territorial directorate. CEREMA is the co-administrator of the Accident database in conjunction with the ONISR. The office in charge of studies and research (Bureau Études et recherches), is responsible for issuing calls for projects and working with scientific organisations. The ONISR's organisation chart now makes a distinction between statistical production and studies.

The editorial guidelines for the BAAC file have existed for several years but they had never been formally validated by a ministerial directive. This formalisation serves as a reminder by the Ministry of the Interior that completing the BAAC is a mandatory mission. The first ministerial directive was issued in 2014, followed by a revision in 2017 in order to change the format and the frequency of transmission of Accident files. This 150-page guide is accompanied by a two-page summary of the most common mistakes. Another summary document quickly distinguishes between what relates to the BAAC and what does not. For example, it should be noted that a suicide committed on the road does not constitute a road accident. On the other hand, the people who could have been injured or killed by the driver seeking to commit suicide will be recorded in the database.

The ONISR information system is now integrated. In the past, several software programs were used but they were not interoperable. A new information system has been put in place to improve the security of the database secure and prevent data exports. This speeds up the transmission of accident files (from 48 hours after the accident).

An independent website has been running since March 2019. It features four sections: studies and research; the road safety situation (section containing reports and barometers); statistical tools; road safety policy. Simple query models (mapping and tables) and maps of departmental and regional indicators are currently being developed.

The ONISR wishes to further develop the information system in order to consolidate it and increase the level of automation. Reducing the number of entries by law enforcement agencies will also improve the quality of data. However, to do so, the BAAC file must be de-anonymized in accordance with the GDPR rules. This use of nominative data will allow the BAAC file to be cross-referenced with other databases in order to enrich it with related data.

In conclusion, the National Observatory's work is based on three pillars. The first of these pillars is its independence, which is indispensable for such a politically high-profile subject. The second pillar is the quality of statistical methodology. The third is its institutional framework and the quality-labelling of its series.

After examination and consideration, the Quality Labelling Committee proposed to renew the label of general interest and statistical quality for a list of statistical indicators of road accidents from the BAAC national personal injury traffic accident register. The committee proposed to retain the indicators labelled in 2013, with the exception of:

- indicators for the number of in-patient injuries;
- annual behavioural indicators.

The Quality Labelling Committee recommended that the renewal decision for these indicators be suspended to enable their reassessment.

In addition, the ONISR has introduced new indicators (including the extension of the geographical scope to French Overseas Collectivities (COMs) and New Caledonia) and modified others. The late transmission of these modifications prevented their examination by the Quality Labelling Committee. It therefore recommended the postponement of their labelling, as it had only been possible to examine the list of indicators transmitted with the initial renewal file.

The Quality Labelling Committee has issued four types of recommendations.

The first recommendations relate to governance.

As early as 2013, the ASP had recommended that governance be improved in order to provide for better reporting on the ONISR's professional independence and the quality of its work. The 2017 text led to the partial implementation of this 2013 recommendation, which is beginning to come into effect with the establishment of an Advisory Board. The Quality Labelling Committee proposes that this Advisory Board be

expanded to include members other than representatives of ministerial statistical offices, including members of the scientific body responsible for monitoring deaths (CépiDC).

The Quality Labelling Committee notes that the draft order for the Advisory Board makes explicit reference to compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice. It proposes the clarification of its missions, mentioning that it could exercise a right of scrutiny for the approval of the annual BAAC file production campaigns and also for the monitoring of the development of the ONISR information system. It could also improve the coordination and the pursuit of consistency with the classifications used by official statistics. More specifically, the Advisory Board could give its opinion on methodological studies. It could also propose new road accident indicators for quality labelling subject to a quality review.

The second set of recommendations relates to labelled statistics, in particular their scope. The Quality Labelling Committee notes that the completion of a BAAC form requires the involvement of law-enforcement agencies, which may lead to partial coverage of accidents involving personal injury. While coverage is complete for road accident fatalities, the under-coverage of injury statistics is not clearly reflected in the published indicators. Yet, according to the ONISR, approximately a quarter of personal injury accidents and half of the in-patient injuries are covered by the statistics recorded by law enforcement agencies. The ONISR uses data from the Rhône register to reconstitute these estimates. The Quality Labelling Committee believes that the under-coverage observed should be made more widely known to users. In addition, the terminology could be clarified to indicate that these are personal injury accidents recorded by law enforcement agencies, rather than stating that they are derived from the BAAC file.

The Committee's recommendations also cover monthly statistics. In 2013, the ASP labelled the monthly statistics obtained from the annual consolidation, but there may be confusion between the monthly barometer statistics and the monthly statistics from the annual consolidation. The current presentation on the ONISR website may imply that the monthly barometer statistics are quality-labelled, which is not the case.

Regarding the counting of in-patient injuries, the Quality Labelling Committee noted that the transition to the new information system reveals a break in the measurement of the number of in-patient injuries between 2017 and 2018. This situation led ONISR to suspend the publication of this indicator. The Quality Labelling Committee was unable to judge whether this "disruption" to declaration was temporary, and what steps will be taken to resume the series. Therefore, the Quality Labelling Committee proposed to suspend the quality labelling of this indicator temporarily and wait for the Advisory Board to take up the matter and submit its proposals. These proposals could then be submitted to the ASP.

The Quality Labelling Committee has also highlighted the lack of transparency in behavioural indicators. It has asked for more details on how these indicators are constructed and noted that these variables could be open to interpretation when the file is completed by law enforcement agencies. As for the indicator relating to in-patient injuries, the Quality Labelling Committee suggests that the Advisory Board should take up this issue to clarify the processing carried out. In the meantime, the Quality Labelling Committee proposes the temporary suspension of the labelling of these indicators.

The third series of recommendations relates to the production system. On this point, the Quality Labelling Committee welcomes the efforts made by ONISR to overhaul the production system for BAAC files with a view to ensuring their more regular validation and easing the inputting burden on law enforcement agencies. However, it notes that this implementation was accompanied by a break in series for the in-patient injury indicator.

In order to comply with the European Statistics Code of Practice, the Quality Labelling Committee recommends the drafting of a methodological document describing the new information system and reporting on the transition between the old system and the new version, and its impact on results. The Quality Labelling Committee also notes that the production chain is complex and involves different actors (law enforcement agencies, observatories, CEREMA). It therefore encourages the traceability of successive processing operations and the production of an annual quality report.

The Quality Labelling Committee takes note of the further developments envisaged by the ONISR

(geolocation, enrichment by matching) and encourages them with the aim of easing the collection burden and enhancing the available information. The Advisory Board will be required to express an opinion on these developments.

The fourth set of recommendations concerns the dissemination of quality-labelled statistics. The Quality Labelling Committee has asked the ONISR to clearly identify the quality-labelled indicators on its website and to clearly distinguish them from other non-labelled indicators. The quality-labelled indicators are derived from the BAAC file in a quasi-final version (January N+1), and then in a final version (May N+1). The barometer publications are provisional estimates and are not labelled (nor are they required to be labelled). The annual report on road accidents includes a mixture of labelled and non-labelled indicators that should be more clearly differentiated.

Finally, in the current state of development of the website, the Quality Labelling Committee observes a certain dispersal of metadata and advises the ONISR to move towards a unified system, possibly incorporating several levels of detail. In particular, it draws the ONISR's attention to the need to ensure the harmonisation of metadata between its various transcriptions by drawing up a glossary.

- ***Renewal of the quality labelling of data produced by the Caisse centrale de la mutualité sociale agricole (CCMSA)***

In 2019, the Quality Labelling Committee, on behalf of the ASP, examined the application for the renewal of the quality labelling of data produced by the Caisse centrale de la mutualité sociale agricole (CCMSA – central agricultural mutual social insurance benefit fund). Following this examination, and in the light of the opinion delivered by the Quality Labelling Committee on 10 January 2019, the ASP, by unanimous decision of its members, gave notice of the renewal of the quality label for a period of five years, applicable to all data series submitted by the CCMSA that were previously labelled in 2013, namely the following series:

- statistics on agricultural payroll employment and self-employment;
- statistics on recipients of family benefits;
- statistics on recipients of pensions for agricultural employees and the self-employed;
- statistics on accidents at work and occupational diseases of agricultural employees and self-employed agricultural workers.

The Authority, by unanimous decision of its members, also gives notice of the quality-labelling of the series on sickness insurance expenditure for the agricultural scheme according to the reimbursement date and the treatment date:

- monthly expenditure on medical care in non-hospital institutions and in the private clinic sector, according to the reimbursement date (raw data);
- amounts of invalidity pensions, maternity and paternity leave, according to the reimbursement date (raw data);
- expenditure on non-hospital treatments according to treatment dates (data corrected for seasonal variations (CVO) and for calendar effects (CWD), with completeness modelling). See Annexe 3).

- ***Towards a new service for qualifying statistics of general interest: presentation of the report by the INSEE General Inspectorate***

In 2019, with a view to moving beyond the existing qualification procedures (ASP labelling and benchmarking for statistics produced by private bodies or associations), a report by the General Inspectorate of INSEE, entitled: “Towards a new service for qualifying statistics of general interest” examined the pertinence of developing a qualification function for new statistics produced outside the Official Statistical Service, with the aim of identifying those that provide real value added and usefully supplement the public information. A hearing on this report was conducted by the ASP at its meeting on 19 June.

Contextual elements

The report was produced in response to a request by the Director General to the General Inspectorate to reflect on the issues raised by the emergence of new statistics and on the pertinence of developing a qualification function for these data within the Official Statistical Service.

The scope of statistics of general interest is broad and heterogeneous. The Official Statistical Service (INSEE and the MSOs) is now clearly identified. Under the 2008 Law, statistics produced by administrations and public or private bodies with a public-service remit also fall within the scope of official statistics, but only a certain number of them are subject to a quality-labelling procedure by the ASP. Lastly, certain private or non-profit bodies produce data that may or may not be considered of general interest and fall within the scope of official statistics.

Among the data produced outside the SSP, ADP – a company which provides HR management services for 12,000 companies in France (i.e. 3 million employees) – produces a monthly report on employment from its data. This report receives relatively little attention in France, but the US parent company publishes a report a few days before the Department of Labour's report, which attracts considerable attention, particularly from the markets. Trendeo uses media web scraping techniques to analyse investment operations and job creations. The company publishes a short economic outlook report twice a year, which receives quite extensive coverage. However, there are fairly substantial discrepancies between this report and the official figures, by a factor of 1 to 5, as the press tends to report on major operations. Finally, the OLAP (Greater Paris rent observatory) produces a panel to describe the level and changes of rents in the private sector in the Paris conurbation, and also publishes a report.

Some of these outputs are intended to act as a “gateway product” to promote sales of commercial services. Private operators carry out systematic benchmarking with official statistics to demonstrate the compliance of their data. They especially value the fact that their statistics appear sooner or at more detailed geographical levels. However, they show little interest in obtaining explicit recognition by official statistics. For organizations with a public service remit, the business model is somewhat different. Utility and legitimacy are powerful issues. These bodies, often publicly funded, can cover gaps in official statistics by exploiting their own data and need to be recognised by official statistics. They include the OLAP, which has requested benchmarking. In the end, therefore, there is relatively little direct competition with official statistics, especially from strictly private or non-profit operators.

Substantial volumes of data emerge from management systems, but there is a difference between data and statistics. Alain Desrosières stated that statistical activity consists in quantifying, i.e. agreeing on concepts and then measuring them. Producing statistics that satisfy the quality requirement and cover a perfectly defined scope on the basis of data is therefore quite an onerous task.

Two types of strategies come into play. With regard to big data originating from private operators, the official statistical system should focus on developing the use of these data as inputs for the production of official statistics. For example, the SSP has already started introducing scanner data into the statistical process. As for statistics produced by bodies with a public-service remit, the strategy consists in bringing out the most relevant statistics to usefully supplement official statistical output.

There are currently two procedures. Quality labelling by the ASP is one of them. So far, ten organisations have used it for some of their statistics. This procedure applies to bodies with a public service remit. For their part, private or non-profit organisations may enter into a benchmarking procedure with the CNIS on a voluntary basis. However, this is quite a costly procedure, as it examines not only the documentation produced by the organisation, but also the quality of the data, which involves analysing processes, methodology and even intervening directly on the databases. Of the three applications submitted, only one organisation – the OLAP – has been benchmarked.

Few examples are found abroad. At the European level, the emphasis is on using these data as inputs for official statistics, with work on the quality framework and big data driven by Eurostat in particular. In Belgium, an initiative was launched 15 years ago to define a quality reference framework that could be used by Statbel to judge the quality of statistics produced by other bodies. However, political and administrative difficulties prevented the realisation of this project. The UK's official statistics authority has adopted a somewhat experimental approach, with a voluntary declaration of compliance with the UK Statistics Code of

Practice. There is no formal framework. Greater London has published a statement on the authority's website describing how it is implementing the principles of the code of practice. This process is in its infancy. To date, twelve organisations have made such a declaration. Parliament has shown an interest in this approach.

The report's recommendations

The report advocates considering the qualification of external statistics in a positive manner, as a means of furthering the development and raising the profile of statistics that are a useful addition to the scope of official statistics, rather than "disqualifying" producers that do not conform to professional practices.

The first thrust of the recommendations concerns the creation of a graduated qualification system, based on the existing institutional framework (ASP, CNIS and the Quality Labelling Committee), ranging from compliance with a reference standard for documentation to quality labelling.

The second orientation consists in mapping out the different stages of this process (approval, labelling) clearly so that users, having been made aware of the importance of quality, fully understand its scope. More generally, the report calls for a user-oriented communication strategy vis-à-vis statistical quality.

The third orientation is of a different nature: given the emergence of innovative new sources, attention should be paid to activities being carried out at an exploratory stage, by creating a new category of experimental statistics, as other European institutes are doing.

4.4 New Big Data sources for official statistics

The ASP is interested in the use of data from the "digital" economy, which open up new opportunities for official statistics but also pose many challenges. "Big data" have the advantage of producing more information almost instantaneously and can therefore be used to complete survey data or produce advanced indicators, although such contributions require appropriate expertise. Coming generally from piecemeal sources that tend to be very varied both in their content and in their quality, they cannot, however, replace the existing arrangements, in particular household surveys which rely on stringent data collection protocols.

The arrival of big data on the data market implies trade-offs between quality, speed of publication and granularity, bearing in mind that official statistics will continue to prioritise quality. Official statistics must, moreover, make every effort to maintain trust in surveys, including in the confidentiality of the data entrusted, the privacy of the people surveyed and the trade secrets of enterprises.

At international level

As is the case every year, an item on the agenda of the OECD's statistical committee meeting on June 2019 concerned the measurement of the digital transformation, bearing in mind that a roadmap has been adopted by the OECD on this topic; its objectives include increasing the visibility of the digital economy in economic statistics and improving the measurement of the impact of digital technology on well-being.

The need for a coordinated approach was stressed, as well as cooperation with the private sector and all international organizations, to develop a better understanding of the different aspects of the digital transformation, particularly in light of the renovation of the 2008 System of National Accounts.

The OECD statistical committee also recommended the use of new sources of information, including satellite data in the field of integrated economic and environment statistics.

Also in June 2019, a seminar at the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) of the UNECE focused on new data sources, their accessibility and use. Access to private data was a central issue. According to the members of the CES, a communication strategy aimed at politicians and citizens needs to be developed in order to explain the importance of access to data. Such communication could facilitate the adoption of new laws that are essential to improving access to private data. The UNECE emphasised the value of experimentation, drawing on concrete examples, to explore the potential of partnerships with the private

sector. Discussions were held on the identification and development of professions, competencies and strategies (learning by doing, multidisciplinary teams, etc.) in order to integrate the new data sources.

In August 2019, sessions at the 62nd World Statistics Congress of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) focused on measuring the digital economy, source integration and big data. INSEE's experience was highlighted at the session entitled "How to create innovative environments to encourage the use of big data in public statistics".

At European level

European statistical institutes are cooperating to explore the potential of mega-data for the production of official statistics.

In March 2019, the [New techniques and technologies for Statistics \(NTTS\)](#) biennial conference organised by Eurostat years on new techniques and methods for official statistics concerning data collection and the production and dissemination of statistics, covered a variety of subjects: modernization, challenges and changes in statistical institutes in response to the digital revolution, web data, mega-data, mobile phone data, scanner data, statistical registers, geographical aspects, visualisation and exploration, satellite data, time series, administrative data, dissemination and understanding of statistics, combinations of sources, survey design, multi-source statistics, small areas, artificial intelligence, etc.

The final working session of the European Big Data Task Force was held in April 2019. In the framework of a partnership between Eurostat and the NSIs, this group, which brings together contributors from several countries, aims to study and promote the use of big data for the production of official statistics. The session included a presentation of a Europe-wide project to create a real-time overview of job offers available online and of the demand for associated skills in all European countries, obtained by the web scraping of job sites.

Eurostat and other countries reported on the progress of their work on mobile phone data. In this context, the need to clearly define the statistics of general interest expected from mobile telephony data was emphasised with a view to facilitating long-term access to these data.

The National Statistical Institute of the Netherlands and LinkedIn's Economic Graph presented an ongoing collaboration on LinkedIn data for different uses: mismatches between the competencies of school leavers and jobs, departure of young graduates abroad, integration of school leavers, etc.

In May 2019, the topic of "trusted smart statistics" was discussed at the meeting of the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC). A roadmap entitled "*Trusted smart statistics action plan and roadmap*" for 2027 was discussed and warmly welcomed by the ESSC. Several areas for future development were proposed: extraction of Web data, implementation of "smart" surveys of household budgets and time use, use of mobile phone data, etc. The discussion focused mainly on the issue of access to private data, which causes difficulties for NSIs, but not for INSEE, which benefits, under certain conditions, from the Law for a Digital Republic (except for mobile telephony data subject to highly restrictive specific regulations).

In September 2019, a European workshop was held at INSEE on the use of scanner data and web scraping (an Internet data extraction technique) to calculate the consumer price index (CPI). These annual meetings, under the aegis of Eurostat, are an occasion for countries to present their progress on these subjects and the new methodologies used to exploit these sources. For the first time, this workshop was extended to the topic of web scraping. It provided an opportunity to present the results of the countries that will be incorporating scanner data into the production of their CPI in the near future (in principle, France and Spain from January 2020), or modifying the scope of their use.

At national level

At INSEE

As of January 2020, the scanner data provided by mass retailers will replace the price surveys carried out by interviewers for calculating the consumer price index for the scope of food, cleaning and beauty products purchased in supermarkets, hypermarkets and multi-trade stores in Metropolitan France.

Since the implementation of the decree of April 2017 imposing the mandatory transmission of these data, INSEE has received them on a daily basis. In 2019, the results of the traditional CPI, published monthly, were compared with a CPI incorporating scanner data.

These comparisons show that the two overall indices are similar (maximum 0.1 point difference for monthly or annual changes). The differences are somewhat more pronounced for more detailed indices in which scanner data, which account for only 11% of the overall index, have a bigger weighting, such as the index for frequently purchased goods in the mass retailing sector, the index for food products, alcoholic beverages or cleaning products.

A detailed analysis of the differences between indices using or not using scanner data highlights three main reasons for their use – all three supporting the use of cash data: (i) the index produced using scanner data is more accurate; as due to a smaller price sample (30,000 products in the scope concerned against 77 million for scanner data), the traditional CPI sometimes monitors prices with atypical variations; (ii) scanner data cover a more extensive scope of products (600 varieties of products in the scope against 350 before); however, product varieties not previously monitored may exhibit different price changes; (iii) until now, the special offers monitored by the CPI have excluded special offers that did not apply to all consumers; scanner data now enable such special offers to be taken into account. The changes for this type of special offer impact the changes in prices measured by scanner data but do not affect the changes in prices measured by the traditional CPI.

In 2019, innovative methodological work was undertaken on testing the use of scanner and bank-card data to produce flash estimates of turnover indices in the retail trade (or even in the scope of personal services), and potentially, in the long term, to replace the monthly survey of the activity of large food supermarkets either totally or partially. Methodological work may also be undertaken to experiment with web scraping techniques and to reflect on wholesale price indices (trade margins) that do not exist today.

Also worthy of note in 2019 was the publication of issue 509 of the Economics and Statistics journal devoted to “Big Data and Statistics”, whose second section covered the use of big data in the Consumer Price Index. This special issue discussed developments in the use of scanner and web-scraped data for producing consumer price indices, and raises two underlying issues. First, to what extent are big data different from, or similar to, traditional data sources such as prices collected in the field? Second, how does this big data change production processes for consumer price indices?

Another article <https://insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3704731> on “Big digital data, ‘citizen data’ and trust in official statistics”, published in the Economics and Statistics journal, issue 505-506 – 2018, should also be noted, which presented the following conclusions:

- Based on the concerns raised by statisticians vis-à-vis digital technologies and big data, four principles for “citizen data” are defined for the production of official statistics: experimentalism, participatory science, smart statistics and data protection as of the design stage;
- Experimentalism means being receptive to a potentially different structure of relationships between the participants involved in data development ;
- Participatory science requires co-production models that enable citizens to influence the ways in which data is understood and generated;
- Smart statistics require a benevolent and a “care-full” approach, covering a broader ethical field that links citizens’ interests and contributions with the creation of new data production mechanisms;
- Data protection by design consists in taking account of citizens’ rights to privacy upstream, when designing software, and in the relationships with citizens who are co-producers of data at all stages of their production,

rather than as a corrective addition downstream of the processes.

In addition, INSEE is part of the MobiTic research project, selected for funding in the framework of the French National Research Agency's generic research projects. This project also involves Orange, IFSSTAR and Géographie-Cité. It aims to produce indicators of people's presence and mobility, by combining recent mobile phone data (especially signalling), other digital data and traditional data. These indicators, produced at detailed levels of spatial and temporal resolution, will shed light on the decisions of local spatial planning actors and should open up opportunities for research on spatial and social dynamics.

In 2019, INSEE's SSP Lab sought to carry out proof-based testing of the potential of new data sources to produce high-quality, reliable and relevant statistics, as well as the potential of innovative data science methods in statistical production systems. It also ensured the monitoring and dissemination of these methods to all official statisticians, provided advice and expertise to INSEE's professional departments and ministerial statistical offices, established links with the research sector and took part in exploratory activities with our counterparts at international statistical institutes.

The experiments conducted by SSP Lab in 2019 set out to improve statistical output (enhancement of survey sampling frames, analysis of textual scope in surveys or administrative data transmissions, improvement of automatic coding tools currently in production), and conduct investigations on long-term issues (contribution of mobile phone data to official statistics, media data, satellite images, neural networks, etc.).

On the MSO side

In 2019, the Health Lab at the DREES continued to implement the "Health Data Hub" project, which aims to promote the use of health data and increase the opportunities for their exploitation, particularly in the fields of research, staff support, health system management, patient monitoring and information. It will enable the development of new techniques, particularly those related to artificial intelligence methods, contribute to promoting innovative uses of health data, and will also be involved in various initiatives associated with the national artificial intelligence strategy.

As part of the redesign of the "TERUTI" land occupancy and use survey conducted by the Agriculture Ministerial Statistical Office, the collaboration with the Centre for the Study of the Biosphere from Space (CESBio) at INRA has continued with a view to assessing the possibility of using satellite data to detect changes in land occupancy and improve the targeting of points that need revisiting.

On the DARES side, work is being carried out on improving the measurement of job vacancies over the widest possible scope, under the auspices of the European "ESSNet Big Data – Web scraping job vacancies" project sponsored by the European Commission (Eurostat directorate). For the DARES, this has involved investing in "big data" approaches (use of new data, scraping, machine learning). This work also uses data from Pôle Emploi's job aggregator, as well as from the OFER survey.

The two main focuses of the analysis are:

- The structuring of the information contained in web-scraped data. In particular, the question of the codification of essential analysis variables (such as the trade or qualifications requested) are being studied.
- Duplicate detection (vacancies published on several job sites).

4.5 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 labelling operations concerning statistical exploitations of administrative data sources.

Regarding the Ministerial Statistical Office for Justice

After hearing representatives of the General Secretariat of the Ministry of 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 of 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 of 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.

Regarding the renewal of the quality labelling of road accident statistics produced by the National Interministerial Road Safety Observatory (ONISR)

Having received an application, in October 2019, to renew the quality labelling of statistical indicators produced by the National Interministerial Road Safety Observatory (ONISR) – first labelled in 2013 – the Official Statistics Authority (ASP) wishes to make the following preliminary clarification. Pursuant to the Order of 2 May 2013 on the organisation of the Official Statistics Quality Labelling Committee, the quality labelling, by the ASP, of data collected by administrations, public bodies and private organisations with a public-service remit, is now based on stricter criteria and is carried out according to a more demanding procedure by the Quality Labelling Committee. As a result, the examination of the application may lead to the non-labelling of series that were previously labelled, even though their characteristics remain unchanged.

An examination of the renewal of the quality labelling of road accident statistical indicators from the national personal injury traffic accidents file (the "BAAC" – Bulletins d'Analyse des Accidents Corporels de circulation – file) was carried out with reference to the recommendations of the ASP's opinion issued in 2013 (appended to this report) and to the Quality Labelling Committee's opinion of 2 October 2019 (also appended to this report). Firstly, it notes an improvement in the quality of the system for producing BAAC files.

Under these conditions, the Authority approves the renewal of the label for five years for the statistical indicators of road accidents derived from the national register of personal injury accidents listed in the Annexe to this report.

Secondly, the Authority notes that the establishment of an Advisory Committee responsible for improving the ONISR's governance, which the Authority called for in its 2013 opinion, is well underway. Its scientific and methodological input will play a valuable role in assessing the impact of the new ONISR information system on the quality-labelled indicators and proposing new indicators for labelling. To enable it to begin its work as

soon as possible, the Authority requests the publication of the Order laying down the composition, duties and operating procedures of this Board without delay.

By the end of 2020, the ASP would like this Advisory Board to examine the issues raised by the following two types of indicators, whose quality-labelling has consequently been suspended:

- indicators on the number of in-patient injuries, for which a break in series has been noted since the transition to the new ONISR information system;
- and annual behavioural indicators, which are undoubtedly of interest to official statistics, but whose design needs to be further developed, both to assert their character as official statistics (collection instructions, further processing) and to ensure that the concepts used are consistent with those developed for other sources in the scope of crime and justice. In particular, methodological comparisons relating to “causality” could help to shed light on the understanding of the ONISR's indicators.

Finally, the Authority invites the ONISR to implement the recommendations set forth in the Quality Labelling Committee’s opinion of 2 October 2019. In particular, it stresses the importance of:

- specifying the title of the labelled indicators, mentioning that they are “personal injury accidents recorded by the law enforcement agencies”, as personal injury accidents concerning the injury statistics are only partially covered by the ONISR statistics;
- clarify the fact that the quality-labelled monthly statistics are those resulting from the annual consolidation of the national BAAC file and broken down according to the month of the accident;
- clearly distinguish between quality-labelled and unlabelled indicators, regardless of the publication medium;
- publish the provisional annual timetable for the dissemination of quality-labelled indicators as soon as the Authority's opinion is published in the Official Journal.

Regarding the renewal of the quality labelling of data produced by the Caisse centrale de la mutualité sociale agricole (CCMSA)

The Authority asks the CCMSA to implement all the recommendations made in the Quality Labelling Committee’s opinion of 10 January 2019 (see Annexe 3).

Furthermore, in order to assert its professional independence in the production of its statistics, the Authority advises the CCMSA to ensure the greatest possible clarity, including in the organisation chart of the Directorate for Statistics, Studies and Funds (DSER), so as to identify statistical activities in manner that clearly sets them apart from the Directorate’s other activities.

Regarding the presentation by INSEE’s General Inspectorate of the report on new statistics of general interest

In response to the emergence of increasingly numerous, diversified and heterogeneous statistics, it is also necessary to develop statistics that are produced directly by the Official Statistical Service (SSP), and to identify those most apt to inform the public debate. This will help to extend the scope of “trusted” statistics. For all that, official statistics has not been given the task of certifying private statistics. The scheme for “benchmarking” private data, implemented following the 2010 CNIS report on housing statistics, has not taken off.

Under these conditions, the Authority validates the following orientations of the INSEE General Inspectorate’s report entitled “Towards a new service for qualifying statistics of general interest?”:

- Abandoning the existing benchmarking scheme;
- Considering any process of qualification of external statistics in a positive manner, as a means of raising the profile of high-quality statistics that are a useful addition to the scope of official statistics, rather than as an indirect means of disqualifying producers who do not conform to

- professional practices;
- Developing public-oriented communication focused on statistical quality, to enable people to better identify the origin and quality of the data they encounter, and thus make the most relevant choices in relation to their needs. The Authority's examination of employment statistics had already emphasised the importance of this focus on helping or training users to take ownership of statistics. Action in this area is key to ensuring that statistics effectively meet the needs;
- Defining a category of experimental statistics for the dissemination of data from new sources, provided that this category is not, under any circumstances, devised as a means of relaxing the quality requirement on which official statistics are based, but rather as a means of enhancing the value of innovative work and promoting exchanges.

The Authority also recognises that transparency in the definitions and documentation of data are absolute prerequisites for good statistics, in order to facilitate their correct interpretation and to enable useful comparisons. Nevertheless, the Official Statistics Authority is wondering about the practicalities of the qualification mechanism proposed by the INSEE General Inspectorate for qualifying statistics produced outside the SSP.

It is important to make the potential contribution of such a system clear, as part of a simple and transparent overall framework, with the new standards being perfectly in line with those used by the SSP or the Authority for its quality labels. It is therefore not a question of creating yet another label, but of devising an efficient system to help users navigate through the enormous body of statistics available to them today. The risk of the proliferation of statistics being accompanied by a multiplication of labels should not be underestimated, and should not be exacerbated in any way.

In this respect, it wonders whether developing a quality score for the documentation reference standard might be a good alternative to the system of qualification according to a gradient of increasing requirements, which is complex and could ultimately lead, at different levels, to giving some credit to statistics that do not deserve it, when there is strong pressure to grant certification "in spite of everything".

To identify the most effective approach, the Official Statistics Authority recommends defining the envisaged documentation reference standards and conducting practical tests to assess their impact, before deciding on the different levels of qualification proposed. In this context, it therefore also suggests testing the alternative possibility of establishing a dynamic index to classify statistics according to the criteria they meet, and thus provide users with an evaluation matrix.

Such preliminary testing of the feasibility and relevance of the envisaged system before its rollout is also required in order to situate the roles of the different players in the process.

The Authority also observes that "quality labelling", which should enable a proportion of "administrative" statistics to be brought under the umbrella of official statistics, is still progressing very slowly, whereas the use, for general information purposes, of data collected by administrations, public bodies or private bodies with a public service remit, is an integral part of official statistics. In parallel with investigating means of accelerating the quality-labelling process for administrative statistics, it therefore recommends an earlier examination of ways in which the proposed scheme could more proactively encourage operators to comply with a minimal documentation reference standard for all their statistics.

Indeed, the public undoubtedly expects a minimum level of quality for administrative statistics, including the statistics published by these operators which do not need to be quality-labelled or which cannot yet be labelled, bearing in mind that quality labels can only be awarded to series or data guaranteeing the same level of quality as those produced by the SSP.

The overall visibility of statistics meeting this requirement, whether produced by the SSP or quality-labelled, should also be enhanced to give the public a less fragmented view of official statistics.

With regard to experimental statistics, the Official Statistics Authority notes that special emphasis should be placed on innovative statistics, which still raise some methodological issues, but whose quality is no lower. It recommends further analysis of this area, in close collaboration with the programme in place at SSP Lab, which must indeed play a major role in the creation of new statistics.

More generally, the ways and means of enabling SSP Lab to act as an incubator for innovative statistics, like the MSOs for “administrative” statistics in their areas of expertise, should be specified.

Lastly, the Official Statistics Authority considers that the possibility of developing a “naming and shaming” policy cannot be completely ruled out.

4.6 Follow-up of recommendations in the 2018 Annual Report of the Authority

In its 2018 annual report, the Authority made a certain number of recommendations for implementation in 2018. 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 ministerial statistical office for local authorities at the Directorate General for Local Authorities (see Annexe X);
- INSEE, the DARES/Pôle Emploi (see Annexe X)
- the High Council for the Notarial Profession (CSN) within the framework of the quality-labelling of the Notaries/INSEE indices of existing housing stock prices in the provinces (see Annexe X)
- the French Health Insurance Fund (CNAM) concerning the monthly series on spending on medicines reimbursed by the health insurance scheme (see Annexe X).

Recommendations were addressed to other bodies whose series had been quality-labelled by the Authority, but these recommendations are to be implemented after 2019.

4.7 Communication of the Authority

In 2019 the President, accompanied by the rapporteur of the ASP, presented the Official Statistics Authority’s 2018 report to Ms Justine Coutard, Chief of Staff to the Minister for Public Action and Accounts, Mr Didier Migaud, First President of the Court of Auditors, Ms Sophie Delaporte, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ms Lepetit, Head of the General Inspectorate of Finances, Mr Jean-Philippe Bourgoïn, Research Adviser to the Minister for Higher Education and Research and Mr. Lara Adélaïde, Budget Advisor to the Minister for Defence.

Discussion covered the following topics in particular:

- the link between statistics and the evaluation of public policies;
- the need for statistics to better inform territorial action and transformations;
- the subject of the revision of the provisional annual accounts.

In addition, the President participated in a seminar organised by ESGAB (European Official Statistics Authority) in Brussels on 19 June. The aim of this seminar was see “how the ‘ESGAB-like bodies’ perform their functions at national level to ensure compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice”.

The ASP rapporteur presented the work of the ASP’s activities to the Directors-General of a number of African States at the June seminar in Libourne organised by INSEE's International Cooperation department.

The 2018 report was widely disseminated (see Annexe 1 for the list of recipients).

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/asp/>

Records of all decisions taken at the Authority's sessions are also accessible on its website.

5. Annexes

Annexe 1 : Recipients of the report

"This report is submitted to Parliament and made public" (Article 2 of the Decree of 3 March 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
 - 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 (MSO), 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 : Décret No 2018-800 of 20 September 2018 amending Decree No 2009-250 of 3 March 2009 on the Official Statistics Authority

Recipients: *members of the Official Statistics Authority, producers of official statistics*

Subject: modifications of the powers of the Official Statistics Authority

Entry into force: *the text enters into force the day after its publication.*

Notice: *the decree modifies the powers of the Official Statistics Authority by stipulating the terms of application of the European Statistics Code of Practice to the Official Statistical Service in terms of compliance with said code, dissemination of statistical publications and issuing an opinion on the occasion of the appointment of the Director General of INSEE and certain heads of Ministerial Statistical Offices.*

References: *the present Decree and the provisions of Decree No 2009 of 3 March 2009 on the Official Statistics Authority, which it amends, may be consulted in the amended wording on the Légifrance website (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>).*

The Prime Minister,

Further to a report by the Minister for the Economy and Finance,

Having regard to Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European statistics and repealing Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1101/2008 on the transmission of data subject to statistical confidentiality to the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 on Community Statistics, and Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom establishing a Committee on the Statistical Programmes of the European Communities, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/759 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015;

Having regard to Law No 51-711 of 7 June 1951 on legal obligation, coordination and confidentiality in the field of statistics, notably its Article 1;

Having regard to Decree No 85-779 of 24 July 1985, amended, implementing Article 25 of Law No 84-16 of 11 January 1984 establishing the list of higher-ranking positions to which appointments are left to the decision of the government;

Having regard to Decree No 2009-250 of 3 March 2009, amended, on the Official Statistics Authority

Having regard to Decree No 2016-663 of 24 May 2016 creating a hearings committee for the appointment of directors in the central government administration;

The Council of State (Finance Section) in its extended format,

Article 1

The abovementioned Decree of 3 March 2009 is amended as follows:

1° In Article 1:

a) Point 1° is replaced by the following provisions:

“1° Issues any opinion it deems useful to guarantee compliance with the principle of professional independence in the design, production and dissemination of official statistics, and with the principles of objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of the data produced, and to ensure compliance by the official statistical service with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice provided by Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the

European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009”

b) A point 1°a, worded as follows, is inserted after 1°: “1° a Issues any opinion it deems useful to ensure that the arrangements for the dissemination of the publications of the Official Statistical Service comply with the principles of neutral and equal treatment of users, as defined in Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 referred to in 1°; it ensures notably that there is a dissemination that is separate and distinct from any ministerial communication, pursuant to Principle 1 of the European Statistics Code of Practice provided by Article 2 of this Regulation.”

c) A point 3°a, worded as follows, is inserted after 3°:

“3°a Issues an opinion on the occasion of the appointment of the Director General of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies and of those of the heads of the Ministerial Statistical Offices who are directors of the central government administration, for the attention of the hearings committee set up pursuant to Decree No 2016-663 of 24 May 2016 creating a hearings committee for the appointment of central government administration directors. This opinion concerns the competencies of the persons being considered for appointment in light of the principle of professional independence set down in the European Statistics Code of Practice provided in Article 2 of European Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of 11 March 2009. The outcome of the opinion is published in the Official Journal at the same times as the deed of appointment.”

d) In point 5°, the words: “in 1°” are replaced by the words: “In 1° and 1°a”;

2° In the first paragraph of Article 2, the words: “in 1° and 5°” are replaced by the words: “In 1°, 1°a and 5°”;

Article 2

The Minister for the Economy and Finance is responsible for execution of this decree which will be published in the Official Journal of the French Republic.

Issued on 20 September 2018.

By the Prime Minister:
Edouard Philippe

The Minister for the Economy and Finance
Bruno LE MAIRE

Annexe 3 : Opinion of 17 January 2019 of the Official Statistics Authority on the renewal of the quality labelling of the data produced by the CCMSA.

Having regard to the letter of 21 September 2018 by the Director General of the Caisse centrale de la mutualité sociale agricole (CCMSA);

Having regard to the opinion of the Quality Labelling Committee of 10 January 2019;

Having regard to Article 6 of the deliberation of 30 October 2018 laying down the Internal Regulations of the Official Statistics Authority

The ASP, by unanimous decision of its members, gives notice of the renewal of the quality label for a period of five years, applicable to all data series submitted by the CCMSA that were previously labelled in 2013, namely the following series:

- statistics on agricultural payroll employment and self-employment;
- statistics on recipients of family benefits;
- statistics on recipients of pensions for agricultural employees and the self-employed;
- statistics on accidents at work and occupational diseases of agricultural employees and self-employed agricultural workers.

The Authority, by unanimous decision of its members, also gives notice of the quality-labelling of the series on sickness insurance expenditure for the agricultural scheme according to the reimbursement date and the treatment date:

- monthly expenditure on medical care in non-hospital institutions and in the private clinic sector, according to the reimbursement date (raw data);
- amounts of invalidity pensions, maternity and paternity leave, according to the reimbursement date (raw data);
- expenditure on non-hospital treatments according to treatment dates (data corrected for seasonal variations (CVO) and for calendar effects (CWD), with completeness modelling).

The Authority asks the CCMSA to implement all the recommendations made in the Quality Labelling Committee's opinion of 10 January 2019 (see Annexe 3 enclosed).

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 present opinion shall be addressed to the Director General of the CCMSA. It will be published in the Official Journal of the French Republic.

ANNEXE

RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE OPINION OF THE QUALITY LABELLING COMMITTEE OF 10 JANUARY 2019;

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, remarks which were for the most part 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.

Annexe 4 : Opinion of 21 November 2019 of the Official Statistics Authority on the renewal of the quality labelling of the statistical indicators produced by the ONISR.

Having regard to the letter of 5 November 2018 from the National Interministerial Road Safety Observatory (ONISR);
Having regard to the quality-labelling opinion of the Official Statistics Authority of 04 June 2013;
Having regard to the Quality Labelling Committee's opinion of 02 October 2019;
Having regard to the minutes of the meeting of the Official Statistics Authority of 16 October 2019, as approved,

Having received an application, in October 2019, to renew the quality labelling of statistical indicators produced by the National Interministerial Road Safety Observatory (ONISR) – first labelled in 2013 – the Official Statistics Authority (ASP) wishes to make the following preliminary clarification. Pursuant to the Order of 2 May 2013 on the organisation of the Official Statistics Quality Labelling Committee, the quality labelling of data collected by administrations, public bodies and private organisations with a public-service remit, carried out by the ASP, is now based on stricter criteria and is performed by the Quality Labelling Committee according to a more stringent procedure. As a result, the examination of the application may lead to the non-labelling of series that were previously labelled, even though their characteristics remain unchanged.

The examination of the renewal of the quality label for road accident statistical indicators from the national personal injury traffic accident file ("BAAC" - Bulletins d'Analyse des Accidents Corporels de Circulation) was carried out with reference firstly to the recommendations of the opinion issued by the ASP in 2013, and secondly, to the Quality Labelling Committee's opinion of 2 October 2019.

Firstly, it notes an improvement in the quality of the system for producing BAAC files.

Under these conditions, the Authority approves the renewal of the label for five years for the statistical indicators of road accidents derived from the national register of personal injury accidents listed in the Annexe.

Secondly, the Authority notes that the establishment of an Advisory Board responsible for improving the ONISR's governance, which the Authority called for in its 2013 opinion, is well underway. Its scientific and methodological input will play a valuable role in assessing the impact of the new ONISR information system on the quality-labelled indicators and proposing new indicators for labelling. To enable it to begin its work as soon as possible, the Authority requests the publication of the Order laying down the composition, duties and operating procedures of this Board without delay.

By the end of 2020, the ASP would like this Advisory Board to examine the issues raised by the following two types of indicators, whose quality-labelling has consequently been suspended:

- indicators on the number of in-patient injuries, for which a break in series has been noted since the transition to the new ONISR information system;
- and annual behavioural indicators, which are undoubtedly of interest to official statistics, but whose design needs to be further developed, both to assert their character as official statistics (collection instructions, further processing) and to ensure that the concepts used are consistent with those developed for other sources in the scope of crime and justice. In particular, methodological comparisons concerning "causality" could help to shed light on the understanding of the ONISR's indicators.

Finally, the Authority invites the ONISR to implement the recommendations set forth in the Quality Labelling Committee's opinion of 2 October 2019. In particular, it stresses the importance of:

- specifying the title of the labelled indicators, mentioning that they are "personal injury accidents recorded by the law enforcement agencies", as personal injury accidents concerning the injury statistics are only partially covered by the ONISR's statistics;
- clarify the fact that the quality-labelled monthly statistics are those resulting from the annual consolidation of the national BAAC file and broken down according to the month of the accident;
- clearly distinguish between quality-labelled and unlabelled indicators, regardless of the publication media;
- publish the provisional annual timetable for the dissemination of quality-labelled indicators as soon as the Authority's opinion is published in the Official Journal.

This opinion will be forwarded to the Interministerial Delegate for Road Safety. It will be mentioned in the Official Journal of the French Republic.

Annexe

List of road accident statistical indicators from the national personal injury traffic accident file (BAAC file) whose label is renewed.

Geographic scope:

Metropolitan France, Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, Réunion and Mayotte from 2012,

Annual accident indicators.

- Annual number of personal injury accidents (AC),
- Annual number of fatal accidents (AM),
- Annual number of people killed (T),
- Annual number of injuries (B),

These annual indicators are broken down as follows:

- According to the timing (time, day of the week, month, day/night period)
- According to the atmospheric conditions
- According to the environment: motorway / outside conurbation, non-motorway / conurbation, non-motorway, formerly known as “urban, rural, motorways”
- According to the type of collision
- By user category (pedestrian, cyclist, moped rider, motorcyclist, motorist, commercial vehicle user, heavy goods vehicle user, public transport user, etc.)
- By age group
- According to gender
- According to user category drivers / passengers
- According to number of years in possession of a driving licence
- In the presence of at least one driver who was above the legal limit for alcohol
- By department
- By region

Indicators concerning victims (killed or injured) can be cross-referenced:

- Age / gender
- Environment / user

The annual ATB indicators are compared to the residential and road traffic context:

- Relative to the number of inhabitants living in the municipality, data from INSEE (estimated resident population on 1 January)
- Relative to the number of kilometres travelled, i.e. billions of kilometres travelled by vehicles.

Annexe 5 : Monitoring of recommendations for the Local Authority MSO

Recommendation in the ASP 2018 annual report:

After hearing the representatives of the Directorate General for Local Authorities (DGCL) and of the Local Authority Ministerial Statistical Office in 2018, the Authority noted that a great deal of progress had been made, in particular in 2017, in the statistical description of local authorities' management accounts and to ensure the comparability of the data: changeover to actual transactions, integration of subsidiary budget annexes, consolidation of cross-flows between budgets and between local authorities. This work must be continued, especially with the consolidation of the work done on financial flows, the extension of the scope covered, the continued investment in "syndicates" and their spheres of competence. Beyond these works, the Authority invites the office to study the chain-linking of the rates of change to local authority expenditure and to improve, in collaboration with the DGFIP, the channels for transmitting initial budgets so that eventually there is only one channel.

The Authority also notes that the statistical office's positioning in relation to the requirements of the Code of Practice is satisfactory. Indeed, the office endeavours to comply with the rules, with, among other things, the creation of a dedicated page on the collectiviteslocales.gouv.fr website, the posting online of a provisional calendar for the MSO's publications, the transparency of the rules on dissemination under embargo, the creation of a methodology page and the rapid publication of data on the number of local government employees. On the other hand, the data on local authority accounts, currently published after a long delay in the Local Public Finance and Management Observatory (OFGL) report, could be disseminated within a shorter timeframe by the MSO. This is necessary to comply with Principle 13 "Timeliness and Punctuality" in the Code of Practice.

More fundamentally, the Authority stresses the need to make the statistical activity specific to the office more easily accessible.

However, the Authority considers that these improvements will not exhaust the demand for objective data in this field, which is legitimately high. Indeed, local authorities are important players, in terms of public investment and taxation, but also more generally for the production of public services. If official statistics are to fully accomplish their mission of making quality information available to anyone and everyone for the purposes of decision-making, research and public debate, the statistics concerning this information must be of a comparable level to what is produced by the other economic agents.

Admittedly, the dissatisfactions expressed are not limited to strictly statistical information. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the DGFIP to provide, authority by authority, the management accounts and the register of local tax data (REI) and ensure this information is accessible under good conditions. Furthermore, the studies conducted by the MSO, in particular within the OFGL, take place downstream of the statistics per se.

And yet, as well as serving to describe economic or social changes in general, statistics are a key component in informing the public debate. These observations tally with certain reflections made by the CNIS as they emerge from its Territories Commission, whose medium-term opinion for 2019-2023 identifies the provision of local indicators for public action as the main priority, because "localised statistical information is indispensable to the actors implementing public policies in local areas". Although it observes that "progress has been made in getting to know the amenities and services present in local areas as well as their accessibility", the same opinion also states that it "would like the efforts to make information available on local authorities, such as local finances; local taxation or local public employment, to continue". The Authority also notes that, following the CNIS Bureau meeting of 24 October 2018, the CNIS adopted the principle of having a preliminary report drawn up, paying particular attention to the different dimensions relating to the quality of local authority statistics and to the context behind the ASP's request, before deciding to set up a working group.

In view of the issues involved and the fact that they also concern INSEE and several ministerial statistical offices, the Authority will carry out a review of this subject in a year's time, covering both the requests made specifically to the local authority MSO and the implementation of the CNIS's orientations, to make sure that official statistics have organised to guarantee the effectiveness of these orientations, under the umbrella of statistical coordination. The corresponding examination will be structured according to the requirements of the Code of Practice, in particular the principles relating to statistical outputs, and first and foremost the principle of relevance which requires that statistics meet users' needs.

Response of the CNIS and MSO

Following the opinion of the Official Statistics Authority addressed to the CNIS with a view to developing an overall reflection on the quality of statistics concerning local authorities, a group of experts chaired by Patrice Duran, Chairman of the CNIS, was established with representatives of the Dissemination and Regional Action Directorate (DDAR), the Economic Studies and National Accounts Directorate (DESE) at INSEE, the head of the Directorate General for Local Authorities (DGCL) MSO, and members of the CNIS General Secretariat. This group submitted its report in October 2019.

This request was made in a complex and still only partially stabilised territorial management context, which could be characterised by three shortcomings:

- a lack of appropriation, probably due to ignorance of statistical sources and methods;
- an institutional shortcoming hindering coordination between territorial authorities and the State, despite such coordination being essential;
- and a broader lack of collective action, concerning the growing number of different players in public action, particularly in order to meet needs whose scope of intervention does not correspond exactly to the local authorities' scope.

With that in mind, and given this contextual difficulty, the working group deliberately focused on observing the nature and volume of the available data, by taking stock of the situation of all producers in the SSP and other territorial public management operators (Local Public Finance and Management Observatory (OFGL), Banque Postale, Caisse des Dépôts, etc.).

This led to the listing of all existing statistics on local authorities considered as economic agents. Statistics on local-authority-administered territories, considered as framework data, fell outside the scope.

In the end, a very large volume of statistics was produced and made available, originating from some fifteen producers, particularly the DGCL. These sources are made available with shortened deadlines and benefit from a progressive enrichment of the topics covered,

but despite the wealth of information available, these sources are insufficiently known and promoted. In addition, the working group noted a certain difficulty in collecting data produced by local authorities and in ensuring a sufficient level of quality, particularly for detailed budgets by function, or wealth data. Lastly, there is a lack of data concerning an entity that is a constituent part of these authorities, namely local public-sector enterprises.

This observation led to three recommendations being made:

- The first sets out to increase the awareness and visibility of existing statistics and recommends making the status review drawn up by the working group widely available through publication and posting on the CNIS website. The creation of a dedicated portal, enabling the updating of sources, could complete this system.
- The second recommendation concerns improving the identification and knowledge of local public-sector enterprises, and advises producers to perform investigations to enable the rapid provision of information concerning them.
- Finally, with regard to data collected by local authorities, the third recommendation makes further investigation by a working group dependent upon the full and active involvement of local authority representatives. Without their participation, it is indeed difficult to ensure smooth access to the channels required to obtain these data.

For further details, see the October 2019 note on local authority statistical data on the CNIS website.

During the January 2020 hearings of the President of the CNIS and the Director General of INSEE, it was mentioned that INSEE's General Inspectorate could be tasked with a mission on these subjects, and that it might be possible to launch a working group which, like Mr. De Foucauld's CNIS working group on labour market statistics, could reflect on developing a longer-term vision.

Annexe 6 : Follow-up to the ASP recommendations on job-seekers' statistics and INSEE employment statistics

Recommendation made in the ASP 2018 annual report:

The ASP commended the quality of the work done jointly by INSEE, the DARES and Pôle Emploi to understand the discrepancies observed, especially since 2009, between the trend in ILO unemployment and that of job-seekers registered with Pôle Emploi in category A. In view of the importance of statistics in this area, the Authority had expressed the desire for these activities to continue so that their results could be published once their robustness had been ascertained.

With regard to employment statistics, the ASP made a point of requesting the improvement of the documentation made available to the public, to enable the latter to make the best use of the different sources.

Since the DARES and INSEE hearings in March 2018, ongoing efforts have been made to help users understand employment and unemployment statistics.

This has led to the publication of two working documents presenting the result of methodological activities, on Insee.fr:

- [Working document on the Employment survey and administrative sources on employment](#) (published online in October 2019)

Within a comparable scope, the difference of approximately one million jobs between the Employment survey and the annual estimates is likely to result partly from under-reporting in the Employment survey.

- [Working document on the matching of the Employment survey and the historical Pôle Emploi file](#) for the 2012-2017 period (published online in July 2019). This discussion paper is common to the three organisations: INSEE, the DARES and Pôle Emploi.

- A dossier containing the main elements for the general public was also published in July 2019 in the *INSEE Références* publication entitled "Emploi, chômage, revenus du travail" (Employment, unemployment and earned Income).

-In addition, an educational document entitled "Emploi : quelles sources pour quels usages" (Employment: which sources for what uses?) was published on Insee.fr in October.

This document sets out to present the main current sources, their strengths and weaknesses, in order to provide the best guidance for users according to their needs. It also aims to describe the discrepancies between sources concerning the measurement of employment levels.

Annexe 7 : Follow-up to the recommendations on the quality labelling of the Notaries/INSEE indices of existing housing stock prices in the provinces

Recommendation in the ASP 2018 annual report:

The Authority unanimously grants the quality labelling of the quarterly indices for existing housing stock prices, raw and seasonally adjusted, for:

- all property (houses and apartments), apartments, houses in the regions Hauts-de-France (with details for Nord-Pas-de-Calais), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (with details for Rhône-Alpes) and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (excluding Corsica);
- all property (houses and apartments), apartments, houses in the provinces;
- all property (houses and apartments), apartments, houses in Metropolitan France;
- all property (houses and apartments), apartments, houses in France (excluding Mayotte);
- apartments in urban areas with more than 10,000 inhabitants (all, town centres, suburbs), apartments in other urban areas and rural areas, as well as apartments in the cities of Lyon and Marseille;
- houses in the Lille conurbation.

The Authority asks the High Council of French Notaries (CSN) to implement the recommendations formulated in the Quality Labelling Committee's opinion of 15 March and, with regard to dissemination, places particular emphasis on the need to clearly identify quality-labelled data in its publications.

The Authority also stresses the need to ensure that the scientific committee continues to play a role in validating the methodological choices, in particular the conditions for the planned merging of the Bien and Perval property databases.

The Authority has taken official note of the CSN's commitment to reduce the number of versions of these quarterly indices from four to two by the end of 2018.

The Authority invites the CSN to facilitate access to its data by researchers.

Response of the High Council of French Notaries (CSN)

A page dedicated to quality-labelled data has been added to the official website for French notaries.

<https://www.notaires.fr/fr/immobilier-fiscalite/C3%A9/prix-et-tendances-de-limmobilier/les-indices-notaires-insee-de-prix-labellis%C3%A9s-asp>

On this page, the CNS provides an overview of the methodology, links to related technical documentation, links to pages on the INSEE and notarial profession's websites on which quality-labelled series can be consulted and downloaded, as well as to quarterly publications by INSEE (*Informations Rapides* collection) and the CSN (quarterly economic outlook report). When these documents are published, in order to differentiate between quality-labelled series and other property statistics, the former are disseminated in special inserts with a reminder of the methodology and the quality label, identified by the official statistics logo. The press kit for the 2019 national press conference shows an example of this presentation:

<https://www.notaires.fr/fr/presse/dossier-presse-notaires-France/conf%C3%A9rence-de-presse-immobili%C3%A8re-nationale-2019>

In addition, the merging of the data populating the Bien and Perval property databases was completed in January 2019. To enable the CSIN to monitor this process, the notarial profession wished to inform the Scientific Council in advance, i.e. as early as 2018. Since then, the merging of the databases has been discussed at every meeting of the CSIN.

Finally, many improvements to the production process have been made. As such, since the calculation of the indices for Q2 2018, there has been a significant drop in the number of revisions between the different publications. For the provinces as a whole, revisions are now almost nil, whereas the indices have been regularly revised downward for the past few years:

- firstly, due to the reduction of correction times and the integration of deeds into property databases;
- secondly, due a change in the calculation of the indices by excluding deeds that have not yet been verified; this change was validated by the CSIN following work carried out at its request.

An observation phase must be carried out over a significant period (four quarters) to validate the stability of these improvements and the results obtained so that the CSN can make a final proposal for the withdrawal of one or two of the intermediate indices. For the time being, it seems necessary to keep the three and six- month versions in order to

publish as much data as possible on a provisional basis and to ensure the final publication of all series.

Regarding access to data for researchers, a dedicated supply remains available, covering the needs for aggregate statistics and access to individual data in the notarial profession's property databases.

Annexe 8 : Follow-up to the recommendations for the quality-labelling of the monthly series on expenditure on medicines reimbursed by the health insurance scheme, dispensed by community pharmacies

Recommendation made in the ASP 2018 annual report:

The Official Statistics Authority approves, for five years, the quality labelling of the raw monthly data on spending on medicines dispensed by community pharmacies (known as "MediCAM" data) and reimbursed by the health insurance scheme, completed by the series on the amounts reimbursable and reimbursed at the five levels of the ATC (Anatomical, Therapeutic, Chemical) classification, all being understood as on the date of reimbursement.

The Authority duly notes that the CNAM has undertaken to implement, by autumn 2018, all the recommendations formulated by the Quality Labelling Committee in order to facilitate access to and appropriation of these data by the public, in particular the documentation on the scope covered by the quality-labelled data.

The Authority has asked the CNAM to add series distinguishing between reimbursement rates (Chronic conditions (ALD)/non-ALD), to programme the seasonal adjustment of the series, starting with the higher levels of aggregation, and to provide long-period series.

The Authority also invites the CNAM and the other official statistical service entities concerned to provide coherent data on the dispensing of drugs by community and hospital pharmacies.

Finally, the Official Statistics Authority has asked to be informed without delay of any reservations that the Court of Auditors may formulate concerning the medicines scope in the course of its annual examination for the certification of the CNAM's accounts.

Response of the CNAM

The medicines series were quality-labelled in September 2018 and this labelling called for the implementation of recommendations (see below). The documentation page has been created and is updated according to events¹⁹. Disaggregation by distinguishing between reimbursement rates is now proposed and long series have also been made available. The deseasonalisation of series has not yet been carried out.

Lastly, the CNAM has begun to disseminate data on the retroceded share of drugs (*médicaments rétrocédés* – drugs dispensed by health care facilities for non-hospitalised patients)²⁰. This does not yet cover the entire pharmaceutical field since it still lacks the medicines dispensed by health institutions to hospitalized patients.

¹⁹ <https://www.ameli.fr/l-assurance-maladie/statistiques-et-publications/donnees-statistiques/medicament/medicaments-pharmacies-de-ville-par-classe-atc/medic-am-labellise-2019.php>

²⁰ <https://www.ameli.fr/l-assurance-maladie/statistiques-et-publications/donnees-statistiques/medicament/retrocede-am.php> Period covered: 2010 to 2018 (all schemes in the whole of France since 2017)

Annexe 9 : The Ministerial Statistical Offices on 31 December 2019

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 and Solidarity 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 Information Systems and Statistical 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 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 of the Interior Ministerial Statistical Office for Internal Security under the Central Director of the Judicial Police
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Annexe 10 : Programme for the ASP colloquium of 27 November 2019

Opening of the colloquium

Dominique Bureau, President of the Official Statistics Authority

First round-table discussion: Professional independence, where do we stand?

Moderator

Jean-Marc Vittori, journalist for the economic press, editorialist at the newspaper Les Échos

Speakers

Paul Champsaur: first President of the Official Statistics Authority from 2009 to 2015

François Clanché: first Head of the Internal Security Ministerial Statistical Office (SSMSI), created in 2014

Édouard De Crozé: Auchan, stakeholder in the “Scanner Data” project

Mireille Elbaum: member of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB)

Jacques Freyssinet: former Director of the IRES, professor emeritus at Paris I

Discussions

Second round-table discussion: Public confidence in official statistics today

Moderator

Jean-Marc Vittori, journalist for the economic press, editorialist at the newspaper Les Échos

Speakers

Mr Patrice DURAN, President of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS);

Gilles de Margerie: Commissioner-General, France Stratégie

Mathilde Damgé: journalist for “Les décodeurs”, a blog at Le Monde newspaper

Mr Jean-Luc Tavernier, Director-General of INSEE.

Karine Van Der Straeten: Scientific Director, Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse

Discussions

Closing of the colloquium

Emmanuel Moulin, Chief of Staff to the Minister of the Economy,

Annexe 11 : 2019 Review of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS)

2019 was a year marked by the renewal of the members of the National Statistical Council, officialised by the order of 9 August 2019 (published in the Official Journal of 30 August 2019).

This new council, established for the next 5 years, covers the same time frame as the medium-term opinions for 2019-2024, which were adopted in January 2019.

These two new elements in 2019 provide an opportunity to reaffirm the role of the CNIS.

Indeed, in the climate of mistrust towards statistics, perhaps partly due to the increasing complexity of the world around us, it seems increasingly essential for a body to allow all types of users – since the CNIS committees are open to all – to come and express their expectations and be able to benefit from presentations of the work and projects of official statistics producers. These dialogues help to improve the users' understanding, and therefore their appropriation, of the data. By providing keys to understanding and defining points to be worked on, the committee meetings, in all likelihood, help to create or build confidence in high-quality statistics.

The 2019 CNIS Review focuses on key elements of four highly strategic topics, bringing together the general opinions for the 2019-2023 medium-term period, namely: sustainable development, digital technology, territories and a more cross-cutting aspect to these previous points, concerning methods and dissemination.

1) Sustainable development

The CNIS working group's report on the French version of the monitoring indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, published in 2018, enabled the structuring of recommendations for this medium-term period.

This report sets out the 17 goals defined by the UN, which led to the definition of 98 indicators used to monitor French strategies contributing to sustainable development, and their value. These indicators will be used until 2030.

It should be borne in mind that the key issue is for sustainable development indicators to complement the measurement of growth according to changes in GDP, to ensure that growth is sustainable, meaning that it does not use up the planet's resources and that it takes account of the issue of inequalities in the world.

During 2019, the indicators were updated and disseminated by INSEE via the INSEE.fr website.

In connection with and following on from the CNIS report, the 2019 edition of *L'environnement en France* (Environment in France), a report produced by the SDES (Environment and Sustainable Development MSO) and published every four years since 1994, was presented at the last meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Development Commission. It clearly states that environmental conservation must not be dissociated from the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and from social issues in particular.

The 2021-2027 work programme for the European Statistical System, which is consistent with the new European Commission's orientations, responds to the increasing European demands for statistics on the environment and sustainable development. For the environment, it is a matter of shifting the focus of observation from waste towards the circular economy, and of continuing to make progress on environmental accounting in order to meet users' needs.

In this spirit, one of the Environment Commission's sessions was devoted to food waste, at the end of which the CNIS noted that the observation system for this phenomenon appears to be insufficiently developed, and that the information system on food waste should be supplemented (especially for the catering sector and households) and then regularly updated (at least every four years) in response to the new European reporting requirements.

The topic of sustainable development was also examined by the Financial System and Financing of the Economy Commission, which devoted its autumn session to "green" finance, covering numerous initiatives, often at an exploratory or intermediate phase, on the adequacy of funding, orientations for savings, and risks related to the ecological transition.

The following points should be borne in mind on this subject:

- firstly, the difficulty in providing a definition of "green" activities, i.e. activities that meet certain environmental objectives,
- secondly, in view of the diversity of initiatives and the current phase of investigations on this subject, the CNIS would like green finance to be the subject of a new status review during the current medium-term period, in a broader framework involving the "Financial System and Financing of the Economy", "Enterprises and Market Strategies" and "Environment and Sustainable Development" Commissions.

Finally, considering that when inequalities worsen, they jeopardise social cohesion and therefore call into question the objective of sustainable growth, the social dimension of this topic was addressed during the spring meeting of the Public Services Commission, which examined the measurement of the non-take-up of rights.

2) Digital technology

The second topic chosen for the medium-term period is digital technology, following on from the symposia organised in 2018 on the digital economy and new data sources, respectively. For official statistics, it is a question of measuring and monitoring digital development on the one hand, and of measuring and analysing its impact on economic and social life, on the other. With regard to the new data sources, the challenge for official statistics is as much about enhancing its current observation systems as innovating in its statistical production, while maintaining the quality of these new sources.

In terms of progress, we can of course single out the use of scanner data in the calculation of the Consumer Price Index which, in 2019, underwent a final phase of experimentation before being put into production in January 2020.

These supermarket and hypermarket data will replace 30,000 prices previously recorded by investigators in Metropolitan France in the scope of industrial food, cleaning, and health and beauty products.

In this framework, by way of the CNIS, the development of territorial price indices will keep users informed of future methodological advances, particularly in terms of spatial price comparisons.

Another use of scanner data has been envisaged by INSEE, which has asked the CNIS to provide support. This is the experimental project on using scanner data for the turnover index (ICA). This monthly index meets both national and European needs. At present, its production is based on administrative data and a survey of large food supermarkets (EMAGASA survey). With the dual objective of improving the quality (of indices and the sources that use them) and reducing the statistical burden on businesses, the food supermarket scanner data, which are already used to calculate the consumer price index (CPI), could also replace the EMAGASA survey. This would also reduce publication periods and introduce the possibility of regional breakdowns of data. INSEE is currently engaged in discussions with certain food retail chains regarding this new use.

The CNIS has issued an opinion supporting INSEE's request.

3) Territories

The issue of territorial statistics is one of the topics frequently raised during consultations conducted in a medium-term context.

More precisely, the attention is focused on two specific issues. The first concerns the description of these territories via the production of precisely located data. The second focuses on the structuring and dissemination of the available information.

Lastly, the question of territories goes beyond the national dimension. In the context of a globalised economy, it is important to situate France in relation to other countries, but also to move beyond comparisons of national averages and conduct comparative analyses between territories in different countries.

With regard to territorial authorities, following the opinion of the Official Statistics Authority addressed to the CNIS with a view to developing an overall analysis of the quality of statistics relating to local authorities, a group of experts chaired by the President of the CNIS was established with representatives of the Dissemination and Regional Action Directorate (DDAR), the Economic Studies and National Accounts Directorate (DESE) at INSEE, the head of the Directorate General for Local Authorities (DGCL) MSO, and members of the CNIS General Secretariat, who submitted a report in October 2019, which set out to define the ASP's needs more clearly.

For further information, see Chapter 4 on the monitoring of recommendations set out in the Authority's 2018 Activity Report.

The issue of territorial boundaries was specifically addressed at the autumn meeting of the Territories Commission by examining the different statistical breakdowns or classifications of territories, which are currently being revised: urban units, urban zones of attraction (redesign of the previous 2010 zoning system for urban areas), employment zones, living zones, travel zones, and agricultural zoning.

On the subject of international comparisons, several projects or advances can be reported:

At the European level, the draft revision of the NACE – the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community – aims precisely to promote international comparisons. The NACE is part of a vast network of interlinked international, European and national classifications of activities and products. The current version dates back to 2006, and is being revised to take account of the significant changes to the economic fabric since then (development of e-commerce, Internet platforms, the sharing economy, factory-less producers, the rapid development of well-being-related services, etc.).

Also at the European level, the Financial System Commission devoted an item on its agenda to the system for monitoring the international activity of groups. After examining this point, the CNIS issued an opinion that welcomed all the developments, encouraged the Banque de France's work on enriching direct investment statistics, and invited INSEE and the Banque de France to continue their work and improve their coordination in order to comply with the European FATS (Foreign Affiliates Statistics) regulation, disseminate all these data and enable their reconciliation.

Switching to the global level, the same Financial System Commission noted the progress made on the LEI (Legal Entity Identifier) – the global equivalent of the SIREN code for financial transactions – which makes a very useful

contribution to the transparency and regulation of financial transactions, according to the feedback provided by the French Financial Markets Authority (AMF). Among the desired improvements, the CNIS encouraged the integration of the LEI into the registers of enterprises (SIRENE and Sirius), and also into the APCR (French Prudential Supervision and Resolution Authority) and AMF registers.

Finally, during the European Day on 22 October 2019, held on the ESSEC campus in Paris on the initiative of ESAC (the European equivalent of the CNIS), on the theme of "Look at the Facts", the CNIS took the opportunity to contact the Vice-President of ESAC and lay the foundations for a future cooperation project, notably on taking stock of user consultation systems in European Union countries.

4) Methodology and dissemination

The medium-term opinions on this topic cut across all the other topics. They set out firstly to develop the matching of data sources in order to enhance the analysis of links between different themes, and secondly, to facilitate the appropriation of the data, statistics and analyses produced by improving the clarity of the official statistical service's output.

Several advances should be highlighted under this heading.

To begin with, it should be pointed out that one of the recommendations of the report on territorial authorities – ensuring the widespread availability of the list of existing statistics compiled in an inventory for each producer – is fully consistent with this aim of clarity.

This aim of ensuring the greatest clarity was also the very subject of the CNIS working group's report on the dissemination of structural business statistics, chaired by Alain Duchâteau.

Indeed, as 2019 was the first year for INSEE's complete dissemination of business statistics according to the new definition of enterprises in the economic sense, following the 2008 Law on Modernisation of the Economy (LME), a group of experienced users of these statistics was tasked by INSEE, under the aegis of the CNIS, with the design of changes to certain publications:

- the note accompanying the data from the "Annual Business Statistics Programme" (ÉSANE) system on the insee.fr website,
- the sector-specific sheets in the annual *Les entreprises en France* (Enterprises in France) publication.
- the development of a new sheet on groups.
- Lastly, the group made recommendations on clarifying and specifying the use of the term "enterprise".

In the end, the report brings together twelve recommendations revolving around pedagogy and communication, the coherence of European statistics, territorial analyses and additional national activities. The validated opinion on this report emphasises the efforts made by official statistics to adopt this new approach, improve the production of analyses and dissemination at territorial level and ensure a sound understanding by the enterprises surveyed.

Another report of the CNIS working group, on the renewal of the classification of professions and social categories (PCS), chaired by Thomas Amossé, also comes under this heading, since the aim of the report, in accordance with the group's mandate, is to improve the clarity of the classification by reconsidering the originality of its principles and clarifying its links with existing French and international classifications, but also to facilitate its production and use by simplifying its coding and improving its documentation, and finally, to extend its possible uses, correct its weaknesses and remedy its shortcomings.

This report should enable INSEE to draw up an action plan, whose first implementation stage could consist in using this new PCS2020 classification in the Employment survey, which has been adapted to accommodate these new tools.

Two new European framework regulations for statistics were adopted in 2019, with the aim of increasing the harmonisation of methods in order to improve the comparability of statistics.

The IESS (Integrated European Social Statistics) regulation aims to structure and harmonise the production of social household surveys on seven major topics: labour force, income and living conditions, health, education and training, use of information and communication technologies, time use, and consumption.

This harmonisation particularly concerns variables common to different surveys (NSIs are generally responsible for conducting the interviews that provide these variables, and for the collection method).

On the business statistics side, the Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS) replaces ten sectoral regulations currently in force, moving from a compartmentalised approach to an integrated approach providing greater flexibility in order to adapt to the emerging needs for new statistics. This regulation will come into force in 2021. It establishes the general framework and defines the data to be transmitted, while introducing certain new or improved features.

For the CNIS, the implementation of these regulations has raised questions about the most appropriate time to present the feasibility opinions to the commissions for surveys subject to such a regulation, and more specifically about the terms of its involvement in the drafting of implementing regulations that are dependent on a framework regulation.

Without calling into question the principle of issuing a feasibility opinion, it was decided to set up a small ad hoc consultation group of five or six volunteers for a given survey and based on a brief presentation of the draft implementing regulation. The various questions raised by the European working groups in which representatives of the owners of the surveys participate would then be put to these volunteers.

The outcome of this consultation will be recorded in a report, which could take the form of a CNIS opinion. Reports on this consultation and regulation will be submitted during the presentation of work programmes at the CNIS commission meetings in the spring.

The feasibility opinion, covering all the characteristics of the survey that comply with the regulation, could then be given on the basis of a presentation that quickly mentions the points in direct application of the regulation and emphasises, where appropriate, any specifically national points.

This procedural change is envisaged for the Adult Education Survey (AES) on an experimental basis starting in spring 2020 for an implementing regulation that should be adopted by May 2021 at the latest.

Regarding clarity and access to sources, the autumn Public Services Commission meeting reviewed the issue of the accessibility of justice data, following the CNIS working group's report on researchers' access to administrative data (PY Geoffard/Antoine Bozio, 2017), which showed that the recent legislative advances, guaranteeing access to the majority of these administrative data and ensuring their processing in a secure environment, did not apply to criminal data, for which the legal conditions had not yet been fully clarified.

This review shows that although conflicting approaches are sometimes used for the different legal sources, ways of improving the access to and processing of such data are becoming clearer. For example, a group has been established at the Ministry for Justice to examine the issue of researchers' access to criminal data, with the involvement of the Information Technology and Freedom Office, the Archives Department and all of the Ministry's directorates, which now receive very large numbers of requests from researchers, from the Prison Service Directorate to the Judicial Protection and Youth Directorate.

The CNIS also endeavours to apply the principles of clarity and easier appropriation of statistics to its own publications, firstly, of course, by publishing all its work on its website (summaries and minutes of commission and working group meetings, working group reports), but also by disseminating its *Les Chroniques* collection, also entitled *4-pages du CNIS*, with a view to reaching the largest possible number of official statistics users.

In 2019, there were three additions to the *Les Chroniques* collection, each devoted to a different topic:

- the Medium Term 2019-2023 period, and to the principles on which it was based (including an English version),
- a look back on 10 years of chairmanship of the "Public Services and Services for the Public" Commission by Pierre-Yves Geoffard,
- a three-year review of the recommendations of the CNIS working group on family breakdowns.

Upcoming editions of *Les Chroniques* include an issue devoted to the overhaul of the Professional and Social Categories (CPS) and another devoted to the dissemination of business statistics.

Lastly, to improve the clarity of the Official Statistical Service's output, the CNIS will organise a colloquium in 2020 on "Panels and cohorts in official statistics", which will focus in particular on the measurement of individual trajectories. This colloquium will thus provide an opportunity to conduct an interim review of the progress made over the last 15 years, both statistically and legally, on the basis of the debates conducted in the 2000s at the time of the CNIS' work on the need to develop a better understanding of personal trajectories, which led to a mission on "Tools for monitoring people's social and employment trajectories". During this conference, it will also be important to compare our practices in this area with those of other countries.

This general review must be supplemented by two salient points that have been raised by the commissions:

1) The first point concerns the three-year review of the follow-up to the recommendations of the report by the working group on the diversity of forms of employment (July 2016), chaired by Bernard Gazier. It should be noted that a number of these recommendations have been incorporated into the redesigned Employment survey. By 2021, the revised questionnaire will thus improve the identification of the different employee statuses (apprenticeship, temporary work, apprentices on open-ended contracts, temporary workers on open-ended contracts, etc.), in order to provide clearer distinctions between specific forms of employment. A number of questions will make clearer distinctions between the different categories of independent and self-employed workers, "auto-entrepreneurs" and entrepreneurs. Finally, the redesigned Employment Survey will enable the dissemination of indicators on the extent to which temporary contracts are chosen or imposed.

(2) The other point concerns the meeting of the Demographics and Social Issues Commission, whose activities in the spring focused on children in official statistics, as both subjects and objects of observation.

This highly sensitive issue was the subject of a specific medium-term opinion, for which the CNIS met with both the President of the HSCP (High Council for Public Health) and the President of the HCFEA (High Council for the Family, Childhood and Age). This opinion stressed the need to know more about the living conditions of children in their social and family environment.

At the end of the Commission's meeting, the CNIS made the following recommendations:

It deems it necessary to consolidate and complete the database on children as recommended by the HCFEA.

As the family survey remains a central source for knowledge and description of children in their environment, the CNIS requests the renewal of this survey, whose latest edition of dates back to 2011.

The CNIS recommends the development and enhancement of child-focused data in existing investigations and supports new operations that directly interview children as subjects.

Regarding specific populations, such as children with disabilities, children subject to protective measures or placement, and children in poor housing or extreme poverty, the CNIS stresses the difficulty in identifying them and mentions the

room for improvement. It insists on the need to pay particular attention to these groups, whose characteristics and trajectories need to be better known.

Finally, the CNIS recommends that the different definitions of children in sources should be clear and shared to facilitate a comprehensive approach.

These cooperation projects with the two councils (HSCP and HCFEA) are a powerful vector for reporting on emerging needs in a changing economic and social context. They also help to reveal and clarify how the CNIS can pass on requests to the bodies responsible for producing official statistics.

Annexe 12 : Recommendations of the report of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB)

Recommendation 1

The mission of all bodies in charge of overseeing the functioning of national statistical systems should be made clear in national legislation, so that their roles are strengthened, and their actions facilitated by their being recognised as key interlocutors within the NSI-government relationship.

Recommendation 2

Due to the importance of an appropriate governance structure to prevent problems and fully implement the Code of Practice (CoP), governance issues should feature prominently in the next round of peer reviews, not least in the context of the communication strategy accompanying the peer review procedure.

Recommendation 3

The round of peer reviews to be launched in 2020 should produce systematic evidence on how the governance within each Member State achieves effective implementation and compliance with the CoP.

Recommendation 4

Due to the importance of an effective dialogue with users to implement Principle 11 of the CoP (Relevance)¹, based on adequate ways of connecting with different categories of users, the ESS should discuss how to strengthen such dialogue at both European and national levels

Recommendation 5

Eurostat, in cooperation with the European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC), should prepare an overview of national user councils and promote the establishment of these bodies in states where they do not currently exist or the extension of their scope, as necessary.

Recommendation 6

In view of the increasing risks of third-party dissemination of non-validated or 'fake' information, ESGAB recommends to Eurostat and the NSIs to design appropriate actions of communication and outreach to citizens to highlight the trustworthiness of official statistics.

Recommendation 7

As an effective implementation of census guidelines at national level is also particularly important to enhance trust in official statistics, ESGAB recommends to Eurostat and the NSIs to pay special attention to the governance of the 2021 population and housing census. In particular, NSIs should, with Eurostat support, strengthen their coordination role in relation to ONAs and local authorities throughout the whole process.

Recommendation 8

Given the growing use of administrative sources in census operations, the ESS should ensure the clarity and consistency of the definitions used in the next round of the population and housing census with those used in the past and with the statistical concepts used worldwide, with particular attention to those concerning social topics (employment, unemployment, etc.) and migration flows.

Recommendation 9

ESGAB recommends that a comprehensive strategy of communication and dialogue with users in relation to the 2021 population and housing census be developed at national and European level.

Recommendation 10

The members of the ESS should begin preparations for the 2031 population and housing census as soon as possible, taking into account the lessons learned from the 2021 round. In this perspective, the possibility of developing a continuous population census within the EU should be explored, in light of the growing mobility of people within Europe and the expected trends in international migration.

Recommendation 11

ESGAB recommends that, when preparing the final report on the 2013-2015 peer-review exercise at the end of 2020, Eurostat presents an in-depth analysis of the whole exercise and in particular of the implementation of improvement actions, with categorisation of the different actions, risks identified, and successes achieved.

Recommendation 12

ESGAB calls on Eurostat, in collaboration with NSIs and potentially with other directorates-general of the Commission,

to be proactive in ensuring progress with implementation of the peer-review recommendations whose implementation depends on actions to be pursued at governmental level.

Recommendation 13

As one of the outcomes of the next round of peer reviews, Eurostat should produce a mapping and an assessment of the different risks of non-compliance with each of the principles of the CoP.

Recommendation 14

ESGAB recommends full transparency of the peer-review process, encouraging Member States and Eurostat to promote awareness of the methodology and to associate representatives of users at different stages of the process.

Annexe 13 : Principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice, 2017 version

QUALITY DECLARATION OF THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM

The European Statistical System is a partnership in which Eurostat and the national statistical authorities of each EU Member State and EFTA country cooperate. Together, our mission is to provide independent high quality statistical information at European, national and regional levels and to make this information available to everyone for decision-making, research and debate.

The programme and priorities of European statistics are discussed and agreed by ESS members with the final decisions taken in a democratic manner according to European legislative procedures.

We operate under a strict legal regime,²¹ supplemented by a robust, world-class and self-regulatory quality framework, the backbone of which is the European Statistics Code of Practice.²² Our compliance with the Code of Practice is periodically assessed by means of review mechanisms and strict follow-up of the improvement actions²³ identified.

We see quality as the basis of our competitive advantage in a world experiencing a growing trend of instant information which often lacks the necessary proof of quality. Our work is governed by professional independence, impartial treatment of all our users, objectivity, reliability, statistical confidentiality and cost-effectiveness. The development, production and dissemination of our statistics are based on sound methodologies, the best international standards and appropriate procedures that are well documented in a transparent manner. Our principles of quality are: relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, as well as comparability and coherence.

We consistently strive to minimise the burden on our respondents, cultivate good cooperation with data providers and cooperate closely with stakeholder groups including the scientific communities.

We are committed to statistical excellence by systematically identifying our strengths and weaknesses, as well as related risks which we duly take into account by the continuous development of our common quality framework. By continuously modernising, innovating and compiling new indicators, we not only improve the quality of our products and services, but also attempt to anticipate emerging phenomena and needs with our users.

Heads of the National Statistical Institutes and Director-General of Eurostat

²¹ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2016:202:FULL&from=EN> and Regulation (EC) n° 223/2009 on European statistics as amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/759 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02009R0223-20150608&from=EN>.

²² European Statistics Code of Practice <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5921941/KS-32-11-955-FR.PDF/f1dfd441-391c-4c15-94f2-b34a43697f55> and Common Quality Framework of the European Statistical System <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4392716/ESS-QAF-V1-2final.pdf/bbf5970c-1adf-46c8-afc3-58ce177a0646>.

²³ First and second rounds of peer reviews: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/first-round-of-peer-reviews> and <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/peer-reviews>.

Institutional environment

Institutional and organisational factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of a statistical authority developing, producing and disseminating European Statistics.

The relevant Principles are professional independence, coordination and cooperation, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity.

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

Indicator 1.1: The independence of the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating statistics is specified in law and assured for other statistical authorities.

Indicator 1.2: The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. They are of the highest professional calibre.

Indicator 1.3: The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have responsibility for ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner.

Indicator 1.4: 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.

Indicator 1.5: The statistical work programmes are published, and periodic reports describe progress made.

Indicator 1.6: Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.

Indicator 1.7: The National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat and, where appropriate, other statistical authorities, comment publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of statistics as far as considered suitable.

Indicator 1.8: The procedures for the recruitment and appointment of the heads of the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat and, where appropriate, the statistical heads of other statistical authorities, are transparent and based on professional criteria only. The reasons on the basis of which the incumbency can be terminated are specified in the legal framework. These cannot include reasons compromising professional or scientific independence.

PRINCIPLE 1bis Coordination and cooperation National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat ensure the coordination of all activities for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics at the level of the national statistical system and the European Statistical System, respectively.

Statistical authorities actively cooperate within the partnership of the European Statistical System, so as to ensure the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.

PRINCIPLE 1bis.1: The National Statistical Institutes coordinate the statistical activities of all other national authorities that develop, produce and disseminate European statistics. They act in this regard as the sole contact point for Eurostat on statistical matters. Legislation and well-defined and established procedures are in place for implementing the coordination role at both national and European levels.

PRINCIPLE 1bis.2: National guidelines to ensure quality in the development, production and dissemination of European statistics within the national statistical system are produced by the Heads of the National Statistical Institutes, where necessary; their implementation is monitored and reviewed.

PRINCIPLE 1bis.3: Statistical authorities continuously maintain and develop cooperation at various levels with each other and with the advisory bodies of the European Statistical System, as well as with the members of the European System of Central Banks, academic institutions and other international bodies, as appropriate.

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

Indicator 2.1: The mandate of the statistical authorities to collect and access information from multiple data sources for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics is specified in law.

Indicator 2.2: Statistical authorities are authorised by legislation to access administrative data quickly and free of charge, and to use them for statistical purposes. They are involved from the beginning in the design, development and discontinuation of administrative records, in order to make them more suitable for statistical purposes.

Indicator 2.3: On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authorities may compel response to statistical surveys.

Indicator 2.4: Access for statistical purposes to other data, such as privately held data, is facilitated, while ensuring statistical confidentiality and data protection.

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

Indicator 3.1: Human, financial and technical resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet statistical needs.

Indicator 3.2: The scope, detail and cost of statistics are commensurate with needs.

Indicator 3.3: Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new statistics against their cost.

Indicator 3.4: Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.

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

Indicator 4.1: Quality policy is defined and made available to the public. An organizational structure and tools are in place to deal with quality management.

Indicator 4.2: Procedures are in place to plan, monitor and improve the quality of the statistical processes, including the integration of data from multiple data sources.

Indicator 4.3: Output quality is regularly monitored, assessed with regard to possible trade-offs, and reported according to the quality criteria for European Statistics.

Indicator 4.4: There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using also external experts where appropriate.

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

Indicator 5.1: Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.

Indicator 5.2: Staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.

Indicator 5.3: Penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality.

Indicator 5.4: Guidelines and instructions are provided to staff on the protection of statistical confidentiality throughout the statistical processes. The confidentiality policy is made known to the public.

Indicator 5.5: The necessary regulatory, administrative, technical and organisational measures are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical data and their transmission, in accordance with best practices, international standards, as well as European and national legislation.

Indicator 5.6: Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.

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

Indicator 6.1: Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.

Indicator 6.2: Choices of data sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are based on statistical considerations.

Indicator 6.3: Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.

Indicator 6.4: Information on data sources, methods and procedures used is publicly available.

Indicator 6.5: Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.

Indicator 6.6: Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies.

Indicator 6.7: Statistical authorities independently decide on the time and content of statistical releases, while taking into account the goal of providing complete and timely statistical information. All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user shall be limited, controlled and publicised. In case of an embargo breach, pre-release arrangements are reviewed so as to ensure impartiality.

Indicator 6.8: Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.

Statistical Processes

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

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

Indicator 7.1: The overall methodological framework used for European Statistics follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices, while constantly striving for innovation.

Indicator 7.2: Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions, classifications and other types of standards are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority.

Indicator 7.3: The registers and frames used for European Statistics are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to ensure high quality.

Indicator 7.4: Detailed concordance exists between national classifications systems and the corresponding European systems.

Indicator 7.5: Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited.

Indicator 7.6: Statistical authorities implement a policy of continuous vocational training for their staff.

Indicator 7.7: Statistical authorities maintain and develop cooperation with the scientific community to improve methodology, the effectiveness of the methods implemented and to promote better tools when feasible.

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

Indicator 8.1: When European Statistics are based on administrative and other data, the definitions and concepts used for non-statistical purposes are a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes.

Indicator 8.2: In the case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection.

Indicator 8.3: Statistical processes are routinely monitored and revised as required.

Indicator 8.4: Metadata related to statistical processes are managed throughout the statistical processes and disseminated, as appropriate.

Indicator 8.5: Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.

Indicator 8.6: Agreements are made with holders of administrative and other data which set out their shared commitment to the use of these data for statistical purposes.

Indicator 8.7: Statistical authorities co-operate with holders of administrative and other data in assuring data quality.

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

Indicator 9.1: The range and detail of European Statistics demands is limited to what is absolutely necessary.

Indicator 9.2: The response burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations and monitored by the statistical authority.

Indicator 9.3: The data sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used where possible to facilitate its return.

Indicator 9.4: Administrative and other data sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for data.

Indicator 9.5: Data sharing and data integration, while adhering to confidentiality and data protection requirements, are promoted to minimise response burden.

Indicator 9.6: Statistical authorities promote measures that enable the linking of data sources in order to minimise response burden.

Principle 10: Cost effectiveness Resources are used effectively.

Indicator 10.1: Internal and independent external measures monitor the Statistics Authority's use of resources.

Indicator 10.2: The productivity potential of information and communication technology is being optimised for the statistical processes.

Indicator 10.3: Proactive efforts are made to improve the statistical potential of administrative and other data sources and to limit recourse to direct surveys.

Indicator 10.4: Statistical authorities promote, share and implement standardised solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Statistical Output

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

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

Indicator 11.1: Procedures are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and value of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and to consider and anticipate their emerging needs and priorities. Innovation is pursued to continuously improve statistical output.

Indicator 11.2: Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme.

Indicator 11.3: User satisfaction is monitored on a regular basis and is systematically followed up.

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

Indicator 12.1: Source data, integrated data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated.

Indicator 12.2: Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented according to the European standards.

Indicator 12.3: Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve source data, statistical processes and outputs.

Principle 13: Timeliness and punctuality European Statistics are released in a timely and punctual manner.

Indicator 13.1: Timeliness meets European and other international release standards.

Indicator 13.2: A standard daily time for the release of statistics is made public.

Indicator 13.3: The periodicity of statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible.

Indicator 13.4: Divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set.

Indicator 13.5: Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate accuracy and reliability can be released when considered useful.

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

Indicator 14.1: Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (i.e. arithmetic and accounting identities observed).

Indicator 14.2: Statistics are comparable over a reasonable period of time.

Indicator 14.3: Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and data sources.

Indicator 14.4: Statistics from the different data sources and of different periodicity are compared and reconciled.

Indicator 14.5: Cross-national comparability of the data is ensured within the European Statistical System through periodical exchanges between the European Statistical System and other statistical systems. Methodological studies are carried out in close co-operation between the Member States and Eurostat.

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

Indicator 15.1: Statistics and the corresponding metadata are presented, and archived, in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.

Indicator 15.2: Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology, methods, platforms and open data standards.

Indicator 15.3: Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and the public is informed.

Indicator 15.4: Access to microdata is allowed for research purposes and is subject to specific rules or protocols.

Indicator 15.5: Metadata related to outputs are managed and disseminated by the statistical authority according to the European standards.

Indicator 15.6: Users are kept informed about the methodology of statistical processes including the use and integration of administrative and other data.

Indicator 15.7: Users are kept informed about the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the quality criteria for European Statistics.

Publication issued free of charge

Autorité de la statistique publique

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ISBN: 978-2-11-151266-5