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## **Peer review on the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice**

**Country visited:** Poland

**Date:** 25-27 April, 2007

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Main findings**

The peer review was performed with a visit 25 – 27 April 2007. The relevant background documents were submitted to the team in good time and with a list of proposed improvements actions. The agenda for the program was decided based on consultations.

The meetings were performed efficiently. It was generally easy for the team to get access to relevant information.

The team was invited to join an ordinary press conference – presenting the latest short-term statistics - which gave the team a good impression of the relevance of official statistics and the performance towards media from the President of Polish Central statistical office (GUS). (The team was given simultaneous translation to English.) After the press conference the team arranged a meeting with a group of journalists for information about their views on GUS.

All the staff we met was very helpful to submit information and the meeting with junior staff gave the team valuable information that helped to complete the picture of GUS.

The main findings are:

- There seems to be in GUS a broad understanding of professional independence and that the credibility and value of official statistics is dependent of such an independence.
- Official statistics are produced in an impartial and objective manner
- All users have access to official statistic on an equal manner. However, there is scope for improvement as regards the information provided on methodological issues.
- GUS has established a good cooperation with other institutions in Polish Government both on data collection and on dissemination of statistics. It is in a position to fully exercise its coordinating role in the Polish system of official statistics
- GUS works with a clear mandate for data collection and is in a good position for the use of administrative data.
- GUS and the President of GUS are identified with a high rank and respect in Polish society.
- The legal texts give support to the independent and high rank postion for GUS, even if professional independency for GUS as a separate body could be more specifically indentified in the legal texts.
- GUS disseminates statistics, metadata and information about work programmes in a professional and transparent way. Some progress could be made in areas such as dissemination of custom-designed analyses and modernisation of the complete web pages.
- GUS works with resources that are largely, though not completely, adequate to meet European Statistics requirements.

- GUS has a long tradition for quality work and documentation but at present this work is not updated to meet the recent EU standards
- Confidentiality rules are respected and there are procedures to guarantee this.
- The research community is served with relevant data and when specific procedures are followed they will have access to anonymous micro data

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

With the adoption of the European Statistics Code of Practice, the Statistical Programme (SPC) committed itself to adhering to its principles. At its meeting on 25 May 2005, the SPC endorsed a stepwise monitoring procedure for the implementation of the Code over three years during which countries' self-assessments should be combined with elements of peer review, benchmarking and monitoring on the basis of the explanatory indicators added to each principle of the Code.

During December 2005 / January 2006 the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat have completed their self-assessments, the results have been summarised by Eurostat in a report submitted to the Economic and Financial Committee in May 2006 which has been published on the Eurostat website.

As a next step towards implementation of the Code, the European Statistical System is organising peer reviews to complement the self-assessments starting with 2006. They are considered a vital element for the implementation of the Code of Practice given their capacity to encourage the sharing of best practice and to contribute to transparency in what is, essentially, a self-regulatory approach. This approach is designed to enhance accountability and to help building trust in the integrity of the European Statistical System, its processes and outputs.

The Code of Practice peer reviews follow a common methodology focusing on the institutional environment and dissemination part of the Code comprising the following principles: (1) Professional independence, (2) Mandate for data collection, (3) Adequacy of resources, (4) Quality commitment, (5) Statistical confidentiality, (6) Impartiality and Objectivity and (15) Accessibility and Clarity. In principle, the peer review is limited to the National Statistical Institute and its co-ordination role within a dispersed national statistical system. A short document provided by the National Statistical Institute which summarises key aspects of the functioning of the national statistical system is published together with this report.

During a three days visit on-site and on the basis of information material provided by the National Statistical Institute and Eurostat prior to the review, peer reviews yield a report assessing compliance with the Code of Practice at indicator level and by principle following a four point assessment scale. The report includes a refined set of improvement actions covering all principles of the Code which are being used to feed the monitoring process of the implementation of the Code in the European Statistical System.

While the peer reviewers will undertake to base their assessment to the extent possible on factual information, it is worth noting some of the limitations of the peer review process. For example, peer reviewers are dependent upon the resources made

available to them (though experienced reviewers can be expected to identify where appropriate information is not forthcoming). In addition these reviews are conducted on a strategic, organisation-wide and system wide basis. Accordingly it is not straightforward to ascertain that certain practices or behaviours or systems operate in all statistical domains.

### 3. FINDINGS PER PRINCIPLE

#### **Principle 1: Professional Independence**

*The 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.*

Overall assessment: There seems to be in GUS a broad understanding of professional independence and that the credibility and value of official statistics is dependent of such an independence. This independence is also understood and respected by other partners. This was expressed to the peer review team by representatives from ministries, the Statistical Council, the media and research community. The importance of maintaining and cultivating this independence is expressed to the peer review team by top management in GUS, and also from other experts in GUS and from representatives from junior staff.

*Indicator 1.1: The independence of the statistical authority from political and other external interference in producing and disseminating official statistics is specified in law.*

#### **Largely met**

Comments: The law on official statistics is issued on June 29 1995. It has been amended several times with the last modifications (Law of 24 August 2006 on State Human Resources and High State Positions (Journal of Laws of 2006, No 170, item 1217) which came into force on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2006. There seems to be a common understanding that the law states the principles and basis for reliable, objective, professional and independent conducting of statistical surveys. The law determines the organisation and procedures of those surveys. (Ref: Article 1)

The independence in professional matters for the President of GUS is not specifically identified and stated by the legal text. However, the independence in professional matters for the President of GUS is described in Article 25, paragraph 1, points 1, 2, 6, 15, which say that the responsibility of the President of the CSO is, inter alia: Recognising the demand for statistical information and analyses and preparing on this basis programmes of statistical surveys of official statistics and submitting them to the Council, organising and conducting statistical surveys and determining their methodology, developing classification standards, nomenclatures and definitions of major categories, determining correspondence between them and their interpretation and conducting research and development activities in the field of methodology of statistical surveys, classification standards and the application of mathematical and computing methods in statistics.

The law identifies the role and responsibility for the Statistical Council. This Council is only advisory but is obviously important in the field of statistics.

Dissemination of statistics is important and the autonomy of the statistical institute and its president in deciding on the release of official statistics is protected by the legal text (Article 25, Paragraph 1.7)). The obligation to release official statistics in an open and equal manner to all users, are stated in the legal text (Article 14. Paragraph 2). The programme of statistical surveys of official statistics shall be determined by the Council of Ministers by a regulation specifying for each survey the type of statistical information and the forms and dates of its dissemination, including major indicators (Article 18, paragraph 6). The sole right for the President to decide what and when to publish does not however seem to be directly supported by the legal text. However it seems to be a clear and strong tradition that the President of GUS has full autonomy, also as regards release of official statistics.

From a legal point of view the final decisions are made by the Council of Ministers, but in practice the Council of Ministers usually does not modify the programme submitted by the Statistical Council.

*Indicator 1.2: The head of the statistical authority has sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. He/She should be of the highest professional calibre.*

**Fully met**

Comments: The President of GUS is given a very high hierarchical standing. He reports directly to the President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister). Formally, he is not a member of the Council of Ministers. However, he is invited to the meetings of the Standing Committee of the Council of Ministers and to the meetings of the Council of Ministers, if their subjects correspond to the tasks of statistics (e.g. adoption of the statistical surveys' program or classification standards). This guarantees a strong position. The close connection to the top political level will hopefully not challenge the professional autonomy of the President of GUS.

*Indicator 1.3: The head of the statistical authority and, where appropriate, the heads of its statistical bodies have responsibility for ensuring that European Statistics are produced and disseminated in an independent manner.*

**Fully met**

Comments: The detailed work programme is drafted by the Statistical Council based on proposals from the President of GUS. The work programme including the European Statistics is finally decided by the Council of Ministers. The President of GUS is responsible for conducting the work programme.

*Indicator 1.4: The head of the statistical authority and, where appropriate, the heads of its statistical bodies have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.*

**Largely met**

Comments: The president of GUS in consultation with corresponding public bodies, is given the obligation and right to prepare standards etc. (Chapter 6, Classification Standards and National Official Registers). The President of GUS is given the responsibility to conduct surveys and determine their methodology (Article 25). His sole responsibility for this task could only be challenged by the bindings given from the detailed descriptions of the surveys given in the work programme. This work

programme is drafted by the Statistical Council on the basis of a proposal prepared by the President of the CSO and decided by the Council of Ministers. The statistical releases follow a schedule on publishing dates with a rather frequent pattern. Press conferences seem also to be arranged at least at a quarterly basis.

*Indicator 1.5: The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.*

**Fully met**

Comments: The detailed yearly work programme is easily accessible to the public and yearly progress reports seem to be produced.

*Indicator 1.6: Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.*

**Fully met**

Comments: The dissemination of official statistics is with a clear identification of the responsibility of GUS, separating it clearly from political statements.

*Indicator 1.7: The statistical authority, when appropriate, comments publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of official statistics.*

**Fully met**

Comments: The rights and obligations for GUS to comment on statistical issues and when appropriate comment on erroneous use of statistics are fully accepted. The CSO staff (press bureau) after releasing the official statistics immediately monitors web pages. If they notice any mistakes in how statistical information is presented and discussed, they react at once by phone in order to correct errors. If necessary, the corrections or explanations are provided to the mass media. The Peer Review team did not observe any examples of such comments. The Peer Review team did however attend a press conference where it was proven that GUS and the President had a clear understanding of the importance of commenting publicly on statistical issues.

## Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection

*Statistical authorities must have a clear legal mandate to collect information 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.*

Overall assessment: The law of 29 June 1995 and subsequent regulations allow the GUS to comply with this principle.

*Indicator 2.1: The mandate to collect information for the production and dissemination of official statistics is specified in law.*

**Fully met**

Comments: Article 5, paragraph 1 of the law of 29 June 1995 on official statistics states that : "The official statistics has a mandate to collect from all available sources, specified in detail in the programme of statistical surveys of official statistics or in

other laws and to gather statistical data from and about business entities, other legal entities and entities without legal status, and their activities, further referred to as "individual data" and statistical data on natural persons concerning their life and status, further referred to as "personal data".

However, paragraph 2 of the same Article 5 limits the mandate in the following way: "The provision of paragraph 1 does not refer to data protected by the law on professional confidentiality". This limitation has created problems between the GUS and the tax administration, the latter referring to fiscal confidentiality when the GUS requested access to individual fiscal data. This problem has been solved with the new regulation (the law of November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006 about the amendments to law – tax regulation and amendments to some other law – J. L. No 127, item 1590 - coming into force on January 1, 2007 , law of 22 September 2006 on the amendment of law on fiscal control and on the amendment of some other laws – J.L No 191, item1413 - implemented on 11 November 2006 ) that allows transmission of individual fiscal data from tax administration to the GUS for statistical purposes.

**Indicator 2.2:** The statistical authority is allowed by national legislation to use administrative records for statistical purposes.

**Fully met**

Comments: Article 13, paragraph 2 of the law of 29 June 1995 states:

"3. The state administration bodies and units of local authorities, other governmental agencies, organs maintaining official registers and the National Bank of Poland on the free-of-charge basis shall submit to the official statistical services the stored by them administrative records in the scope, form and time specified each time in the programme of statistical surveys of official statistics, especially in the form of extracts from the registers, copies of: data files, collected declarations, registration documents and other official forms, results of measurements, data on the environment monitoring and shall provide data from their computerised data bases systems.

4. In case the organs of units of local authorities shall perform special tasks as the tasks commissioned by the state administration, the tasks shall include also the responsibility to submit the information for the purposes of statistical surveys of official statistics and national official registers run on the basis of this Law."

**Indicator 2.3:** On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authority may compel response to statistical surveys.

**Fully met**

Comments: Article 6, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the law of 29 June 1995 states:

"2. Statistical surveys shall be conducted on the obligatory or optional basis.

3. The issues mentioned under paragraph (...) 2 are specified each time in the programme of statistical surveys of official statistics or in special laws."

Most household surveys conducted by GUS are not obligatory, while most enterprise surveys are obligatory. Provisions for penalties are made by articles 56 to 59 of the law of 29 June 1995 in case of submission of false data, refuse to respond, or submission of data after the specified deadline, when the survey is obligatory. In fact the GUS has never imposed such penalties so far, in order to preserve its good image in the population.

### **Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources**

*The resources available to statistical authorities must be sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.*

Overall assessment: Resources are largely, though not completely, adequate to meet European Statistics requirements. But the low level of salaries for high qualified staff is a source of concern because of the turnover it creates, especially among young professionals.

*Indicator 3.1: Staff, financial, and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current European Statistics needs.*

**Largely met**

Comments: Staff, financial and computing resources are considered by GUS management as largely, though not completely, adequate for meeting requirements of the European statistical system and other national statistical needs. However, they express strong concern about the level of salaries, especially for high qualified staff. There is an important gap between salaries paid by GUS and salaries paid by most ministries and state bodies. This is resulting in high turnover of professionals, which might damage the quality of human resources of GUS in a couple of years ahead. Junior staff has confirmed the reality of this risk.

*Indicator 3.2: The scope, detail and cost of European Statistics are commensurate with needs.*

For European level reply

*Indicator 3.3: Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new European Statistics against their cost.*

For European level reply

*Indicator 3.4: Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all European Statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.*

For European level reply

### **Principle 4: Quality commitment**

*All ESS members commit themselves to work and co-operate according to the principles fixed in the Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System.*

Overall assessment: GUS seems to have a deep and relevant understanding of statistical quality. The peer review observed support for this from representatives from user groups and the research community. The Scientific Council of GUS seems to be instrumental in supporting the quality work in official statistics in Poland.

At present new methods for quality work – in accordance with European standards – has not yet been applied. This is already identified by GUS and an ambitious plan for improvements has been prepared.

*Indicator 4.1 Product quality is regularly monitored according to the ESS quality components.*

**Partly met**

Comments: Product quality is frequently monitored and quality work has a high priority in GUS but the work process is not based on the ESS quality components. A plan for adaptation to ESS seems to be clear and will be given priority. The present system has several components in common with the ESS system and a conversion and adaptation to ESS system should not need a prohibitive amount of resources.

*Indicator 4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics.*

**Fully met**

Comments: GUS is monitoring the quality of collection, processing and dissemination of statistics, based on self assessments. This is done for most statistics at stages of design, data collection and processing, and only for some statistics at stages of data analysis and dissemination. Monthly information is given to the President of GUS on realisation of surveys covered by the statistical programme according to the timeframe, as well as reports on survey realisation.

*Indicator 4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations, including trade-offs within quality, and to guide planning for existing and emerging surveys.*

**Fully met**

Comments: The system for planning of existing and emerging surveys is ambitious and at a rather detailed level. The process is also open, with user contacts and with the use of experts and the Scientific Council. The Statistical Council is responsible for the draft work programme which is based on quality considerations.

*Indicator 4.4 Quality guidelines are documented and staff is well trained. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.*

**Largely met**

Comments: There has been a training programme and a system of internal handbooks. As a part of the modernisation and introduction of elements from the ESS and use of TQM a new program for training will be released. Plans for this have been established.

*Indicator 4.5 There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using external experts where appropriate.*

**Largely met**

Comments: An ambitious internal system for quality reviewing of outputs has been maintained in GUS. The use of external experts has not been on the same level. The Peer Review team has however had access to several external reports on GUS

activities (Tim Holt and Patric Roussel June 2001, IMF October 2003, IMF September 2003).

### **Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality**

*The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes must be absolutely guaranteed.*

Overall assessment: In general, GUS practices are in good compliance with this principle. There is a need for broader and comprehensive dissemination to the public of rules and guidelines on the protection of statistical confidentiality concerning all survey data.

*Indicator 5.1 Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.*

#### **Fully met**

Comments: Article 10 of the law of 29 June 1995 states:

“The collected and gathered in the statistical surveys of official statistics individual and personal data shall be confidential and subject to particular protection; the data shall be used exclusively for statistical calculations, compilations and analyses and for the creation by the statistical services of official statistics sampling frames for statistical surveys conducted by those services; providing or use of individual and personal data for other than specified above purposes shall be prohibited (statistical confidentiality).”

*Indicator 5.2 Statistical authority staff signs legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.*

#### **Fully met**

Comments: A legal confidentiality commitment is signed by statistical authority staff, as prescribed in the law of 29 June 1995, Article 12:

“The staff of the official statistical services, the census enumerators, statistical interviewers and other persons performing activities in the name and on the behalf of official statistics, having direct access to individual and personal data shall be obliged to observe without exceptions the statistical confidentiality and shall be allowed to perform those activities only after delivering an oath in a written form, at a statistical office or other units of official statistical services, of the following contents:

‘I hereby take summons that I shall perform my tasks on the behalf of the official statistics dutifully, in accordance with the professional ethics of a statistician and that I shall keep secret from the third parties the individual data known to me during performing those tasks’ ”.

**Indicator 5.3 Substantial penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality.**

**Fully met**

Comments: The law of 29 June 1995 has established severe penalties for wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality:

"Article 54

Who violates statistical confidentiality shall be subject to imprisonment up to 3 years.

Article 55

Who to obtain material or personal gains uses statistical data known to him/her due to performing job or tasks on the commission of the organiser of a statistical survey of official statistics shall be subject to imprisonment up to 5 years."

**Indicator 5.4 Instructions and guidelines are provided on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.**

**Largely met**

Comments: Instructions and guidelines for the protection of statistical confidentiality exist in writing. They are not disseminated to the public in the same way, depending on the type of statistics: a particular effort is put on key censuses (for instance, population census and agricultural census) and agricultural surveys. For other surveys that are considered less important, information on confidentiality rules is made public in a summarised way. The framework of statistical confidentiality rules is made public at the GUS internet site.

***Indicator 5.5 Physical and technological provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases***

**Fully met**

Comments: Electronic procedures are in place to protect statistical databases from any intrusion. They are periodically reviewed to take account of technological progress. Physical protection procedures of buildings where databases are stored also exist and are periodically reviewed. A data security section has been created that is directly supervised by the President's office.

***Indicator 5.6 Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical micro data for research purposes.***

**Fully met**

Comments: The GUS allows access to anonymised micro-data by researchers under strict conditions. The conditions are in compliance with the European Commission regulation n° 831/2002 on access to confidential data for scientific purposes. A formal written request has to be submitted by the organisation where the researcher is working. In some specific cases, the researcher has to come to the appointed organizational unit of official statistics, to test on a dedicated computer (that is not

connected to the network, without possibility of data copying and data transmission) the type of data sets he/she wants to get. A staff member of GUS (specialized statistician (IT)) can assist the researcher in its investigation. (See indicator 15.4)

### **Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity.**

*Statistical authorities must produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.*

Overall assessment: The production of European statistics respects scientific independence and is done in an objective, professional, and transparent manner. There is some scope for improvement, however, as regards the information provided to users on methodological issues. All users are treated equally.

*Indicator 6.1: Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.*

#### **Fully met**

Comments: Objectivity is inscribed in the statistical law and guaranteed by the current practices in the GUS. The methodology used is based on statistical research and its objectivity is guaranteed through contacts with other NSIs and international organisations. It is not questioned by users.

*Indicator 6.2: Choices of sources and statistical techniques are informed by statistical considerations.*

#### **Fully met**

Comments: Choices of statistical techniques and sources are an integral part of the annual statistical programme, and have to follow strict methodological rules. Also official statistics produced by other government bodies are part of the annual statistical programme, and as such have to follow the same rules.

*Indicator 6.3: Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.*

#### **Largely met**

Comments: There is no formal procedure for the correction of serious errors, and there is no policy in place to record information on serious errors. There have been no recent instances of serious errors. Junior staff seems to be well aware of what is required from them in case they would be responsible for a serious error.

*Indicator 6.4: Information on the methods and procedures used by the statistical authority are publicly available.*

#### **Largely met**

Comments: Information on methods and procedures is publicly available on the GUS' website, and all publications contain methodological information. However, certain user representatives argued that there is a need to improve the quality and completeness of published information on methodology. Moreover, the results of the recently conducted user survey conducted by the GUS shows that in all areas, a large

majority of respondents have “no opinion” on the methodology used, which could be an indication that they are not adequately informed about methodology. A solution envisaged by the GUS’ President is to provide targeted methodological information aimed at different user groups (professional users, media, students,...), but this has not yet been implemented.

**Indicator 6.5: Statistical release dates and times are pre -announced.**

**Fully met**

Comments: The GUS publishes statistical release dates and times well in advance, and all user groups indicate to be well informed about them.

**Indicator 6.6:** All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time and any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements should be revised so as to ensure impartiality.

**Fully met**

Comments: All users have equal access to statistical releases by GUS at the same time, and there is no privileged access. With regard to statistics produced outside GUS, representatives of the ministry of Finance mentioned that government finance statistics produced by the ministry of Finance have to be approved by the minister before transmission to GUS for publication. However, the PR team considers that this is part of the production process of statistics produced outside GUS.

**Indicator 6.7:** Statistical releases and statements made in Press Conferences are objective and non-partisan.

**Fully met**

Comments: Statistical releases and press statements describe the reality as it is reflected in statistics. It is avoided to make any qualitative comments.

**Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity**

*European Statistics should be presented in a clear and understandable form, disseminated in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.*

Overall assessment: Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, especially since the introduction of the new GUS web portal. There is some scope for improvement as regards the presentation of metadata. The dissemination of statistics is done in a suitable and convenient manner, but some aspects, such as the dissemination of the results of custom-designed analyses, need to be improved. At present a rather limited proportion of the web pages are in English language. An action plan for improvement exists linked to a full program for modernisation of the complete web pages.

*Indicator 15.1: Statistics are presented in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.*

**Largely met**

Comments: Since very recently, GUS' new web portal has been put in place. This complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and substantially improves the presentation of statistics on the web. However, the recently conducted user survey identified a problem related to the lack of published long time series in many statistical areas. It has been decided by the GUS President that this should be corrected, but the implementation of this decision will not take place before 2008. In meetings with users, it was argued that there is scope for improving the presentation of the data, so that they can be better understood and put to use by non-statistical users, such as SMEs.

*Indicator 15.2: Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy.*

**Fully met**

Comments: Statistics are disseminated via the internet and through a number of hard copy publications.

*Indicator 15.3: Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and are made public.*

**Partly met**

Comments: GUS each time makes available custom-made sets of data against payment according to the needs of particular users, for example as specific groupings, time-series and territorial cross-sections. The users pay for additional statistical and IT work, which is necessary to realise each order. The results of custom-made sets of data are not made public. Junior staff confirmed that the results of such analyses are not to be communicated further. Certain users complained about the long delays in processing requests, which in some cases has led to the cancellation of such requests, given that the data would have become obsolete by the time they would be realised.

GUS prepares also occasionally special custom-made publications (analysis) for example for governmental organisations and such analysis are made public.

*Indicator 15.4: Access to micro data can be allowed for research purposes. This access is subject to strict protocols.*

**Fully met**

Comments: Certain users ascertain that they are requested to pay in order to have access to micro-data for research purposes. According to information provided by GUS, users pay for additional statistical and IT work and for preparation of data according to the needs of research and scientific centers. Users also expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the GUS in their view is not at all customer-oriented when dealing with such requests. See also indicator 5.6.

*Indicator 15.5: Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems.*

**Largely met**

Comments: In all areas where standardised metadata systems exist, GUS metadata systems are documented in line with these. More specifically, GUS metadata are following the format of IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), which Poland is a subscriber to, for statistics covered by SDDS, i.e., economic, fiscal, financial, and external sector statistics, and population statistics. For other statistics, in the demographic and social area, metadata do not refer to standardised metadata systems.

*Indicator 15.6: Users are kept informed on the methodology of statistical processes and the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the ESS quality criteria.*

**Partly met**

Comments: See also 6.4. The preparation of the annual statistical programme (which includes decisions on methodology) involves a broad social consultation in the framework of . The Program and Methodological Commission. However, this mainly involves representatives of the main user groups, and individual users that are not professional statisticians are not adequately informed on the methodology of statistical processes.

#### **4. CO-ORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE**

The team met and interviewed representatives of the:

- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- The National Bank of Poland.

These institutions are responsible of a large number of statistics. They collect data and do quality work, estimation and dissemination. The surveys have a wide range from use of administrative data to more traditional statistical surveys with questionnaires. Some surveys are full scale while others are based on sample surveys.

The representatives from these institutions expressed that all were well informed about the Code of Practice and the essential quality criteria and principles for European Official statistics. They followed the principles of release calendar, equal access for all users. Even that in several cases, the ministers have to formally sign the release of statistics from their ministry, the representatives felt that there was no political interference on their statistics.

It is important for the coherence of all official statistics that coordination is taken care of. It seems that there is a broad understanding about this among both GUS and the Ministries and National Bank. The GUS plays a leading role in these coordination

activities, by establishing relevant teams or working groups to take care of coordination.

There will be examples of closely related statistics produced in Ministries and in GUS. One example is unemployment data where the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy also produces statistics on registered unemployment. Moreover, GUS compiles data on unemployment on the basis of a sample survey - the Labour Force Survey. . As usual these two sources will give different figures. This situation is treated with relevant information and metadata to users. This seems also to be a good example of well performed coordination.

There seems to be relevant concern about response burden, without much visible stress on this problem.

International representation - especially Eurostat meetings will be taken care of both by GUS and ministries/National Bank.

The conclusion from this discussion with representatives of other producers of official statistics is that coordination is taken well care of. There seems to be willingness, and understanding among all partners for this and they seem all to have a positive attitude. This is crucial. GUS has also recognised their responsibility for creating relevant teams and committees which seems to work effective to secure coordination.

In Poland, only data that are produced in accordance with the annual statistical programme are considered to be official statistics. About 80% of these official statistics are produced by the GUS, the remainder by a number of other government bodies, of which the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank of Poland (NBP) are the main ones. The coordination is ensured through various bodies, including the Program and Methodological Commission and other bodies dependent on the GUS. There are also wide-ranging contacts on an informal basis. It clearly appeared that there is a general acceptance among the other producers of official statistics of the predominance of the GUS in all matters related to statistics. It was confirmed explicitly that in case of disagreement (e.g. on methodological issues), the final decision is always in the hands of the GUS, even though there is a long-standing and well-established tradition of cooperation within the Program and Methodological Commission and other bodies. This seems to be working very well in practice.

The one exception to this predominance of the GUS concerns the production of monetary and financial sector data by the NBP. This production is based on specific legislation, but it is also part of the annual statistical programme, so that these statistics have the status of official statistics. Nevertheless, the final decision on methodological issues in relation to monetary and financial sector statistics lies with the NBP.

Besides the GUS, which serves its President and operates under his/her direct management, the official statistics services are the directors of sixteen regional statistical offices that are subordinated to the GUS President. Certain national tasks of official statistics are delegated to the regional statistical offices. Given that these are, in a clear hierarchical relationship, subordinated to the President of the GUS, and

because the methodological supervision over the delegated national tasks is done by the GUS, there are no issues in terms of coordination in this respect.

All in all, the institutional and organizational set-up of the statistical system gives a major coordinating role to the GUS. This framework allows the GUS to fully exercise its coordinating role in practice.

## 5. GOOD PRACTICES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED

Some of the findings and observations could be highlighted as Good Practices. These are:

- Coordinaton activities among producers of official statistics. Extensive consultation with users and producers of statistics in Statistical Council. As described in chapter 4, the GUS has an active tradition for close cooperation with ministries and Government Agencies about data capture and production of statistics. The importance of respecting the principles of official statistics is well taken care of by all partners.

- Methodological co-operation in the range of:

- public deficit and debt

In June 2004 formal General Government Statistics Working Group (GGSWG) was established by decree of the President of the Central Statistical Office of Poland. It used to consist of representatives of CSO, Ministry of Finance and National Bank of Poland. In 2007 representatives of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister dealing with so called "performance budged" and the new budgetary classification joined the Group.

The GGSWG meets on regular basis and deals with data sources availability and methodological issues for the compilation of public deficit and debt as well as annual and quarterly government statistics. An official document (annual report) is produced once a year and submitted to MoF and NBP.

- agricultural surveys

The Central Statistical Office closely co-operates with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development as well as with other institutions involved in conducting of agricultural surveys at the stage of survey preparations and data analysis. Methodological co-operation concerns sampling frame, definitions, results precision, timeliness and accuracy. Possibility of the use of administrative sources for statistical purposes is also discussed with the gestures of particular registers.

- specialized surveys, for example: energy, environment protection

In these statistical domains the complex use and integration of variety/different information sources are very important.

Adequate governmental organizations carry out the specialized surveys. CSO has very good experiences in long-term cooperation with these organizations.

- Regional Data Bank - a publicly accessible database containing statistical information describing the socio-economic situation of particular units of territorial division. This database is an example of a good instrument that may be used to monitor the changes occurring in the long time series, to conduct with multidimensional statistical analyses within regional and local aspects and to make comparisons between the units of territorial division.

The continuous process cover works on increase of database functionality as well as on creating clear and user-friendly procedures of search and data processing. Keeping in mind users' amenity and cohesion of statistics used, to the databank's resources is attached module of quarterly data and basic, the most frequently used statistical indicators useful for analytical purposes, the needs of various strategies monitoring and for programming documents.

- External reviews of more important publications and activity of Editorial Committee of the CSO

Editorial Committee is advisory and opinion making body of President of CSO in the range of CSO and regional statistical offices publishing activities. The main tasks of Editorial Committee are: giving opinions on the project of statistical surveys program of official statistics in part regarding publishing activities and making an annual analysis on publishing activities.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PEER REVIEW TEAM**

The Peer Review Team has identified few specific recommendations not already identified and included in the proposals for improvements received from the GUS.

The work with quality has to move forward and modernise and adapt to EU Principles.

The contact with and services towards research community is also an arena with a potential for improvements. The internet presentations should be improved and it will be valuable if more will be available in English language.

## 7. LIST OF IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS BY PRINCIPLE OF THE CODE

Principle 1: Professional Independence

**Improvement actions**

**Timetable**

Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection

**Improvement actions**

**Timetable**

Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources

**Improvement actions**

**Timetable**

Taking the actions to increase financial resources for remuneration in statistics pointing at the rate of average remuneration in statistics to average remuneration in other administration branches

since 2007

Principle 4: Quality commitment

**Improvement actions**

**Timetable**

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Participation in a pilot application of the EFQM model   | 2007            |
| 2. Elaboration of the long-term quality program for the official statistics for 2008-2012   | 2007/2008       |
| 3. Elaboration of the annual quality program for the official statistics  | 2007/2008       |
| 4. Wider dissemination of ESS quality standards: Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System, Leadership Group on Quality recommendations, European Statistics Code Of Practice within units of official statistics - basic trainings, complementary trainings |                 |
| 5. Elaboration of rules and procedures for monitoring of statistical surveys outputs quality according to the ESS quality components  | continuous work |
| 6. Wider dissemination of quality assessment results of the statistical surveys outputs among external users, also by the CSO Information Portal  | 2008            |
| 7. Implementation of all stages of the statistical production process quality monitoring  | 2008            |
| 8. Elaboration of the model of statistical surveys quality audit – methodology and organisation   | 2008            |
| 9. Implementation of the ESS standard questionnaire for statistical processes self-assessment   | 2007            |
| 10. Increase the number of surveys, which quality will be described by means of standard quality reports and standard quality indicators  | 2007            |
| 11. Preparation of guidelines concerning surveys quality for external users   | continuous work |
|   | 2007/2008       |

<b>Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality</b>	
<b>Improvement actions</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Elaboration of methods of automatic hiding of confidential data	2008
<b>Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity</b>	
<b>Improvement actions</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
1. Drawing up the specific procedure of recording information about serious errors in published data	2008
2. Provide targeted methodological information aimed at specific user groups	continuous work
<b>Principle 7: Sound Methodology</b>	
<b>Improvement actions</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
1. Quality improvement of the frames using administrative sources	continuous work
2. Elaboration of the procedures for assessment of frames quality	
3. Elaboration of organisation and realisation rules for surveys implementation including classification standards, concepts and definitions for application by other than the CSO of Poland producers of statistics; .	2008
4. Improvement in surveys methodology in the range of: eco-industry, environment expenditures accounts, material flow accounts, and NAMEA Air Emission under co-operation with Eurostat	2008
5. Intensification of co-operation with scientific units	continuous work
6. Creation of the research and development unit in the CSO of Poland	
7. Establishment of separate Commission, which will be engaged in assessment of statistical surveys methodology	continuous work 2007/2008
 <b>European level</b>	
More workshops on the way of presentation of methodology in different statistical fields are required.	2007
<b>Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures</b>	
<b>Improvement actions</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
1. Elaboration of common system for imputation of data	2008
2. Intensification of co-operation of official statistics with bodies running administrative systems - in particular organisation of periodical meetings with these administrative bodies; current submit the needs of official statistics, at design phase in case of new administrative systems	continuous work
3. Increase of access for bodies running administrative systems to statistical metadata (Glossary of Statistical Terms, Glossary of Classifications, Nomenclatures , survey methodology )	2008
4. Wider dissemination of standards used in official statistics	continuous work
5. Evaluation and improvement of informatics systems of data editing	continuous work
 <b>European level</b>	
Organisation of seminars and workshops on imputation methods	

## Principle 9: Non-Excessive burden on respondents

### **Improvement actions**

1. Elaboration of conception of respondent burden survey
2. Elaboration of conception of wider use of administrative registers - work continuation
3. Introduction of conception of wider use of administrative registers into the statistical practice
4. Increasing the number of digital (on-line) forms used in statistical surveys

### **Timetable**

2008  
2007  
  
2007/2008  
  
2007

## Principle 10: Cost Effectiveness

### **Improvement actions**

1. Intensification of work on the use of administrative data sources
2. Introduction of electronic questionnaires for the most of statistical questionnaires
3. Preparation to direct use of business accounts and electronic means

### **Timetable**

continuous work  
  
2007/2008  
2008

## Principle 11: Relevance

### **Improvement actions**

Carrying out actions referring to prioritization of the surveys

### **Timetable**

continuous work

## Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability

### **Improvement actions**

1. Work on quality improvement of the frames using administrative sources
2. Implementation of modern methods of data collection e.g. electronic forms

### **Timetable**

continuous work  
  
continuous work

## Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality

### **Improvement actions**

### **Timetable**

## Principle 14: Coherence and Comparability

### **Improvement actions**

Focusing more attention on coherence and comparability during the work on the methodology of the statistical surveys.

### **Timetable**

continuous work

## Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity

### **Improvement actions**

1. Publish long time series on the website
2. Elaboration of conception of complex metadata system according to standard metadata systems
3. Establish a new system of providing custom-designed analyses, in accordance with the Code of Practice

### **Timetable**

since 2007  
  
2008  
  
2007/2008

## 8. ANNEX A: PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT

Time	Topic	Participants <sup>1</sup>
<b><u>25 April, Wednesday, Room No. 149</u></b>		
<b>Discussion with external participants of the peer review – media</b>		
10.00 – 11.00	Press Conference chaired by Mr. Józef Oleński – CSO President	journalists, representatives of statistics
11.00 – 11.30	Meeting with mass media – selected journalists	media representatives
11.30-12.00	Break	
<b><u>25 April, Wednesday, Room No. 149</u></b>		
<b>Discussion with internal participants of the peer review</b>		
12.00 – 12.30	Opening session, discussion of the agenda, organisational issues	
12.30 – 13.15	Principle 1: Professional independence	
13.15 – 14.00	Principle 2: Mandate for data collection	
14.00 – 15.00	Lunch	
15.00 – 15.45	Principle 3: Adequacy of resources	
15.45 – 16.30	Principle 4: Quality commitment	
16.30 – 16.45	Break	
16.45 – 17.30	Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality	
17.30 – 18.15	Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity	
18.15 – 19.00	Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity	
<b><u>26 April, Thursday, Room No. 149</u></b>		
<b>Discussion with internal participants of the peer review (continued)</b>		
09.00 – 09.45	Meeting with junior staff with 2-5 years of experience in statistics Principles 1-6, 15	Representatives of branch divisions of the CSO,
09.45 – 10.15	Meeting with representatives of regional statistical offices	

<sup>1</sup> The full list of participants including their positions is enclosed to the agenda

10.15 – 10.45	Presentation of the results of survey on the key aspects of quality in official statistics by the users	
10.45 – 11.00	Break	

### **Discussion with external participants of the peer review**

11.00 – 13.00	Meeting with institutions conducting statistical surveys covered by the programme of statistical surveys of official statistics  Meeting with the main users of statistical data – public administration, the National Bank of Poland	<i>Representatives of: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, The National Bank of Poland,</i>
13.00 – 14.00	Break	
14.00 – 15.30	Meeting with The Statistical Council, respondents and other users of statistical data	<i>Statistical Council, Representatives of respondents and other users:</i>
15.30 – 15.50	Break	
15.50 – 17.20	Meeting with the representatives of science and research institutions, Scientific Statistical Council	

### **27 April, Friday, Room No. 149**

#### **Conclusions**

11.00 – 12.50	Meeting with the CSO top management to sum up and review in detail the list of activities to improve the implementation of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice with regards to each principle of the Code	
12.50 – 14.00	Break	
14.00 – 15.30	Meeting with the CSO top management: conclusions, recommendations, activities to be conducted to improve the implementation of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice	

## **9. ANNEX B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **List of participants in Peer Review on the implementation of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice in the Polish official statistics The Central Statistical Office, Warsaw, Poland, 25-27 April 2007**

#### **Internal participants:**

1. Józef Oleński – President of the CSO
2. Halina Dmochowska - Vice-President of the CSO
3. Sławomir Brodziński – Civil Service Director
4. Maria Pierzynowska – Advisor to the CSO President
5. Alicja Weesile – Advisor to the CSO President
6. Wanda Tkaczyk – Advisor to the CSO President
7. Tadeusz Walczak – Advisor to the CSO President
8. Władysław Wiesław Łagodziński - Advisor to the CSO President, Spokesman of the CSO President
9. Melania Pupkiewicz – Deputy Director, CSO President's Secretariat
10. Anna Dobrowolska – Deputy Director, Co-ordination of Statistical Surveys Division
11. Janusz Dygaszewicz - Deputy Director, Co-ordination of Statistical Surveys Division
12. Lucyna Przybylska – Director, Analyses and Regional Statistics Division
13. Dorota Turek – Deputy Director, Analyses and Regional Statistics Division
14. Maria Jeznach – Director, National Accounts and Finance Division
15. Izabella Zagoździńska – Director, Business Statistics and Registers Division
16. Katarzyna Walkowska – Deputy Director, Business Statistics and Registers Division
17. Grażyna Marciniak – Director, Social Statistics Division
18. Lucyna Nowak – Deputy Director, Social Statistics Division
19. Małgorzata Fronk – Director, Economic Statistics Division
20. Małgorzata Kowalska – Deputy Director, Economic Statistics Division
21. Małgorzata Dytman – Director, Services Statistics Division
22. Alina Baran – Deputy Director, Services Statistics Division
23. Barbara Domaszewicz - Director Agriculture and Environment Statistics Division
24. Marian Grzesiak – Deputy Director, Agriculture and Environment Statistics Division
25. Barbara Prażmo - Deputy Director, Dissemination Division
26. Jolanta Szczerbińska - Deputy Director, International Cooperation, Budgetary and Personnel Division
27. Anna Borowska - Deputy Director, International Cooperation, Budgetary and Personnel Division
28. Małgorzata Sołtyszewska – Chief Accountant
29. Tomasz Biały – Director, Administrative and Accounting Division
30. Zdzisław Choromański – Director, Central Statistical Computing Centre
31. Krzysztof Kurkowski – Deputy Director, Central Statistical Computing Centre
32. Waldemar Dubla - Acting Director, Statistical Office in Łódź
33. Marek Morze – Director, Statistical Office in Olsztyn
34. Kazimierz Kruszka – Deputy Director, Statistical Office in Poznań
35. Zofia Kozłowska – Director, Statistical Office in Warsaw
36. Ewa Walburg – Head of the Section, Co-ordination of Statistical Surveys Division
37. Elżbieta Sudnicka - Head of the Section, Co-ordination of Statistical Surveys Division
38. Karina Anasiak – Chief Specialist, National Accounts and Finance Division
39. Magdalena Breńska-Robak – Specialist, Dissemination Division
40. Sylwia Czeczkę – Specialist, Business Statistics and Registers Division
41. Joanna Konopka - Specialist, Agriculture and Environment Statistics Division
42. Dariusz Podedworny – Senior Specialist, Co-ordination of Statistical Surveys Division
43. Renata Kugel – Senior Specialist, Analyses and Regional Statistics Division
44. Tomasz Pudłowski – Senior specialist, Economic Statistics Division
45. Krzysztof Nowak – Specialist, Central Statistical Computing Centre
46. Dorota Szostakowska – Specialist, Analyses and Regional Statistics Division

**External participants:**

Ministry of Finance

1. Joanna Winiarska, Tax Policy Department
2. Monika Wygoda, Financial Policy, Analysis and Statistics Department
3. Danuta Kłęk, Financial Policy, Analysis and Statistics Department
4. Karolina Burzyńska, Local Government Finances Department

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

1. Paweł Stanilewicz, Department of Family Benefits
2. Zbigniew Olejniczak, Department of Information Technology
3. Tadeusz Kopczyński, Department of Information Technology
4. Jolanta Jakubowska, Department of Labour Market
5. Andrzej Majchrzak, Department of Funds
6. Grażyna Stańska, Department of Economic Analyses and Forecasts
7. Dorota Girej, Department of Social Assistance and Integration
8. Zbigniew Mrozik, Department of Social Assistance and Integration
9. Maciej Szczepański, Department of Migration

Ministry of Economy

1. Elżbieta Sułczyńska, Analyses and Forecasts Department

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

1. Kazimiera Bojanowska, Department of Programming and Analysis
2. Lidia Korytkowska, Department of Agricultural Markets

National Bank of Poland

1. Elżbieta Borkowska, Department of Statistics
2. Piotr Boguszewski, Macroeconomic and Structural Analyses Department

Statistical Council

1. Franciszek Kubiczek – Chairman
2. Elżbieta J. Syrda, Polish Confederation of Private Employers
3. Krzysztof Marczewski, Polish Economic Society

Representatives of science and research institutions

1. Bohdan Wyżniewicz, Institute for Market Economics; Scientific Statistical Council
2. Alina Potrykowska, Government Population Council; Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization
3. Jadwiga Seremak - Bulge, Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics

Local administration

1. Krzysztof Mączewski, Geodesist of the Mazowieckie voivodeship
2. Maciej Bąk, The Urban Planning Office in Łódzkie voivodeship
3. Emilia Jacalska, The Marshall Office in Łódź city

The Mass media

1. Edward Lewandowski, ‘Farmer’ – monthly
2. Leszek Baj, ‘Gazeta Wyborcza’ – newspaper
3. Mirosław Ziach, ‘Głos PSB’ (Polskie Składy Budowlane) – bimonthly
4. Zofia Bolkowska, ‘Polish Market Review’ – monthly
5. Marek Misiak, ‘Nowe Życie Gospodarcze’ – biweekly