

**Light Peer Review  
of the Implementation of the  
European Statistics Code of Practice  
in Croatia**

**Final Report**

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## PREFACE

The light peer review (LPR) of the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia (CBS) was undertaken in the framework of the Eurostat funded project ‘Global assessments of statistical systems of candidate and potential candidate countries as well as ENP countries’. The company ICON-INSTITUT Public Sector GmbH, under contract with Eurostat, was responsible for organising all activities and tasks relating to the LPR.

Light peer reviews are based on the structure and procedures of the EES (European Statistical System) peer reviews and are designed for candidate and advance potential candidate countries. The objectives of these reviews are in particular to assess compliance of the reviewed National Statistical Institute (NSI) with Principles 1-6 and 15 of the European Statistics Code of Practice, to evaluate the coordination role of the NSI within the statistical system, to highlight transferable practices suitable to foster compliance with the Code of Practice and to recommend improvement actions needed in view of fully complying with the Code.

The review process was initiated by Eurostat at the request of CBS made in December 2009. The review was conducted by the two experts Mr. Günter Kopsch (former director in DESTATIS, Germany) who was the leading expert and Mr. Stanislav Drapal (Czech Statistical Office). The review mission took place from 29 March to 1 April 2010 (*see Annex 1*). Besides the two experts, Mr. Anton Steurer and Mr. Ronald Delemont (both from Eurostat) as well as the two observers Mr. Ünal Gündoğan (TurkStat) and Ms. Verka Grozdanoska Panova (State Statistical Office of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) participated in this mission. Written material was made available by CBS in advance or during the assessment mission (*including Annex 2*). The review mission was also prepared through replies to the questionnaire sent out in advance to CBS.

The peer review team very much appreciated the well-prepared meetings and the openness of the communication both with the staff of CBS and with representatives from partner and stakeholder organisations. It is hoped that the review will be of benefit to the further development of CBS.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Main findings** (including an assessment of the co-ordinating role of the National Statistical Institute):

- (1) The peer review team recognized the extremely positive developments in the CBS with regard to the institutional aspects reviewed as well as in most of the statistical domains. All of the stakeholders interviewed expressed the opinion that the CBS had achieved considerable improvements in its work over the last few years, its standing as the leading statistical institution in Croatia thereby rising.
- (2) The current version of the Official Statistics Act of the Republic of Croatia is broadly in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics of the United Nations and the corresponding parts of the European Statistics Code of Practice. On the basis of this Act, the CBS produces and disseminates official statistics that respects in practice the principles of professional independence, of impartiality and objectivity and of statistical confidentiality. Nevertheless, the review team recommends some improvements to the Act. In particular, these address the need to provide the Director of the CBS with a fixed term mandate, to protect him/her against an inappropriate dismissal during his/her term of office, and to lay down the nomination process and the qualifications needed for this position.
- (3) The Official Statistics Act gives the CBS a clear mandate to collect required data from natural persons and businesses, as well as far reaching access to administrative data. Despite clear legal provisions, the extent to which the CBS actually uses administrative data is to date relatively low. The review team recommends an amendment of the Official Statistics Act to strengthen the role of the CBS in the development of existing and new administrative data sources and its influence on the content of such data sources.
- (4) Under the precondition that the new posts within the CBS that have already been approved by the government can be staffed soon, the resources of the CBS are considered to be adequate to meet current European Statistics needs. However, there are indications that additional financial resources will be needed to enable the CBS to recruit and retain the highly qualified experts required and to undergo the required technical modernisations of the statistical processes.
- (5) A key objective of the CBS is to ensure that its statistical products and services are of a high quality. However, the mechanisms for ensuring quality are incomplete; product quality and processes are only monitored here and there, only partial guidelines exist, and outputs are only reviewed for some statistics. The establishment of a systematic quality management approach is required, in which the current, scattered quality measures can be brought together in a coherent way.
- (6) The main users of the statistical information produced and disseminated by the CBS expressed an altogether positive opinion about the accessibility to and clarity of the CBS's statistics. The improvement of the CBS's website and the

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establishment of a standardised metadata system will enhance still further the present situation.

- (7) According to the Official Statistics Act, the CBS is the chief producer, disseminator, and co-ordinator of the official statistics system of the Republic of Croatia. During the peer review, interview partners confirmed that the CBS is accepted as the co-ordinator of the statistical system by the other producers of official statistics.
- (8) The management of the CBS expressed its clear intention to further improve compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice. The list of actions regarding these improvements, described in Chapter 5 of this report, was discussed by the peer review team and the management of the CBS and is fully supported by the team.

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# 1 FINDINGS PER PRINCIPLE

## 1.1 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:***

*The Central Bureau of Statistics of Croatia (CBS) is, according to Article 8 of the Official Statistics Act (Official Gazette, No. 103/03, amended by the Act on amendments to the Official Statistics Act of 23 June 2009), a state administration organisation which autonomously performs its tasks, in conformity with the law. It is directly accountable to the Prime Minister. In several places, the Official Statistics Act explicitly supports the professional independence of the CBS and its Director in producing and disseminating official statistics. Furthermore, the Official Statistics Act gives a strong role to the CBS in the whole programme planning process.*

*The legal status of a statistical office, with regard to professional independence, is a good prerequisite for being able to fully comply with the Independence Principle of the Code of Practice. It is, however, not a guarantee. The professional independence of the producers of official statistics has also to be accepted in practice, in particular by the Government. From the discussions of the peer review team with the management and other staff of the CBS as well as with members of the Statistics Council and with representatives of various user groups, it became clear that the CBS acts independently in practice and that there is no political interference.*

### 1.1.1 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.

The purpose of official statistics is according to Article 3 of the Official Statistics Act the production and dissemination of statistical data in conformity with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. In Articles 5 and 6 the principles “Impartiality” and “Professional Independence” are explicitly specified. Impartiality is defined as “the objective manner of laying down methods and definitions in the process of collecting, processing and disseminating statistical data, which is free from any influence”. By definition of the law, Professional Independence means “that the producers of official statistics shall perform the tasks of official statistics based on professional and scientific methods and knowledge and shall be protected from any kind of influence”. The professional independence of the Director of CBS is specifically determined in Article 11 of the Act, although the conditions of his or her appointment are not regulated by the Act.

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**1.1.2 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.**

The hierarchical level of the Director of CBS is comparable to highest public servants. He has sufficiently high standing to ensure access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. It helps that CBS is directly accountable to the Prime Minister. The nomination process and the qualification needed for this position are not addressed in the Official Statistics Act. An amendment of the Act is recommended.

**1.1.3 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.**

The professional independence of the Director of CBS is specifically determined in the Official Statistics Act. His/her appointment by the Government of the Republic of Croatia is, however, not based on a fixed term contract. Nothing is said in the Act on the procedure of the appointment and the reasons for a possible early dismissal. A change of the Act providing the Director with a fixed term mandate and protecting him/her against an inappropriate dismissal during his/her term of office would further strengthen the institutional safeguards of the professional independence of CBS.

**1.1.4 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.**

The responsibility of the Director of CBS for content and methodology of all statistical activities, which include production and dissemination of the outputs of official statistics, is explicitly laid down in the Official Statistics Act. All interview partners during the peer review confirmed that the legal rules with regard to professional independence of CBS are fully applied in practice.

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

Under the Official Statistics Act, CBS – in cooperation with the other producers of official statistics – is responsible for drafting the proposal of the Development Strategy of Official Statistics of the Republic of Croatia, of the multi-annual Programme and of the Annual Implementing Plan. After obtaining the Council's opinion the draft Strategy, Programme and Annual Plan are submitted to the Croatian Government and then to the Parliament for adoption. CBS is also responsible for drafting the report on the Execution of the Annual Implementing Plan to be obtained for opinion to the Council and to be passed by the Parliament. All documents except the report on the Execution of the Annual Implementing Plan are published in the Official Gazette.

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

CBS publishes its own releases which are clearly identifiable as coming from CBS. They are purely statistical in their nature and never mixed with any political statements. The peer review team gathered full evidence on this issue by studying a number of press releases as well as through discussions with users, in particular with the media.

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

The Official Statistics Act explicitly gives the Director of CBS the right to react publicly in the case of misinterpretation or misuse of statistical information. In practice CBS utilized its right only in cases of significant misuse or misinterpretation of official statistics. The recently established Dissemination Strategy of CBS stipulates that in case of any incorrect presentation of their data CBS shall, in the shortest time possible, contact the journalist who published the article and ask for the correction of incorrectly presented data and comments. The Law on Media of the Republic of Croatia moreover stipulates the right to require a correction of incorrect information in the media. CBS suggests the following improvement action: Policy to intervene publicly in case of misuse or misinterpretation of official statistics will be applied more systematically.



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## 1.2 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 Official Statistics Act provides the CBS with a clear and broad legal mandate to collect the data needed for the execution of the Annual Implementing Plan and for statistical activities pursuant to the decision of the Government, which have not been established by the Annual Plan, from all available sources. The CBS and the other producers of official statistics are entitled to select the most suitable source with regard to the quality, timeliness, cost-effectiveness and burden on the reporting units from which these data are collected.*

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

CBS has a clear legal mandate to collect data from all existing sources. Articles 36 to 45 of the Official Statistics Act define in detail the rights and duties of CBS and the other producers of official statistics as well as the rights and duties of the reporting units including holders of administrative data sources in connection with the collection of data for the production and dissemination of official statistics.

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

According to Article 41 of the Official Statistics Act CBS has the right to use all administrative data sources free of charge. The holders of administrative data sources – without any exception – are explicitly bound to provide data in conformity with the request of CBS. Despite these clear legal provisions, the extent to which CBS uses administrative data in practice for the production of official statistics is to date still relatively low. CBS intends to continuously use any opportunity to promote the development of administrative data sources and to provide methodological support for their development. CBS will further investigate how its role in that process and its influence on the content of administrative data sources can be strengthened. It is recommended that the Official Statistics Act will be amended by a rule that all other public institutions are obliged to inform CBS about new data collections or a change of existing data collections. Furthermore, it should give CBS the right to intervene so that the needs of statistics are taken into account (see examples in the Laws of Ireland and Norway). On the other hand, CBS should be obliged to advise on methodological questions for the collection of administrative data. Moreover, CBS should be provided with the metadata for the administrative data that it uses for statistical purposes. It is further recommended to negotiate about the settling of Memoranda of Understanding with holders of administrative sources.

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

According to Article 32 of the Official Statistics Act the Annual Implementing Plan shall lay down the obligation of reporting units to provide data for all statistical surveys. The Official Statistics Act includes rules that legal persons as well as natural persons can be fined if they fail to provide accurate, complete and updated data in form, time and content as determined by CBS. The legal system of sanctions is, however, not practiced. With rather high response rates, in particular in business surveys, CBS would see it as counter-productive to fine reporting units. Instead, CBS uses all possibilities to convince mainly enterprises of the importance of official statistics and of the importance to participate in surveys.

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### 1.3 PRINCIPLE 3: ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

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

*Overall assessment:*

*The fact that official statistics are a separate chapter within the accession negotiation process raised the awareness of the importance of statistics. This helped the CBS ensure that sufficient resources were available to meet the requirements of European Statistics. The position of the CBS within the system of public administration in the Republic of Croatia has been strengthened by becoming directly accountable to the Prime Minister. The rather advanced state of the compliance of Croatian official statistics with the European Statistics Requirements indicates that, in general, the available resources are, despite difficulties and under the precondition that the available posts of CBS can be filled soon, adequate to meet European Statistics requirements.*

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

A further increase of the number of staff of CBS is, together with thereto required increase of the financial resources, an indispensable prerequisite to reach compliance with the *acquis communautaire* by accession. The now legally adopted integration of the regional statistical offices will support the administrative capacity of CBS to reach compliance. With regard to the quality of its staff resources, CBS underlines in its self-assessment that its main strength in ensuring the adequacy of human resources is the existence of a core group of experts having gained high expertise over the last years in their areas of statistics as well as of the European Statistical System. This core group of experts is the foundation of knowledge transfer and of further improvement of CBS's capacities. There are, however, problems to ensure the adequacy of CBS's resources. Because of the rather low level of salaries it is very difficult for CBS, as it is for the public administration in general, to recruit and retain highly qualified experts, in particular in the fields of Information Technology, mathematical statistics and National Accounts. Staff turnover within the IT Directorate of CBS is high. That makes it difficult to undergo a major modernisation and improvement regarding the use of technology in statistical processes. The full switch from the mainframe to client-server solutions will need several more years.

To improve cost-efficiency and retain skilled staff CBS will implement an integrated Human Resources Management System which is lacking to date. In addition, CBS plans to further develop procedures for the integration of financial aspects into its statistical activities planning to ensure better planning and improved utilisation of the allocated budget.

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## 1.4 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 (ESS).**

*Overall assessment:*

*The CBS is fully focused on all aspects of quality and involved in developing quality improvements. Quality is understood as a basic condition for the stable development of statistics and as an important precondition for strengthening the reputation of the office. At present, the regular monitoring of product quality is only carried out for selected statistics. During the last two years, quality reports have been prepared for the first time, both for internal purposes as well as for Eurostat. The CBS has prepared handbooks and guidelines on the evaluation and monitoring of quality only for some statistics. A regular and thorough review is carried out for parts of all statistical outputs.*

*The CBS does lack a systematic quality management approach, in so far as starting with the preparation and implementation of a quality management model. The CBS does intend, however, to decide on the concrete type of quality management system within one year. A new and specific unit in charge of quality that would also organize the necessary training of staff would enhance a systematic approach in this field.*

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

CBS started with monitoring of product quality according to the ESS quality components. Up to now, however, only less than 25 % of statistical output is regularly monitored. Further development depends on the introduction of a systematic framework for addressing quality on a consistent basis throughout CBS and an extended training of staff.

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

Quality of the stages of the statistical production process is monitored to a certain extent for some statistics. Monitoring is conducted by the Internal Audit Unit (which is subordinated to the director general) and by the subject matter directorates.

Furthermore, quality reports are prepared for some statistics, mostly for household surveys (Labour Force Survey, Household Budget Survey) and newly introduced surveys (Information and Communication Technology, Innovation, Environment etc.). In the future the monitoring shall be widened to further surveys.

### 1.4.3 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.

There are no processes in place to deal with quality considerations, including trade-off within quality in particular between timeliness and accuracy. A formal policy to guide

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the planning of surveys is only in parts available (handbook for the use of IT; dissemination).

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

CBS's directorates prepare written guidelines and handbooks including results of monitoring and recommendations for further development of the statistical production process. These guidelines have been written mostly for newly introduced statistical surveys. They are not available to external users, but they are well known within CBS. Staff of CBS is well trained and strongly committed to produce high quality statistics. Staff training will nevertheless have to be further extended and improved.

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

A regular and thorough review is provided for parts of all statistical outputs. Examples are labour market statistics, national accounts, tourism, and energy statistics. Moreover, CBS receives feedback on the quality of its statistical information from many users. Users interviewed during the peer review expressed their satisfaction with the current quality of CBS's statistics.

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## 1.5 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:*

*The management of the CBS as well as all its members of staff are well aware that the strict guarantee of statistical confidentiality is a key value of the office. Individual data have to be protected and may be used only for statistical purposes. The principle is well covered by the Official Statistics Act. This law also includes articles on penalties, in case of any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality by employees of the statistical authority or of any other producer of official statistics. Instructions and guidelines concerning confidentiality exist for all processes in the form of an internal ordinance. Protection of individual data includes procedures of a technical and organizational nature, as well as other suitable logistic and technical procedures. The CBS gives access to statistical micro-data for research purposes to authorized external users, subject to precise procedures and conditions. All interview partners during the peer review – users and other producers of official statistics – confirmed their trust in the confidentiality of individual data within the CBS.*

### 1.5.1 Indicator 5.1 Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.

The Official Statistics Act guarantees statistical confidentiality and data protection in chapter IX “Confidentiality and Protection of Statistical Data” (articles 59 to 66). All statistical data which may provide a direct or indirect identification of natural or legal persons are considered as confidential and represent an official secret. Individual statistical data collected for the needs of official statistics may only be used for statistical purposes. All persons authorised to collect and process statistical data shall be bound to proceed in conformity with the provisions of the Official Statistics Act. This obligation shall continue after the termination of employment, or after the performance of the tasks referred to in this Act. The manner of protecting statistical data shall be determined by the director of CBS.

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

Staff of CBS did not sign any confidentiality commitments up to now. It is recommended to do so in future.

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

The Official Statistics Act in chapter XI “Penal Provisions” (articles 69 to 71) explicitly specifies concrete penalties for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality. Employees of the statistical authority or of any other producer of official statistics shall be fined an amount ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 HRK (Croatian Kuna) if he or she proceeds contrary to the provisions of the Act concerning the

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confidentiality and protection of statistical data. It can also be fined if statistical data obtained for the purpose of performing activities of scientific research are used contrary to the Official Statistics Act.

**1.5.4 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.**

CBS has written instructions and guidelines for the protection of statistical confidentiality. These instructions and guidelines concern both production and dissemination processes, and the legislative form of these documents is an internal ordinance addressed to the staff. In the near future, the ordinances will be put on CBS's web site and they will then be accessible for the public.

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

According to the Official Statistics Act physical and technological provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases. The internal ordinance stipulates rules and procedures for protection against unauthorized access to statistical data or against the risk of their destruction. It defines how data are stored, who can access the data and in what way, how data are disseminated, and other conditions.

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

CBS grants access to statistical micro-data for research purposes. The legislative basis for the use of micro-data for research purposes is given by the Official Statistics Act, Chapter IX; Article 65. Producers of official statistics may, on the basis of a written request, provide individual statistical data without identifiers for the purpose of performing activities of scientific research. This request shall state the purpose of the use of the statistical data. A special contract shall be concluded on the use of the statistical data according to which the user shall be held financially and criminally responsible to use statistical data only for the purpose stated in the request, and shall not provide these data for inspection or use to unauthorized persons. The user shall destroy such data after use. For every case of micro-data provision, protocols have to be signed. According to the internal ordinance on statistical data protection only scientific institutions and scientists listed in the national Register of Scientific Institutions and Register of Scientists set up by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports can apply to access statistical micro-data.

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## 1.6 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:*

*There is strong evidence that the CBS respects scientific independence in producing and disseminating European Statistics and carries out its tasks in an objective, professional and transparent manner. The practice in ensuring equality of access to newly released data is exemplary.*

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

The Official Statistics Act stipulates the objective manner of laying down methods and definitions in the process of collecting, processing and disseminating statistical data which is free from any influence. Though CBS expressed in its self-assessment that in rare cases the media questioned objectivity of CBS, the peer review team had – after the interviews with users including representatives of the media – no doubts that compilation of official statistics by CBS is solely driven by statistical considerations.

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

Besides the legal provisions that gives the producers of official statistics the right to select the sources with regard to the reliability and timeliness of the output, the cost-effectiveness of the processes and the burden on the reporting units, and to decide on the methods and procedures on the basis of established professional standards, scientific methods and principles of professional ethics CBS applies in practice a clear policy to select data sources and statistical techniques solely on the basis of statistical considerations.

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

The recently adopted “Dissemination Strategy of Statistical Data of the Central Bureau of Statistics” describes the procedures on how to deal with errors discovered in already published statistics and how the corrected data should be announced to the users. As a general rule, it is said that errors must be published in the shortest time possible and users must be enabled to see clearly what has been corrected. The interviews with junior staff showed that these rules are well known to the staff of CBS and applied in practice in case such errors should happen.



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

Article 55 of the Official Statistics Act lays down that statistical data shall be accompanied by an explanation in order to facilitate interpretation and to provide professional help to users in the interpretation and evaluation of the data. In its self-assessment CBS states that information on the methods and procedures used are published on its website and regularly updated for more than 75% of its outputs. It is very positive to see that already the first releases of data include comprehensive bilingual notes on methodology. It is recommended to amend the dissemination strategy of CBS by a chapter on the publication of metadata (see also comments to Principle 15).

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

The Official Statistics Act lays down that the producers of official statistics have to publish a Calendar of Publications of Statistical Data which includes the dates of the publication of statistical data at least three month prior to the period the Annual Implementing Plan refers to. At the end of the year t-1, CBS publishes its bilingual release calendar that provides a precise overview of the releases of CBS for the entire year t and in addition for the first five months of the year t+1. Details are explained in the “Dissemination Strategy of Statistical Data of the Central Bureau of Statistics”. According to the Official Statistics Act, possible delays and changes in the release dates of publications have to be announced in advance. This procedure is explained in the dissemination strategy.

#### **1.6.6 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.**

All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. That principle is clearly laid down in the Official Statistics Act and fully applied by CBS in practice. There haven't been any occurrences of information divulged prior to its official release (leaks) during the last years.

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

Impartiality and objectivity are major principles which determine the production and dissemination of official statistics by CBS. Statistical releases which can be found on the website of CBS are clearly formulated in an objective and professional manner. The same holds true for statements in press conferences as confirmed in interviews during the review. The procedures of how press releases and statements for press conferences are prepared and adopted in CBS should nevertheless be included in the Dissemination Strategy or any other document.

### **1.7 PRINCIPLE 15: ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY**

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**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:*

*In general, the CBS disseminates its statistical information in a clear and understandable form. Data are available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance. The CBS has issued a Dissemination Strategy of Statistical Data which is based on the provisions of the Official Statistics Act. The document includes long-term goals, but also general principles, determinants, and criteria for the dissemination of statistical outputs. The new organisational structure of the CBS now contains a Directorate for Information, Services and Publications, in order to further improve dissemination and communication.*

*Improvements are necessary with regard to the implementation of a standard metadata format, to regular tests of the ease of use of the website and to a closer cooperation with the media and with journalists.*

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

According to the evaluation of feedback by main users of CBS's statistics, CBS provides correct and meaningful information and interpretation. The implementation of a standardised metadata system will further improve the comparability and clarity of the statistical information.

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

CBS uses all kinds of technologies for dissemination, both classical and modern. Although currently nearly all data are available via internet, only a small part of the data has been available in a data base format including metadata. With regard to altered market conditions and greater user demand for publications in electronic format, CBS will publish all of its publications in electronic format on its website in the shortest time possible. So far, already 90 % of the CBS publications are available in electronic format on CBS's website. All the publications, data and databases on CBS's website are free of charge.

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

CBS offers a wide range of standardised data and information free of charge via internet. Custom-designed outputs and analyses made on user demand are regulated in the price list of publications and services included in the publishing programme which is available on the website as well as in printed form. Incomes gained from the sale of the custom-designed analyses and outputs are allocated to the State budget and can at present not be directly used by the CBS. A change of the rules governing the use of incomes from custom-designed analysis would very much heighten the motivation of the CBS and its staff to perform such services for their users. Custom-designed

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analyses are only sometimes published on the website of CBS. Information that analyses was made is, however, always available.

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

The Official Statistics Act (Article 65) and the internal Ordinance on Protection of Statistical Data (Article 37) allow producers of official statistics – on the basis of a written request – to provide individual statistical data without identifiers for research purposes. This request shall describe the research activity for which the statistical data should be used. A special contract shall be concluded on the use of the individual data for research and scientific purposes according to which the user shall be held financially and criminally responsible to use these data only for purposes stated in the request, and shall not provide these data for any other purposes. According to the internal ordinance on statistical data protection only scientific institutions and scientists listed in the national Register of Scientific Institutions and Register of Scientists set up by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports can apply to access statistical micro-data. Users from scientific institutions confirmed during the peer review meetings that CBS provides access to such data in accordance with the Official Statistics Act.

The second possibility for an access to micro-data concerns international statistical cooperation. This is defined in the Official Statistics Act in Article 68. CBS is responsible for an exchange of statistical outputs with other countries and international organisations. CBS and other producers of official statistics may transfer individual statistical data without identifiers, to which the provisions on confidentiality and protection of statistical data of the Act apply, to the statistical offices of other countries and to the statistical services of international organisations if such users guarantee statistical confidentiality and the sole use for statistical purposes.

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

Though CBS has not yet implemented a standardised metadata system, the statistical data in its publications are accompanied with appropriate metadata. Accomplishment of the standardised metadata system requests completion of all national statistical classifications and nomenclatures based on international standards, definitions of indicators, and other parts of the metadata system. The second part is the establishment of an IT system for such a metadata system and its functioning. Building of an IT survey processor based on a metadata system will improve the situation regarding the present lack of databases on the website. The CBS is currently testing such IT application, which will allow more flexible dissemination. This process requests longer time, financial resources, technical equipment and staff with the necessary knowledge and experience.

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**1.7.6 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.**

CBS tries to keep its users informed as much as possible. In accordance with the Official Statistics Act many basic statistical documents like the Development Strategy of Official Statistics of the Republic of Croatia, the Programme of Statistical Activities of the Republic of Croatia, and the Annual Implementing Plan etc. are published on CBS's website. These documents include information on the methodology of statistical processes. With the establishment of a systematic quality management within CBS information on the quality of statistical outputs can be increased.

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## **2 CO-ORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE**

CBS seems to be accepted as the coordinator of the Statistical System by the other producers of official statistics. With the most important ones, the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance, a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the division of work in the fields of macroeconomic and government finance statistics and the sharing of data between the institutions was signed. Memoranda with some other producers also exist. Memoranda of Understanding should be agreed with all other producers of official statistics.

CBS has a strong role in the programme planning process. It is by law the institution which drafts the strategy, the multi-annual plan and the annual implementing plan. CBS coordinates the discussions with the other producers and with users. With the opinion of the Statistical Council which is intensively involved in the preparation procedure the draft plans are submitted by CBS to the Government for adoption by the Parliament.

Responsibility for classifications lies with CBS. They become legally binding for all public institutions in Croatia after a legal act brought in by CBS has been adopted.

## **3 GOOD PRACTICES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED**

The Official Statistics Act does not only regulate the production and dissemination of official statistics by the National Statistical Office, CBS, but it regulates the production and dissemination of all official statistics by all producers of official statistics. It therefore also includes rules on the coordination of the statistical system.

The Official Statistics Act stipulates strictly that official statistical data shall be available to all users in an equal way and at the same time. Exceptions are strictly not allowed.

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## 4 LIST OF IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS BY PRINCIPLE OF THE CODE

### 4.1.1 Improvement Actions Principle 1: Professional Independence

#### Improvement actions

In order to determine a fixed-term mandate for the position of Director General (DG) as well as to change the procedure for appointment of DG, the Official Statistics Act needs to be changed.

Policy to intervene publicly on statistical issues in case of misuse or misinterpretation of official statistics will be more systematically applied.

#### Timetable

CBS will propose changes to the existing legal frame within 2 years.

Systematic approach within 6 months.

### 4.1.2 Improvement Actions Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection

#### Improvement actions

CBS plans to utilize available administrative data to a greater extent in two steps:

CBS will continue to use any opportunity to promote the development of administrative data sources and provide methodological support for their development.

CBS will investigate how to strengthen its role in that process and how to enforce its influence on institutions collecting administrative data. Possibilities to define formal procedures in achieving that goal including memoranda of understanding will be investigated.

It is recommended that the Official Statistics Act will be amended by a rule that all other public institutions are obliged to inform CBS about new data collections or a change of existing data collections and it should give CBS the right to intervene (see examples in the Laws of Ireland and Norway). CBS, on the other hand, should be obliged to advice on methodological questions for the collection of administrative data. Moreover CBS should be provided with the metadata for the administrative data that it uses for statistical purposes.

#### Timetable

This activity is already in progress for some administrative data sources.

Expected timeframe in which this issue will be analysed is 2 years.

CBS will propose changes to the existing legal frame within 2 years.

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#### 4.1.3 Improvement Actions Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources

##### **Improvement actions**

CBS plans to further develop procedures for integration of financial aspects into its statistical activities planning. This will ensure better planning and improved utilization of allocated budget.

Regarding human resources an integral Human Resources (HR) Management System will be put in place.

##### **Timetable**

Time planning: 3 years.

Within 6 months CBS will hire an expert to start the work on the process of HR Management System implementation.

Expected timeframe for establishing the System is 3 years.

#### 4.1.4 Improvement Actions Principle 4: Quality commitment

##### **Improvement actions**

CBS will appoint a person for dealing with quality management. Based on this decision, participation of CBS's representative in the Eurostat working group on the subject matter will be initiated. Following these activities CBS will start with staff training on quality management.

CBS will decide on a concrete type of quality management system.

*(See improvement action under principle 8)*

##### **Timetable**

Expected time frame for these activities is 1 year.

Timeframe is 1 year.

#### 4.1.5 Improvement Actions Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality

##### **Improvement actions**

Increase of efficiency in providing data users with micro-data sets through standardisation of their content and time frame for their preparation. Furthermore, an upgraded IT system for the creation of custom-made micro-data sets will be set up.

##### **Timetable**

Expected time frame for this activity is 3 years.

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**Improvement actions**

Employees of CBS shall sign special confidentiality declaration (commitment).

**Timetable**

Time frame 1 year.

**4.1.6 Improvement Actions Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity****Improvement actions**

Description of the processes in connection with press releases and statements in press conferences.

**Timetable**

Timeframe is 6 months.

**4.1.7 Improvement Actions Principle 7: Sound Methodology****Improvement actions**

The department dealing with statistical-mathematical methods will be strengthened. Trainings regarding such methods will be provided both to staff from the department in question but also to other staff dealing with surveys.

**Timetable**

This activity will be initiated within the period of 2 years.

Development of Statistical Business Register (SBR) will continue. Number of business statistics which are based on SBR will be increased.

SBR will be fully integrated to major statistical surveys within 2 to 3 years.

**4.1.8 Improvement Actions Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures****Improvement actions**

Templates for describing statistical procedures which are in implementation will be prepared.

Upon preparation of templates all procedures will be put in writing.

Based on compiled written procedures possibilities for standardisation of statistical procedures in use will be analysed.

**Timetable**

Expected time frame for this activity is 1 year.

Expected timeframe for the full implementation is 3 years.

Timeframe is 5 years.

CBS will implement a completely metadata-driven automated processing system which is now in the testing phase. This will make possible a gradual transfer from mainframe to the client-server

Expected timeframe for a full switch from the mainframe to the client-server environment is 5



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**Improvement actions**

environment.

**Timetable**

years.

**4.1.9 Improvement Actions Principle 9: Non-Excessive burden on respondents****Improvement actions**

CBS will put more efforts into the organisation of business surveys in a way that the burden on respondents is more fairly spread (improvement of sampling frames, better use of sampling techniques). To achieve this, efforts will be made to strengthen the capacity of the unit in charge of classifications, sampling, statistical methods and analyses (see also Principle 7).

**Timetable**

Timeframe for full implementation is 4 years.

**4.1.10 Improvement Actions Principle 10: Cost Effectiveness****Improvement actions**

Information and communication technologies will be integrated into statistical procedures to a greater extent.

Majority of business surveys will be carried out using electronic questionnaires.

Household surveys will start to employ CAI (Computer Assisted Interview).

**Timetable**

Expected time frame for this activity is 3 years.

First CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) survey will be introduced within 6 months; CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) centre will be established by the end of 2011.

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#### **4.1.11 Improvement Actions Principle 11: Relevance**

##### **Improvement actions**

CBS will introduce a regular user satisfaction survey.

##### **Timetable**

Timeframe is 1 year.

#### **4.1.12 Improvement Actions Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability**

#### **4.1.13 Improvement Actions Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality**

#### **4.1.14 Improvement Actions Principle 14: Coherence and Comparability**

#### **4.1.15 Improvement Actions Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity**

##### **Improvement actions**

Establishment of IT survey processors based on metadata system will improve the situation regarding the lack of databases available on the web. CBS is currently testing this IT application which will allow more flexible dissemination. Processing of several statistics have already been transferred to the new application.

Standard metadata format will be established immediately.

In 2009 CBS introduced a satisfaction survey to its web page in order to monitor user satisfaction with the way CBS and its statistical outputs are presented via Internet. CBS will further develop this form of communication and improve its web page depending on user's comments.

CBS plans to introduce new visual identity and standardise the design of all its products.

Communication with media needs to be improved. The plan is to deal with media in a more systematic way by improving the quality of press releases, reacting to misinterpretation of statistical data in a more systematic way.

Press conferences as a regular mean of communication with the media will be introduced.

In order to further improve clarity of CBS's statistical outputs CBS will train its staff in writing different releases and dealing with media and users in general.

##### **Timetable**

Transfer of all statistics will need up to 5 years.

Until the end 2010.

This activity will be performed continuously.

The expected time frame for this activity is 1 year.

Expected time frame is 1 year.

Planned timeframe is 2 years

CBS will start implementing this activity within a time of 1 year.

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**Improvement actions**

Within the same time period CBS will start organising activities in order to train data users. Data users training will start with organisation of “Open days” events.

**Timetable**

Until the end of 2010.

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## **5 ANNEXES**

**ANNEX 1: AGENDA OF THE LPR**

**ANNEX 2: OFFICIAL STATISTICS ACT**