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New concept of statistical legislation in the Republic of North Macedonia

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1. Introduction

- Statistical system established in 1945.
- After the independence of our country (1991), activities were undertaken to build a new modern statistical system.
- The system was formally established with the adoption of the new Law on State Statistics.
- At the moment, the Office is preparing a new text of the Law on State Statistics.



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2. Legal basis of the statistical system

- Law on the Organisation and Operation of State Administration Bodies (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 58/00...).
- Law on State Statistics (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” No. 54/1997, 21/2007, 51/2011, 104/2013, 42/2014, 192/2015, 27/16, 83/18 and (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia” 220/18 and 31/20).



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Legal basis of the statistical system

- Law on the Organisation and Operation of State Administration Bodies (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 58/00...).
- The Law on the Organisation and Operation of State Administration Bodies establishes the status of the State Statistical Office (SSO) as an administrative organisation (state body) with the status of a legal entity.
- Pursuant to this law, the SSO conducts activities related to the collection, processing and publication of statistical data, maintains, presents and provides statistical data and determines their accuracy, gives opinions on the methodological bases to the authorised bodies for conducting statistical surveys, prepares statistical forecasts, trends and models and other analytical data and indicators, and performs other expert activities.



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Legal basis of the statistical system

- Law on State Statistics ¹⁾
 - The law was adopted in 1997 in cooperation with foreign experts and has been amended 9 times to date in order to align it with the European statistical regulations that were adopted in the meantime and to harmonise it with the domestic legislation.
 - The law is organised in 13 chapters with a total of 62 articles.
 - According to the law, the State Statistical Office (SSO) is the main producer of official statistics in the country's statistical system.



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Legal basis of the statistical system

1) One of the strengths of the national statistical system in the Republic of Macedonia is that the statistical legislation - primarily the Law on State Statistics - is modern, comprehensive and well aligned with the Code. The legislation draws on other national and international models and has been upgraded and expanded with the help of international experts since its establishment in 1997. The law is written in clear and simple language. Article 4a states that professional independence "means that the work of official statistics is carried out on the basis of professional and scientific methods and knowledge and is protected from any influence, as well as the timing and content of all forms of dissemination. The same Article goes on to give further robust definitions of what is meant by neutrality, objectivity, reliability and statistical confidentiality.

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Legal basis of the statistical system

- The SSO is an independent and autonomous body of the state administration that has the capacity of a legal entity.
- The Director represents the professional independence and autonomy of the SSO.
- Official statistics are based on the following principles: professional independence, neutrality, objectivity, reliability, statistical confidentiality and cost-effectiveness.
- Quality criteria: relevance, accuracy, timeliness, punctuality, accessibility and clarity, coherence and comparability.



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3. Coordination of the statistical system

- According to the law, the SSO is the coordinator of the country's statistical system. In addition to the Office, the country's statistical system consists of the National Bank (NBRNM) and five other producers of official statistics (authorised bodies), which are determined in the five-year Programme of Statistical Surveys.
- The statistical system, in a functional sense, is a centralised system as more than 70% of the statistical surveys are conducted by the SSO.
- At the same time, in the organisational sense, it is a decentralised system, since in addition to the SSO, the system includes six other producers of official statistics.



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Coordination of the statistical system

- Coordination Committee, a new body in the statistical system.
- The Committee consists of representatives of the authorised bodies who, apart from the representative of NBRNM, are appointed by the Government of RNM.
- The Coordination Committee is composed of a President and six members.
- The President and members of the Coordination Committee, who are appointed and dismissed by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, are representatives of the authorised bodies for conducting statistical surveys from among the management officials who are responsible for the implementation of statistical surveys.



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4. Challenges in the coming period

4.1. Strengthening the professional capacities of the Office in terms of professional staff and the necessary information technology infrastructure.

- The Office's professional capacities are at a satisfactory level, but there is a problem with the departure of skilled staff from the Office, primarily due to discouraging salaries.
- The Office makes great efforts to retain the staff in the institution, primarily by offering excellent opportunities for their training both in the country and abroad, as well as by enabling a longer stay in one of the statistical institutions in the EU countries.



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Challenges in the coming period

4.2. Strengthening the professional capacities of the authorised bodies

- Part of the authorised bodies do not have sufficient institutional and human capacity to be able to fully perform their role in the statistical system of the country.
- To overcome this situation, the role of the Coordination Committee will be significant.
- One of its tasks will be the promotion of joint projects and the inclusion of all persons from the authorised bodies who work on statistical surveys in the training organised by the State Statistical Office.



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Challenges in the coming period

4.3. Change in the method of data collection, i.e. the use of administrative data sets, as well as data sets maintained by entities that are outside the public administration system

- Using data that are owned by legal entities that are public institutions.
- The use of data that are owned by legal entities that are not public institutions will be a major challenge.
- Use of artificial intelligence.
- Needs of legal changes.



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Challenges in the coming period

4.4. Preparation of a new Law on State Statistics

- The State Statistical Office will be an authority that will be under the competence of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- The Director should be appointed and dismissed by a plenary session of the Assembly, through a transparent procedure before the bodies of the Assembly.
- The most important acts of the Office, such as the Five-Year Programme of Statistical Surveys, the Annual Programme and the Strategic Plans of the Office, should be reviewed and adopted by the Assembly.



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Challenges in the coming period

- The professional capacities of the Office's employees should be significantly increased, both in terms of the number of employees, as well as in terms of their professional qualifications.
- The independence and autonomy of the State Statistical Office should be fully strengthened.
- The role of the SSO as the main producer and coordinator of the country's statistical system will be further strengthened.
- Organisational and personnel issues (increasing the number of employees and raising the salaries of the employees) should be decided by the Assembly.



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Conclusions

1. The position of the State Statistical Office within the country will be strengthened.
2. The status and position of the Director of the Office and the top management will be strengthened and additionally guaranteed.
3. The Office will adapt its operation to the new modern methods of statistical production.
4. The coordinating role of the SSO within the national statistical system will be strengthened.
5. With the adoption of the Law, the statistical European regulations and the recommendations will be implemented.



THANK YOU

