



## **10 & 11 March 2011 Statistics for policymaking: Europe 2020**

The Europe 2020 strategy [http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm) put forward by the Commission sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century as a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

The challenges to reach these goals have been accentuated over the last two years, as the world's worst economic crisis since the 1930s reversed much of the progress achieved in Europe since the year 2000. Europe is now facing high levels of unemployment, sluggish structural growth and excessive levels of debt. At the same time, the world is moving fast and long-term challenges – globalisation, pressure on resources, climate change, ageing – are intensifying.

Supporting the economic recovery and reaching the Europe 2020 goals does not only require political support for stronger governance, with improved rules and procedures, but also sound, high quality data and statistical analysis on which decisions can be based. Quality of statistical information also means fit for purpose. The Europe 2020 strategy asks for a very solid statistical basis and in this respect the European Statistical System (ESS) has a crucial role to play.

### **Purpose of the conference**

The conference will focus on the role of statistics in policymaking, using the Europe 2020 strategy as a case in point. The trends in using statistics for politically highly sensitive purposes and the related complications for statisticians will be discussed.

The aim of the conference is to bring together policymakers and statisticians in a dialogue on how to shape the statistics underpinning policymaking. How should indicators be defined so that they provide the required information? How should policymakers and statisticians cooperate in order to get the best possible outcome on both sides? How can the statisticians ensure that statistics influence policymaking rather than being contaminated by it? How can the current trends in measuring economic, social and environmental developments be reflected in statistics used for policymaking and, in particular, in support of the Europe 2020 strategy? The conference will underline the importance of good interaction and understanding between policy makers and statisticians in order to be able to correctly measure the political targets set.

The participants in the conference will be users of these statistics (European and national policymakers, analysts from the European institutions and international organisations, policy advisors responsible for the national coordination of the Europe 2020 strategy, users from media and the academic sphere) and producers of statistics (Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes).

The topics to be addressed include:

- How are statistics used for evidence based decision making and what are the related issues? What are the good examples and lessons learned with regard to the use of statistics for policymaking? Should the use of statistics influence processes used for defining, compiling, controlling and disseminating indicators? Is there a political role for official statistics/statistical authorities in case of politically highly sensitive indicators occur? Is the credibility and integrity of statistical institutions affected by their role as providers of statistics when these are heavily used in a political context?

- In the concrete case of Europe 2020 the issues are: What was the process for setting up the statistical support of the strategy? What was the role of statistics in defining the headline targets and the additional statistical indicators? How are statistics used in measuring the progress in achieving the objectives of the strategy and for the evaluation of the performance of the Member States and of the EU as a whole? How statistics do fit in the framework of the country surveillance procedure, for assessment of competitiveness and macroeconomic imbalances of the Member States and in relation to the evaluation in the framework of the Stability and Growth Pact?
- What are the current developments in measuring trends in social and economic welfare and in the environmental areas using official statistics? How do these developments affect statistics used for policy purposes? What is the impact of the GDP and beyond initiative and of the conclusions of the Report of the Stiglitz Commission on statistics and what are the concrete examples?
- What does it mean to present statistics in the form of sets of indicators in support of a policy? How is the indicator set defined and what are the quality aspects? How to ensure the complexity of coverage of the given policies or socio-economic phenomena and at the same time respect the parsimony of the set? How to effectively communicate knowledge and insights on complex phenomena based on indicators?

### Structure of the conference

The first part of the conference will be devoted to discussing the above topics in the plenary session. This will be the main part of the conference. Three parallel sessions will focus on more concrete experience with regard to the three main objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. The conference will conclude with a roundtable on lessons learned, best practices and suggestions in relation to compiling statistics used for policy purposes.

### Organisation

The conference will take place on 10 and 11 (morning) March 2011 in Brussels. It is organised by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Union and a Directorate General of the European Commission, whose mission is to provide the European Union with a high-quality statistical information service.

### Proceedings

The conference proceedings will be published on the conference's dedicated website.

### Questions

For any questions concerning the **content** of the conference, please contact Mr Ales Capek, Head of Unit D-5 "Key indicators for European policy" ([ales.capek@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ales.capek@ec.europa.eu), Tel: +352 4301-36045).

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