

**DELIBERATION NO 41 OF THE CONSELHO SUPERIOR DE ESTATÍSTICA (STATISTICAL COUNCIL)
ON THE 2012-15 SITUATION ASSESSMENT REPORT OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

Whereas the Law governing the National Statistical System (NSS) lays down that the *Conselho Superior de Estatística* (Statistical Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council), before the end of each term of office, shall prepare a situation assessment report for the NSS (Article 15 (4) of Law No 22/2008 of 13 May);

Whereas under the methodology approved by the Standing Section of Statistical Coordination (*Secção Permanente de Coordenação Estatística* in Portuguese), the preparation of this Report – which had the participation of the Vice-Chairperson of the Council, the Chairpersons of the Council's Sections, the Standing Section of Statistical Coordination, statistical authorities, and the Council Secretariat – has implied in-depth work to assess the results achieved over the course of the 2012-15 period and identify the future challenges posed to the NSS;

Whereas the Report:

- **Leads to an overall favourable assessment of the NSS performance**, notwithstanding, on the one hand, the organisational instability felt in some of its members and a persisting shortage of skilled human resources and, on the other, an ongoing increase in the production of official statistics in response to growing demand at national and European level.
 - **Identifies the challenges posed to the NSS, such as:**
 1. The timely production of relevant statistics for supporting decision-making, particularly those where greater insufficiencies prevail, such as social statistics;
 2. The gradual widening of the assessment of the quality of official statistics in its different dimensions based on a selection of methodologies to be followed;
 3. The progressive utilisation of administrative and other data for statistical purposes, so as to minimise the costs of statistical production and the burden on citizens and enterprises;
 4. The deepening of institutional cooperation;
 5. The ongoing promotion of statistical literacy across the whole society;
 6. The intensification of initiatives to raise awareness of citizens, enterprises and other public and private entities to the importance of official statistics, aimed at stimulating and intensifying their use, both for the knowledge of reality and support to decision-making.
 - **Subjects the success of these challenges:**
- 

- a. To the endowment of the NSS with suitable skilled financial and human resources not only to meet the growing needs for high-quality official statistics, but also to face the technological and societal challenges that will continue to be posed to official statistical production;
- b. To a more intense, active and interested participation of the Council members – producers and users of official statistics and others – in the respective activities;
- c. To an increase in the degree of openness of general government entities to the supply of administrative data for statistical use.

Pursuant to Article 3 (2) and Article 13 (a) and (g) of Law No 22/2008 of 13 May, and following a favourable opinion of the Standing Session of Statistical Coordination, **at its plenary session on 11 April 2016 the Council decided the following:**

1. To approve the 2012-15 Situation Assessment Report of the NSS (<http://cse.ine.pt>), highlighting, in annex to this Deliberation, the priority actions to be developed and monitored within the National Statistical System;
2. To release the 2012-15 Situation Assessment Report of the National Statistical System to the media.

Lisbon, 11 April 2016.

The Vice-Chairman of the Statistical Council, *Alda de Caetano Carvalho*

The Executive Secretary of the Statistical Council, *Maria da Graça Fernandes Caeiro Bento*

PRIORITY ACTIONS TO BE DEVELOPED AND MONITORED

WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM (NSS)

1. Statistical Council's activities

- a. Development of initiatives to raise awareness of general government bodies to a more intense utilisation of administrative data for statistical purposes of adequate quality and conducive to efficiency gains and a reduction of the statistical burden on respondents, notably:
 - by warning entities holding administrative data of the legal obligation of releasing them for the production of official statistics;
 - by enabling statistical authorities to intervene in the design of mechanisms originating administrative data, so as to ensure the possibility of their utilisation for statistical purposes, namely in terms of concepts, nomenclatures and quality.
- b. Design and implementation of mechanisms that, under its powers, make it possible to ensure compliance with the principles enshrined in the NSS Law and its monitoring at the level of statistical authorities;
- c. Gradual widening of assessment of the quality of official statistics to all its dimensions, based on the selection of methodologies to follow, considering the good results stemming from monitoring compliance with cut-off dates for statistical information;¹
- d. Intensification of the analysis and monitoring of relevant statistical areas for supporting decision-making where weaknesses/insufficiencies still prevail in the production of statistical information, based on the objectives set out in the General Guidelines of National Statistical Activity 2013-17;
- e. Ongoing efforts to create a Local Units File to use within the NSS, an indispensable tool for harmonising and rationalising the means and the quality of official statistics;
- f. Reinforced cooperation among the NSS members (Council and statistical authorities) and between statistical authorities and general government bodies.
- g. Continued promotion of the sharing of good practices and knowledge, both through the presentation of methodologies and projects by official statistics producers, and studies and work carried out by statistical information users;
- h. Implementation of already identified solutions and others to be defined ensuring submission to the Council's prior consultation of draft laws setting up statistical systems or containing rules on statistical activity, pursuant to the NSS Law;
- i. Intensification of the use of communication channels to promote the improvement of statistical literacy levels;

¹ Dimensions of statistical quality (in the European Statistics Code of Practice and the Public Commitment on European Statistics by the European System of Central Banks): relevance, accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, coherence and comparability, accessibility and clarity.

- j. Creation of internal mechanisms to stimulate:
 - the intervention and participation of Council members;
 - the monitoring of the functioning of Working Groups to maximise their efficiency and efficacy;
 - the improvement of the execution and monitoring of the Council's deliberations and recommendations, namely through (i) joint meetings with Section Chairpersons for strategic decision-making, and (ii) implementation of meetings between Section Chairpersons and Working Group Chairpersons.

2. Statistical authorities' activities

- a. Reinforcement/consolidation of the necessary conditions for strict compliance by all statistical authorities of the principles and powers enshrined in the NSS Law, the European Statistics Code of Practice and the Public Commitment on European Statistics by the European System of Central Banks;
- b. Timely observance of the Action Plan arising from the 2015 Peer Review's recommendations to Statistics Portugal and entities with delegated powers;
- c. Monitoring of the official statistics' production and dissemination process and their quality, namely through statistical audits;
- d. Deepening of interinstitutional cooperation, notably through the possibility of joint statistical operations, sharing of statistical units files, assessment of the quality of basic information, and removal of redundancies at the various levels of statistical production, by establishing collaboration mechanisms suitable for the performance of their tasks within the NSS;
- e. Identification of areas of complementarity between statistical authorities' activities, based on their legal powers, aimed at rationalising resources and fully meeting the society's needs for statistical information, taking into account the objectives of the General Guidelines of National Statistical Activity 2013-17 and the principle enshrined in the NSS Law according to which "Official statistics are considered a public good. They shall be proportionate to user needs";
- f. Intensified utilisation of high-quality administrative data for the production of official statistics, reporting possible difficulties within the Council so that recommendations are presented to facilitate access to said data;
- g. Provision of information to the Statistical Council whenever deep methodological changes are introduced in statistical operations of major economic and social impact, which originate breaks in series or the discontinuing of variables;
- h. Widening of the production of statistics to relevant domains for decision-making, notably those where weaknesses prevail (due to the shortage of available resources and/or the burden on respondents), particularly through the adoption of new statistical production and dissemination models, the utilisation of administrative data, and the sharing of technological and operational infra-structures, in preparation at European level;
- i. Enhancement of instruments and streamlining of mechanisms to anticipate new statistical production needs and meet them on time;

- j. Improvement of communication and dissemination channels contributing to the increase in statistical literacy, adapting differentiated communication strategies to the different user segments and to changes in functionalities for searching and accessing statistics;
- k. Increase in the statistical authorities' ability to meet the growing and differentiated needs of statistical information users in terms of speed, efficiency and quality, while observing the confidentiality rules in force at national and European level;
- l. Widening of the information released, notably as regards long series;
- m. Improvement of the information released, notably as regards revisions, the discontinuing of variables, accessibility, transparency, and timeliness;
- n. Continued increase in the geographical breakdown of relevant indicators, ensuring a balance between usefulness and cost.