

ELSTAT

Annual Report

2015

A. INTRODUCTION

In this Annual Report, ELSTAT accounts for its activities in 2015. Besides the activities concerning the statistical surveys and tasks outlined in the 2015 Statistical Work Programme, the Chapters of this Annual Report also contain information about the major issues in the area of statistics in 2015.

In 2015, ELSTAT, as in the past years, continued to put emphasis on the following four (4) main pillars:

- a) Improving and continuously ensuring the quality and reliability of statistics, by unswervingly observing the European statistical legislation in force and by following the highest European and international statistical standards.
- b) Good governance in the National Statistical Institute by continuously upgrading the processes for the production of statistics through the implementation of defined and transparent rules.
- c) Responding to users' needs, as well as carrying on the cooperation with other statistical producers with a view to improving the quality of statistics.
- d) Intensifying the cooperation with the European and the international statistical community and undertaking of actions in the above mentioned framework.

In 2015, ELSTAT continued the implementation of actions aiming at securing and further improving the quality of produced statistics and at maintaining the confidence of users in them, by unswervingly observing the national and European statistical legislation. In the above actions are included those carried out in the framework of the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP). The full observance of the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics by the Greek Government, which had been signed in 2012, and particularly in terms of ensuring for ELSTAT adequate and stable resources for the production of statistics and its access to administrative data, would have facilitated the securing and further improving of the quality of statistics.

Among the major events, for ELSTAT, that took place in 2015 are: a) the implementation of the new European System of Accounts – ESA 2010 and the publication of the revised results in October and November 2015, b) the publication of revised External Trade Statistics for the period 2002 – 2014, c) the completion of the basic stage of the certification of the statistics of all the National Authorities of the Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS), which develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics and d) the upgrading of the portal of ELSTAT. Among the important events of 2015, in the European Statistical System, can be mentioned: the designation and the beginning of implementation of the supporting projects of the 2020 Vision of the European Statistical System (ESS), whose aim is to modernise the ESS, and the amendment of Regulation 223/2009 on European statistics.

B. IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND RELIABILITY OF STATISTICS

1. The 2020 Vision of the European Statistical System

The 2020 Vision of the European Statistical System (ESS Vision 2020) was developed by the need to modernise the European Statistical System (ESS). It was agreed in May 2014 by the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) as the guiding framework for the development of the European Statistical System until 2020.

The five (5) key areas of the ESS Vision 2020 are presented in Box 1.

Box 1: The five (5) key areas of the ESS Vision 2020



Source: Eurostat.

Eight (8) common projects (ESS VIPs) have been identified for the implementation of the ESS Vision 2020, which constitute the portfolio of the Vision⁽¹⁾. In February 2015, the European Statistical System Committee adopted the initial portfolio of projects, which includes the following projects:

- SIMSTAT and REDISIGN (Single Market STATistics and Redesign of Intrastat)
- ESBRS (European System of interoperable Business Registers)
- VALIDATION (Common Data VALIDATION Policy)
- ADMIN (ADMINistrative data sources)
- ESDEN (European Statistical Data Exchange Network)
- SERV (shared SERVices)
- DIGICOM (/UA/IPROD) (DIGItal COMmunication, User Analytics and Innovative Products)
- BIGD (BIG Data)

The European Statistical System Committee also agreed that there is a need for progress on activities for the implementation of the Vision that are included in a number of supporting frameworks and cover further work on quality, information models and standards, ESS business architecture, as well as legal and financial issues of the cooperation models within the ESS. ELSTAT participates in the supporting framework "QUAL", which refers to the quality issues of the portfolio projects.

The development of these projects has already begun and some of them are at the final stage. ELSTAT participates in three (3) projects (SIMSTAT and REDESIGN, DIGICOM and BIGD).

2. Amendments in the European and the Greek Statistical Law

In April 2015, Regulation (EC) 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European statistics was amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/759. The objectives of this amendment were to: a) reinforce the professional independence and the coordinating role of the National Statistical Institutes, b) improve access of Statistical Authorities (NSIs and Other National Authorities producing

(1) More information on the ESS Vision 2020 portfolio can be found at the following link:
<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/ess/about-us/ess-vision-2020/implementation-portfolio>

European statistics) to administrative data and c) ensure political support for the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice, through the signing of the Commitments on Confidence in Statistics (CoCs).

By the changes introduced by the amending Regulation 2015/759 it is, inter alia:

- Imposed to the Member States the obligation to ensure the professional independence of the heads of National Statistical Institutes and the statistical heads of the other National Authorities.
- Clearly identified the sole responsibility of the heads of National Statistical Institutes for deciding on all matters concerning the production and dissemination of statistics, on statistical activities and on the internal management of the Statistical Office, as well as the performance of their statistical duties within the Statistical Office in an independent manner.
- Defined the coordinating role of the heads of National Statistical Institutes within the National Statistical System.
- Imposed to the Member States the obligation to follow transparent procedures for the recruitment and appointment of the heads of National Statistical Institutes and, where appropriate, of the statistical heads of the other National Authorities.
- Provided to the Member States the possibility to establish a national body for ensuring the professional independence of the producers of European statistics.
- Introduced the Commitments on Confidence in Statistics as a measure to ensure public trust in European statistics and to achieve progress in the implementation, at national level, of the Principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. It is reinforced the right of National Statistical Institutes for access to all administrative records and use of these records for the production of European statistics and it is granted to the National Statistical Institutes the right to participate in the initial designing, subsequent development or discontinuation of administrative records, thus facilitating further use of those records for the production of European statistics and contributing to the reduction of the response burden.

To align with the above European Statistical Law, the Greek Statistical Law 3832/2010 was amended in July 2015 by Law 4334/2015 (Government Gazette 80/A/16.7.2015), in order to further ensure the professional independence of ELSTAT and to implement the relevant improvement actions in the context of the implementation of the recommendations of the Peer Review Report. The amendment of the Greek Statistical Law defined or clarified, inter alia, issues pertaining to:

- the establishment, composition, role and responsibilities of the Advisory Committee of the Hellenic Statistical System (SYEPELSS), which consists of representatives of entities that use statistical data and assists ELSTAT with respect to taking into account users' needs in the coordination of the strategic goals and priorities of the national statistical information policy,
- the functioning of the Good Practice Advisory Committee, which compiles an annual report on the implementation of Principles 1 – 6 of the CoP in the ELSS,
- the possibility of ELSTAT to provide its opinion, prior to the submission to Parliament, on any legal provision that concerns ELSTAT or the Country's official statistics, as well as in the creation of new administrative data sources and public registers or files,
- the selection process of the President of ELSTAT.

Box 2: Main points of the Statistical Law as amended in 2015

- Pursuant to a relevant recommendation of the Peer Review Report for Greece, an Advisory Committee of the Hellenic Statistical System (SYEPELSS) is established, which is composed of the President of ELSTAT and seventeen (17) other members, who verifiably use in their work statistical data as users. The SYEPELSS provides an advisory opinion to ELSTAT as regards: a) the areas in which it may be necessary to have new statistics developed by ELSS, b) potential changes in the priorities of production of existing statistics by ELSS, c) the ways in which the relevance of ELSS statistics can increase for users, d) whether the scope, the level of analysis and the cost of statistics correspond to the needs of users. Moreover, the SYEPELSS also provides an advisory opinion to ELSTAT, if a relevant request is submitted to it by ELSTAT, on matters that concern the requirements of users of ELSS statistics, the assessment of the relevance of existing ELSS statistics and the policy on the dissemination of statistics that are produced by ELSS agencies.
- The operation of the Good Practice Advisory Committee is established on a permanent basis, by repealing the paragraph of the relevant Article 4 of the Statistical Law 3832/2010, which provided for the establishment of the Committee for two (2) years and for the review of its role and effectiveness at the end of the two-year period.
- One more responsibility is delegated to ELSTAT, according to which ELSTAT provides its opinion, prior to the submission to Parliament, of any legal provision that concerns ELSTAT or the official statistics of the Country or through which the statistical law is explicitly or implicitly amended. The same applies for any legal provision regarding the creation of new or the restructuring of administrative data sources and public registers or files, which are maintained in printed form, or by means of electronic, magnetic or other means, with a view to securing the capacity to utilise the relevant data for statistical purposes. To this end, the draft of every relevant legal provision is submitted to ELSTAT, at the earliest possible point in time and before the relevant public consultation. If ELSTAT compiles a report on the final draft of the legal provision, this report is necessarily submitted to the Parliament before the tabling of the legal provision for discussion.
- The procedure for the selection of the President of ELSTAT is redefined with a view to further ensuring transparency and independence from political interventions. The basic changes in the selection procedure to this end are: a) the President of ELSTAT is selected following an international open call, which is published by the Minister of Finance and refer, inter alia, to the candidate evaluation and selection criteria, the selection procedure and the duties and responsibilities of the President of ELSTAT and b) the establishment of a five-member committee of experts for the selection of the President of ELSTAT. One of the members of the committee is appointed by the Minister of Finance, while the four (4) other members are nominated by the Hellenic Parliament, Eurostat, the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) and the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC). The committee of experts makes a justified recommendation to the Minister of Finance for the choice of the candidate who meets, to the fullest extent, the consistent-with-the law selection criteria. In the event that the Minister of Finance does not agree with the recommendation of the committee, the Minister may appoint as President of ELSTAT the candidate of his choice after prior notification to the committee with the full justification of his choice and after the committee notifies the Minister of its judgment about this candidate's meeting of the selection criteria. The recommendation of the committee of experts on its choice for President of ELSTAT, the justification of any choice by the Minister of Finance that deviates from the recommendation of the committee and the relevant judgment thereon of the committee of experts are published, mandatorily, in Greek and in English on the website of ELSTAT.

3. Improvement actions based on the recommendations of the Peer Review Report

In March 2015 Eurostat finalised and published the Peer Review Report for Greece, which comprises twenty-six (26) recommendations of the peer reviewers. For the compliance with the above recommendations, ELSTAT was asked to submit to Eurostat a list of improvement actions with a timetable for their implementation. The list was submitted by ELSTAT and after its finalisation by Eurostat it was published on the website of Eurostat in June of 2015.

These improvement actions have been incorporated by Eurostat, with ELSTAT's consent, to the actions of pillar A of the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP), which aim at enhancing the institutional framework of the ELSS (see Chapter 6, below). A number of improvement actions, which mostly concern changes in the Greek Statistical Law 3832/2010, were completed in 2015, while progress has been made in some of the remaining improvement actions.

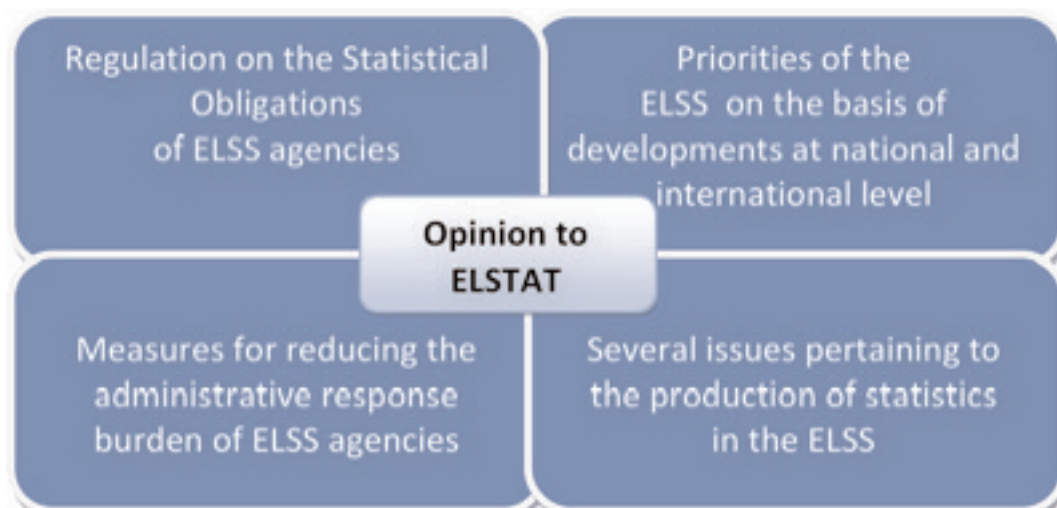
4. Coordination within and between the ELSS agencies

Pursuant to Article 2 of the Greek Statistical Law 3832/2010, as in force, ELSTAT coordinates all the activities of the other ELSS agencies, which concern the development, the production and the dissemination of the Country's official statistics, in order for them to be developed, produced and disseminated in compliance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP). In the context of this coordination, ELSTAT has signed with other ELSS agencies memoranda of cooperation, which set out the framework for the cooperation with the aforementioned agencies in specific statistical areas, and it collects, on a yearly basis, information both on the statistical works that the other ELSS agencies plan for the following year and on the completion of the statistical works of the previous year.

Aiming at enhancing the coordination within and between the ELSS agencies and for the implementation of a relevant recommendation of the Peer Review Report, ELSTAT asked in 2015 all the ELSS agencies to nominate their statistical head, in accordance with the provisions of Principle 1 of the European Statistics Code of Practice. By the end of 2015, most of the ELSS agencies had nominated their statistical head. Furthermore, in June 2015, ELSTAT organised on its premises a workshop on the certification of ELSS statistics, in which were invited to participate the representatives of the ELSS agencies who were to be involved in the certification process. The participants were informed on the necessary steps for the certification of their statistics as "official statistics".

The coordination within and among the ELSS agencies is expected to be significantly enhanced with the initiation of the operation of the Coordination Committee of the ELSS, whose establishment is included in the recommendations of the Peer Review Report. The Committee is chaired by the President of ELSTAT and its other members are the statistical heads of the ELSS agencies. The work of the Committee is to provide an advisory opinion to ELSTAT on the Regulation on the Statistical Obligations of the ELSS agencies, the priorities of the ELSS, on the basis of the developments at national and international level and on the measures aiming to reduce the administrative response burden of the ELSS agencies, as well as on several issues pertaining to the production of statistics within the ELSS.

Box 3: Work of the Coordination Committee of ELSS



The coordination between the ELSS agencies is expected to be further reinforced in the context of the certification as "official" of the statistics produced by the above agencies, which recorded satisfactory progress in 2015 and will continue in 2016 and over the next three-year period, 2017 – 2019.

5. Certification as "official statistics" of statistics produced by ELSS agencies

The certification, by ELSTAT, of statistics produced by the ELSS agencies as "official statistics" is an important factor and a tool for enhancing the quality and reliability of ELSS statistics.

On the basis of the experience gained from the two (2) pilot certification exercises conducted in 2013 and 2014, the main document used for the certification of the ELSS statistics entitled "Statement of Principles and Procedures for the Certification of ELSS Statistics" was enriched, in the section of the stages of the certification process, with a view to fully covering and describing all the consequences for the ELSS agencies, as regards the certification of their statistics, depending on their degree of compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice. After the aforementioned enrichment, the document was posted on ELSTAT's website and was used for the conduct, in 2015, of the basic certification stage of statistics produced by the ELSS National Authorities.

As provided for in the above document, in May 2015 ELSTAT published an announcement concerning the scheduled certifications in 2015 of statistics of the ELSS National Authorities. According to the above time schedule, in June 2015 ELSTAT conducted the basic certification stage of statistics produced by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs. Then, in September 2015, ELSTAT conducted the basic certification stage of statistics produced by the Ministry of Productive Reconstruction, Environment and Energy.

On account of the changes occurred to the Greek Ministries in September 2015, ELSTAT redefined the ELSS agencies, including the National Authorities that develop, produce and disseminate European statistics. In this context, the list of the scheduled certifications in 2015 of statistics of the ELSS National Authorities was amended and the updated list was announced by ELSTAT in October 2015. On the basis of the above list, during the 4th quarter 2015, ELSTAT conducted the basic certification stage of statistics of four (4) more Ministries: a) Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, b) Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism, c) Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks and d) Ministry of Culture and Sports.

Furthermore, in 2015, on the basis of the findings of the Certification Teams that conducted the basic certification stage in the Ministry of Finance (in 2014), the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, ELSTAT, in accordance with the stages of the certification process, informed the above ELSS agencies on the basic steps they had to implement for the continuation of the certification process. More specifically, the Ministry of Finance was informed on the above steps by a letter of ELSTAT that was sent to the Ministry in June 2015 and it confirmed, by a letter of the Minister sent in July 2015, its intention to implement the aforementioned steps. The Ministry and ELSTAT agreed on the completion of the implementation of the steps within the next six (6) months, i.e., until 31 December 2015. Until the above deadline, there was no information by the Ministry on the implementation of the basic steps. The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity was informed on the basic steps that had to implement by a letter of ELSTAT that was sent to the Ministry in October 2015 and it confirmed, by a letter of the Minister sent in November 2015, its intention to implement the above steps by April 2016. Finally, the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs was informed on the basic steps that had to implement by a letter of ELSTAT that was sent to the Ministry in December 2015 and it confirmed, by a letter of the Minister sent in the same month, its intention to implement the above steps by June 2016.

ELSTAT will inform in writing the remaining ELSS agencies, in which the basic certification stage of their statistics was conducted in 2015, on the basic steps that have to implement for the continuation of the certification process.

6. Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan

In 2015, ELSTAT continued the implementation of the actions of the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP), aiming at the full harmonisation of the Greek Statistical System with the European Statistical System. During 2010 – 2012 new actions were added to the actions included in the initial version of JOSGAP, when it was first launched in 2010, in order to cover issues that had not been included in the initial version. In 2015, the actions of pillar A of JOSGAP, which aim at strengthening the institutional framework of the ELSS, were complemented by the improvement actions decided in the context of the implementation of the recommendations of the Peer Review Report.

A significant number of these actions of JOSGAP have been completed or are in the stage of completion. The greatest progress has been achieved as regards the implementation of the actions under pillar C of JOSGAP, which aim at enhancing the quality of Greek government finance statistics. All actions within ELSTAT's competence, with the exception of one action pertaining to the classification of the Legal Entities under Private Law that are supervised by the Local Government, have been completed. As regards the above action, some progress was recorded in 2015, however its completion depends on the provision of data to ELSTAT by the involved agencies. The implementation of the actions of pillar C has resulted to the established acceptance of the government finance statistics compiled by ELSTAT as statistics that fully meet the rules and requirements of European Regulations, and the international statistical standards in general.

Regarding the actions of pillar A that fall within ELSTAT's competence, as mentioned in Section 3 above, in 2015 a number of improvement actions that mostly pertain to amendments in the Greek Statistical Law 3832/2010 were completed, while progress was made in some of the remaining improvement actions.

The amendments in the Greek Statistical Law and the relevant recommendations of the Peer Review Report impose the amendment of the Regulation on the Statistical Obligations of ELSS agencies and of the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT. In this context, by the end of 2015 a final draft of the amended Regulation on the Statistical Obligations of ELSS agencies had been compiled, which will be put into consideration of the ELSS agencies for opinion before its approval. Furthermore, a first draft of the amended Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT was compiled, in which some changes pertaining to the issues of coordination of the ELSS, with reference to the Coordination Committee of the ELSS, were incorporated; the certification process of the ELSS statistics was further specified; and a separate Chapter on the quality assurance of the statistical work of ELSTAT, with reference to the establishment and the work of the Committee for Monitoring and Managing the Quality of the Statistical Works of ELSTAT, was included. The completion of the draft requires the updating of the Chapter concerning the financial management of ELSTAT, in order to reflect all the developments that have taken place in this area since 2012, when the Regulation was compiled. The limited human resources of ELSTAT and the expiry of the President's term of office in August 2015 did not allow for the completion, within 2015, of the draft Organisation of ELSTAT. The completion and approval of the above draft was pending until the appointment of the new President of ELSTAT, which had not been completed until the end of the year.

As regards the actions of pillar A, under the competency of the Government, no significant progress was made in the issue of ensuring adequate human resources to ELSTAT (see Chapter E, Paragraph 1), while until the end of 2015 there has been no development as regards the access of ELSTAT to administrative data, notably to tax data. As regards the actions under pillar B, which aim at improving the processes and capacity for the production of statistics in Greece through a programme of short and medium-term technical assistance provided to ELSTAT by Eurostat, in 2015, for some of these actions, there was a continuation of the provision of technical assistance to ELSTAT by experts of the European Statistical System. This concerns the actions pertaining to: improving of the quality of Structural Business Statistics; improving the Statistical Farm Register;

upgrading the Sector National Accounts; improving the Price and Volume Measures; and improving the quality of Foreign Trade Statistics. In 2015, seven (7) out of the eight (8) sub-projects of the project for upgrading the existing infrastructure and services provided by ELSTAT in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) were completed. Moreover, during the same period, ELSTAT carried out six (6) training series on specialised statistical topics, with the aim of training both its staff and the staff of the other ELSS agencies. At the same time, ELSTAT continued the work for the development of a Statistical Motor Vehicles Register.

More specifically, in 2015 the progress that was achieved, in terms of the aforementioned actions under pillar B, was as follows:

- As regards the project for **improving the quality of Structural Business Statistics**, in the 1st quarter 2015 two Working Groups were set up in ELSTAT. A Working Group dealt with the study of the definitions of the variables of Structural Business Statistics and their matching with the codes of the tax variables, in cooperation with an external expert. The other Working Group dealt with the preparation for the secure transfer, storage and processing of the tax data, with the assistance of an external expert. In this framework, ELSTAT compiled an updated circular on the Security Incident Management Policy. This circular provides a framework with clear and consistent instructions for the management, reporting and recording of incidents pertaining to the security, loss and alteration of data, or of general incidents relevant to security. Moreover, the Informatics Division of ELSTAT was equipped with the necessary discs and hardware for the receipt of the tax data. All the above incurred a significant cost for ELSTAT in terms of human and financial resources.
- With a view to **improving the quality and timeliness of the Statistical Farm Register**, in 2015 ELSTAT continued the work in the framework of the relevant grant agreement that had been signed in 2014 between ELSTAT and Eurostat. The two (2) external experts, who were recruited in December 2014 to assist the implementation of the grant agreement, cooperated closely with ELSTAT and OPEKEPE, in order to link the Statistical Farm Register of ELSTAT with the Register of Beneficiaries of OPEKEPE. In the 3rd quarter 2015 the software for linking the two (2) above registers was developed. Subsequently, in the 4th quarter 2015 the operation of the software was tested. The cooperation of ELSTAT with OPEKEPE was formalised by the signing of a memorandum of cooperation, in October 2015.
- In 2015, ELSTAT continued the work for **upgrading the Sector National Accounts**. An expert of the European Statistical System provided technical assistance to ELSTAT, with a view to upgrading Sector Accounts, fully in line with the new European System of Accounts ESA 2010. In the 4th quarter 2015, ELSTAT published a series of government finance data for the period 1995 – 2014, in accordance with ESA 2010.
- For the implementation of the action on **improving the Price and Volume Measures** and their alignment with the requirements of ESA 2010, in 2015 ELSTAT continued the necessary works in order for Eurostat to lift its reservations on the Gross National Income. As a result all the required tables were transmitted to Eurostat, in accordance with ESA 2010, within the set deadline. In this context, in 2015, missions of experts took place, with the aim of providing technical assistance and performing quality control of the works and results.
- In 2015, ELSTAT continued the actions aimed at further improving the **quality of the produced statistics in the area of International Trade in Goods**, by adopting the most modern methodological approaches, in line with the standards of the European Statistical System. In January 2015 an expert mission took place in ELSTAT with the purpose of a total evaluation of the Action Plan on Foreign Trade Statistics and the provision of expertise on methodological issues and best practices for compiling statistics for specific cases, in the framework of the International Trade in Goods Statistics. The expert stressed the improvements achieved and provided guidance on possible further improvements of ELSTAT's statistics. According to his evaluation,

these statistics meet Union standards and are comparable, in terms of quality, to those of other Member States. In July 2015, ELSTAT transmitted to Eurostat revised data on International Trade in Goods Statistics for the period 2002 – 2014 and published a relevant Press Release. From September 2015 onwards, the data on International Trade in Goods Statistics of ELSTAT are used by the Bank of Greece for the compilation of the Balance of Payment.

- In 2015, ELSTAT completed seven (7) out of the eight (8) sub-projects of the project for **upgrading the existing infrastructure and the services provided by ELSTAT in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**. More specifically, the following sub-projects were completed:
 1. Redesign and upgrade of the statistical works sub-system of the Integrated Information System
 2. Upgrade of the portal services for the dissemination of statistics
 3. Evaluation and implementation of security policies
 4. Contingency Planning
 5. IT service management
 6. E-mail archiving
 7. Central printing system
- With a view to **training both its staff and the staff of the other ELSS agencies**, in 2015 ELSTAT carried out the following training series on specialised statistical topics, with the assistance of experts of the European Statistical System:
 - Statistical Disclosure Control Methods and Related Software (12 – 14.1.2015)
 - Seasonal Adjustment (16 – 20.2.2015)
 - Survey Methodology and Sampling Techniques (16 – 19.2.2015 & 2 – 6.3.2015)
 - Demographic Statistics (20 – 23.4.2015)
 - National Accounts (13 – 17.7.2015)
 - International Statistical Principles and Codes (9 – 13.11.2015)
- In the framework of the action aiming at **improving the Statistical Motor Vehicles Register**, with a view to compiling statistics on vehicles fleet and making available an updated sampling frame for the surveys of the transport sector, in 2015, ELSTAT continued the processing of the vehicles file that had been provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks. The initial planning provided also for the transmission of data by the General Secretariat for Public Revenue, with the view of updating certain fields of the above file, which until the end of 2015 was pending.

Nevertheless, in 2015 no progress was recorded as regards two (2) actions of pillar B. It concerns the project for redesigning and upgrading the Statistical Business Register of ELSTAT and the project for the creation and updating of the Dwellings Register.

7. Compliance with the requirements of the Union Statistical Legislation

In spite of the above mentioned actions of ELSTAT aimed at improving the quality of its statistics, in 2015 ELSTAT was not fully compliant with eleven (11) European Regulations, as regards the transmission of some requested data within the set deadlines. It concerns the following Regulations:

- Regulation (EC) 2494/1995 concerning Harmonized Indices of Consumer Prices
- Regulation (EC) 450/2003 concerning the Labour Cost index
- Regulation (EC) 1287/2003 on the harmonization of Gross National Income at market prices

- Regulation (EC) 638/2004 on Community statistics relating to the trading of goods between Member States and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) 3330/91
- Regulation (EC) 1445/2007 establishing common rules for the provision of basic information on Purchasing Power Parities and for their calculation and dissemination
- Regulation (EC) 177/2008 establishing a common framework for Business Registers for statistical purposes and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) 2186/93
- Regulation (EC) 295/2008 concerning Structural Business Statistics
- Regulation (EC) 452/2008 concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning
- Regulation (EC) 453/2008 on quarterly statistics on Community job vacancies
- Regulation (EC) 1185/2009 concerning statistics on pesticides
- Regulation (EC) 549/2013 on the European system of National and Regional Accounts in the European Union

The full compliance with the above Regulations in the near future is a target of high priority for ELSTAT.

C. ENHANCED RESPONSIVENESS TO USER NEEDS AND CLOSER COOPERATION WITH PRODUCERS OF STATISTICAL DATA

One of ELSTAT's main concerns since its establishment has been the production of statistics adapted to the needs and requirements of users, at national, European and international level. In this context, ELSTAT gathers the comments and interventions made by the participants in the Annual User Conferences that it has established, as well as the results from the User Surveys it conducts, with the aim of improving its statistical products and services provided, as well as identifying new needs and requirements for the production of statistics.

As above mentioned, in 2015 ELSTAT completed the upgrading of its electronic portal for the dissemination of statistics in the framework of the completion of the relevant sub-project of the project for upgrading the existing infrastructure and the services provided by ELSTAT in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

During the three-year period 2017 – 2019, ELSTAT will continue to improve the layout and content of its portal and of the other dissemination modes for its statistics, in line with the evolving international standards, in order to fulfill user needs, both at national and international level.

• Undertaking of actions in 2015, responding to the conclusions of the Annual User Conferences held in the period 2010 – 2014

On the basis of the comments and suggestions made by users in the five (5) User Conferences during the period 2010 – 2014, ELSTAT included, among others, in its Annual Statistical Work Programme for 2015, the following:

- Production, on the basis of the results of the Health Survey, of new Health Statistics, which pertain to mental health, social support of population groups facing problems due to age, chronic complaint or disability and provision of informal care to them.
- Publication, on the basis of the results of the Time Use Survey, of Statistics on the Time Use of the population, which cover issues such as average time spent on main and secondary activity, percentage on participating in activities, main activities of the population during an ordinary day, in relation to their main occupation, education, health status, etc.
- Production of the results of the Household Budget Survey (HBS) at the level of Region (NUTS 2) instead of the level of Greece as a whole, after having redesigned the survey that was con-

ducted in 2014.

- Production of statistics on persons with disabilities.

As regards the above works, in 2015 the following progress was achieved:

- *Statistics on mental health, social support to population groups facing problems due to age, chronic complaint or disability and on the provision of informal care to them*

In the framework of the Health Survey, in 2015 a Press Release on mental health was published.

- *Statistics on the Time Use*

In 2015, ELSTAT continued the publication of statistical data on the Time Use of the Country's population, with reference period 2013 – 2014, and, more specifically, of statistical data pertaining to the use and allocation of time of working people.

- *Production of results of the Household Budget Survey (HBS) at the level of Region*

In 2015, ELSTAT completed the production of the 2014 HBS results at the level of Region.

- *Statistics on people with disabilities*

The questionnaires of already conducted surveys were complemented with questions concerning the people with disabilities. In 2015, statistics from the health survey were published, with reference year 2014, pertaining to the population facing restrictions in physical and sensory functions or chronic diseases.

In addition, in 2015 the following progress was recorded as regards previous users' requests:

- *Compilation of long time series for National Accounts*

In October 2015, updated detailed tables containing Annual National Accounts data for the period 1995 – 2014, in accordance with the European System of Accounts ESA 2010, were posted on ELSTAT's website.

- *Compilation of Health Accounts*

In July 2015, ELSTAT compiled a Press Release concerning statistical data on the financing of health expenditures at national level, on the basis of the new 2011 Manual on the System of Health Accounts (SHA) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In addition, revised data for the years 2009 – 2012 were incorporated in the above Press Release. These revisions are due to the revision of the estimates concerning on the one hand the financing of public hospitals by the sub-sector of State and on the other hand the financing of private health providers by the sub-sector of Social Security Organisations, by the incorporation of the flows of payables. The revision took place in the light of ensuring consistency and comparability of the data on the financing of health expenditures with the corresponding National Accounts data, in order to fulfill a relevant commitment of ELSTAT.

- *Reduction of the time needed for the dissemination of Tourism Statistics to users*

The time needed for the dissemination of data on arrivals and overnight stays in hotels and campings, with reference year 2014, which were published in July 2015, decreased by two (2) months and it is now in line with the data transmission programme laid down in the relevant European Regulation.

The time needed for the dissemination of the data of the Survey on the Quality Characteristics of Domestic Tourists decreased and the data were published six (6) months after the end of the reference year, in line with the transmission programme laid down in the relevant European Regulation. The Press Release of the survey was published for the first time in September 2015.

– *Improvement of the quality and timeliness of the results of the Annual Agricultural Survey*

After the redesigning of the Annual Agricultural Survey in 2014, in the framework of the co-operation between ELSTAT and the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the survey was conducted in 2015 with the use of an electronic questionnaire, which was filled in by Agronomists – Statistical Correspondents. With the view of selecting the Statistical Correspondents, a pilot register was created in accordance with the pattern of the Register of External Survey Workers, which is kept by ELSTAT and renewed every eight (8) months. The questionnaire is also completed by utilising the administrative sources of the Ministry.

– *Designing the compilation of new statistics in the transport sector, on the basis of respective feasibility studies*

On the basis of feasibility studies that were carried out in 2014, ELSTAT, in 2015, undertook preparatory works with a view to compiling statistics on:

- the road network of Greece,
- road transport by buses and coaches,
- passenger mobility statistics,
- road traffic for the compilation of vehicle-kilometers (VKM), and
- transport via pipelines of natural gas.

– *Production of seasonally adjusted short-term indices*

In 2015, ELSTAT completed the works for the compilation of the following seasonally adjusted short-term indices: a) Turnover Index in Retail Trade, b) Volume Index in Retail Trade, c) Turnover Index in Motor Trade, d) Turnover Index in Wholesale Trade, e) Index of the number of Persons Employed in Retail Trade and f) Industrial Production Index.

– *Works for the compilation of the Index of Hours Worked and the Index of Wages and Salaries of Persons Employed in Retail Trade*

In 2015, ELSTAT completed the works for the compilation of the Index of Hours Worked and the Index of Wages and Salaries of Persons Employed in Retail Trade, by using data of the Labour Force Survey and the Survey on the Compilation of Labour Cost Indices. The time series of data covers the period from the 1st quarter 2010 to the 4th quarter 2015.

– *Continuation of the work for improving the quality of the data of the European Integrated System of Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS)*

In 2015, ELSTAT continued the works aiming at the review and revision of the methodology for the production of data of the European Integrated System of Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS). The project, which is conducted in cooperation with Eurostat, involves corrections in methodology and updates in data sources, resulting in a major revision, while at the same time implementing a new benefits-based, instead of the previous institution-based, list of ESSPROS schemes. However, the revised statistics were not released in the last quarter of 2015, as planned, on account of difficulties occurred during the revision in the collection of data from the competent agencies.

– *Production of statistics at a level below the Country level*

In 2015, ELSTAT continued to gradually increase the sample size of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions of Households, with a view to enhancing the reliability of the results at a level below the Country level and, at the same time, to further increasing the accuracy of results at the Country level (reduction of statistical error). The total increase of the sample, which will be completed in 2018, will allow for the production of reliable results at the level of Region.

- *Improving accessibility to statistical information*
(See Paragraph "Upgrading the portal of ELSTAT", in the same Chapter below).
- *Cooperation with administrative data sources for improving the quality and timeliness of the Statistical Farm Register*
(See Chapter B, Paragraph 6, above).

- **Presentation of the application "Panorama of Census Data, 1991 – 2011" for the dissemination of results of the Population – Housing Censuses**

In July 2015, the web application "Panorama of Census Data, 1991 – 2011" was presented to the public; this application is the product of the long-standing cooperation of ELSTAT with the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE). This application enables the direct access to, management, correlation and mapping of the data from the Population – Housing Census of the years 1991, 2001 and 2011, while observing the rules of statistical confidentiality. The application is accessible for users at the following link: <http://panorama.statistics.gr/>

- **Compilation of statistics pertaining to the geographical distribution and characteristics of buildings of Greece, on the basis of the 2011 Buildings Census**

In May 2015, ELSTAT published a Press Release on the 2011 Buildings Census, which contains results of the Census concerning the number of buildings in Greece and their characteristics (number of buildings, floors, construction period and construction materials, use of buildings, number of dwellings, type of roof and entity of ownership).

- **Compilation of the 2016 Annual Statistical Work Programme and of the 2014 Annual Report**

In May 2015, ELSTAT completed the compilation of the 2016 Annual Statistical Work Programme and of the 2014 Annual Report.

- **Digitisation of the historic cartographic archive**

In 2015, ELSTAT completed the digitisation of the historic cartographic archive (scale 1: 5.000) for the settlements of Greece, on the basis of the Population – Housing Census of the years 1971 and 1981. In addition, the digitisation of the historic cartographic archive of the 1991 Population – Housing Census was completed at a percentage 70%.

- **Digitisation of new settlements (for the 2021 Population – Housing Census)**

In 2015, ELSTAT completed the digitisation of the cartographic maps of 50 settlements, whose population in the 2001 Population Census was less than 1,000 inhabitants and in the 2011 Population Census was more than 1,000 inhabitants. The digitalisation took place at the level of building blocks, road axes, and points of geographical interest.

- **Cooperation actions of the Library of ELSTAT concerning the dissemination of statistics**

In 2015, the Library of ELSTAT continued its cooperation with the National Documentation Centre (EKT), in the framework of the participation of ELSTAT in the Greek digital libraries search engine "openarchives" of the National Documentation Centre. In the context of the above cooperation the following actions were undertaken: a) cross-matching of the metadata of the two systems (MoDs with Dublin Core – DC), b) adjustment and corrections of the metadata in the programme of the Digital Library of ELSTAT, c) transmission of XML metadata files to EKT, d) inclusion of the Digital Library of ELSTAT in the openarchives.gr and e) transmission of corrections and proposals for improvement.

- **Organisation of the 6th Annual User Conference**

In the framework of implementing its 2015 Annual Statistical Work Programme, ELSTAT convened, on 21 December 2015, the 6th Annual User Conference on its premises in Piraeus. During the Conference a series of presentations were made, in the following order, on: a) the new Legal Framework on European Statistics, the changes that took place in the Greek Statistical Law in July 2015, and the 2020 Vision of the European Statistical System (ESS Vision 2020), including the sectors, projects, and horizontal activities and procedures that complement its implementation, b) the most important achievements of ELSTAT, in 2015, for each of the major pillars of its operation, as well as the actions of ELSTAT in response to users' requests as these had been expressed during the previous User Conference, both the completed actions and those undertaken or planned, c) the procedure and conditions for the provision by ELSTAT of confidential data for scientific purposes and of anonymised microdata of statistical surveys, with predefined and non-predefined anonymisation criteria, d) the purpose and coverage of the User Satisfaction Survey that is conducted by ELSTAT on annual basis, as well as comparative results of the survey for the years 2013 and 2014, and e) the new portal of ELSTAT.

Subsequently, users commented on the statistical output and the services provided by ELSTAT in relation with the satisfaction of their needs. The users pointed out, inter alia, the need for:

- i. making available on the portal of ELSTAT external trade data by product, at two-digit and three-digit level and by country, in line with the standards of OECD database,
- ii. reducing the time for the production of social statistics,
- iii. producing statistics in the field of education, at a geographical level below the Country and Region levels,
- iv. producing economic data on public and private vocational training institutes (IEK),
- v. producing consolidated data from the previous time series of Annual and Quarterly National Accounts (since 1975) and the already existing data and, in general, from all the data of General Government Accounts, and reviewing the seasonality model,
- vi. creating and maintaining a database with all the available data on a quarterly basis, for the needs of the forecasts of the Ministry of Finance,
- vii. making available the time series tables in .xls format and keeping and displaying both the old and the revised time series,
- viii. providing individual non-anonymised enterprise data to researchers who sign contracts with ELSTAT and Statistical Confidentiality Declarations,
- ix. requesting the contribution of other agencies and data producers for continuously enriching the application "Panorama of Census Data, 1991 – 2011" with new variables and for upgrading the data search techniques,
- x. developing the cooperation of all stakeholders in the framework of the preparation of the next 2021 Population – Housing Census, so that more data, and more detailed data, are available to users for their research needs,
- xi. maintaining variables and concepts, such as the "household head", to meet the needs of national users who require comparable data,
- xii. extending statistical training to young scientists who want to follow career in the field of statistics,
- xiii. creating a wider statistical community in Greece, in which authorised research institutions will be included,
- xiv. creating a register – sampling frame, to which researchers from academia could have access with faster procedures for their research needs,
- xv. having sampling frames for the conduct of social surveys by research entities.

On the basis of the comments and observations made by the participants in the 6th User Conference, as well as in the other five (5) User Conferences, ELSTAT recorded and processed the needs of users. Satisfying such identified needs is already, to a large extent, reflected in ELSTAT's priorities for the three-year period 2017 – 2019, as they have been integrated into the Hellenic Statistical Programme for 2017 – 2019. ELSTAT has prioritised the aforementioned needs on the basis of their importance to users and how critical the satisfaction of such needs is for the statistical product, and has begun to explore the possibility of satisfying these needs, taking into account its available resources and its national and international obligations.

- **Upgrading the portal of ELSTAT**

ELSTAT aims at continuously improving various aspects of the layout and content of its portal and of the other dissemination modes of its statistics, with a view to adapting them to users' needs, both at national and international level.

The project for upgrading the existing infrastructure and services provided by ELSTAT in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (see Chapter B, Paragraph 6) and in particular the completion of sub-project 2 "Upgrade of the portal services for the dissemination of statistics" has significantly contributed to the achievement of the aforementioned objective. The new portal of ELSTAT was launched in October 2015 and has incorporated new tools and technologies, offering operational navigation for all browsers. The new portal of ELSTAT was re-designed to present the results per statistical survey/work. Furthermore, in several cases, the hanging up of metadata is made per statistical survey/work, in order to be more user-friendly.

The main webpage of ELSTAT receives a large number of visitors on a daily basis. In 2015, the main webpage had 363,326 unique users' visits⁽²⁾. In comparison with 2014, the number of unique users' visits recorded a decrease of 16.6%. The total number of connection periods, i.e., the time period during which a user is actively connected to the webpage, amounted to 672,679. In comparison with 2014, the number of connection periods recorded a decrease of 11.1%. It is noted that the Statistical Data Dissemination Section and the Library Section of ELSTAT served 5,444 users' requests in 2015, which, in comparison with 2014, recorded an increase of 10.2%.

In 2015, the following actions were carried out for enriching the website of ELSTAT (both the Greek and English version of the website):

- Continuing the work of updating the tables and covering the gaps in the time series of data posted on ELSTAT's website, as well as enriching the website with the metadata and quality reports for all the statistical surveys and works in line with the established in the ESS Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS). Until the end of 2015, analytical quality reports, user-oriented quality reports and metadata had been posted on ELSTAT's website for about 92 %, 60 % and 97 % of the conducted statistical surveys/works of ELSTAT, respectively.
- Continuing the posting on ELSTAT's website of tables on various statistical themes and for a number of years for which there was insufficient information.
- Enriching the website with new Press Releases, which include statistical data published by ELSTAT, in order to provide users with more and more results of statistical works of ELSTAT and, in general, more comprehensive and detailed statistical information. In 2015, two (2) new Press Releases were posted and another sixty-one (61) new Press Releases are scheduled to be published in 2016.
- Developing a link (<http://panorama.statistics.gr/>) for providing users with access to the web application "Panorama of Census Data, 1991 – 2011" (see above in the same Chapter).

(2) It refers to the number of unique computers that visited the webpage.

- **Fostering statistical literacy**

In the context of the project of ELSTAT "Fostering Statistical Education", in 2015 ten (10) guided tours of secondary education pupils were organised on the premises of ELSTAT. Three hundred seventy-three (373) pupils, accompanied by twenty-seven (27) teachers visited the premises and the Library of ELSTAT, they were informed on the tasks and the work of ELSTAT, the statistical material they can retrieve from the portal of ELSTAT, as well as on the services provided to users by the specialised Library of ELSTAT (the Library's electronic catalogue, Digital Library, European Statistical Data Support Centre – ESDS).

- **Participation of ELSTAT in the 80th Thessaloniki International Fair**

In 2015, ELSTAT participated in the 80th Thessaloniki International Fair (5 – 13 September 2015) with its own stand, with the aim of informing the citizens on the work it has accomplished and it continues to undertake.

Material on the presence of ELSTAT in the 80th Thessaloniki International Fair is available on ELSTAT's website at the following link: <http://www.statistics.gr/el/elstat-80th-tif>.

- **Exploiting administrative data sources for the production of statistics**

With the aim of improving the quality and timeliness of statistical output, while at the same time saving human and financial resources and reducing the burden on respondents, the European and international statistical community have focused, during the last years, on the exploitation of administrative data sources and, recently, of Big Data⁽³⁾. The recent amendment of Regulation 223/2009 on European statistics reinforces the right of the National Statistical Institutes to have access to all administrative records and to use them for the production of European statistics. It also provides the right to the National Statistical Institutes to be consulted and involved in the initial design and subsequent development of administrative records, with the view to making them more suitable for their use in the production of statistics.

ELSTAT, since its establishment, has given special emphasis on further utilising data available in the administrative data sources of Greece. In this framework, ELSTAT has signed memoranda of cooperation with ELSS agencies and has developed close cooperation with the administrative data sources.

In this context, the following actions of ELSTAT were carried out in 2015:

- a) Signing of a new memorandum of cooperation between ELSTAT and the National Documentation Centre (EKT), in June 2015, for the production of statistics on Research and Development (R&D) and on Innovation in enterprises, as well as for the coverage of the needs of National Accounts of Greece, which is valid until the end of 2020.
- b) Signing of a memorandum of cooperation between ELSTAT and the Payment and Control Agency for Guidance and Guarantee Community Aid (OPEKEPE) for the updating of the Statistical Farm Register and the needs of agricultural surveys of ELSTAT and of the National Accounts of Greece.
- c) Continuation of the cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, pertaining to:
 - i. the automatisisation of data collection through the interconnection of ELSTAT with the application of the project "Integrated System for the Management of Judicial Cases of Civil and

(3) The term "Big Data" means data sets with very large sizes, ranging from a few dozen to several petabytes. The Big Data require a number of new techniques and technologies for their processing.

Penal Justice" (OSDDY-PP) of the Ministry,

- ii. the automatization of the collection of data for the statistics on prisoners, through the project "Integrated Information System of Detention Facilities (OPS-KK)".

In addition, at the end of 2015, a joint Working Group was set up between the two (2) agencies, by decision of the Minister of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, with a view to providing ELSTAT with the necessary data for the production of statistics on justice during the transitional stage until the full operation of the above project (OSDDY-PP).

- d) Continuation of the cooperation with the Division of Road Traffic Police of the Hellenic Police for the development of a web application, through which the required data on road traffic accidents will be collected. This application will contribute to the automisation of the data collection, through the interconnection of ELSTAT with the application of the project "Integrated Information System for the collection and management of data on road traffic accidents and imposition of sanctions on road traffic issues".

D. INTENSIFYING COOPERATION AND UNDERTAKING OF ACTION IN THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COMMUNITY

ELSTAT, with the objective to be established as an active member of the European Statistical System, continued, in 2015, to put special emphasis on the cooperation with Eurostat and the other Agencies of the European Commission, as well as with the National Statistical Institutes of the other EU Member States. In this context, in 2015, the staff of ELSTAT continued to participate in Eurostat Working Groups and in the Council Working Party on Statistics (CWPS). In addition, in the context of pursuing the cooperation of ELSTAT in the international statistical fora, there was continuation of the active participation by ELSTAT in the meetings and workings of international statistical agencies, such as the Conference of European Statisticians, the UN Statistical Commission, and the International Statistical Institute (ISI).

In 2015, ELSTAT participated in the following projects of the European Statistical System, which are included in the project portfolio of the ESS Vision 2020:

- a) Pilot project "SIMSTAT" of the European Union concerning the implementation of a new system of collecting data for international trade transactions, which is an innovative approach for the simplification of the system for the collection of data on intra-Community trade (Intrastat). This project provides for the collection of data only on intra-Community trade dispatches for all the countries, which will be transmitted to/exchanged among the relevant interested countries, thus abolishing, totally or partially, the collection of data on intra-Community arrivals. This project, if implemented, is expected to contribute significantly to reducing the administrative burden of enterprises, while at the same time maintaining the quality of data, through the exchange and reuse of microdata on intra-Community trade among the Member States. The analysis of the results of the pilot study was presented on ELSTAT's premises, on 24 and 25 November 2015, with the participation of representatives from twenty-one (21) Member States.
- b) Project "Re-design of Intrastat", which is considering other alternative methods for reducing the burden on enterprises in the framework of intra-Community trade. This project aims at elaborating an operational feasibility study by evaluating a wide range of alternative methods that combine quantitative and qualitative criteria for the selection of the best method for compiling intra-Community trade statistics; this method will contribute, on one hand, to the reduction of the burden on enterprises and, on the other hand, to the production of high quality statistical information.
- c) Project "ESSnet BIG DATA" whose main purpose is the investigation of "Big Data" sources for their integration in the production of official statistics in the ESS. ELSTAT considers important the work being done for the integration of Big Data in the compilation of official statistics.

Therefore, it is following with particular interest, inter alia, the issues pertaining to the development of the relevant methodology, as well as the quality issues associated with the Big Data. The development of a Big Data joint Action Plan and Roadmap at ESS level constitutes a medium-term objective, which can be achieved through the ESS Vision 2020, thus enabling the ESS to respond to data revolution and the use of new sources in the production of official statistics. ELSTAT participates in the following two sub-projects of the project:

- sub-project for the exploitation of web data to develop job vacancy statistics, by developing the relevant applications for automatic extraction of data from the websites of enterprises, and
- sub-project for the exploitation of data collected from the transmission of the position of ships through the Automatic Identification System (AIS). These data are collected worldwide and therefore can be used to improve the quality of statistics on vessel traffic and traffic in ports, as well as to develop models for measuring air emissions.

E. HUMAN RESOURCES OF ELSTAT

1. ELSTAT personnel

In 2015, there was a continuous decrease in the number of ELSTAT staff, in comparison with 2014, due to the retirement of employees. More specifically, on 31 December 2015, the total number of ELSTAT staff amounted to 743 employees: the permanent staff numbered 704 employees (256 men and 448 women) and the staff working under Private Contract of Unlimited Duration numbered 39 employees (13 men and 26 women). The total number of ELSTAT staff, on 31 December 2014, was 769 employees: the permanent staff numbered 728 employees (268 men and 460 women) and the staff working under Private Contract of Unlimited Duration numbered 41 employees (14 men and 27 women). In 2015, 44 employees retired and 2 employees were redeployed to other Service, while 20 new employees were hired. Consequently, in 2015 the total number of ELSTAT staff decreased by 3.4%, in comparison with 2014.

In comparison with 2009 (31 December), when ELSTAT staff numbered 1,007 employees, a net decrease by 264 employees had been recorded in the number of ELSTAT staff by the end of 2015. This drastic decrease in the number of ELSTAT staff has created particularly difficult conditions for the timely implementation of the actions that have been planned in the framework of the Annual and Three-year Statistical Work Programmes of ELSTAT. The need to provide adequate and stable resources to ELSTAT is also mentioned in a recommendation of the Peer Review Report.

On 31 December 2015, out of the 743 employees of ELSTAT, 549 worked in the Central Office and 194 employees worked in the Regional Statistical Offices.

The following table depicts the allocation of ELSTAT staff, by gender and education level, in 2014 and 2015 (31 December):

Table 1. ELSTAT staff, by gender and education level: 2014 and 2015									
Education level	Men			Women			Total		
	2014	2015	Change %	2014	2015	Change %	2014	2015	Change %
University	173	169	-2.3	221	217	-1.8	394	386	-2.0
Technical	26	26	0.0	56	55	-1.8	82	81	-1.2
Secondary	78	70	-10.3	206	198	-3.9	284	268	-5.6
Obligatory	5	4	-20.0	4	4	0.0	9	8	-11.1
Total	282	269	-4.6	487	474	-2.7	769	743	-3.4

H. ELSTAT BUDGET EXECUTION

ELSTAT's expenses, for 2015, are classified in the following categories:

- a) Labour cost (wages and salaries of ELSTAT staff, including basic salary, allowances (family allowance, position allowance, etc.) social security contributions, overtime pay, etc.).
- b) Expenses related to the staff's travelling within Greece and abroad, ie., travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses for the employees of ELSTAT travelling:
 - in Greece, away of the headquarters or out of the office, for the purpose of conducting statistical surveys in the field,
 - abroad, for participating in meetings, seminars, etc. organised by Eurostat or other international organisations.

This category includes also expenses related to the transfer or detachment of ELSTAT employees to other agencies in Greece or abroad.

- c) Other operating expenses, including expenses related to ELSTAT's buildings (Central and Regional Offices) such as rents, electricity, communication, water supply, security and building maintenance costs, expenses related to advertising and public relations, subscriptions, expenses for the provision of consumables (paper, stationery, medical and pharmaceutical supplies, materials for the maintenance and repair of premises and equipment), fuel, etc. In the same category are also included expenses for the provision of capital formation (furniture, PCs, printers, photocopiers and other office equipment), as well as the expenses for the remuneration of external survey workers, who are used by ELSTAT for the collection of data of conducted statistical surveys.
- d) Expenses for projects financed by Eurostat (for the conduct of surveys, studies and other statistical works).
- e) Investments through the Public Investment Programme (projects of the National Strategic Reference Framework – NSRF).

The following table presents the allocation of ELSTAT's expenses in 2015, by type of expenditure, as well as the comparison with the corresponding debriefing expenses in 2014:

TABLE 2. ELSTAT expenses, by type of expenditure: 2014 and 2015		
Type of expenditure	Amount paid (EUR)	
	2014	2015
Labour cost	22,777,554.95	21,741,857.98
Expenses related to staff travelling within Greece and abroad	445,624.57	313,585.32
Other operating expenses and cost for capital formation	4,310,645.41	7,586,636.93
Expenses for the conduct of the Buildings, Population – Housing and Agricultural – Livestock Censuses	447,252.00	—
Projects financed by Eurostat	1,564,678.05	272,898.15
Investments through the Public Investment Programme	29,333.04	1,460,246.31
Total	29,575,088.02	31,375,224.69

The decrease observed in the expenses paid in 2015, in comparison with 2014, as regards the item "Labour cost", is due to the decrease of ELSTAT personnel on account of retirements and of the non-completion of procedures for the necessary hiring of personnel.

The increase recorded as regards the item "Other operating expenses and cost for capital formation" for 2015 is due to the payment of the rent for the main building of ELSTAT, amounting to 1,584,000.00 EUR, as well as to the payment of unpaid liabilities of the year 2014, concerning: a) the conduct of surveys in 2014 and b) the provision of services in 2014, whose payment was authorised in 2015 (cleaning, safekeeping, etc.).

The increase of expenses as regards the item "Investments through the Public Investment Programme" is due to the payment, in 2015, of the following NSRF projects that were implemented by ELSTAT during the years 2014 and 2015:

- "Support for the conduct of the Time Use Survey of ELSTAT for the improvement of the planning and evaluation of policies on gender equality", MIS code 380305 of the Operational Programme "Administrative Reform 2007 – 2013".
- "Medium-term Action Plan of the Informatics Division of ELSTAT", MIS code 380300 of the Operational Programme "Digital Convergence". It concerns the project for upgrading the existing infrastructure and services provided by ELSTAT in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

The expenses (in EUR) of the above two (2) projects, which were paid in 2014 and 2015, are as follows:

TABLE 3. Payment of NSRF projects				
Operational programme/ Code	Action	Sub-project	2014	2015
OPERA- TIONAL PRO- GRAMME "Administrative reform 2007 – 2013"/MIS 380305	Support for the conduct of the Time Use Survey by ELSTAT for im- proving the plan- ning and evaluation of policies on gen- der equality	1. Support for the conduct of the Time Use Survey 2. Supply of equipment for sup- porting the conduct of the Time Use Survey	29,333.04	108,383.34
Total payment for the project			29,333.04	108,383.34
OPERA- TIONAL PRO- GRAMME "Digital conver- gence"/MIS 380300	Medium-term Action Plan of the Informatics Division of ELSTAT (Project for upgrading the existing infrastruc- ture and services provided by ELSTAT in the area of Information and Communication Technologies – ICT)	1. Redesign and upgrading of the Integrated Information System 2. Upgrade of the portal ser- vices for the dissemination of statistics 3. Evaluation and implementa- tion of security policies 4. Contingency planning 5. IT services management 6. E-mail archiving 7. Central printing system		915,777.10 141,849.03 71,143.08 69,239.91 23,185.50 35,424.00 89,176.32
Total payment for the project				1,345,794.94
Grand total of payments for NSRF projects			29,333.04	1,454,178.28
In addition, amounts from withholding interest on advances paid for the sub-projects 1 and 2 of the "Medium-term Action Plan of the Informatics Division of ELSTAT"				6,068.03

