

# European Commission's Progress Report, 2022

## Kapitulli 18: Statistika

EU rules require that Member States are able to produce good quality statistics in line with the principles of the European statistics Code of Practice and based on professional independence, impartiality, reliability, transparency, and confidentiality. Common rules are provided for the methodology, production and dissemination of statistical information.

The country is moderately prepared in the area of statistics. Good progress was made, in particular with the publication of the first batch of the population census data in spring 2022. Improvements are noted in all statistical areas and in further aligning of sectoral statistics with EU standards, including enhanced use of administrative sources. Continued efforts are needed to improve the scope and data quality of macroeconomic and social statistics. As last year's recommendations were not fully carried out, in the coming year, the country should, in particular:

- publish all results of the population census by the end of 2022 and ensure that the results of the census are considered in decision-making and resource allocation;
- urgently ensure adequate staffing and sufficient financial resources for the State Statistical Office;
- continue to align financial accounts and quarterly national accounts with the European System of Accounts 2010 (ESA 2010).

The legal framework for statistical infrastructure is broadly in line with the European Statistics Code of Practice. In December 2021, the State Statistical Office (SSO) started preparing the new programme for statistical surveys for 2023-2027 in consultation with stakeholders. Regarding other main statistical producers, the central bank remains fully committed to the European statistics code of practice. The Ministry of Finance has yet to appoint a head of statistics. The SSO backup storage equipment was configured and made operational at the national Disaster Recovery Centre in Prilep; the SSO data are backed up daily. At the end of 2021, SSO adopted a new communication strategy to streamline the use of social media. During the reporting period, the SSO has adopted several strategic papers related to quality management such as the Quality Declaration, the Quality Policy and the Roadmap for introducing Internal Quality Audit. Human resources of the state statistical system continued to decrease and the SSO financial plan for new posts for 2021 and 2022 was not approved. In 2021 and 2022, the SSO's annual budgets for regular operations have been reduced, continuing a negative trend.

**On classifications and registers**, the main classifications comply with the EU acquis and are updated regularly. Progress was made in the use of administrative data sources, including for carrying out the combined methodology of the population census. In June 2022, the SSO started testing the new logical design of the Statistical Business Register. In October 2021, the administrative register of agricultural holdings was re-designed and its data regularly feed the Statistical Farm Register. Thanks to the census operation, data availability and quality have improved, though there is still a need to further comply with new requirements. Data transmission to Eurostat further increased but remains incomplete.

The country made good progress on **macroeconomic statistics**. The SSO continued to improve the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) tables in terms of coverage and consistency between financial and non-financial data. The SSO transmitted the October 2021 EDP notification for North Macedonia, including relevant annexes. Still, coverage of EDP and government finance statistics supplied through the ESA 2010 transmission programme need to be further expanded. In April 2022, trade by invoicing currency (TIC) statistics were transmitted to Eurostat according to the latest EU requirements.

The National Bank continued to transmit to Eurostat the annual financial accounts stock data (data series 2013 – 2020) and advanced in preparation of experimental quarterly financial accounts data (stocks and flows), and annual flows data (by (sub)-sectors and financial instruments). In September 2021, the National Bank transmitted to Eurostat more detailed data for FDI income (by activity and geographical breakdown) and for FDI positions and transactions (data with cross-tabulation by activities and geographical breakdown) for the year 2020.

On **business statistics**, good progress was made. On foreign affiliates statistics, data for 2019 were published. In June 2021 and in June 2022, the SSO conducted the first and second pilot survey on International Trade in Services Statistics (ITSS) with a geographical breakdown. Preliminary work to set up tourism satellite accounts (TSA) made good progress.

Very good progress was made **on social statistics**. Progress made for the census of population, households, and dwellings in North Macedonia, which was conducted between 5-30 September 2021, is particularly relevant. All activities planned for the census were completed on time despite challenges. An innovative combined census method of administrative registers and field enumeration was applied. First results of the census were published in March, April and June 2022. The full set of results of the census, including household data and geographical grid statistics are being published in batches. This is a major achievement: up-to-date data on population is essential for planning and

implementing adequate social, demographic, and economic policies for the benefit of all citizens. Data transmission of the survey on income and living conditions and crime statistics has been delayed due to shortage of staff. Progress was achieved in labour market statistics. Activities are under way to source data from the administrative registers for education statistics.

In the area of **agricultural statistics**, the SSO has started preparations for the agricultural census which was piloted in June 2022. The methodology is harmonised with EU standards. Data for fishery statistics aiming at alignment with EU standards were produced and published in June 2022. Statistics concerning organic production have improved. For forestry statistics, SSO has re-designed the survey of forest fires and published the data of the ad hoc survey in December 2021.

In the area of **energy and environment statistics**, environmental protection expenditure statistics, waste statistics, water statistics, and environment-related taxes' statistics were further aligned with the EU acquis. In October 2021, for the first time, the SSO reported data to Eurostat, including compiled Environmental Protection Expenditures (EPEA) tables and quality reports with preliminary data compiled for Environmental Goods and Services Sector, Air Emission Accounts and Physical Energy Flow Accounts. The compilation of tables for environmental expenditure for the government is outstanding. Material flow accounts data are regularly reported, although material flow balances are not yet included. The comprehensiveness of energy balances needs to be increased with the inclusion of solar heat energy. The results of a sample survey for energy consumption in households were published in August 2021.