

# STATISTICS ACROSS BORDERS

International statistical co-operation



1/2009

**Federal Statistical Office of Germany** 



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Dear readers,

Our newsletter "Statistics across Borders" has been given a new face. We hope that you will like the new layout and feel enticed to read on.

What is the focus of this publication? Above all a new record: We carried out a total of 95 co-operation activities during the first half of this year. This was the highest number ever recorded in a six-month period.

This edition of the newsletter provides information on our cooperation with the new EU Member States and the candidates for EU accession, which is one of the pillars of our work. As a matter of fact, the largest number of activities was undertaken in the context of the EU Twinning project with Bulgaria. Our article on co-operation with Bulgaria stresses the important issue of reducing the burden on respondents by making use of administrative data. In addition, we inform you about the successful completion of the EU Twinning project with the Croatian statistical office.

As far as Asia, our second important target region, is concerned, Mr. Günter Kopsch, Team Leader in the World Bank Twinning project with Tajikistan, offers insight into his activities. Furthermore, the German-Chinese Working group on statistics, which was set up during the 15 years of co-operation with the Chinese statistical office, has been given a new mission, namely to examine the bilateral trade in services.

Other major pillars of our work are both the relations with other bodies in the context of the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) and the co-ordination of ESTP courses. During the first six months of this year, 33 Destatis employees attended ESTP courses which were held in various European countries. Mr. Thomas Vieweg, who was selected by Eurostat as one of the participants in the European Statistical Week pilot course, outlines in this newsletter the experience he gained during his stay in Luxembourg.

In a consortium with the national statistical offices of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, we were successful in acquiring a large-scale EU Twinning project with the national statistical office of Azerbaijan at the beginning of 2009. Furthermore, we provide you with information on our co-operation with the statistical offices of Latvia, Turkey, Romania and Russia. Apart from our commitment in the new EU Member States and the candidate countries for EU accession, in Central Asia and in China, we were able to establish new contacts with partners in South-East Asia and Southern Africa (Namibia) in the first six months of this year. And another article outlines our participation in a meeting of the UN Statistical Commission in New York from 24 to 27 February 2009.

Finally, we would ask you to note the following internal change. In June 2009, Ms Birgit Zimmermann changed teams and now works in the project team in Wiesbaden where she is involved in project activities and bilateral co-operation matters.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please send an e-mail to:

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## Successful conclusion of the Twinning project with Croatia



#### Head of Office visits Wiesbaden

A delegation of the Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), headed by the Director-General, Mr. Ivan Kovac, visited the Federal Statistical Office from 3 to 5 February 2009. The visit was part of the Twinning project between the two offices.

Ivan Kovac headed the Croatian statistical office since May 2008. The visit was an opportunity for him to become familiar with the organisational structure and strategy planning of the Federal Statistical Office. That information is to be used in the reorganisation of the

Croatian office. Among the other issues on the programme of the visit were the European Statistical System and questions concerning data quality. Apart from that, Destatis staff members presented the pretest laboratory, the website, and the press and public relations activities of the Federal Statistical Office.



President Roderich Egeler (left), Ivan Kovac, Director-General CBS (right)

## Final conference in Zagreb

As partner of the Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Destatis was engaged in the "Twinning project on Restructuring and Development of the Organisational Structure of the CBS and its Regional Offices and the Adoption of the Acquis communautaire in the Selected Statistical Areas (SILC, HBS and Business Statistics)" since October 2007. In this project, Destatis was supported by the statistical offices of Denmark, Finland and Sweden. After all the consultation activities had been completed, the celebratory final seminar was



Podium: from left: Maarten Boon (Human Dynamics); Ivan Kovac (Director-General CBS); Robert Knezevic (CBS); Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski (Head of Department, Destatis); Carsten Zangenberg (Head of Department, Statistics Denmark)

held at the Croatian Ministry of Economics in Zagreb on 10 March 2009. Among the around 140 participants from the political, business, academic and official statistics communities, the Deputy EU Representative to Croatia, the Ambassador of Denmark, the Permanent Deputy of the German Ambassador, and the heads of the statistical offices of Bulgaria, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovnia as well as staff members of Eurostat were present as guests of honour.

The high-ranking participants of the final seminar commended the good co-operation and underlined the successful implementation of the project, which encompassed a total of 63 consultation activities. The presentation of the project results met with great interest. The seminar participants were agreed in their assessment that the project had laid the groundwork for modernising the Croatian statistical system and aligning it to the applicable standards of the European Statistical System (ESS) and thus had achieved the project goals set by the EU.

A proposal for reforming the Croatian statistical system which was developed as part of the project has already been submitted to the Croatian government agencies for decision.

The participants of the final seminar paid particular attention to the speech by Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski, Head of Department at the Federal Statistical Office, on the future challenges for national statistical institutes in Europe with regard to a better focus on the in-

terests and requirements of users, to the speech delivered by Carsten Zangenberg (Head of Department at Statistics Denmark) on marketing and disseminating statistical results (special evaluations) and to the talk given by Maarten Boon (Human Dynamics) on the future challenges of information and communication technology.

At a press conference held at the premises of the EU delegation in Zagreb on 11 March 2009, the project results in the areas listed below were presented to the general public:

- business statistics,
- household budget surveys,
- further development of the organisational structure of the Croatian statistical office.
- · reorganisation of the national statistical system.



The German project management team: Marta Kljaic, assistant; Wolfgang Schulze, project leader; Dr. Gisela Kröger, long-term adviser: Leonhard Fix. project manager (from left)

#### Overview of the project activities

### Study visit to Copenhagen/Denmark, 13 to 15 January 2009

Consultation on questions concerning organisational and personnel development using the example of Denmark

#### Expert mission to Zagreb, 20 to 23 January 2009

Consultation on the system of new short-term indicators in industry

#### Expert mission to Zagreb, 20 to 23 January 2009

Basic training for interviewers of the EU SILC survey on applying the Blaise Software

#### Expert mission, 26 to 30 January 2009

Training course on the functions and operation of the European Statistical System (ESS)

#### Expert mission to Zagreb, 27 to 30 January 2009

Analysis of the results of the EU SILC pilot survey

### Project Steering Committee meeting in Zagreb, 27 January 2009

Discussion of the project progress

## Expert mission to Zagreb, 2 to 4 February 2009

Consultation on the user-oriented dissemination and publication of short-term statistics results

## Expert mission to Zagreb, 2 to 4 February 2009

Consultation on the tasks and functions of internal auditing

## Study visit to Wiesbaden, 3 to 5 February 2009

Visit by Head of Office, consultation on questions of organisational and personnel development using the example of Germany

## Expert mission to Zagreb, 10 to 13 February 2009

Consultation on the revision of the Croatian Statistics Act

#### Study visit to Bonn, 11 to 13 February 2009

Consultation on the organisation and conduct of household budget surveys

## Study visit to Vienna/Austria, 17 to 19 February 2009

Consultation on the organisation and conduct of household budget surveys in Austria

### Expert mission to Zagreb, 2 to 6 March 2009

Analysis of the results of the HBS pilot survey

#### Study visit to Oslo/Norway, 2 to 4 March 2009

Consultation on questions of organisational and personnel development, using the example of Norway

#### Expert mission to Zagreb, 10 to 12 March 2009

Final evaluation of the consultations and progress in the area of short-term statistics

#### Final seminar in Zagreb, 10 to 11 March 2009

Presentation of the results of the Twinning project, followed by a press conference

## Project Steering Committee meeting in Zagreb, 12 March 2009

Discussion of general questions concerning the conclusion of the project

## World Bank Project Tajikistan





## Interview with the Leader of the Project Team, Günther Kopsch

Until his retirement, Günther Kopsch headed Department I of the Federal Statistical Office, where he was responsible for questions of principle of federal statistics and the co-operation with other countries. Since 2007 he has been involved in the Twinning project with Tajikistan as Project Team Leader. Apart from the consortium leader, the Federal Statistical Office, project partners are the statistical offices of Denmark, Slovakia, Sweden and the Czech Republic. The interview was conducted by Sara Braun.

#### What are your responsibilities in the project?

Günther Kopsch: My major task is to act as team leader. As such I am responsible for the technical management of the project. So every year I discuss the work programme for the year to come with the project leader from Destatis, the counterparts at the Goskomstat of Tajikistan and with the head of the Tajik Project Co-ordination Team and then I submit the result to the Chairman of Goskomstat for approval. With the partners we have detailed discussions on the expert missions undertaken in the course of the year and their implementation at Goskomstat, with special attention being paid to the progress and the improvements which could already be made at Goskomstat and, of course, to finding out where recommendations of the experts have not been implemented.

It was absolutely essential to the success of the project that after the end of the inception phase and on the basis of the key experts' reports and subsequent discussions with the component leaders at Goskomstat, a first comprehensive work programme was drawn up for the entire duration of the project in co-operation with the project leader and the controller responsible for project financing.

In addition to my function as team leader, I work in the project as an expert for statistical legislation. The objective is to prepare a new statistics act meeting the requirements of the United Nations fundamental principles and have it adopted by the national bodies. Even though such an act may not guarantee the transition of the Tajik statistical system to a modern system satisfying the requirements of a market economy, it is a fundamental and indispensable prerequisite. In my opinion, there still are several obstacles, but we are on a good path.

Lately I have also worked as an expert on improving the co-operation of Goskomstat with the ministries. As the ministries are both users and suppliers of data, their co-operation with Goskomstat is essential to the success of the project.

## How did you prepare yourself personally and professionally for your mission?

**Günther Kopsch:** The preparations for a mission as part of technical co-operation must always be two fold:

First of all, it is necessary to familiarise yourself with the country you are travelling to and with the customs and habits of its people. My colleagues at Destatis provided me with some material for this and additional information was available on the internet. Although it is usually only possible to learn the finer details in the country itself – which may include an occasional faux pas – good preparation will always help you to avoid big blunders.

A thorough evaluation of the professional aspects is another important part of the preparation. For me as team leader this meant, and still means, a critical examination of the medium-term strategy and programme planning of Goskomstat, an intensive analysis of the reports submitted by the key experts – partly complemented by discussions with them – and, as the project proceeds, the regular perusal of the expert reports.

Prior to the project, in the area of legislation, the existing statistics act of Tajikistan had to be compared with the international recommendations, so that suggestions for revision and amendment could be developed in advance.

I certainly didn't harbour any reservations about my mission. On the contrary: I was excited to see what was waiting for me.

#### What were your first impressions of the country and the people?

**Günther Kopsch:** During a mission of technical co-operation, it is usually not possible to get to know the country and the people really well because the work often stretches into the evenings and weekends and there is little time for other activities. The people I have got to know are my colleagues at the statistical office. Our co-operation is working well, we trust each other and my Tajik colleagues are showing great interest. Everybody I have met is a professional and very much prepared to adopt new methods and procedures, even in the difficult conditions at Goskomstat.

The few excursions I was able to make took me to the mountains. The landscape there is very impressive and I would like to see some more of it, as time permits.

### How does the co-operation with the Tajik statistical office proceed?

Günther Kopsch: As a matter of principle, the co-operation with the statistical office of Tajikistan proceeds very well. The statisticians there are greatly interested in the project and have pinned their hopes on it. Nevertheless, there is a lack of internal communication both within Goskomstat and between the Tajik Project Coordination Team (PCT) and Goskomstat. A committee suggested by us for this purpose and set up by Goskomstat has so far not succeeded in improving the situation. Now our hopes are resting on the newly appointed Change Manager. There is insufficient feedback to Destatis on how the experts' recommendations are taken forward at Goskomstat and whether notable improvements have been achieved. This is

partly due to the fact that our colleagues at Goskomstat haven't had enough time to deal with the further developments because of the continuing lack of staff.

Other authorities than Goskomstat, especially the ministries, don't seem to be particularly interested in the project. After all, the specially created Interministerial Steering Committee has never been convened to date.

Of particular importance is the close and trusting co-operation with the World Bank, the donor organisation. The relevant project leader is the point of contact for all questions concerning the project's progress and the targeted project management. Without his strong support for and monitoring of the project, its success could not be assured.

What have you been able to achieve with the project activities? What remains to be done?

**Günther Kopsch:** Our activities are proceeding as planned and are well prepared by the experts, but their implementation at Goskomstat requires better organisation and monitoring.

## Overview of the project activities carried out in the past six months

Study Visit to Astana, Kazakhstan, 26 to 30 January 2009 Consultation on Agriculture Statistics

Study Visit to Astana, Kazakhstan, 26 to 30 January 2009
Consultation on Environment Statistics

Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 23 to 27 February 2009

Consultation on Institutional Framework Improvement

**Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 23 February to 07 March 2009**Consultation on 2010 Population Census Preparation

Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 09 to 14 March 2009
Consultation on Construction Price Index

**Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 16 to 21 March 2009**Consultation on Quarterly National Accounts

**Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 16 to 21 March 2009**Consultation on Demographic Statistics

Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 26 March to 01 April 2009
Consultation on Statistics of Poverty and Living Conditions

Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 30 March to 04 April 2009
Consultation on Statistics of the Non-Observed Economy

Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 02 to 08 April 2009
Consultation on Agricultural Statistics

Study Visit to Wiesbaden, 14 to 17 April 2009 Consultation on National Accounting Issues

**Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 16 to 22 April 2009**Consultation on Education Statistics

#### Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 20 to 25 April 2009

Consultation on Labour Force Statistics

#### Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 20 to 25 April 2009

Consultation on Development and Design of Questionnaires

#### Study Visit to Bonn, 21 to 24 April 2009

Consultation on Project Management and Progress Monitoring

### Study Visit to Dushanbe, 27 April to 11 May 2009

**Consultation on Transport Statistics** 

#### Study Visit to Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 12 to 15 May 2009

Consultation on Industrial Production Index

#### Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 11 to 16 May 2009

Evaluation of the Project's Progress and Adjustment of the Work Plan

#### Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 18 to 20 May 2009

Consultation on Liaison with Ministries

### Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 18 to 23 May 2009

Workshop on Standardisation of Publications and Optimizing the Printing Process

### Study Visit to Prague, Czech Republic, 19 to 22 May 2009

Consultation on Statistical Methodologies and Classifications

### Study Visit to Astana, Kazakhstan, 25 to 31 May 2009

Consultation on Domestic Trade Statistics

## Expert Mission to Dushanbe, 22 June to 01 July 2009

Consultation on Agricultural Statistics

## Twinning with Bulgaria



## High-level seminar on reducing the burden imposed on respondents

Reducing the burden imposed on respondents is a major objective of the Twinning project with the Bulgarian statistical office. To identify the joint efforts that will have to be made by Bulgarian administrative and official statistics bodies and to kick off their collaboration, a high-level seminar was held in Sofia on 16 March 2009. The seminar with the title "Reducing the burden on respondents" had been initiated by the German project leader and was hosted by the President of the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute (NSI).

Invitations had been extended to the Bulgarian ministries and authorities that collect and use administrative data. The seminar was also attended by delegates from Bulgarian business and industrial associations as representatives of the respondents.

Reducing the burden on respondents is also one of the aims of the European Statistical System (ESS) and has been defined as a quality standard in the "European Statistics Code of Practice for the National and Community Statistical Authorities". To lend her support to this important effort, Ms Marie Bohata, the Deputy Director General of Eurostat, had accepted the invitation to Sofia. In her welcome address she underlined the significance of that principle for the further development of the national and European statistical systems. Ms Mariana Kotzeva, the President of the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, laid out the strategy of Bulgaria's official statistics agencies to reduce the burden on respondents. This includes giving the Bulgarian statistical office better access to administrative data that are collected by other Bulgarian authorities. By amending the Bulgarian Statistics Act in November 2008, the Bulgarian National Assembly extended the possibilities of using administrative data for statistical purposes, thereby removing one of the major obstacles to their accessibility. It will be one of the major future tasks of the Bulgarian

statistical office to implement the legal rules in partnership with the authorities concerned in joint working groups and to examine the usability of the available data for statistical purposes.

With the aim of supporting this project of the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute and to present successful models from other member states, experts from Finland and Austria reported on the use of administrative data for demographic, social and business statistics.

Furthermore, representatives of the Bulgarian Ministry of Economics, the national tax authority and the social insurance institute delivered papers outlining their concepts for reducing the burden.

The seminar was a success and gave significant impetus to the well-justified efforts by Bulgarian official statisticians and respondents to minimise the burden on respondents. The Twinning project between the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute and the Federal Statistical Office provided a major contribution to this and made the seminar possible.

## Overview of the project activities in the past six month

**Project Steering Committee meeting in Sofia, 21 January 2009** Evaluation of the project progress

Expert mission to Sofia, 10 to 12 February 2009
Training course 1 on sampling theory

Expert mission to Sofia, 11 to 13 February 2009

Consultation on the availability of regional indicators

Expert mission to Bachinovo/Bulgaria, 18 to 20 February 2009
Training course 1 on seasonal adjustment

Expert mission to Bachinovo/Bulgaria, 18 to 20 February 2009 Advanced training for lecturers (Train-the-trainer)

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 16 to 20 March 2009

Consultation on introducing cost and performance accounting

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 16 March 2009

High-level seminar on reducing the burden on respondents

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 17 to 19 March 2009

Action plan for reducing the burden on respondents and statistical offices

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 23 to 25 March 2009

Consultation on the dissemination of regional data

#### Study visit to Paris/France, 23 to 27 March 2009

Using modern methods of data collection and processing

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 23 to 25 March 2009

Management training 1 (for Directors of regional offices)

## Expert mission to Sofia, 25 to 27 March 2009

Management training 2 (for Directors of regional offices)

## Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 25 to 27 March 2009

Training course 2 on seasonal adjustment

### Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 30 March to 2 April 2009

Training course 3 on seasonal adjustment

## Expert mission to Sofia, 30 March to 1 April 2009

Identification of the demand for advanced training concerning the application of SPSS

## Expert mission to Sofia, 14 to 16 April 2009

Training course 1 on using administrative data

## Expert mission to Sofia and Pernik, 15 to 17 April 2009

Consultation on the division of labour between the regional offices and NSI headquarters

#### Project Steering Committee meeting in Sofia, 21 April 2009

Evaluation of the project progress

#### Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 22 to 24 April 2009

Training course 2 on using administrative data

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 11 to 15 May 2009

Consultation on introducing cost and performance accounting

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 12 to 15 May 2009

Training course 2 on sampling

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 18 to 20 May 2009

Consultation on modern methods of data collection and processing

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 19 to 21 May 2009

Training course on the "European Statistical System"

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 25 to 28 May 2009

Expert mission on reducing the burden on respondents

### Expert mission to Sofia, 25 to 29 May 2009

Consultation on introducing cost and performance accounting

### Expert mission to Sofia, 26 to 28 May 2009

Consultation on the availability of regional indicators

### Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 26 to 28 May 2009

Training course 1 on data security and statistical confidentiality

## Study visit to The Hague and Heerlen/Netherlands, 27 to 29 May 2009

Reducing the burden on respondents, using administrative data

## Expert mission to Sofia, 2 to 4 June 2009

Consultation on the division of labour between NSI headquarters and the regional offices

#### Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 2 to 4 June 2009

Training course 3 on sampling theory

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 9 to 11 June 2009

Consultation on the dissemination of regional data

#### Expert mission to Bachinovo/Bulgaria, 9 to 11 June 2009

Training course 2 on data security and statistical confidentiality

#### Study visit to Helsinki/Finland, 15 to 18 June 2009

Reducing the burden on respondents using administrative data

### Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 15 to 17 June 2009

Training course 1 on SPSS

#### Expert mission to Sofia, 16 to 18 June 2009

Consultation on the division of labour between NSI headquarters and the regional offices

### Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 17 to 19 June 2009

Training course 2 on SPSS

## Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 22 to 24 June 2009

Training course 3 on SPSS

## Expert mission to Sofia, 23 to 25 June 2009

Training course 3 on data security and statistical confidentiality

## **German-Chinese co-operation**



## 15 years of German-Chinese co-operation

The partners in German-Chinese co-operation look back on 15 years of friendship and successful partnership. On 4 November 1993, the then heads of the Federal Statistical Office and the National Bureau of Statistics of China signed a bilateral agreement on co-operation in the area of statistics. That was the first bilateral co-operation agreement concluded between the Federal Statistical Office and another national statistical institute. In discussions, representatives of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology and of the German embassy in Beijing have always stressed the great importance of German-Chinese statistical co-operation for the German foreign and economic policies. Against this background, they have explicitly expressed their interest in a continuation of co-operation between the national statistical offices. Following the Act regarding the German-Chinese intergovernmental agreement on co-operation in the fields of economy, industry and technology of 15 May 2002, co-operation has significantly gained in importance. Article 4 of the Act expressly regulates the close co-operation relations between the two national statistical authorities.

## New mission for the German-Chinese Working group on statistics

On 10 November 2008, the 14th meeting of the German-Chinese Joint Economic and Trade Committee took place in Berlin. During that meeting, which was headed by the competent ministers of the two countries, the German-Chinese Working group on statistics was given a new assignment. The first task of the working group set up in 2005 was to study the asymmetries in the German-Chinese foreign trade statistics. In the next two years, however, the working group will examine the bilateral trade in services. The mission of the working group is to be seen in the context of the joint declaration of the German Federal Chancellor and the Chinese Prime Minister of

29 January 2009 on joint efforts to stabilise the world economy. An aspect mentioned in the declaration is the intensified exchange of statistics on trade in services.

In addition to the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, the Deutsche Bundesbank and the Federal Statistical Office are the German members of the working group. The Chinese delegation comprises representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, the National Bureau of Statistics, the Central Bank, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange and other financial regulatory agencies. After a short but intensive preparation period, the constituent meeting of the working group took place at the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology in Berlin on 20 April 2009. As a first item on the agenda of the meeting, the representatives from the different authorities gave an overview of their responsibilities regarding trade in services. Subsequently, the two sides both discussed the goals and procedures of the working group and prepared an associated work plan which was signed by the heads of the two delegations. The second meeting of the working group is scheduled to take place in Beijing in November 2009.

## Signing a project agreement

After the projects on Prices, Education Statistics, Health Statistics and Statistical Legislation, which were launched in 2006, were completed successfully in late 2008, the National Bureau of Statistics of China submitted proposals for undertaking new projects on Employment Statistics, Earnings and Labour Cost Statistics and on Data Dissemination via the Internet and Statistical Information Services. Due to its importance in terms of legal policy, the project on Statistical Legislation will be continued at the request of the Federal Ministry of Justice and the Legislative Affairs Office under the Chinese State Council. To underline both the priorities of the individual projects and their importance for the People's Republic of China, the Chinese partner proposed to agree on future co-operation between the two offices in a Memorandum of Understanding. The project

agreement, which was prepared by the Chinese statistical office and co-ordinated between the competent experts, was signed by the German office's Vice-President Peter Weigl and the Chinese Deputy Commissioner Xie Hongguang. All projects, which are scheduled for the period from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2011, will be funded by the two offices.

## Activities between January and June 2009

Study visit of a Chinese delegation, 22 to 28 April 2009

Beginning of the project on Data Dissemination via the Internet and Statistical Information Services

Study visit of a Chinese delegation, 13 to 19 May 2009 Continuation of the project on Statistical Legislation

Study visit of a Chinese delegation, 18 to 24 June 2009
Beginning of the project on Earnings and Labour Costs

#### A look behind the scenes at Eurostat



## Report by a participant in the "European Statistical Week pilot course"

The bar was set very high: looking "behind the curtain" at Eurostat ... We were to learn how the workflows are organised in areas where our specialist counterparts work at the Statistical Office of the European Communities. Also, we were to meet our contact teams in person and not least to set up regular contacts with our colleagues, which is also known as 'networking'. These were the ambitious goals of a new pilot training course at Eurostat in Luxembourg, which was undertaken in the context of the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) in June 2009.

Young members of staff of the statistical offices of the European Union, who had gained one to three years of professional experience at their offices, were invited to apply for participation in this pilot course entitled "European Statistical Week – A study visit to Eurostat". Strictly speaking, their applications were sent to 13 different Eurostat units which were engaged in the pilot project. And that was the difference compared to other training courses: In the context of the European Statistical Week, the participants were to be given the opportunity to shadow their counterparts at Eurostat and exchange views with them.

Finally, 22 people from 13 European countries were selected as participants in the five-day pilot course. Among them was a Destatis employee who had applied for the chance to visit the colleagues of Eurostat's press office and look 'behind the curtain' there. Before that, however, the participants in the course met and received detailed information about official statistics in the European Union. After, initially, almost every second participant had learned that the Destatis main office was located in Wiesbaden instead of Berlin, the

first two days of the five-day course were dedicated to issues such as the organisational structure of Eurostat and the European Statistical System and the history of European integration.

Then, on the third day of our stay, we were given the opportunity to look behind the scenes. We had the chance to directly visit 13 Eurostat units for another two days. I visited Eurostat's press office where, despite my short stay of two days, the ambitious goals of the pilot course could be achieved. The colleagues of the press office did not only present in detail their relevant workflows, they spent a lot of their time talking to their colleague from Wiesbaden. We exchanged our views on all sorts of things such as organising press conferences, correcting wrong data publications or setting priorities to a number of themes. Regarding the issue of data dissemination via the internet, the colleagues even organised a meeting with the competent group at Eurostat.



Consequently, the Destatis representative contributed a strongly positive assessment when all course participants met again on the last day of the five-day course. The look behind the scenes at Eurostat and the useful exchange of specialist opinions had been possible not least owing to the commitment of the colleagues of Eurostat's press office. Otherwise, there are only two wishes left for the future. On the one hand, this pilot course will hopefully lead to a series of courses - as has been intended by Eurostat - and, on the other, as many members as possible of the Destatis academic staff will apply for participation in one of the courses - it's really worth it!

**Thomas Vieweg** 

#### News in brief



## Assisting the Azerbaijani statistical office

In a consortium with the statistical offices of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, the Federal Statistical Office will give assistance to the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan in the context of an EU Twinning project from the middle of this year. As an MS junior partner in the project, the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria will for the first time provide experts to work in a Twinning project. It will also send a long-term expert to Azerbaijan to undertake the relevant activities there. Over a period of two years, the State Statistical Committee will be provided with comprehensive consultation services in various statistical areas.

The general goal of this project is to enhance the system of official statistics in Azerbaijan by introducing new methods of data production. The activities, which will presumably be launched in October 2009, relate to the following four components: national accounts, informal economy, business statistics and price statistics.

Presumably in October 2009, the long-term adviser Mr. Sergej Tsvetarsky will start his 24-month work at the State Statistical Committee in Baku. Supported by an assistant and an interpreter, Mr. Tsvetarsky will co-ordinate all expert missions and work as an adviser for the Azerbaijani statistical office.

The Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden will be responsible for the project management and all related organisational and financial matters.

Currently, the Twinning agreement is being prepared with all partners involved.

### Overview of the project activities

Expert mission to Baku, 21 to 22 January 2009

Presentation of the German Twinning proposal

Expert mission to Baku, 18 to 20 May 2009

Co-ordination of the first draft of the work plan and time schedule submitted by the Federal Statistical Office for the implementation of the Twinning project

#### **EU Twinning light Latvia**



As partner to the Finnish statistical office, the Federal Statistical Office co-operated in the Twinning light project on "Increasing CSB Capacity in Data Protection and Confidentiality" (LV/2006/FI-02TL). The project with a scheduled duration of six months could be completed successfully by 30 June 2009. Experts from the Federal Statistical Office participated in four of altogether twenty-four consultations.

#### Expert mission to Riga, 9 to 11 February 2009

Training course for staff members on data protection

Expert mission to Riga, 12 to 13 February 2009

Workshop on "Safe Centres"

Expert mission to Riga, 20 to 22 April 2009

Presentation of the Research Data Centre and its work

Expert mission to Riga, 3 to 5 June 2009

Final seminar and evaluation of the project results

## **USST II Turkey extended**



The project to support the Turkish statistical office (USST II) has been extended until 30 November 2009. The Federal Statistical Office provides experts for the project and advises delegations of Turkish ex-

perts. In the first quarter of 2009 there was a consultation on the subject of "Information and communication technologies in enterprises". Destatis was represented also at the meeting of the project steering committee at the beginning of June. A study visit of Turkish experts was dedicated to the topic of "Self assessment – peer review".

#### **Environmental statistics in Romania**



The EU-funded project on Developing Economic Statistics in Romania was completed by a final workshop which took place in Bucharest from 17 to 18 February 2009. Destatis had been engaged in the activities of the component on "Improving and harmonising the data of environmental statistics" aimed at developing statistical and methodological tools in accordance with the relevant EU provisions. As a result of the assistance rendered in the areas of waste statistics, the evaluation of energy resources and balancing of air emissions, the Romanian environmental statistics could be considerably enhanced. And the co-operation between the institutions involved in the compilation of environmental statistics could be clearly improved, too. Romania is now in a position to produce environmental statistics whose quality will meet the given EU requirements.

## Training courses for Russian statisticians of regional offices



Destatis participated in a tendering procedure regarding "Quality management in official statistics" in the context of the Second State Statistical System Development Project which is financed by the World Bank. As a matter of fact, the Federal Statistical Office won the tender. The project focuses on the conduct of four seminars with equal content for managerial staff of the regional statistical offices of the Russian Federation. The courses are scheduled to take place in Bonn between September 2009 and April 2010.

## Training course at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila

From 31 March to 3 April 2009, Waltraud Moore and Günther Kopsch conducted a high level workshop commissioned by the ADB at its headquarters in Manila on "Challenges in Managing National Statistical Systems". The central objective of the workshop was to impart knowledge of statistical institute management, budget planning and the application of quality standards and processes in line with international standards and principles to the heads of the national statistical institutes of seven Asian countries. Participating countries were Afghanistan, Cambodia, Laos, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste. In addition to the heads of the national statistical offices and their deputies, the senior officials of the planning and finance ministries of these countries attended the workshop.

The Federal Statistical Office managed to convince the participating countries of the fact that a well-functioning statistical system is essential and presented subjects largely new to participants such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and personnel development in an interesting manner. The participants and the ADB evaluated the course as very successful. Several participants showed great interest in further training courses.

### Census of enterprises in Namibia



The GTZ implements a project in Namibia to prepare, conduct and analyse the enterprise census. The Federal Statistical Office provides the statistics expert and supports the project in all technical matters. Project partner is the Chief statistician of the Namibian ministry of trade and industry. Data collection has been scheduled for the second half of 2009.

## In diplomatic circles — a German delegation to the United Nations

The United Nations Statistical Commission met from 24 to 27 February 2009 in New York. In addition to the 24 states which – like Germany – are members of the UN Statistical Commission at the present time, the session was attended by representatives of official statistics from altogether 140 countries. That has been the largest number of participants in a session of the UN Statistical Commission to date.



From the Federal Statistical Office, the Head of Department in charge, Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski (centre), Waltraud Moore (left) and Sabine Köhler (right) were on the spot. Apart from the approval of volume II of the revised UN System of National Accounts (SNA 2008),

the statistical monitoring of climate change and the further development of environmental-economic accounting, major items on the agenda were the millennium development goals/indicators and statistical capacity-building in developing countries.

## EU assistance for Central Asia (Tacis-11)

The TACIS project on the Further Development of National Statistics in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan – Statistics 11 was officially launched by a kick-off meeting in Brussels on 26 January 2009. (TACIS = Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States is a funding instrument of the EU succession states of the former Soviet Union.)

Destatis is involved in the activities of a number of project components. Contrary to the original plans, the project duration has been

prolonged (31 December 2010) so that all activities can be successfully completed without time pressure. After the inception phase has now been concluded, the first activities will be undertaken in early July 2009.

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