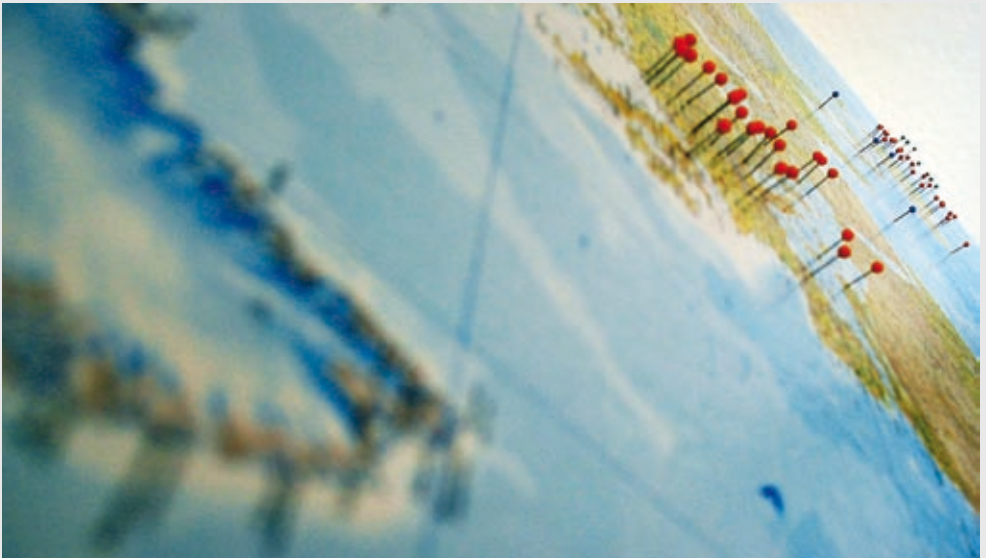


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Dear readers,

It is all about new beginnings. While the EU Twinning project with Azerbaijan could be completed successfully in the first half of 2012, a large part of our work at the Statistical Co-operation Unit focused on preparing new projects. First the EU Twinning project with the State Statistical Office of Macedonia, which will continue the long-term co-operation of the two countries. There have been numerous activities before the implementation phase could start: contract preparation, co-ordination with all partners, and the selection of a project assistant, to name only a few.

And there is another large project ready for takeoff: the co-operation with the Kazakh Agency of Statistics in a Twinning project funded by the World Bank. For a long time, Kazakhstan has been an important and close partner of the Federal Statistical Office. That is why we are really looking forward to this co-operation and the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive project to improve the Kazakh statistical system further. The project will cover almost all spheres of official statistics and many cross-cutting subjects.

Here is another topic dealt with in this issue: the new Head of Statistical Co-operation, Ms Angela Schaff, introduces herself and expresses her pleasure at the chance to co-operate with our partners.

These are some of the news in the first half of 2012, and there is much more. The editorial team hopes that you will enjoy reading the latest issue of the co-operation newsletter.

Ringo Raupach

Michael Schäfer

Volker Gutekunst

If you would like to receive the electronic version of this publication on a regular basis and have not received it directly from the address below, just send an e-mail to international-cooperation@destatis.de.

Interview with the President of the Federal Statistical Office on statistical co-operation and his visit to Mongolia

Since August 2010, the Federal Statistical Office has been carrying out the Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System of Mongolia, which is financed by the World Bank. Until the end of 2014, experts of the Federal Statistical Office will consult the Mongolian partners on methodological issues of various important areas of statistics. They are supported by colleagues from the statistical offices of the German Länder and by international experts. During a visit to Mongolia at mid-term of the project, President Roderich Egeler had the opportunity to inform himself about the results achieved so far and to take a look ahead to the future co-operation between the two offices.

Read in the following interview how President Egeler supports international co-operation and what personal impressions he got during his visit to Mongolia.

Mr. Egeler, for nearly 20 years the Federal Statistical Office has closely co-operated with many statistical offices as part of international co-operation. What are the reasons?

The German engagement in international co-operation is based on the commitments and priorities of the Federal Republic of Germany in terms of foreign policy and economic policy. In the agreements on partnership and co-operation in Europe, in various treaties on the European Union, and in the treaties with the partner countries, it has been agreed to provide financial and staff support in order to set up a system of official statistics in the recipient countries. This is also supported by United Nations resolutions. In addition, bilateral agreements have been concluded with some major partners in German international co-operation. Consequently, international co-operation is an important duty of official statistics in Germany, and also the statistical offices of the Länder take an increasingly active part in it.

What are the regions in which the Federal Statistical Office has been engaged so far?

In the initial phase, our activities focused on co-operation with our Eastern neighbour countries. Every accession of a new member state to the European Union has actively been accompanied by international co-operation because a sine qua non for those countries' accession has been that they completely take over the "acquis communautaire" – that is, the total of EU legislation that is binding for all EU member states – in the sphere of statistics. This also applies to the (potential) Balkan candidate countries and for Turkey, which we support, too.

Another focus of our commitment is more to the east, in the Eastern European and Asian region. Recent examples, apart from Russia, are especially Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. Since 1994, we have co-operated very successfully with the statistical office of the People's Republic of China on the basis of a bilateral co-operation agreement, and since the mid-1990s, we have had a trusting working relationship also with the Mongolian national statistical office.

Mongolia is the keyword. You have recently visited the statistical office in Ulan Bator, the Mongolian capital. What was the context of your visit?

Since August 2010, and together with the Korean statistical office, we have been carrying out a World Bank financed Twinning Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System of Mongolia and we have closely been co-operating with the Mongolian statistical office. The goal of the project is to gradually adjust the Mongolian statistical office to international standards, so that scientifically well-founded and comparable figures can be published. Until the end of 2014, we will provide consultancy in highly different areas, such as organisation, staff management, publications, statistical registers and national accounts, to mention just a few. The project's scope includes an IT plan to modernise the IT architecture, which has been developed by our Korean partner. The purpose of my visit was to get an overview of what has been achieved and to take a look ahead.

How do you rate the results achieved so far in the project?

Based on the recommendations of our experts, our Mongolian partners have achieved improvements in many areas. Examples are improvements regarding staff training, quality control, publications and sampling methods. The centrepiece of an efficient statistical system is a modern IT infrastructure. The IT plan set up in co-operation with our Korean partners will now enter the implementation phase. The Mongolian side said they were very satisfied altogether with the activities of the consortium's experts. I had that impression, too. Once we have completed our joint project by the end of 2014, Mongolia will have one of the most modern and advanced statistical systems in the region.

Are there any plans on how co-operation with Mongolian statistics can continue after the current project has been completed?

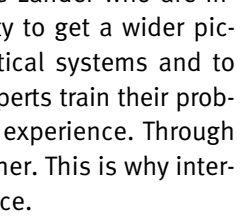
All parties involved are aware of the fact that there will still be need for further consulting in other statistical areas when this project has been terminated. This will mainly concern statistics on the environment and on raw materials. The Mongolian colleagues are already preparing proposals of how our co-operation might continue. We will then decide jointly on how we will co-operate in the future.

What impression of the country and the people did you get during your visit to Mongolia?

The Mongolian colleagues I talked to turned out to be very keen to learn new things. I saw for myself that the information, training and expert discussions have fallen on fertile ground and will have a lasting effect on official statistics of Mongolia. By the way, this is confirmed by the regular discussions with World Bank representatives. But those measurable successes of our joint work are not the only thing I would like to emphasise. Another thing that made my stay there an impressive experience is the very likeable way of the people.

Will the Federal Statistical Office continue its commitment to international co-operation?

As I mentioned at the beginning, what we do in international co-operation is in line with the principles and goals of German foreign policy and of development assistance. International co-operation gives us the opportunity to impressively document the role and importance of official statistics in a modern and democratic society. In addition, such projects support the appreciation of German official statistics in the international statistical community. For the staff of the Federal Statistical Office and for the colleagues from the statistical offices of the Länder who are involved in co-operation, this provides an opportunity to get a wider picture of things, to get acquainted with other statistical systems and to contribute to their development. Additionally, our experts train their problem-solving competence and gain valuable cultural experience. Through the mutual exchange, both sides learn from each other. This is why international co-operation is an important task in our office.



Positive mid-term assessment of German-Mongolian co-operation



Thanks to the active participation of many experts in the World Bank Twinning Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System of Mongolia, the first 18 months have been highly successful. This is confirmed by the result of the first official World Bank mid-term review, which also acknowledges that the experts employed by Destatis achieve very high consultation quality in missions and study visits.



Participants in the conference at the Mongolian statistical office in Ulan Bator on 11 June 2012

Since the project started in late 2010, over 40 Destatis staff members have shared their knowledge and experience with their Mongolian colleagues in consulting missions to Ulan Bator and study visits to Wiesbaden. Representatives of the Korean consortium partner and of other partner offices (e.g. Statistics Finland or the Land Statistical Offices of Berlin-Brandenburg and Hesse), international experts as well as former Destatis staff members have contributed to making the project a success. A total of 25 expert missions and 16 study visits were held until July 2012.

Mongolia

The Mongolian statistical office took the success of the first 18 months as an opportunity to hold a conference in Ulan Bator in mid-June 2012, drawing the attention to what had been achieved up to then and to the sustainable implementation of the expert recommendations. Among others, representatives of the World Bank, of the parliament and of the embassies of partner countries of Mongolia were invited. The World Bank representatives and the head of the Mongolian statistical office thanked the experts employed by Destatis for their support.

As representatives of the consortium leader Destatis, Jochen Arnhold (Acting Project Co-ordinator), Christine Kronz (Project Assistant and Finance Manager) and Dennis Claus (Project Assistant) attended the event. In the follow-up to the conference, and together with their Mongolian colleagues, they prepared the work plan for the second half of 2012 and settled important project management details.

Overview of the project activities

		January
National Accounts	Wiesbaden	16–18
		February
Training on project management	Wiesbaden	06–10
Population and household register	Helsinki	13–15
		March
Non-observed economy	Ulan Bator	12–16
IT Infrastructure	Daejeon	12–16
Seasonal adjustment	Wiesbaden	12–16
National Accounts	Wiesbaden	26–30
		May
Dissemination	Wiesbaden	14–16
Sampling methods	Ulan Bator	21–25
Improvement of the statistical system	Wiesbaden, Berlin	21–25
		June
Project planning discussions	Ulan Bator	11–14

Twinning project with Azerbaijan successfully completed



The large-scale event of the EU-funded Twinning project with Azerbaijan (“Support to the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan [SSC] to reach European standards in national accounts, non-observed economy, business statistics and producer price index”), the Visibility Conference, in which five heads of statistical offices participated, took place already last year (cf. Statistics across borders, 1/2012). Some consulting missions were held even afterwards, which were financed from unused funds. After the project had been extended by three months, the implementation phase ended on 29 February 2012. The goal of the project, that is, adjusting the standards of Azerbaijani statistics to European Union standards, was achieved in all areas.

The project was carried out under the leadership of the Federal Statistical Office, with the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria as a junior partner and with the support of the statistical offices of the Czech Republic and Lithuania.

Over a period of two years and three months, consulting missions were held for colleagues of the State Statistical Committee (SSC) of the Republic of Azerbaijan. They covered, among other things,

- enhancement of the statistical methods applied in national accounts (comparability with ESA 95);
- measurement of the non-observed economy;
- improvement of the business register quality;
- support in setting up structural business statistics (enhancing data collection, processing and analysis);
- support in setting up and developing further short-term statistics;
- producer price index (enhancing the use of the price index for national accounting).

In addition to the 33 consulting missions held in Baku, ten study visits to Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Germany were organised for the Azerbaijani statisticians. On the German side contributions have been made by the relevant subject matter units of the Federal Statistical Office as well as the Hessian Land Statistical Office.

The Twinning project was the first co-operation project of that size for the SSC and Azerbaijani official statistics. Thanks to the excellent working relations between the Azerbaijani and international experts and the successful management of all parties involved in the project, very good evaluation results were achieved. Interim reports commissioned by the European Commission gave top grades to the Twinning project both in 2010 and in 2011.

In an evaluation of all Twinning projects commissioned by the EU delegation in Azerbaijan, the statistics project was rated best of all. Therefore, the EU has chosen that project as an exemplary approach to carrying out EU Twinning projects in Azerbaijan.

Overview of the project activities

		January
National Accounts	Baku	23–26
		February
Non-observed economy	Prague	30 Jan.–3
9th Steering committee meeting	Baku	16
Non-observed economy	Baku	21–24
Business statistics	Wiesbaden	22–24

Twinning project with the Macedonian Statistical Office can start



Macedonia has been an important partner of German statistical co-operation for some time already. From 2006 to 2008, the Macedonian Statistical Office (SSO) and the Federal Statistical Office co-operated in an EU-funded Twinning project. Afterwards, the Federal Statistical Office was involved as a consortium partner in a technical assistance project which was also funded by the EU. After that project had successfully been completed, too, the Federal Statistical Office submitted a tender to carry out a second EU Twinning project.

In November 2011, the German partner was informed about being awarded the contract. The project on “Support to the State Statistical Office for capacity building and improving compliance of statistics with EU standards” will be carried out by German experts together with Denmark as a junior partner. Other institutions involved in the project are the national statistical institutes of Bulgaria, France and the Czech Republic and, on the German side, the Land Statistical Offices of Berlin-Brandenburg, Hamburg-Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen, Bremen, Hesse and Saxony as well as the Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries (vTI).

The Federal Statistical Office will provide the Project Leader of the EU Member State involved, Mr Ringo Raupach, and, as the consortium leader, it will be responsible for the organisational and financial implementation of the project. In these functions, the Federal Statistical Office will be supported by the Land Statistical Office of Sachsen, providing the Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA), Dr Bernd Richter. For the duration of the two-year implementation phase, the RTA will perform his activities in Skopje. He will be responsible for project co-ordination in the beneficiary country. He will be supported by a local assistant, who was selected in the selection interviews held in June 2012, being the best suited candidate among the total of 51 applications received.

As is the case in all EU Twinning projects with candidate countries, the project's goal is to support the country in taking over the relevant EU standards. The project will cover support to Macedonian official statistics in the following areas:

- National Accounts;
- Passenger Transport Statistics;
- External Trade Statistics;
- Agriculture Statistics;
- Environmental Statistics;
- Data Quality;
- Geographical Information System (GIS);
- Information Technology.

The project will be implemented through a total of 87 activities with 81 short-term expert missions to Skopje and, in addition, 6 study visits of SSO staff members to the national statistical institutes of the EU Member Countries participating in the consortium.

The project budget has been set by the EU Commission at about Euro 1.2 million.

The Twinning contract prepared by the project partners was approved on 22 June 2012 by the Steering Committee of the European Commission, Directorate-General Enlargement. The notification of the Macedonian financing authority was performed on 1 August 2012. So the project is now in its initial phase.

Co-operation cycle between Destatis and China's National Bureau of Statistics successfully completed by finishing the subproject on employment statistics



In 2009, the colleagues from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBS) had asked the Federal Statistical Office for support in developing further their employment statistics. As a consequence, the topic was included in the co-operation agreement signed by the two Vice-Presidents at the time. Consultations were then held with the goal of enhancing the processing of employment and unemployment data, which come from different sources, at the NBS and to improve the quality of the labour cost survey.



Dr Martina Rengers (6th from left), Hermann Seewald (8th from left) und Dr Kai Lorentz (10th from left) with Chinese partners

After two consultations had been held by experts of the Federal Statistical Office in China and the Chinese colleagues had come for three study visits to Germany, the employment statistics project was completed with final discussions in April in Beijing. There, the German delegation was welcomed by the NBS Vice-President, Mr Zhang Weimin. The discussions focused on the extrapolation method applied in the labour force survey and on the calculation and publication of unadjusted and adjusted monthly results from the German labour force sample survey. The innovative extrapolation method

(Generalized Regression Estimation) applied in the German microcensus for the intra-annual survey and the German experience made with monthly labour market reporting met with great interest on the part of the Chinese colleagues. In addition, the Chinese colleagues were given information on the use of computer-assisted methods in the German microcensus and on quality assurance issues.

In labour market statistics, the NBS has developed many recommendations and achieved concrete improvements over the last three years – including the further development of the sample design and the extrapolation method of the Chinese labour force survey and the tentative use of computer-assisted collection methods. The NBS considers specifically the mission and, more generally, the co-operation in the employment statistics project as very successful and effective and thanked the German experts very cordially.

With the completion of the employment statistics sub-project, another co-operation cycle in bilateral co-operation with the NBS was finished. The last consultations in the sub-projects on statistical legislation, internet-based data dissemination and statistical information service as well as earnings and labour costs had been conducted already in late 2011.

The NBS has already indicated further need for consultation. On that basis, the experts of the Federal Statistical Office and their Chinese colleagues are currently co-ordinating the issues which will be in the focus of co-operation in the coming years.

Foreign delegations visit the Federal Returning Officer

The German Bundestag is elected according to the principles of proportional representation combined with a candidate-centred election. The first vote is cast for one of the candidates running for direct election in the 299 constituencies (candidate-centred election), while the second vote determines how many of the 598 seats a party will obtain (proportional representation). It is generally acknowledged that this electoral system is tried and tested. Since it accounts in a well-balanced manner for the target functions of representation, concentration and participation, the German electoral system is in fact treated as a model in the ongoing electoral reform processes of other countries.

Upon the invitation of the Federal Government, an OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission for the first time observed a Bundestag election in 2009. In their report they confirmed Germany's solid experience in conducting democratic elections, based on adherence to the electoral principles laid down in the Basic Law und a comprehensive legal framework. The report stresses the equitable conditions for all contestants, the efficiency and professionalism of the election administration as well as a high level of public confidence in the overall integrity of the electoral process.

Part of the electoral administration at federal level is the Federal Returning Officer, who also is President of the Federal Statistical Office. As an independent central electoral body, the Federal Returning Officer is responsible, among other things, for organising, conducting and monitoring elections to the German Bundestag and elections of members of the European Parliament from the Federal Republic of Germany.

In performing his tasks, the Federal Returning Officer is supported by a specific elections unit – the “Federal Returning Officer's Office“. The main tasks of these 11 colleagues are

- recording the candidates running for election by different criteria,
- checking the notices of participation in the election in keeping with the Federal Elections Act and the Federal Electoral Regulations (only in Bundestag elections),

- checking the joint list for all Länder (only in European elections),
- compiling the results of the election,
- preparing the meetings of the Federal Electoral Committee,
- settling points of law related with the electoral laws of the Federation and with the Political Parties Act,
- preparing the meetings and the report of the Constituency Commission (only in Bundestag elections), which serves the German Bundestag as a basis for taking decisions on constituency boundaries for the following Bundestag election,
- preparing the general and representative electoral statistics and, finally,
- taking care of foreign delegations.

In the first half of 2012, various high-level foreign delegations visited the Federal Returning Officer and his Office:

- Dr Maximus Jonity Ongkili, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovations from Malaysia, who is also chairman of the Parliamentary Special Select Committee on Electoral Process. He was accompanied by members of the Malaysian parliament, of the afore-mentioned Committee, representatives of the Election Commission of Malaysia, and staff members from ministries and other public institutions,
- Tarek Abou El Ata, judge at the constitutional court in Cairo und member of the Egyptian Commission for the Presidential Elections. He was accompanied by five other Commission members, all of them also high-level judges,
- Professor Bekana Gonfa and four other members of the National Electoral Commission from Ethiopia, and Zurab Kharatishvili, chairman of the Central Electoral Commission from Georgia, who was accompanied by two other Commission members and the Head of the International Relations Department.



Federal Returning Officer Roderich Egeler (3rd from the left), Karina Schorn and Brigitte Gisart from the Office of the Federal Returning Officer (6th and 7th from the left) and Kerstin Dietzel from the Language Service (far right) with the Georgian delegation

Generally, the guests are given an overview of German law pertaining to Bundestag elections in a presentation which essentially comprises the following subjects: state structure and framework conditions of elections, electoral bodies, breakdown of the electoral territory into constituencies, nomination of candidates, the voters, the electoral system as such, the distribution of seats and finally the scrutiny of elections. The focus is on the interests of the guests as implied by their respective functions, which are communicated to the Office of the Federal Returning Officer in preparation of the visit.

Central issues for the Egyptian judges, who belong to the Egyptian Commission for the Presidential Elections and visited the Federal Returning Officer in the runup to these elections, were the structures, authority and activities of the electoral bodies, the nomination of candidates by political parties, the legitimacy of elections, and electoral scrutiny. Topics dealt with were the part which the Federal Constitutional Court plays in the process of electoral scrutiny and the consequences that its rulings and decisions have on the

conduct of Bundestag elections. This led to an intensive exchange of thoughts giving the Federal Returning Officer and his team insights into the Egyptian electoral system.

It often turns out that the foreign visitors are well-informed about the German electoral system. This is shown by the precise and detailed questions they ask about special features of German electoral law, for instance the creation of overhang mandates.

The visit of Attahiru Jega in 2011 was particularly impressive. In Nigeria, Professor Jega is regarded as a person of integrity and very popular as a fighter for democracy, human rights and freedom of opinion. In times of dictatorship, until 1998, he fought for the return to democracy as trade union leader. Later, he stood up for the deepening of democracy as professor of political science and principal of the renowned University of Kano in the north of Nigeria. The Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, who came to office only 2010 when his predecessor died, shortly afterwards dismissed the extremely controversial chairman of the electoral commission and appointed Professor Jega.

In January and February 2011, the latter achieved a first memorable success with the Commission by preparing in no time a new electoral roll listing 70 million people entitled to vote.

European Union



Half a decade of didactics – the ESTP course „Train the Trainers“

Presentations, knowledge transfer and speaking in front of an audience – this is part of the daily routine for many staff members at the Federal Statistical Office. For that reason, the Federal Statistical Office hosted the ESTP course „Presentation, facilitation and consultation skills for statistical trainers“ or briefly „Train the Trainers“ for the fifth time. From 29 February to 2 March 2012, the two British trainers Duncan Miles and Denis Greer presented the course programme and imparted knowledge from the broad range of presentation techniques and didactics aimed at passing on information effectively also to international audiences. The participants gave their own presentations in English and so got the opportunity to practise what they had learnt. This year, the course was attended by 14 staff members from the statistical institutes of the Czech Republic, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Poland, Latvia, Norway and from Eurostat. There were three participants from the Federal Statistical Office as the course was held in Germany.



Simone Tries, Assistant Head of Section in „Questionnaire Pretesting, Data Collection Methods“

„The course clearly exceeded my expectations. Both the competence of the trainers and the composition of the group were quite outstanding. I have learnt some new things, for instance, how to deal with one’s own anxiety prior to giving a presentation or what the different types of learners are. Even more important for me: as I was made aware of specific behaviour patterns, I reflected a lot about the way I give presentations. Hopefully, this will enable me to present the content of my work more efficiently in future. This course should definitely remain part of the programme!“



Andreas Kuhn, Head of Section in „Methodology of Agricultural Accounts, Analyses“

„The course was very helpful for me because in the practical exercises I learnt how to structure presentations and papers so as to make them interesting for the audience. The two committed British trainers also managed to show how to involve the audience so that they follow the train of thoughts and participate actively. ‘How do adults learn?’ was an entirely new subject for me. I profited a lot because the course linked theory and practice, this would have been different if it had merely dealt with presentation techniques.“



Dorothea Klumpen, Assistant Head of Section in „Supranational and International Co-ordination“

„The course was a success for me because I learnt much about didactics and the principles of adult learning. We were given ‘golden rules’ which will enable us to improve important presentations of our work in future. And we learnt how to avoid typical pitfalls. Also, our rhetorical skills were ‘tested’ in practical exercises, and suggestions were made how to improve them. With the help of the famous British humour, the two very friendly trainers managed to share their treasure trove of experience with us.“

Staff news



Angela Schaff, the new head of the International Co-operation Division, introduces herself

“In March 2012, the statistical co-operation of the Federal Statistical Office was added to my responsibilities as Head of Division on “Planning and Co-ordination, International Co-operation”. I am the successor of Waltraud Moore, who retired at the end of February 2012.

As an economist, I have worked at the Federal Statistical Office in various fields and functions since 1980. At first, I was a member of academic staff in the unit dealing with short-term indicators in industry before I became Head of Section there and was responsible for the indices of new orders. After I had introduced short-term statistics of industry in the new Länder in the context of German unification in 1990, I was assigned the function of Head of Division on “Publications – Editing and Proofreading” in 1991 and compiled the first all-German Yearbook. In 1993, I became Head of the Press Office and in 1999 Head of Division on “Press, Central Information Services, Library”. Since October 2006, I have been Head of the Division on “Questions of Principle, National and International Co-ordination”, which has been extended to include statistical co-operation as part of a Destatis-wide reorganisation. In the areas I have worked in so far, I have acquired rich international experience and established many contacts. At the ECE level, for example, I was involved in developing worldwide standards for the press and public relations activities of statistical offices and participated in several statistical co-operation projects.

I am very pleased about my new responsibility for international statistical co-operation, which I think is an important function of federal statistics within the scope of economic and foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany.”

Farewell to Günter Moser †

It was with great dismay that we learned that our colleague Günter Moser had died. Since 1999, he had worked in statistical co-operation. The impact of his work in the co-operation with our partner offices, in particular with the National Bureau of Statistics of China, will still be visible for many years to come. During the years of his activity, Mr Moser became the “face” of our co-operation with China. The numerous external requests he received and the specialised articles he published demonstrate that his knowledge in matters of Chinese statistics was much appreciated.

We will miss him very much, as will the international co-operation sphere. In these sad days, our deepest sympathy goes to his family.



Dennis Claus changing to another unit

In mid-2012, Dennis Claus changed to another Section within the Division on “Planning and Co-ordination, International Co-operation, Legal Matters Concerning Statistics”. Since September 2004, he had worked in the statistical co-operation Section where he organised and implemented, among other things, study visits as part of Twinning projects and bilateral contacts with partner countries. In addition, in the context of the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP), he had co-ordinated registrations from the Federal Statistical Office, maintained contacts with Eurostat, organised courses and, last but not least, supported the production of Statistics across borders.

He will be able to make use of his rich experience acquired in the international sphere also in his new unit, which deals with fundamental questions of statistical law, where European regulations are becoming more and more important. We thank him very much for his active and reliable support and wish him every success with his new responsibilities.

News in brief

Kazakhstan

World Bank project with Kazakhstan



On 29 May 2012, the consortium led by the Federal Statistical Office was awarded the contract to carry out the World Bank Twinning project on Strengthening the National Statistical System of Kazakhstan (KAZSTAT). The project partner is the national statistical office of Kazakhstan and the project duration will be five years. In July 2012, the German and Korean project partners travelled to Astana to negotiate the work plan on the basis of the tender. The project agreement will be signed afterwards. Other statistical offices involved in the consortium are those of Finland, Russia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

On the occasion of the 6th meeting of the “German-Kazakh Intergovernmental Working Group on Economy and Trade” held in Hamburg on 26 June 2012, the Federal Statistical Office had the opportunity to present the new project to the representatives of the two countries.

Prior to the application for the World Bank project, the Federal Statistical Office had informed interested staff members in a presentation about Kazakhstan and about intercultural communication with the country. The presentation focused not only on the history, economy and politics but also on cultural specificities to be taken into account when co-operating with Kazakhstan.

Astana Economic Forum

The Astana Economic Forum is a high-level international conference which has been held for some years in Kazakhstan. The V Astana Economic Forum (22 to 24 May 2012) dealt with problems and prospects of the worldwide economic development in times of global change.



One of the 35 events with a total of 5,000 participants from 80 countries was organised by the national statistical office of Kazakhstan on the issue of “statistics and globalisation”. The invited speakers included not only representatives of international organisations such as the UNECE and the World Bank but also the deputy heads of the statistical offices of Australia, Russia and Germany. The discussions focused on approaches to enhancing the relevance and quality of statistical data. The Vice-President of the Federal Statistical Office, Dieter Sarreither, presented the current state of debate on the further development of international trade statistics in view of the challenges faced in the context of an improved measurement of global trade flows.

China

German experts giving speeches at the PR workshop of the Chinese statistical office



From 15 to 17 May 2012, a workshop was held in Nanjing on “Statistical Public Relations Management”, which had been organised by the Chinese statistical office NBS in co-operation with the United Nations Statistics Division. Its target group were in particular some 100 staff members of the NBS and of the regional statistical offices. Upon invitation of the NBS, two Destatis staff members – as international experts – gave speeches especially on press work, crisis communication and the new media.

A major focus of the speeches – which, according to the participants, entailed very interesting discussions – was credibility and how to take account of the needs of statistics users. The events allowed both attendants and speakers to obtain information on the subject-matter developments and the prospects of the colleagues in the other country.

Turkey



Study visit on social statistics

As part of the EU-financed project on “Strengthening the Statistical Capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security”, the Federal Statistical Office participated in a study visit on social statistics.

On 28 February, a delegation comprising representatives of the Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security and of other institutions dealing with social statistics visited the Bonn Branch Office. The experts of the Federal Statistical Office first gave a general overview of the social security systems and their statistical coverage in Germany. Following an intensive and informative exchange of opinions on the issue, items on the afternoon agenda were the statistics of public children and youth welfare and the statistics of people with disabilities. Here, the speeches and discussions focused on the concrete mechanisms of statistics production and especially the use of administrative data.

Once again, the exchange of information during the study visit showed how important and, at the same time instructive national specificities are in statistics production, for example, with regard to different forms of state and administrative organisation.

The programme of the Turkish delegation included further visits to German institutions regarding the issues of labour market and social security.

In the co-operation with the Turkish statistical office, several study visits on various topics will be held in the second half of the year.

Japan



Visit of a Japanese high-level delegation on service statistics

On 21 March 2012, a Japanese delegation, headed by Takeshi Hiromatsu, Professor of the Institute of Information Security of Tokyo University, visited the Federal Statistical Office. He was accompanied by representatives of the Statistics Department of the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Indus-

try (METI). Welcoming the guests, Vice-President Dieter Sarreither said a few introductory words and mentioned the anniversary of the nuclear accident in Fukushima of 11 March 2011, expressing his sympathy.



Professor Takeshi Hiromatsu and Vice-President Dieter Sarreither signing the visitors' book

Before the visit, the delegation had sent a long list of questions. For better mutual understanding, the Japanese side presented the system of official statistics in Japan and Christine Kronz (Assistant Head of Section in International Co-operation) provided the guests with background information on German official statistics. The centrepiece of the visit were the speeches by Joachim Weisbrod (Head of Section “Co-ordination of Business Statistics”) on the business register, focusing on service statistics, by Christopher Gräß (Head of Section “Monthly and Annual Reports, Investments in Industry”) on industrial statistics and by Stefan Hauf (Head of Section “Gross Domestic Product: Production Approach”) on productivity measurement. All speeches were met with great interest by the guests.

The visit of the Japanese delegation to Destatis was the main part of a tour through Europe. At the beginning of the week, the guests had discussions at the National Statistical Institute of Italy (Istat) and afterwards the delegation travelled to the National Statistical Institute of France (INSEE) in Paris.

Armenia



Steering Committee meeting in the Twinning project with the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (NSSRA) in Yerevan on 17/18 January 2012

The EU-financed Twinning project to support Armenian statistics is led by the Danish statistical office. The Federal Statistical Office participates as a junior partner and provides short-term experts for national accounts and quality management. Other project partners are the statistical offices of Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Finland.

The project started in January 2011 and will end in January 2013. Other project components are agricultural statistics, ICT, business statistics and price statistics.

As part of his responsibility, the German junior project leader, Mr Ringo Raupach, participated in the 4th Steering Committee meeting, in which reports were given on the project's progress in the past quarter and on the coordination of project activities.

In the components with German participation, all project activities can be carried out according to schedule.

The stay in Yerevan was also used for a meeting with the Permanent Representative of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Armenia to inform him about the engagement of the Federal Statistical Office in the country. The German ambassador participated in the project's kick-off meeting.

In addition, the Federal Statistical Office is involved in a project in Armenia that deals with tourism statistics and is supported by the German Federal Government.

Initial activities of Twinning project with Bosnia and Herzegovina



After the Twinning project started at the end of 2011 with Destatis as junior partner of the Danish statistical office, the implementation phase has now begun. The first mission of the expert from the Federal Statistical Office and a Danish colleague took place in Sarajevo from 30 January to 3 February 2012 under extremely wintry weather conditions. That mission dealt with tourism statistics, the subject on which the German contribution to the project is centred.

Stock was taken of the current situation in tourism statistics on both the supply and demand sides, the next steps were defined and first recommendations given on how to proceed.

Based on that, the second mission in April served to carry out general training activities on tourism statistics and to discuss the challenges of implementing the EU regulation on tourism statistics in the field of accommodation statistics. The expert from Destatis used that mission for dovetailing with another EU-funded project to support tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Following another activity in June to cover mainly the demand side of tourism statistics, work will continue on this project component in the second half of 2012.

Overview of the project activities

		February
Expert mission on tourism statistics	Sarajevo	30 January–3
		June
Expert mission on tourism statistics	Sarajevo	17–20

Traineeships at the Federal Statistical Office

Since 2002, employees from statistical agencies of countries, that belong or want to belong to the European Union, can do an internship of several months at Destatis, tendered and financed by Eurostat. Also at the end of 2011 two so-called trainees visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden for three and a half months in the areas price statistics and national accounts.

Arijana Muhic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, September – December 2011, Wiesbaden: Price Statistics



“My work at Destatis was not just a traineeship. I was involved in daily and ad-hoc work inside the group and was treated as more than just a trainee. My knowledge and working experience were an advantage for me and my working colleagues in Destatis. But there were many tasks for which I was happy to have a chance to work on inside a European statistical office and confirm and broaden my experiences and working habits.

There are many issues I have seen and worked on during my stay in Destatis and I am sure that I will also transfer all the knowledge I have gained to the departments in which the specific tasks will be done, including my department. The most positive effect of my stay is being more self-confident in my working approaches and habits as well as trying to implement some new experiences in my office.

All the colleagues from my group and section accepted me as their friend. I was included in many private activities with these colleagues and through their help and engagement I have gotten so much insight into German cities, culture and history. I think I have also given them some broadened picture of my country and its culture and habits. I appreciate all the colleagues for making me feel like being their friend and for taking time for me and making my stay as easy as possible.”

Nertila Sinakoli, Albania, September – December 2011,
Wiesbaden: National Accounts



“Doing a traineeship in an institution as is the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, which produces independent and high quality statistics, is very valuable and useful for new staff, as I am in the Albanian Statistical Institute, to get experience.

During the traineeship I had the opportunity to participate in different trainings and meetings, which were helpful for me to see even how the process of work in an EU Statistical office is organized and how it works. The staff I was working with had experience in statistics and was available to help and explain every question that I had related to my job.

I have not worked for many years in National Accounts, so the experience that I gathered is very helpful for me and will help me to improve my job in the Albanian Statistical Office. On the other hand, I had the opportunity to take part in different trainings and to have meetings with staff of different units which was good to get knowledge related to their work. I took part in some meetings and internal trainings.

Albania must fulfil some requirements to be part of the European Union, one of them is to produce comparable data with EU countries and use the same methods. For that reason it is important to have staff that has seen how other countries produce statistical data and which methods they use. Having an opportunity to work with a Statistical Office that has produced these data based on EU requirements for many years will help to improve our statistics.

Beside the experience that I gathered related with my job, I have learned many things that will help me in my future career as an economist. I feel much more confident and responsible after the traineeship at Destatis.

I also would like to mention that I have seen many cities in Germany and have learned more about German culture.

I really want to convey my thanks to Destatis staff for providing me a friendly atmosphere.”

Internship report

The work of the international statistical co-operation is regularly supported by interns. We are pleased to be able to print their feedback.

Erika Orban, March/April 2012 in Bonn



“Right from the start I had high expectations about my internship, and I was not disappointed at all. I was very warmly welcomed into the team and given many different things to do. The preparation of the bid for the Kazakhstan project revealed to me how important it is to plan precisely and in detail. There are questions to be answered for instance about the selection of experts and the field in which they specialise.

It was particularly interesting for me to assist the Mongolian delegation in Wiesbaden. It was a lot of fun to discover and talk about cultural differences during dinner and about what we have in common. I also had the opportunity to visit the Federal Statistical Office and attend lectures on time series analysis and national accounts. This gave me the chance to revise my idea of how an exchange of statistics experts works.

Many thanks to the team for their friendly co-operation, all the valuable experience I gained and the good supervision I received during my entire traineeship.”

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