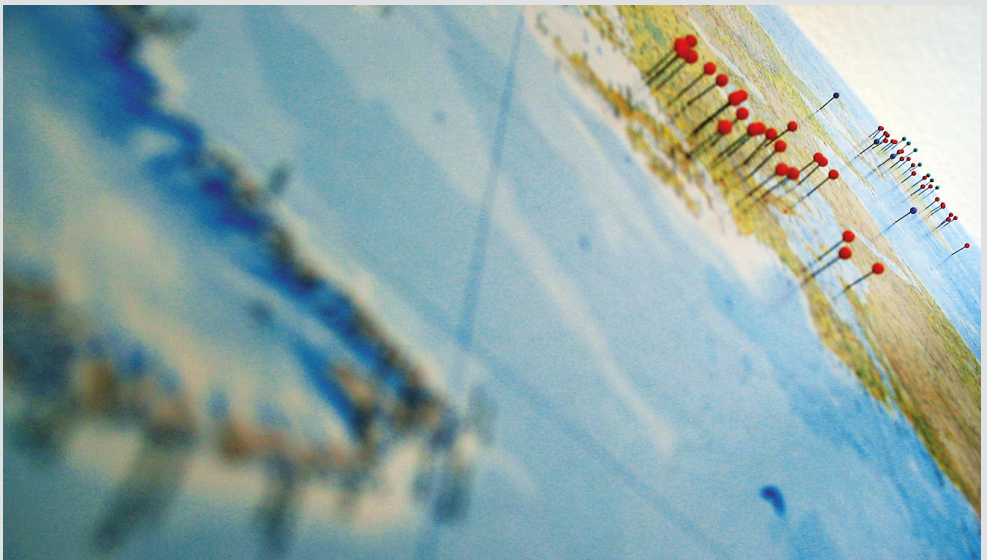


# STATISTICS ACROSS BORDERS

International statistical co-operation



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You may contact us at

[www.destatis.de/kontakt](http://www.destatis.de/kontakt)

Information on “international co-operation”

Phone: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 41

Fax: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 92

Statistical Information Service

Phone: +49 (0) 611 / 75 24 05

Fax: +49 (0) 611 / 75 33 30

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Dear readers,

2011 has been very much a transitional year as regards the international co-operation activities of the Federal Statistical Office. Some large-scale projects were or will be completed. For example, the TAJSTAT co-operation project with Tajikistan, which had been conducted over a period of more than four years, was successfully concluded at the end of June. A wide range of project results could be presented at the associated conference with high-ranking participants in Dushanbe. The EU-funded Twinning project with the Azerbaijani statistical office, which is also nearing its end, will be completed in November 2011.

Changes will occur in ongoing co-operation projects, too. Three of the four subprojects with the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) will be completed by the end of the year. Requests for new topics have already been received. As outlined in this edition of our newsletter, the Federal Statistical Office has continued its co-operation with a number of important partners. Here, we should particularly emphasise the study visits by Mongolian delegations to Wiesbaden, which were undertaken in the context of the current large-scale project funded by the World Bank.

Assistance provided by the staff of the Federal Statistical Office continues to be in great demand at the international level. Hopefully, we can give you more detailed information about some emerging new projects in one of the forthcoming editions.

The editorial team, which was recently joined by Mr Volker Gutekunst, hopes you will enjoy reading this issue of the co-operation newsletter, which provides you with most recent information on our activities in the first six months of 2011.

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

[international-cooperation@destatis.de](mailto:international-cooperation@destatis.de)

The editors



## Tajikistan

### Successful completion of the project

On 18 May 2011, representatives of the Tajik statistical office and the Federal Statistical Office presented the results of the World Bank project on Strengthening the National Statistical System at a final conference in Dushanbe/Tajikistan. The Twinning partners, representatives of the Tajik government and the World Bank, and the independent project evaluator agreed in their positive assessment of the project results. With a budget amounting to 3.1 million US dollars, more than 140 consultations and training activities were carried out in five years under the leadership of the Federal Statistical Office. The statistical institutes of Denmark, Sweden, Slovakia and the Czech Republic also participated in the transfer of knowledge. On the whole, the Tajik partners were advised and trained by 80 German and international experts on more than 1,000 workdays.



Participants of the Conference

Several years of co-operation in the context of a Twinning project have paid off. Official statistics in Tajikistan have come closer to international standards thanks to the work of committed experts. The quality and availability of many sets of statistics and the qualification of the staff at the Tajik statistical office have improved considerably. The Tajik Statistics Act was revised, the statistical office was reorganised and statistical methods were improved. Many new surveys were conducted, too, and the German and international experts helped with the concepts and preparatory work. Such surveys were held in the fields of waste, labour, construction operations, income and living conditions, goods transport, agricultural holdings and households. In addition, the Tajik statistical office conducted a business census and a population census (2010).

To improve user orientation, the Tajik statistical office conducted a user survey whose results were integrated into the daily work. The public relations work of the Tajik statistical office was also improved considerably by introducing a corporate design for publications and by redesigning the website.



Final conference participants in front of the Kohi Vahdat event hall

A great demand for advice and support remains on the Tajik part now that the project has ended. For that reason the World Bank plans to continue supporting official statistics in Tajikistan based on the results of this project and a current requirement analysis.

## Overview of the project activities

		<b>January</b>
Final evaluation	Dushanbe	17–29
		<b>February</b>
Industrial production	Bratislava	7–11
		<b>March</b>
Questionnaire design	Wiesbaden	15–18
National accounts	Dushanbe	28–2 Apr.
		<b>April</b>
Industrial production	Dushanbe	7–20
Strategic planning	Bonn	8–12
Agricultural statistics	Dushanbe	11–16
Input-output accounts	Dushanbe	18–23
Finance statistics	Dushanbe	25–30
		<b>May</b>
Project management/organisation	Dushanbe	16–21
Final conference	Dushanbe	18
Non-observed economy	Dushanbe	26–1 June

## **“There is still a lot to do” – Interview with Mr Mustafa Dinc, Team leader, World Bank**

**As Team leader at the World Bank you have been working with the TAJSTAT project starting from the earliest phase of its preparation. What were the reasons for the World Bank to apply the twinning concept to a project in the field of statistics?**

I would like to note that Tajikistan has not been selected by the World Bank as a beneficiary. In fact, the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (formerly the State Committee on Statistics, or Goskomstat) has initiated this entire undertaking and has been in the driving seat from the very beginning. Since the early 2000s, both the Government of Tajikistan and the Agency have been well aware of the need for improvement of the statistical system of the country in general and of the Agency in particular. The two World Bank missions in November 2001 and March 2002 confirmed that there was a general consensus within administration to revamp and rehabilitate the national statistical system.

As a result, the Agency has prepared a proposal to be funded by the World Bank managed Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB), which was approved in May 2002. The purpose of the proposed project was to develop a long-term statistical plan including the assessment of the statistical system, to strengthen the national accounts, poverty monitoring and expenditure tracking as well as developing and conducting the Labour Force Survey.

The project was successfully implemented by the office and completed on time. The Multi-year Integrated Statistical Plan (MISP) was prepared in consultation with major donors and relevant government agencies. The MISP was shared with all major donors and development partners and the TAJSTAT project was prepared for the implementation of MISP. It



should be noted that as in the previous project the Agency has been in the driving seat from the beginning. The Government of Tajikistan, World Bank, DFID, SIDA and TICA are the contributing partners.

**Why has Tajikistan been selected as a beneficiary?**

TAJSTAT is a comprehensive and relatively complex project involving five major components and 38 sub-components in different fields of official statistics within different government agencies. Timely, efficient and effective implementation of such complex projects is always difficult and could easily become derailed due to a number of reasons. This is particularly true in countries where the initial capacity of the implementing office is quite low and access to international expertise is limited. In such cases, diligent planning is, of course, a must, but what is needed more is a one-stop-shop of expertise in all areas of official statistics so that the recipient office can draw good quality technical assistance on a timely basis.

These were the major reasons why we have looked for a long-term partner for the implementation of the TAJSTAT project. Our thinking at the time was very well in line with the twinning concept. It is now a very well-known fact that twinning is not a simple co-operation, but a long-term and systematic co-operation between recipient and provider partners to achieve specific objectives and deliver agreed results. The co-operation is based on a comprehensive plan and both parties agree in advance on a detailed work program to meet the objectives of this plan. A twinning partnership also requires the objectives of the project to be clearly defined; there should be sufficient political support from the government and strong commitment from the implementing Agency. Since the TAJSTAT project had all these features we agreed that the twinning would fit very well with the project.

**What have been your impressions from the project during the time of its implementation? How did you experience the co-operation with the Tajik colleagues and the implementing Consortium?**

I am very pleased to note that my overall impression of implementation is extremely positive, even though there have been some delays due to unforeseen factors and time to time some misunderstandings between the consortium and the Agency.

We should keep in mind that this is the first time in Tajikistan the Agency has been implementing such a project with the help of a Consortium. From the very beginning both parties have been very enthusiastic and doing a great job in implementing the project. The TAJSTAT project is one of the few projects in Tajikistan that is being implemented as scheduled, disbursing without any delays and will be completed on time, which was confirmed by the Mid-term Review and Project Completion Review reports.

I should also commend the Consortium for their willingness for going the extra mile and being flexible when needed. This was very much appreciated.

### **What lessons have been learnt from the TAJSTAT project?**

There are a number of lessons we have learnt and tried to make necessary adjustments during the implementation, but the first lesson was that the twinning arrangement was the appropriate implementation method for the project. As we come closer to the completion of the project perhaps the most important lesson is that there is still a lot to do.

## Major progress achieved in the World Bank project to enhance the Mongolian statistical system



At the beginning of June 2011, representatives of the Destatis and Statistics Korea consortium met the project team of the Mongolian statistical office and the responsible representative of the World Bank to discuss the results achieved during the first six months of the five-year project. Another important item on the agenda was adjusting and adopting a joint work schedule for the project activities planned until the end of 2011.



Project managers of the World Bank, the Mongolian statistical office (incl. Vice-President Gerelt-Od), Statistics Korea and Destatis

At half-year intervals, meetings of that kind will take place either at the Mongolian statistical office in Ulan Bator or at Destatis in Wiesbaden both to discuss the progress made in project implementation and to reach agreement on the time schedule and the content of the activities to be carried out in the following six months. By the time of the above meeting, the consortium had successfully carried out more than ten consultations. The Mongolian partners were highly satisfied with the work undertaken by the staff of the Federal Statistical Office, supported by Korean and Finnish

colleagues. The representatives of the Mongolian statistical office explained how the knowledge imparted had already been put into practice and how that process should be continued in the future.

A highlight during the first six months was the study visit by a group of 17 heads of Mongolian regional statistical offices to Germany from 23 to 27 May 2011. The guests visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden and Berlin, the Hessian Land Statistical Office and also the Office for Statistics of Berlin-Brandenburg. The visit was designed to give the participants a better insight into the organisational structure of official statistics in Germany, in particular with respect to the functions of the statistical offices of the Länder.



17 representatives of Mongolian regional statistical offices together with Destatis staff

## Overview of the project activities

		<b>December</b>
Business register	Ulan Bator	10–19
		<b>January</b>
Supply and use tables	Ulan Bator	17–22
		<b>February</b>
Improving the institutional framework	Ulan Bator	28–4 Mar.
		<b>March</b>
Gross national income	Ulan Bator	28–1 Apr.
Price statistics	Ulan Bator	28–1 Apr.
Databases and geographical information system	Ulan Bator	28–2 Apr.
		<b>April</b>
Sampling methods	Ulan Bator	4–8
		<b>May</b>
Dissemination and marketing	Ulan Bator	13–19
IT area: establishing registers	Ulan Bator	16–20
Organisation and quality management in statistical institutions	Wiesbaden, Berlin	23–27
IT networks	Ulan Bator	30–5 June
		<b>June</b>
Project planning discussions	Wiesbaden	7–8
Databases and geographical information system	Daejeon	26–2 July

## **Twinning-Project with the Azerbaijan Statistical Office SSC**



**National Accounts are improving  
(interview with Mr. Nuru Suleymanov, leader of Component 1  
“National Accounts” and Component 2 “Non-observed economy”)**

**Did the Twinning as a tool for improvement of the  
statistical methodology meet your expectations?**

Yes, absolutely. It would be more appropriate to say implementation of statistical methodology rather than its improvement. Methodologies and recommendations adopted and used internationally are well-known and available for all interested experts. How to implement them correctly? – this is the issue. And, I think importance of the Twinning format lies especially in the possibility of getting acquainted with practical experience of countries, which have implemented some standards in order to use this experience in the statistical practice of the beneficiary country.



**Which practical results have been achieved so far?**

According to the project time-schedule compilation of Annual Sector Accounts, Input-Output Tables; Supply-and-Use Tables and Financial Accounts have been studied during the missions in the Component 1 “National Accounts”. Experts from the State Statistical Committee (SSC) and European Union (EU) Member States’ experts have exchanged their experience regarding theoretical and practical aspects of works conducted in this field, discussed possibilities and ways for improvement of System of National Accounts (SNA) indicators and methodological approaches in Azerbaijan, and also implementation of the experience of Czech and Bulgarian statisticians into the practice of Azerbaijani statistics.

Along with it, variety of works has been conducted in this field, particularly:

- The process of statistical data collection for SNA compilation has been revised. On the base of questionnaires used in the Czech Republic as well as in Bulgaria an integrated version has been adopted;
- Improved and implemented in practice calculation scheme of holding gains estimations;
- Set of electronic tables for compilation and balancing of annual accounts by institutional sectors, input-output tables, used in the Czech Statistical Office, have been adopted for the SSC and filled out in frame of pilot survey;
- Data sources for financial accounts have been improved;
- Algorithm for defining the sector assignment of the statistical units has been elaborated;
- Estimations of the quarterly GDP were improved.

During the missions concerning Component 2 “Non-Observed Economy” (NOE) a lot of topics have been discussed such as: the data sources; the estimation methods and practice of calculation of non-observed economy; evaluation of the money transfer to abroad; measuring illegal activities.

Pilot labor-force balance has been compiled using data of the SSC and the “Labour expenditures” method for estimation of volume of non-observed economy has been applied. Recommendations concerning its further use and improvement were given.

Data sources for estimation of output and value added in drug sale, illegal production of alcohol drinks were discussed and defined in frame of the mission concerning non-observed economy. Some electronic tables for calculation and balancing of these indicators were prepared. Methodology concerning estimation of Non-observed economy has been elaborated and adopted. Fields of concern and activities to be undertaken for improvement of coverage of SNA indicators and estimation of non-observed economy have been defined.

**What results do you expect in the remaining period of the project?**

- 1) Implementation of EU standards into practice of calculations of SNA indicators.
- 2) Practical recommendations and concepts for improvement of SNA indicators.
- 3) Increase of knowledge and experience of the staff of National Accounts Department.

In particular it has been decided to work towards:

- Changes in organization scheme of SNA compilation;
- Implementation of new electronic tables and models for calculation and balancing of SNA indicators, elaborated on base of tools used in Czech and Bulgarian practice;
- Annual compilation of simplified input-output tables and supply-use tables;
- Improvement of the system of indicators in the sector of financial corporations and financial accounts;
- Improvement of statistical questionnaires implemented in the SSC for improving the system of indicators and data comparability.

**What do you think could be improved?**

I, personally, don't have any suggestions for improvements concerning organization and results from activities carried out in frame of the Twinning project. Taking the chance I would like, on behalf of me and the colleagues of our department, again to thank all stake holders of the project for a good job and support, which they have been carrying out for further implementation of EU experience in the statistical praxis of Azerbaijan. This is our first time co-operating in frame of Twinning project and the only thing which I would improve here during the preparation phase of a new project is the thorough choice of goals and planning of activities for achieving the benchmarks. To my mind, in the preparation of the Twinning Contract of the current project we included as many goals in the Component "National Accounts" as for two Twinning projects. As a result we had to work under a tight schedule which sometimes did not allow us to discuss some questions with MS experts in more detail.

## Do you think the planned activities were enough for the desired improvement or do you need some more?

First of all, as I already mentioned there are some issues which we discussed in frame of this project but which I would like to study more detailed. Secondly, as the saying goes, there's no limit for perfection and this can be exactly said, speaking about the System of National Accounts (or ESA). And this means we have a lot of work in front of us!

## Overview of the project activities

		January
Steering Committee meeting	Baku	12–13
Workshop on Business statistics	Baku	24–25
		February
Price statistics	Prague	14–17
Business statistics	Baku	21–24
		March
Informal economy	Baku	14–17
		April
Steering Committee meeting	Baku	4–5
National accounts	Baku	4–7
National accounts	Baku	12–15
Price statistics	Baku	18–21
National accounts	Baku	25–28
		May
Business statistics	Baku	16–19
National accounts	Prague	31–3 June
		June
Meeting of Twinning management teams	Sofia	6–10
Business statistics	Baku	21–24
Workshop on price statistics	Baku	28–30

**“Madame Chair, thank you for giving me the floor.” Report on the training course on committee work in the European Statistical System (ESS)**



**“The European Statistical System – An introduction to active participation at EU meetings”, Slangerup/Copenhagen, 16 – 18 March 2011, leader: Statistics Denmark**

This year the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) once again gave staff members of European national statistical institutes the opportunity to practise the active participation in task forces, working groups or committees of the European Statistical System (ESS). ESS training courses are co-ordinated by Eurostat and carried out by the statistical institutes of individual member states. It was therefore necessary to apply for the course to the German national ESTP contact point. Seven staff members of Destatis were happy to be assigned the sought-after places in Denmark.

Headed by the Danish team of trainers, 26 participants from 16 countries were warmly welcomed in Copenhagen and invited to explore the capital both on land and on water. After first impressions had been gained of Amalienborg Castle and the Little Mermaid, the group was transferred to the conference area in quiet Slangerup. In view of the undisturbed surroundings we guessed that the agenda of the three days to come would be rather full of work – and we were not disappointed. The aim of the course was to prepare the participants for the day-to-day challenges of international committee work, help them maximise their influence when participating in meetings and train negotiation skills and interest co-ordination.

First of all some background knowledge was required about the structure and functioning of the ESS. The course was organised in line with the individual phases of decision-making and legislative procedure of an EU legal act: preparation, deliberation, decision-making and implementation. By these stages of work, the bodies of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union were presented

as well as their methods and challenges of work. Many exercises gave us the chance to get to know the other colleagues and to profit from their various levels of experience in the field of committee work.



Work session of the ESTP training course on active participation at EU meetings held in Slangerup/Denmark

The most exciting part came at the end – after quite a lot of theoretical input the training began. On the last one and a half days, simulating a meeting of the Council Working Group on Statistics was on the agenda. Parts such as representing a country, chairing the meeting, etc. were assigned and the related negotiation goals were specified exactly. From then on one had to be well prepared, show negotiating skills and have the right timing. The dedicated participants may well have been searching for information far into the night. In addition to content and strategy, networking was necessary for which a “business meal” with Danish delicacies provided an excellent opportunity. The meeting took place on the last day: positions were discussed controversially and proposals were prepared. All in all this gave us

the opportunity to practise what we had learnt in a very well-adapted situation and a demanding way. The programme of the course was rounded off by an overview of the European Statistics Code of Practice and the future tasks of the ESS.

To sum up, it was a course with an ambitious agenda, which offered much interesting information and presupposed very active participation. Committed lecturers and detailed material to be used for preparation and consultation conveyed the information in a very appealing manner. The many interactions and the close interchange with the European colleagues were great fun ... and last but not least the relaxed hospitality of our northern neighbours. Mange tak!

Silvia Vogel

Research, Culture, Vocational Training

## Bilateral co-operation with the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics



**China as a high-growth country and the “workbench of the world” – interview with Mr Martin Beck, Head of Division, responsible for the Business Register, Classifications, Earnings and Cross-Sectoral Business Statistics**

China is one of the major international partners of this Office. The close co-operation between the Federal Statistical Office and the Chinese NBS began in 1993. Since that time, expert consultations have been undertaken on a rather wide range of topics. In what way have you as an expert been involved in statistical co-operation between the Federal Statistical Office and China?



Since November 2008, we have carried out a joint project on earnings statistics. The associated co-operation activities include two one-week work meetings per year: one in China, the other one in Germany. A maximum of five experts of each side participate in these meetings. As head of the German delegation, I am assisted and accompanied by experts of the Federal Statistical Office who are specialised in the issues to be discussed. The procedure of the work meetings is always very similar. Presentations by both sides on the topic selected by the Chinese partners are followed by a thorough discussion. As far as China is concerned, the meetings take place in Beijing, while in the majority of cases a regional statistical office is visited, too. The provinces of that vast country play an important role also in the area of statistics.

**In 2011, the co-operation activities focus additionally on employment statistics, statistical legislation, data dissemination and information services. And what is the focus of co-operation in the area of earnings statistics? What can the Chinese colleagues learn from their German counterparts and what can we learn from China?**

There is a clear difference between producing economic statistics in a centrally planned and in a market economy. For decades, earnings data have been collected in sample surveys in Germany in order to reduce the burden on business and industry. Our data are more than averages, they rather reflect manifold differences regarding, for instance, sex, the training level attained and the level of earnings. This is our status quo which China intends to reach, too. Covering private enterprises is of particular importance to the Chinese colleagues as the economic importance of those businesses has considerably increased in the recent years. At the same time, however, they pay below average wages. As a result of the project, concrete progress has already been achieved in this area. Generally, the focus of co-operation is on the methodology of sample surveys and the selection and use of variables for which data are to be collected.

It is always exciting to hear that official earnings statistics are very much in the public eye in China and to learn how the Chinese colleagues manage that situation. It is in that context that you get an impression of how China sees its role as a high-growth country and the “workbench of the world”.

**Where do you think further co-operation activities should be provided both in terms of earnings statistics and generally?**

Sample surveys involve many questions of methodology. A lot remains to be done in this respect. As a next step, we want to discuss the opportunities and advantages to be gained by using a rolling sample. Questions regarding analyses and reports on the quality of the results obtained in the sample survey would then be a logical continuation. Also, a labour cost survey is still outstanding in China. In view of China’s global economic role, providing comparable data would be of particular importance – just think in terms of competitiveness.

**What motivates you and how do you benefit – be it personally or professionally – from mutual co-operation?**

What motivates me is the fact that the Chinese colleagues are seriously interested in our experience and methodological know-how and that co-operation gives us the opportunity to impact the future earnings statistics in one of the major national economies.

In professional terms, it is especially interesting to discover the possibilities and limits of applying statistical methods that have been proven in Germany under the completely different conditions of the national economy in China.

Personally, our co-operation gives me the chance to follow up on previous university research on China and to continue my relationship with the country. To see how much has changed in China since the late 1980s is really impressive.

### **UN Project: Study visit of Chinese statisticians**

The co-operation with the colleagues from China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) goes beyond the ongoing bilateral co-operation programme (see the interview with Mr Martin Beck). On 24 and 25 January 2011, a delegation of eight from the NBS visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden for one of the activities of a five-year project carried out for the NBS by the United Nations Statistics Division. Under that programme the Chinese colleagues are to be made familiar with the experience gathered at the statistical institutes of other countries in various fields. These include for instance the organisation of business surveys, methods of data collection for business statistics and the use of a business register as a frame. These training measures are to help the colleagues from the NBS to improve and optimise their statistics programme in the field of economic statistics.

During their study visit to Europe the Chinese colleagues did not only come to the Federal Statistical Office but also visited the headquarters of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Vienna and the Hungarian Statistical Office.

The two-day study visit in Wiesbaden started with a detailed introduction to the system of German official statistics. This subject met with great interest, not least because of the considerable differences between the federal

system of official statistics in Germany and the centrally organised system of statistics in China.

Then the Chinese guests discussed the business register and statistical units, methods of data collection and the organisation of business surveys with the German experts. These topics also raised many interesting questions, which led to a lively exchange of information.



From left to right: Mr Liu Bin, Ms Xiaojuan Kahlich-Zhang (interpreter), Mr Lu Shan, Ms Wang Ping, Mr Peng Hua, Ms Jia Nan, Ms Deng Xiaolin, Mr Ringo Raupach (Destatis), Ms Li Shuang, Ms Di Wei, Ms Diana Schüler (Destatis)

A visit to the Hessian Land Statistical Office rounded the visit of the Chinese delegation off. As the delegation showed much interest, the Hessian colleagues presented the system and the tasks of the Hessian Land Statistical Office and answered central questions about the federative structure.

We should like to take the opportunity to thank those involved very much for their commitment and their readiness to provide their expert knowledge.

## Overview of the co-operation activities

		January
Earnings and labour costs	Beijing	17–21
Employment statistics	Beijing	17–21
Business statistics	Wiesbaden	24–25
		May
Earnings and labour costs	Berlin	8–14
		June
Employment statistics	Wiesbaden, Berlin	5–11
Data dissemination via the internet and statistical information services	Wiesbaden, Berlin	19–25

## News in brief

### Postponing does not mean abandoning – study visit by Croatian colleagues



Due to the eruption of the Icelandic Eyjafjallajökull volcano in March 2010, a long-planned study visit had to be postponed at short notice. The visit to the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden then took place on 14 April 2011. The Croatian delegation, which comprised high-ranking representatives of business and industry, the media and institutions of higher education, was accompanied by a member of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. After the Croatian delegation was briefly introduced to the system of German official statistics, the data survey of economic trends in Germany was presented. As it seems possible for Croatia to join the European Union in 2013, the participants were especially interested in having another consultation on harmonising economic statistics next year.



Members of the Croatian delegation engaged in a conversation with a member of staff of the Federal Statistical Office

## Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



The EU project to support the Macedonian statistical office was continued successfully. German experts carried out two consultations on financial services and on construction prices in Skopje. In addition, a representative of the Federal Statistical Office participated in the Steering Committee meeting in Skopje.

### Overview of the project activities

		February
Financial intermediation services indirectly measured (FISIM)	Skopje	28–3 Mar.
		May
Steering Committee meeting	Skopje	17
		June
Construction price statistics	Skopje	6–9

### The labour cost index in countries of the Western Balkans

Funded by the 2009 IPA programme of the European Union, two expert missions on the labour cost index took place in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Montenegro in May and June, respectively. The objective of the seminars, held by experts of the Federal Statistical Office over a period of two days each, was to adopt further EU standards in the relevant statistical areas. Plans have been made to organise, based on the results of this year's seminars, two further missions – one to Skopje, the other one to Podgorica – at the beginning of next year.

## Project with Armenia – Being a junior partner of the Danish statistical office



As a junior partner, Destatis is involved in the EU Twinning project AM09/ENP-PCA/TP/04 to provide Support to the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (NSSA) that is led by the Danish statistical office.

The project, which has a budget of one million euros, comprises the following six components:

- Strengthening the quality management system
- Reduction of reporting burden for structural business surveys
- National accounts – exhaustiveness of GDP estimates
- Development of methodology and preparation of the Census of Agriculture
- Introduction of the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP)
- Statistics on the information society

The implementation phase of the project which will run over a period of 24 months began in January 2011. As a junior partner, Destatis supports the Danish statistical office in the following project components: Strengthening the quality management system and National accounts – exhaustiveness of GDP estimates.

## Overview of the project activities

		February
Quality management – inception activity	Yerevan	14–18

## Consultation with Belarusian experts on construction price statistics



In close co-ordination with the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology and the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Statistical Office received a Belarusian delegation on 28 February 2011 to have a discussion about weighting patterns in the context of the statistics of construction operation prices. Staff members of the Destatis unit responsible for Agricultural and Construction Prices, Land Market presented the German experiences in the field. The reason for the visit was the Belarusian intention to apply the relevant EU standards in the area of construction in the future.

## Strengthening German-Russian co-operation: study visit on information technology



As the Russian statistical office (ROSSTAT) is considered a strategically important partner of the Federal Statistical Office, a regular exchange of experience on topical issues of official statistics has been carried out as part of the co-operation between the two offices in the past few years.



Russian delegation with the former Vice-President Peter Weigl and Destatis representatives

Between 1 and 3 March 2011, a delegation including representatives of ROSSTAT and its regional statistical offices (e.g. in Komi, Krasnoyarsk and Tatarstan) visited the Federal Statistical Office to exchange views on topics like IT infrastructure, statistical data standards and IT security. The Russian delegation was headed by Mr Sabelin, Vice-President of ROSSTAT. The Destatis Department of Information Technology, Mathematical-Statistical Methods and colleagues of the Hessian Land Statistical Office were responsible for the exchange of experience at the expert level.

### **Eurostat – Destatis meeting to exchange information**

On the occasion of the appointment of Ms Claudia Junker as Head of Unit – Statistical cooperation with European and Mediterranean countries at Eurostat, colleagues from the Federal Statistical Office and Eurostat met in Luxembourg to exchange views on statistical co-operation matters. The Destatis representatives presented the range of services offered by the Federal Statistical Office in the area of statistical co-operation. The presentation covered ongoing projects, too. In addition to the Office's expert knowledge in the statistical domain, the focus was on the support services provided in the context of the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) and Statistical Capacity Building (incl. management courses). Afterwards, the Eurostat colleagues explained the orientation of the current and future EU-funded co-operation projects. Another purpose of the meeting was to give the new representatives on both sides the chance to get to know each other.



### **EECCA meeting of heads of statistical offices in Athens**

This year's high-level seminar for the heads of statistical offices of the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Central Asian countries, which was chaired by Eurostat, took place in Athens from 21 to 23 June 2011. Regarding the topic of Quality Matters in Statistics, the participants described their experiences with programmes and activities aimed at sustainable quality improvement. All participating institutions are faced with the challenges of an improved quality management regarding the procedures applied and results obtained, the necessity of professional independence and impartiality, and the requirement to ensure higher qualification of their staff. At

the invitation of Eurostat, Ms Moore, representative of the Federal Statistical Office, gave a presentation on the Development of Human Resources and Change Management and headed a meeting of the seminar. In her presentation that received considerable attention, Ms Gukasova, representative of the Tajik office, underlined the results of the TAJSTAT project component on Dissemination, which were obtained with the support of the Federal Statistical Office.

### Visit by a Japanese delegation at the time of the Fukushima disaster



The visit took place when the devastating earthquake hit the eastern coast of Japan. Despite the incidents especially in Fukushima, a Japanese delegation of the statistical department of the Ministry of Agriculture in Tokyo visited, among others, the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden and Bonn on 14 and 16 March 2011. The delegation comprising three members received information about the system of official statistics in Germany. It showed particular interest in the principle of professional independence of the statistical offices of the Federation and the Länder. The exchange of information also focused on the functions of Destatis in the area of agricultural statistics and, in particular, on the statistics on land use and crop production. The delegation visited the Hessian Land Statistical Office, too. The Hessian colleagues explained the system of agricultural statistics in the Land Hesse. The programme of the visit to Germany also included a visit to the Hessian Ministry of the Environment, Energy, Agriculture and Consumer Protection.

### Turkey



### Overview of ongoing co-operation activities with TURKSTAT, the Turkish Statistical Institute

		April
Construction price index	Wiesbaden	11–12
		May
Tourism satellite accounts (TSA) in national accounts	Ankara	9–13

## Internal changes



In March 2011 Volker Gutekunst joined the international co-operation team. Mr Gutekunst has broad experience in the international sphere. After obtaining his Master's degree in International Relations he worked for the UN in Buenos Aires and for a consulting firm. As new staff member of the Bonn Section he will be responsible, among others, for the co-operation with Turkey and be on the editorial team of "Statistics across borders". We are happy about the new addition to our team and wish him much success.

## Traineeships

Trainees regularly support the international statistical co-operation unit in its work.

Valentina Dudinov, February to April 2011 in Bonn



Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Russia, China, Mongolia ...

"Does the EU finance the project with Azerbaijan or is it the World Bank? There is a bilateral co-operation with which country again? And then, what are these projects about?" At the beginning of my traineeship I had questions upon questions. How I could possibly remember all these things and get involved – these were the concerns I had. But thanks to the staff of the international statistical co-operation unit they vanished into thin air in no time. Whenever I had questions or problems, they were ready to help in any possible way. I was cordially welcomed in the team and right from the start I was involved in many projects and tasks. I was always given quite different tasks which I could deal with on my own drawing upon my knowledge and abilities.

I also had the opportunity to spend several weeks in Wiesbaden and get to know the headquarters of the Federal Statistical Office. I was lucky in that I had the chance to welcome delegations from Russia and Tajikistan during that period – a very good opportunity to see what project management means outside office walls.

Finally I can say that my traineeship at the Federal Statistical Office did not fall short of my expectations at all. During these ten weeks I got to know many interesting people and it was a good experience I certainly would not want to miss.

Otto Kähm, May to July 2011 in Bonn



Even though maths is not a field of university study that is typical of trainees in the international statistical co-operation unit, I enjoyed my traineeship very much.

It was very positive for me that I was allowed to handle tasks on my own but did not feel left alone. There was always some staff member I could ask for help.

The highlight of my traineeship surely was the chance to provide some assistance to a visiting Chinese delegation. For one week I was allowed to accompany the delegation consisting of five members of the Chinese Bureau of Statistics (NBS) together with Mr Günter Moser, who was responsible for the project, and the expert leader responsible for the subject matter, Mr Hermann Seewald. This gave me the chance to see how much planning and effort is needed to implement such a project.

All in all I can say that my traineeship was great fun, thanks above all to my friendly colleagues.

Important – please note:

If you wish to subscribe to the electronic edition of “Statistics across borders”, just send an e-mail to:

[international-cooperation@destatis.de](mailto:international-cooperation@destatis.de)

## **Who is Who?**

### **in international co-operation**

#### **Management, Bonn**

Federal Statistical Office  
Bonn Branch  
international co-operation, language service  
P.O. Box 17 03 77  
D – 53029 Bonn  
Fax: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 92  
international-cooperation@destatis.de

#### **Head of division**

##### **Waltraud Moore**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 41  
waltraud.moore@destatis.de

#### **Project and financial controlling**

##### **Michael Schäfer**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 30  
michael.schaefer1@destatis.de

## **EU accession countries, European Neighbourhood countries, China, developing countries – (Bonn)**

**Head of section**

**Ringo Raupach**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 32

ringo.raupach@destatis.de

**Volker Gutekunst**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 12

volker.gutekunst@destatis.de

**Manfred Waschkowski**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 14

manfred.waschkowski@destatis.de

**Leonhard Fix**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 36

leonhard.fix@destatis.de

**Jochen Arnhold**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 38

jochen.arnhold@destatis.de

**Günter Moser**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 34

guenter.moser@destatis.de

**Bilateral contacts with statistical offices outside the EU and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), National ESTP contact point, World Bank project Mongolia – (Wiesbaden)**

**Federal Statistical Office**

international co-operation, language service

D – 65180 Wiesbaden

Fax: +49 (0) 611 / 75 39 50

**Head of section**

**Simone Koll**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 42 81

simone.koll@destatis.de

**Christine Kronz**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 46 42

christine.kronz@destatis.de

**Dennis Claus**

Tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 47 10

dennis.claus@destatis.de