



Statement of the Members of the European Statistical System on recent developments concerning ELSTAT in Greece

We the undersigned, who collectively as members of the European Statistical System Committee are responsible for overseeing the production of European Statistics to be in compliance with the highest professional standards throughout the European Union, wish to express our deep concern at recent developments with regard to ELSTAT in Greece, which we believe can affect not only the integrity of official statistics in that country, but also the functioning of the European Statistical System as a whole.

While fully respecting the independence of national judicial systems and abstaining from commenting on on-going court cases, we are concerned that political debates surrounding judicial action taken against the Head of the Greek statistical office (ELSTAT) and the calling into question of the validity of data which have repeatedly passed the stringent quality checks applied by Eurostat to ensure full compliance with European law seem to disregard commonly agreed European procedures.

The production of European Statistics on the basis of common rules and standards is the main task and objective of the European Statistical System (composed of Eurostat and National Statistical Institutes of EU/EFTA Member States). In particular, statistics of high policy relevance, such as public finance statistics (including figures on deficit and debt), are produced according to very precise standards, under a strict European legal framework and fall under a special scrutiny procedure. To achieve the maximum comparability of public finance data across the EU, the data are subject to close scrutiny before final approval by Eurostat.

Furthermore, the European Statistics Code of Practice stipulates that the credibility of European Statistics shall be ensured by professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators.

We are encouraged that in Greece many important steps have been taken in recent years to reinforce the credibility of official data, such as the new statistics law establishing ELSTAT as an independent statistical institute or the signing by the Greek government of a Commitment on Confidence in European statistics and its subsequent endorsement by the Greek Parliament. We are confident that Greek authorities will do everything necessary to protect the independence of ELSTAT, its management and its staff from political and all other interference and support ELSTAT in ensuring that statistics in Greece are produced in line with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

The European Statistical System will very closely observe the further developments in the Greek statistical system.

The Director General of Eurostat and the Presidents/Directors General
of National Statistical Institutes of the European Union and EFTA