

**PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS OF THE
FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE OF GERMANY IN RESPONSE TO THE
RECOMMENDATIONS**

PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND IMPROVING THE FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR PRODUCING OFFICIAL STATISTICS

1. The legal provisions for and the practice of appointment of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should comply with the principle of professional independence. A transparent appointment procedure and clear selection criteria emphasising the professional qualifications of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and Other National Authorities producing European statistics should be established in law. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The procedures of appointing the President of the Federal Statistical Office, the Heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and statistical heads of Other National Authorities are based on the relevant provisions in terms of law relating to public officials, of collective bargaining law and of labour law at the federal and Land levels.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION:

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is envisaged.

TIMELINE:

N. A.

2. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should amend the relevant legal provisions and clearly underline the responsibility of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the heads of the Other National Authorities producing European statistics for deciding on statistical methods and standards and the content and timing of statistical releases. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.4.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 (incl. the amendments that will enter into force soon), which is directly applicable in each Member State, lays down these responsibilities for European statistics as a whole and, consequently, for all Other National Authorities.

Article 1, second sentence, of the Federal Statistics Law lays down the principle of scientific independence of the system of federal statistics and hence of all authorities producing federal statistics. The relevant authorities' deciding on statistical methods and standards and the content and timing of releases is derived from this.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 2: THE FEDERAL STATISTICAL LAW TO UNDERLINE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATISTICAL AUTHORITIES

Several items of the Federal Statistics Law are to be amended soon. In this context, the term 'scientific independence' is to be replaced by 'professional independence'. The Federal Statistical Office will suggest to the competent ministry to integrate in the explanatory

memorandum a statement that professional independence includes decisions on statistical methods and standards and the content and timing of releases.

Apart from that, see also the remarks on Recommendation 28.

TIMELINE:

The draft of a proposal for an Act amending the Federal Statistics Law will be discussed in 2015.

3. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should simplify the procedure for ordering statistical surveys, delegating entire responsibility for designing statistical surveys to the statistical authorities. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 1.3 and 1.4; Principle 11.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The implementation of EU legal provisions regarding European statistics in national law is based on the constitutional principles of legislation. The principle that statistics are generally ordered by way of federal laws or ordinances is laid down in the Federal Statistics Law. With a view to the constitutional right to informational self-determination, this principle provides transparency as to what personal data are collected or are processed from administrative data stocks.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION:

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is envisaged.

TIMELINE:

N. A.

4. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should regularly compile and publish a consolidated national statistical work programme covering statistical surveys and other statistical activities of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and Other National Authorities producing European statistics. Periodic progress reports should also be published. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.5.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Federal Statistical Office has compiled Strategy and Programme Plans for ten years. Each Strategy and Programme Plan is available free of charge to the public at the Federal Statistical Office's website (<https://www.destatis.de/EN/AboutUs/OurGoals/StrategyProgrammePlan2018.html>). Every year, this publication is updated and the planning horizon rolled forward.

Further to this, the Federal Statistical Office, in tandem with the Statistical Offices of the Länder, implemented a strategic priority area plan for the system of official statistics in 2012. Currently, the statistical offices have identified and (internally) documented eight action areas with strategic goals and prioritised actions. Implementing these actions is subject to regular control.

A relevant publication has not yet been made outside the system of official statistics. However, information on the progress achieved in selected areas is published in a summarised form in the annual report of the Federal Statistical Office.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 4: CONSOLIDATED NATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK PROGRAMME

The statistical work programme will be expanded to include Other National Authorities' statistics and be published in this form. This will require detailed coordination meetings with the Other National Authorities. Note that there is a link between this improvement action and the relevant action relating to Recommendation 28.

TIMELINE:

Expansion of the documentation and publication strategy for a consolidated statistical work programme including a progress report, and coordination with the Other National Authorities: 4th quarter of 2017.

Publication of the expanded statistical programme including the Other National Authorities and the progress report: 2nd quarter of 2018.

5. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany, in cooperation with the Statistical Offices of the Länder, should elaborate a common communication and dissemination policy which should, among other things, define the procedure for commenting publicly on statistical issues. It should also be adopted by the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.7.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

A common dissemination policy of the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder is regulated in a "Marketing Concept" which is an internal working paper.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 5: COMMON COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION POLICY

The Federal Statistical Office elaborates in cooperation with the Statistical Offices of the Länder a common communication and dissemination policy that addresses the requirements of the European statistics Code of Practice and will be published on the internet. It will define the procedure for commenting publicly on statistical issues. The initiative for adoption by the Other National Authorities will be carried out in the context of improvement action 28.

TIMELINE:

Communication and dissemination policy published: 02/2016

STRENGTHENING USER ORIENTATION

6. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should establish a policy of improving the timeliness of statistical products in order to better address the needs of the user community. This policy should be supported by a detailed internal work schedule. Timeliness should also be systematically measured. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 13.1.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Federal Statistical Office operates a timeliness control system to measure and assess, based on targets, the punctuality of certain work steps for both the system of official statistics and the Federal Statistical Office. The actual time difference between the first release date and the reference date for a given set of statistics, which is referred to as timeliness, is calculated, too.

However, a clear definition of what should be referred to as 'first release' and, based on this, an across-the-board assessment of the timeliness of the individual sets of statistics are missing, as is a strategy for improving timeliness.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 6: TIMELINESS OF STATISTICAL PRODUCTS

The Federal Statistical Office will determine in each case what should be regarded as 'first release'. The deadlines to be measured - and potentially specified intermediate steps - will be recorded. In this way, timeliness measurement will be implemented across the board.

On this basis, a strategy for assessing and improving timeliness will be developed and introduced.

TIMELINE:

Definition of what should be regarded as 'first release' for the individual sets of statistics: 12/2015

Across-the-board implementation of the timeliness control system and, subsequently, start of recording and measuring: 12/2016

Policy for assessing and improving timeliness in place: 12/2017

7. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should publish a comprehensive annual release calendar for statistical products. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.5.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

At the moment, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany publishes both a weekly and an annual release calendar of its press releases. The annual calendar includes 26 statistical indicators and 215 release dates. However, the list is not complete as its basis is the “Advance Release Calendar” of the International Monetary Fund.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 7: COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL RELEASE CALENDAR FOR STATISTICAL PRODUCTS

The Federal Statistical Office is planning to expand the annual release calendar in two ways. Firstly, a complete overview of all press releases that can be scheduled in advance will be implemented. Secondly, the annual release calendar will be presented in a more user-friendly way. Instead of offering a pdf document, a database will be established so that the release dates and the indicators can be searched for and sorted by release date and theme.

TIMELINE:

Comprehensive annual release calendar published: 01/2016

8. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should implement a uniform and transparent policy and procedures for planned regular and irregular revisions of statistical data. It should also publish a comprehensive release calendar for planned revisions. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.6 and 8.6.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

To date, individual statistics-specific revision practices of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany have been well documented and communicated. But this information is scattered on the webpage or in various documents and the terminology used in the context of revisions is not always consistent. In addition, comprehensive documentation is provided only for part of the 85 sets of statistics where revisions are employed.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 8: GENERAL REVISION POLICY AND REVISION CALENDAR

A general revision policy and a revision calendar are currently being developed by the Federal Statistical Office and will be published on www.destatis.de. This provides for more transparency and a better understanding of the revision processes of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany. Also, the revision policy serves as an important reference frame for the specialised units and will thus, for example, advance the consistent use of revision terminology.

TIMELINE:

General revision policy published: 07/2015

Revision calendar published: 07/2015

9. The Federal Motor Transport Authority should change the practice of providing some users with intermediate results of the statistical survey on the registration of motor vehicles. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.7.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

On the basis of a longstanding contractual agreement, the statistics on the first registration of passenger cars (which is not a European statistics) made on the preceding day are currently supplied every day to three clients outside the NSS; the monthly accounts of registration data are made available to the general public as monthly evaluations. The existence of this special kind of custom-designed analyses is not publicised at present. In principle, custom-designed analyses are offered publicly to all users.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 9: THE FEDERAL MOTOR TRANSPORT AUTHORITY'S PRACTICE OF PROVIDING INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Even though the practice does not touch European Statistics, the NSI and the Federal Motor Transport Authority will investigate by what means this delivery of data or its prevailing conditions shall be adjusted in order to comply with the CoP.

TIMELINE:

Decision on adjustment: 12/2015

Adjustment: 03/2016

10. A common procedure on correction of errors discovered in published statistics should be agreed among the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics and published on their websites. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.3.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

For the Federal Statistical Office of Germany the "Guideline on how to deal with publication errors" entered into force in 2011. It also applies to joint publications of the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder. For their own publications the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the other national producers of European statistics generally do not yet have corresponding guidelines.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 10: COMMON PROCEDURE ON CORRECTION OF ERRORS IN PUBLISHED STATISTICS

Within the Working Group for the Quality of Statistical Processes and Products as well as within the working group with other national producers of European statistics the Federal Statistical Office is working towards the use and publication of a similar policy for dealing with publication errors by the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Producers of European statistics to ensure harmonised communication and treatment of publication errors.

TIMELINE:

Promotion of "Guideline on how to deal with publication errors" with Statistical Offices of the Länder: 10/2015

Promotion of "Guideline on how to deal with publication errors" with Other National Authorities producing European statistics: 12/2015

11. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should check the pricing policy of the research data centres and, if possible, reduce the tariffs in order to facilitate the use of microdata for scientific purposes. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The charges for using data offered by the research data centres of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder were evaluated in 2014. On 1 January 2015, a new price model became effective. The price of data sets based on several sets of statistics has been reduced. Price reductions have been introduced for doctoral candidates and students. Another evaluation will take place in two years.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION:

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is envisaged.

TIMELINE:

N. A.

ENHANCEMENT OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

12. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should adopt quality guidelines which describe in detail the implementation of quality management within the statistical production processes based on the Generic Statistical Business Process Model. These or similar quality guidelines should also be adopted by the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. Application of the guidelines and monitoring results are to be reported annually. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.2.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The "Quality Standards in German Official Statistics" have been in place since 2006. Additionally, the business process model of official statistics (GMAS), a national adaptation of the GSBPM, and the ESS Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) are in use. There are no general quality guidelines that combine the relevant quality management aspects of these three documents.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS:

12.1: QUALITY GUIDELINES

In collaboration with the Statistical Offices of the Länder in the Working Group for the Quality of Statistical Processes and Products, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany is currently developing quality guidelines that specify quality principles and quality objectives for each part of the statistical production process according to the GSBPM. Hence, the quality guidelines will support specialist statisticians in the quality assurance of their statistics and will provide users with a comprehensive view of the quality standards of official statistics.

Within the working group with other national producers of European statistics, the Federal Statistical Office will launch an initiative to make the quality guidelines also known to the Other National Authorities and to promote their adoption.

12.2: MONITORING OF THE APPLICATION OF THE QUALITY GUIDELINES

In collaboration with the Statistical Offices of the Länder in the Working Group for the Quality of Statistical Processes and Products, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany is developing a strategy for the annual monitoring of the application of the quality guidelines and for annual reports on the monitoring results.

TIMELINE:

12.1: Adoption of quality guidelines by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder: 6/2016
Initiative to adopt quality guidelines by Other National Authorities: 12/2016

12.2: Development of a strategy for monitoring the application of the guidelines: 12/2017
Start of monitoring of the application of the guidelines: 01/2018

13. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should implement guidelines for the assessment and the validation of source data and intermediate results. The guidelines should also be adopted by the Statistical Offices of the Länder and possibly also by the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 8.5 and 12.1.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

Over a decade ago, a German handbook was produced for the statistical data editing and imputation process, also covering the process of assessment and validation of the data.

Also, several shared IT tools support a harmonised approach to data editing in the German statistical system: The “.BASE data edit designer” is a standard tool for specifying validation rules for the validation of source data. “Data edit runtime environment”, is another tool for the checking and validation of source data. Regular training courses introducing those tools are offered.

Currently, Destatis is coordinating an ESSNET project on validation methods (ESSNET ValiDat - Foundation). One of the main deliverables of this project will be a first version of a handbook of validation methods and techniques. There is also an on-going methodology project at the Federal Statistical Office, aiming at a harmonisation of the validation process.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 13: IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDELINES FOR DATA VALIDATION

The Federal Statistical Office will produce a revised version of the handbook of methodology for the statistical data editing and imputation process and will reconcile it with the Statistical Offices of the Länder.

The set of data editing rules applied will be analysed for some statistics, and workshops on data editing methods will be organised.

Building on the results of this work and on the outcome of the ESSNET ValiDat – Foundation project, guidelines for data editing will be developed and the handbook will be revised and extended accordingly.

TIMELINE:

First draft revised version of the German handbook of methodology for the statistical data editing and imputation process: 05/2015

ESSNET ValiDat – Foundations draft handbook of validation methods and techniques: 12/2015

Workshops on validation methods carried out: 05/2016

Guidelines for data validation: 07/2017

14. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should establish formalised communication with owners of administrative data and provide them with tools for systematic assessment of data quality. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 8.9.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder have established communication with many owners of administrative data. However, this communication is not always institutionalised and formalised.

In a few cases the statistical offices supply the owners of administrative data and software providers with tools or checking rules to assess the quality of those data. Since the owners of administrative data have a strong focus on their own purposes of use, they conduct few (if any) quality checks for statistical purposes.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS:

14.1: COMMUNICATION WITH OWNERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Identifying best practices regarding the communication with institutions whose administrative data are already used at the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder respectively.

14.2: INITIATIVE FOR AN ACT AMENDING THE FEDERAL STATISTICS LAW TO ENHANCE THE USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

In the context of amending the Federal Statistics Law, it is intended to codify a new regulation on the statistical use of administrative data. The goal is to enhance, on this basis, the use of administrative data in the production of federal statistics. The regulation will encourage both the legislators and the statistical offices to envisage more often the use of administrative data for the production of federal statistics. While administrative data are frequently used already now, the new regulation will make such use a general principle.

The aim of the new regulation is that institutions owning administrative data will for the first time be obliged to formally cooperate with the Federal Statistical Office to enable the latter to obtain metadata of those administrative data. The new regulation will also include a provision stipulating that institutions owning administrative data are obliged to transmit, upon request, formally anonymised microdata from their stock of administrative data to the Federal Statistical Office so that the data can be examined for suitability. Via the federal ministry responsible in terms of subject matter, the Federal Statistical Office will initiate the formalised communication with institutions whose administrative data will be used in the future.

14.3: STRATEGY FOR THE PROVISION OF TOOLS TO OWNERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

On this basis, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany in cooperation with the Statistical Offices of the Länder will develop a strategy for the provision of tools or checking rules for the systematic examination of the data quality according to the standards of official statistics to be used by the owners of administrative data.

TIMELINE:

14.1: Identification of best practices with regard to the communication with institutions whose administrative data are already being used by the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder respectively: 4th quarter of 2016

14.2: The draft of a proposal for an Act amending the Federal Statistics Law will be discussed in 2015.

14.3: Development of a strategy for the provision of assessment tools or checking rules to owners of administrative data: 12/2017

15. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should provide users with quality reports for all statistics. The available reports should be improved by standardising the format and enhancing the homogeneity of the contents. For internal purposes and for expert users, producer-orientated quality reports should be available. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3, 6.4 and 15.5.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany has been publishing user oriented quality reports for all statistics since 2005. These are subject to European and national standards regarding their structure and update frequency, which are described in detailed national guidelines. Since the end of 2012 a database application has been used facilitating the creation and maintenance of the quality reports by the specialised units and ensuring a consistent and standardised format. This database is not yet being used by all units and the quality of the content and the timeliness of the quality reports are heterogeneous. There is no general approach to the creation of producer-oriented quality reports.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS:

15.1: HOMOGENEITY OF QUALITY REPORTS

All specialised units of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany create quality reports for all statistics using the database provided to ensure a uniform structure. The quality of the content and the timeliness of the reports are continuously reviewed by the responsible organisational unit. Where necessary, the quality reports are improved in cooperation with the specialised units.

15.2: PRODUCER-ORIENTED QUALITY REPORTS

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany will develop a standardised structure for producer-oriented quality reports, will create such reports for selected statistics and will make them available for internal purposes as well as for expert users.

TIMELINE:

15.1: Comprehensive application of the database, use of the standardised format, regular update and homogenous quality of content for all quality reports: 07/2016

15.2: Development of a standardised structure for producer-oriented reports on quality: 06/2017

Producer-oriented reports on quality are made available for selected statistics: 12/2017

16. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should provide users with all relevant metadata about the methodology of statistical processes, including the use of administrative data and quality indicators. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.4 and 15.6.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The national quality reports contain basic information about the methodology of statistics including the use of administrative data. In addition, quality indicators are presented in the reports if they are available. Statistical methodology papers on many sets of statistics are published on the website of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany. Additional metadata are available to users via the distribution system GENESIS.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 16: METHODOLOGICAL REPORTS

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany will develop a standardised structure for methodological reports, will create such reports and will make them available to users.

TIMELINE:

Development of a standardised structure for methodological reports: 12/2017

Methodological reports are made available for selected statistics: 12/2018

17. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should systematically and comprehensively measure sampling and non-sampling errors. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should prepare guidelines to support the Statistical Offices of the Länder in this task. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 12.2.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

In principle, sampling errors are calculated for each sample survey. However, for many statistics non-sampling errors are not measured systematically and comprehensively.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 17: QUALITY DATA SHEETS

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder implement the quality data sheets, whose aim is to technically support the calculation of quality indicators regarding accuracy of the statistics and various other indicators on the quality of the statistical production processes.

TIMELINE:

Start of implementation of quality input papers for statistics that are subject to European quality monitoring procedures: 01/2017

Currently planned end of implementation of quality input papers: 12/2019

18. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should develop guidelines on how to monitor internal coherence and conduct such monitoring in a systematic way. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 14.1.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

At survey level, studies about accounting identities, about the coherence of monthly, quarterly and annual results as well as between basic statistics and national accounts are carried out regularly. In addition, coherence is discussed in the context of statistical development projects, e. g. "Reform of business statistics" and "Further Development of the System of Household Statistics." General and overarching guidelines for coherence monitoring are lacking.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 18: MONITORING COHERENCE OF STATISTICS

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany will develop overarching guidelines and a framework for the implementation of a systematic monitoring of the coherence of statistics.

TIMELINE:

Development of guidelines on how to monitor internal coherence: 12/2017

Start of systematic monitoring of coherence: 01/2018

19. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should develop a comprehensive concept for carrying out internal audits or for initiating audits by external experts. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.4.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Federal Statistical Office is subject to an EFQM assessment every 3 years. Various tools exist for reviewing statistical output, for example DESAP based self-assessments. A Process Management System systematically examines statistical production processes. So far, however, neither the Federal Statistical Office nor the Statistical Offices of the Länder have systematically carried out audits for reviewing the quality of statistical products.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 19: STRATEGY FOR QUALITY REVIEWS

In the Working Group for the Quality of Statistical Processes and Products, the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder will develop a strategy for the implementation of quality reviews for individual statistics.

TIMELINE:

Development of a strategy for carrying out reviews: 12/2017

USING ADMINISTRATIVE DATA, EXTENDING RESPECTIVE LEGAL MANDATES, MODERNISING STATISTICAL PROCESSES AND ENSURING STATISTICAL CAPACITY

20. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more generic legal provisions providing the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder with a more flexible mandate to use administrative data for statistical purposes in order to reduce the response burden and underpin the quality of statistics. The Federal Statistical Office should take the lead in promoting this. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.2.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The statistical offices of the Federation and the Länder have a right of access to administrative data to the extent that this is explicitly and concretely regulated by law. However, many such provisions are in place. In most cases these provisions grant access to the relevant data for compiling a concrete set of statistics.

In accordance with Section 2 Subsection 1, first sentence, number 2 of the Law on the Use of Administrative Data, the statistical offices receive the administrative data governed by this law in particular for using them "for economic statistics prescribed by a legal provision". Regarding non-economic statistics, in the German social and political environment with its high demands on data protection a more general permit of using administrative data is not feasible.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 20: MANDATE FOR THE USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

The Federal Statistical Office will suggest to the competent ministry to amend Section 2 Subsection 1, first sentence, number 2 of the Law on the Use of Administrative Data as to permit using the administrative data governed by this law for the purpose of economic statistics.

TIMELINE:

Proposal for amending the Law on the Use of Administrative Data: end of 2015.

21. Arrangements should be put in place whereby the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics are consulted on the design and make-up of administrative databases. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 8.7.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The statistical offices of the Federation and the Länder are in contact with many owners of administrative data. However, information and views on the design and make-up of administrative databases are exchanged only occasionally.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 21: DESIGN AND MAKE-UP OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATABASES

The Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder will seek involvement in the so-called advisory boards of users set up by owners of administrative databases.

Apart from that, see also the remarks on Recommendation 14.

TIMELINE:

It is planned to be a member of the relevant advisory boards of users by end of 2017.

22. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt the next Census Act in such a way that the individual data are archived permanently and not just for a limited period of time and should continue to include appropriate rules relating to confidentiality and data security. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 9.5 and 9.6.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The register of addresses and buildings was basically designed to coordinate the individual steps of the census of buildings and housing and to prepare (and serve as the sampling frame for) the sample-based household surveys in the framework of the 2011 Census. In addition, the register of addresses and buildings was used to develop a system of spatial analyses and statistical result presentation. In accordance with Section 15 Subsection 3 of the Census Preparation Act, the register of addresses and buildings shall be abolished on 9 May 2017 at the latest, and all data stored in it shall be deleted.

The background for this is the right to informational self-determination which limits the legislator's degree of freedom.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS:**22.1 INITIATIVE FOR A PROVISION TO SET UP A PERMANENT REGISTER OF ADDRESSES**

In a first step, the Federal Statistical Office will seek to convince the competent ministry that a provision for setting up a permanent register of addresses should be included in the planned amendments to the Federal Statistics Law.

22.2 INITIATIVE FOR PERMISSION TO PERMANENTLY STORE SEVERAL PERSONAL VARIABLES FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES

A register of addresses and buildings is expected to be established in preparing the next 2021 Census. This register can be based on the register of addresses outlined in action 22.1 and be fed with data in particular from the population registers. The Federal Statistical Office will seek permission to permanently store several personal variables of the register for statistical purposes. In this respect, however, the right to informational self-determination limits the legislator's degree of freedom.

TIMELINE:

22.1 The draft of a proposal for an Act amending the Federal Statistics Law will be discussed in 2015.

22.2 As currently planned, the law prescribing a register of addresses and buildings for the 2021 Census will be passed in this legislative term, that is, by autumn 2017.

23. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more generic legal provisions providing the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics with a more flexible mandate to share existing microdata within and between these authorities. A legal foundation for linking household surveys data with administrative records should also be established in order to reduce the response burden and utilise the potential for quality improvement. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 9.5.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The provisions of Article 16 (2) of the Federal Statistics Law allow microdata to be exchanged between the statistical offices of the Federation and the Länder to the extent that this is required to produce a certain set of federal statistics. However, other producers of European statistics, in particular the Deutsche Bundesbank, are not covered by these provisions.

The 2011 Census was conducted as a register-based census of the population. Many personal data from different sources were linked to the microdata collected by the statistical authorities. In accordance with the relevant legal provisions, however, all personal data had/have to be deleted.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS:

23.1 INITIATIVE TO AMEND THE FEDERAL STATISTICAL LAW TO LAY DOWN COOPERATION WITH THE DEUTSCHE BUNDESBANK

The Federal Statistical Office will seek to convince the competent ministry that, in a first step, intensive cooperation with the Deutsche Bundesbank should be laid down in the planned amendments to the Federal Statistics Law.

23.2 INITIATIVE FOR PROVISIONS TO PERMIT EXCHANGE OF BUSINESS DATA WITH THE DEUTSCHE BUNDESBANK

Based on this, the Federal Statistical Office will encourage provisions in other legal acts to permit an exchange of business data with the Deutsche Bundesbank for the production of statistics.

23.3 INITIATIVE FOR THE CENSUS ACT 2021 TO PERMIT PERMANENT STORAGE OF PERSONAL DATA FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES

Another aim of the Federal Statistical Office is that the legal provisions regulating the 2021 Census will permit at least several personal data to be permanently stored for statistical purposes.

Please note that the right to informational self-determination which, as a rule, also applies to corporate bodies governed by private law and namely to enterprises, limits the legislator's degree of freedom.

TIMELINE:

23.1 The draft of a proposal for an Act amending the Federal Statistics Law will be discussed in 2015.

23.2 In the process of preparing the relevant provisions, there will be intensive discussions covering in particular aspects of data protection and the right to informational self-determination. For this reason, the provisions concerned can be achieved at best during the next legislative term that will begin in autumn 2017.

23.3 As currently planned, the law prescribing a register of addresses and buildings for the 2021 Census will be passed in this legislative term, that is, by autumn 2017.

24. The arrangement by which the information technology services are outsourced should be reviewed. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should take the main responsibility for information technology services. In the interim, an arrangement should be put in place whereby the Federal Statistical Office of Germany can be more actively involved in the management of the current outsourcing arrangements, particularly in relation to information technology security. Responsibility for or more active involvement in information technology should be facilitated by a key unit within the Federal Statistical Office of Germany with appropriate expertise in information technology security. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 5.5.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

A Federal Government decision has led to a stepwise consolidation of IT Operations Services (IT Computer Centre Services) in the federal public administration, as well as to the common development of basic and cross-cutting IT services. Responsibility for IT services regarding statistical data, including security, has been allocated to a service centre in Wiesbaden. The transfer of IT services from the computer centre to the Federal Office for Information Technology (BIT) is regulated in detail and by contract. The Federal Statistical Office maintains full sovereignty of the statistical data.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION:

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is envisaged.

TIMELINE:

N. A.

25. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should take the main responsibility for developing a more strategic approach to information technology security across the whole National Statistical System and for planning and implementing a programme of auditing to guarantee that all systems are audited at least once every three years. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 5.5.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder already cooperate in the field of IT security management to concretise and implement the content of the implementation plan of the IT Planning Council of Germany. In this context the Federal Statistical Office endeavours to promote the IT security within the system of official statistics and has therefore, in consultation with the

Statistical Offices of the Länder, adopted the "Generic IT security concept for the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder".

Due to the constitutional sovereignty of the parties in the national statistical system and the legal situation in Germany, the Federal Statistical Office is currently not able to take the main responsibility for auditing the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 25: IT-SECURITY ACROSS THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder will implement the "Generic IT security concept for the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder".

As a basis for the required auditing programme, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany intends to negotiate a general agreement with all Other National Authorities to improve coordination, taking account of the legal aspects (see also improvement actions under recommendation 28).

TIMELINE:

The further plans are based on the improvement actions and the timeline for recommendation 28 and will be integrated into the work programme and the action plan, which will be agreed upon there.

26. In the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder temporary employment contracts should no longer be used other than in exceptional cases; permanent appointments should be the norm. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 3.1.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

Generally, new staff are employed using fixed-term contracts. Permanent positions becoming vacant will be filled permanently again. In such cases, staff are preferred who had a fixed-term position at the statistical office before.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION:

The Federal Statistical Office of Germany has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is envisaged.

TIMELINE:

N. A.

STRENGTHENING THE COORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE IN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

27. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more concrete legal provisions which strengthen the coordination role of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and facilitate coordination of statistical activities of the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (Coordination.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

To date the coordination role of the Federal Statistical Office vis-à-vis the Other National Authorities has not been regulated by national law. However, Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 is directly applicable.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION 27: COORDINATION ROLE OF THE FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE OF GERMANY

In accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009, the Federal Statistical Office will perform its coordinating role vis-à-vis the Other National Authorities on the basis of relevant guidelines. See the remarks on Recommendation 28 for further details.

TIMELINE:

Completed. See more details in Recommendation 28.

28. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should promote the application of standardised statistical business processes and uniform dissemination and communication policies and procedures in the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should monitor centrally the pre-announced release calendars and data transmission to Eurostat, and involve systematically the employees of Other National Authorities producing European statistics in the national statistical training programme. (Coordination.)

CURRENT SITUATION:

As a result of the 2006/2008 ESS Peer Review, the Federal Statistical Office set up a working group with the Other National Authorities. It meets once a year to discuss coordination matters regarding the production of European statistics. This action was supplemented with a newsletter providing information about ESS developments and informative meetings on specific issues. Sporadically, interested staff of the Other National Authorities participate in training courses at the Federal Statistical Office although systematic involvement is not in place.

Amending Regulation No 223/2009 on European statistics, which was approved by the European Parliament and the Council in March 2015, is of special importance. Articles 5 and 5a of the regulation are intended to strengthen the coordination role of the EU national statistical institutes in the production of European statistics. Essential elements are the following: the national statistical institutes act as the sole contact point for the Commission (Eurostat); they are entitled to issue so-called 'national guidelines' for the Other National Authorities regarding the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS:

The Federal Statistical Office will act as the sole contact point for European statistics. Because of the federal structure and the institutional and legal framework, the basis for improved coordination can only be partnership and cooperation to be laid down in relevant agreements. The President of the Federal Statistical Office is definitely not authorised to give instructions to the Other National Authorities. Responsibility for the quality of data that the Other National Authorities provide will remain with the Other National Authorities. Furthermore the Other National Authorities will continue to supply data to Eurostat. In cases of non-compliance, the Federal Statistical Office as the sole contact point will encourage an elimination of shortcomings vis-à-vis the Other National Authorities.

Essential actions to improve coordination are the following:

28.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE BY THE OTHER NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

The Federal Statistical Office will encourage the implementation of the Code of Practice principles especially in the area of quality assurance for European statistics and, in particular, a uniform application of the Quality Assurance Framework.

28.2 APPLICATION OF EDAMIS, UNIFORM DATA FORMATS AND IT SECURITY STANDARDS BY THE OTHER NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

The Federal Statistical Office will encourage the application of EDAMIS, the use of uniform formats for data supplies to Eurostat, and uniform IT security standards.

28.3 COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

In accordance with its role as the sole contact point, the Federal Statistical Office will seek improved communication with the Other National Authorities and the other related data producing entities.

28.4 INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER NATIONAL AUTHORITIES' STAFF IN TRAINING COURSES

The Federal Statistical Office will provide opportunities for an improved involvement of Other National Authorities' staff in courses of the national statistical training programmes and the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP).

TIMELINE:

Actions 28.1 to 28.3: Implementing these actions will require considerable coordination in both general and specific terms between the Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities. The coordination process regarding an action plan will be completed by the end of 2016.

Action 28.4: Involvement of Other National Authorities' staff in the training programmes from 2016.