

# PEER REVIEW REPORT

ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND  
THE COORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

## ROMANIA

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite a long history and traditions, current Romanian official statistics have a basic starting point in 1990, the first year of democratic rule of the country following the revolution of 1989. Since then, the institutional statistical framework has been developed, initially influenced by the United Nations (UN) statistical cooperation but in the last decade by alignment of Romanian statistics with European statistics and partnership in the European Statistical System (ESS) in connection with the country's accession to the European Union (EU) in 2007.

The National Institute of Statistics (NIS) is the National Statistical Institute (NSI) of Romania and the central agency in the Romanian National Statistical System (NSS). Included in the NSS are the territorial directorates and other subordinate institutions of the NIS, statistical offices of central and local government, the National Bank of Romania (NBR), and statistical offices of other public authorities (other than the ones within the structure of the NBR). The NIS is the main producer of national and European statistics but there are 45 other national authorities which are considered to be producers of official statistics. Ten of these are producers of European statistics.

Romanian official statistics are based on the Law on the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania, No. 226/2009 with subsequent amendments (hereinafter referred to as the statistical law). The statistical law is largely in line with Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics. According to the statistical law, the NIS leads and coordinates the NSS. The annual national statistical programme is the main vehicle for the coordination of the statistical activities of the various institutions forming the NSS. The programme covers all data and information produced for both European and national needs.

The NIS is organised and functions as a specialised body of central government. It is headed by a President, assisted by three Vice-Presidents, all appointed by the Prime Minister. The NIS has around 1,700 staff members, stationed in the headquarter office in Bucharest and in 42 territorial offices around the country, thereof 8 regional offices and 34 county offices. The Peer Reviewers found the NIS to be a well-working, closely-knit organisation which shows many signs of significant development. Modernisation of the organisation and activities have, however, been thwarted over the last few years by severe budget restrictions and freezing of salaries. This situation has now been eased considerably. Through Government decisions in 2014 the NIS budget has been increased and salaries of the staff have been brought to the same level as that of the General Secretariat of the Government. This is somewhat of a break-through for the NIS and Romanian official statistics, much strengthening the foundations for progress and modernisation.

The NIS and the Romanian statistical system have participated actively in European statistical cooperation since Romania joined the EU. European tasks and priorities have been incorporated in the annual statistical programme of the NSS as well as the multi-annual programme and the strategy of the NSS. The relevant Romanian statistical legislation has been aligned with the European legislation and statistical practices have been developed with a view to fulfilling the requirements of the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP). Reviewing the current situation, the Peer Reviewers are of the opinion that the activities of the NIS and the NSS are to a considerable degree in compliance with the CoP.

This notwithstanding, several issues and areas have been identified where there is a need for improvements to enhance the institutional framework, the organisation and the activities of the NSS in line with the principles and indicators of the CoP. Hence, the Peer Reviewers recommend that specific actions are taken to bring the official statistical practices closer to the CoP.

The NIS is currently preparing two sets of legislative proposals concerning official statistics. On the one hand, the statistical law will be amended in line with the recent amendments to the Regulation on European statistics and in order to strengthen the professional independence of the NIS and of other producers of official statistics. On the other hand, the NIS is preparing a “bill of law on demographic statistics” which has as one of its main aims to set aside legislative provisions which constitute hindrances to the utilisation of administrative data for statistical purposes. The Peer Reviewers are of the opinion that abolishing such hindrances is a prerequisite for effective use of administrative data in accordance with the CoP. At the same time, they point out that if the proposals of the bill of law on demographic statistics are enacted as law, the NSS will find itself with two statistical laws with different provisions on the right of access to administrative data. Hence, the Peer Reviewers believe that such a potential imbalance should preferably be corrected by strengthening the data collection provisions of the statistical law.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Professional independence**

1. The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote an amendment to the Law on the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania No. 226/2009, laying down specific provisions on the appointment and the dismissal of the President of the Institute, in line with the European statistics Code of Practice. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1, indicator 1.8.)

### **Coordination of the official statistical system**

2. The National Institute of Statistics should review the division of labour with the other producers of official statistics to identify the extent to which they have the professional capacity and competence to act as producers of official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1; coordination.)
3. The National Institute of Statistics should revise the annual national statistical programme in accordance with the review of the division of labour between the various statistical authorities. The programme should show a clearer distinction between the producers/surveys that are part of official statistics and the deliveries of data to the National Institute of Statistics, which should also be more consistent with the many agreements on data deliveries. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7 and 10; coordination.)
4. The National Institute of Statistics should strengthen its efforts as a coordinator and provider of technical assistance to other authorities that are considered as producers of official statistics in order to increase the use of standard methods, increase efficiency and quality, and ensure compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice as well as with the fundamental principles of official statistics as specified in the Law on the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania No. 226/2009, Article 5. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7 and 10; coordination.)

## **Use of administrative data for statistical purposes**

5. The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote the necessary legislative amendments, strengthening the authority of the National Institute of Statistics and other national authorities to access and use microdata from administrative registers and records, including tax records, held by public authorities, for the purposes of compiling official statistics. These amendments should override the current legislative obstacles to such utilisation and include authority to match and link data from different sources based on ID numbers while fully respecting obligations of confidentiality and protection of individual data. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 2, Principle 8, indicators 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9, Principle 9, and Principle 10, indicator 10.3.)
6. The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote the necessary legislative amendments, making it mandatory for holders of administrative records and registers which are or may be used for statistical purposes, to inform and consult the Institute on planned changes to registers and on the design and specifications of registers in order to make them more suitable for statistical usage. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 2, Principle 8, indicators 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, and Principle 10, indicator 10.3.)

## **Organisation and process management**

7. The National Institute of Statistics should continue to modernise data collection by extending online collection to new surveys and by using new technology and tools for household surveys. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)
8. The National Institute of Statistics should review to what extent there is a need to plan and use more standardised methods and tools for data processing, especially for data control, editing and imputation. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)
9. The National Institute of Statistics should plan a gradual implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model in order to improve process management, standardization, documentation and efficiency. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7, 8 and 10.)
10. The National Institute of Statistics should in parallel conduct a review of how the organisational setup and competences may have to be adapted in order to support the implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model and improve the workflow within the organisation. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)

## **Quality management**

11. The National Institute of Statistics should immediately initiate actions to enhance the competences of the quality unit, possibly with support from relevant partner countries. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 4.)
12. The National Institute of Statistics should design a plan for developing and implementing quality management with clear priorities and a timetable for the key tasks related to the possible adoption of a quality framework, quality documentation, quality reviews and reporting. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4.)
13. The National Institute of Statistics should review its training programme with a focus on quality issues. This should be targeted at the needs of all staff, including staff of the territorial offices. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 4.)

14. The National Institute of Statistics should immediately start to implement quality reviews and quality audits, utilising the experience of other countries, in the first phase through pilot projects. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4, indicator 4.4.)
15. The National Institute of Statistics should develop performance indicators on response burden both for businesses and households. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 9, indicator 9.2.)

#### **User engagement**

16. The National Institute of Statistics should make proposals to strengthen the operational effectiveness of the National Statistical Council, including securing sufficient resources and appropriate appointments to meet its objectives of representing the interests of data providers, producers and users of official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 11, indicators 11.1 and 11.2.)
17. The National Institute of Statistics should increase activities to raise statistical awareness and ensure more widespread use of official statistics within public administration and among decision makers at local, regional and national level, building on the training programmes for users of statistics and working with partners such as the Romanian Statistical Society and academic institutions. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 11.)
18. The National Institute of Statistics should develop the capacity to provide customised analysis of data, if necessary on a charging basis, and publish details of such analysis carried out. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15, indicator 15.3.)

#### **Dissemination**

19. The release calendar covering official statistics produced by the National Institute of Statistics should include the precise time and date of all statistical releases, be flexible and searchable by theme, and be regularly updated during the year. The procedure for updating the calendar should also be published. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 13, indicators 13.2 and 13.4.)
20. The National Institute of Statistics should work towards extending the release calendar to cover all official statistics produced by Other National Authorities. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.5, and Principle 13, indicator 13.2.)
21. The National Institute of Statistics should make a clear distinction between the processes for correction of errors in statistics that have already been published, and planned revisions due to other reasons, preferably in two separate policies that are published on the website. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicators 6.3 and 6.6, and Principle 8, indicator 8.6.)
22. Pre-release of statistics to Ministries by the National Institute of Statistics and Other National Authorities should be abolished, or be restricted to relevant Ministries for individual releases based on need. The list of those with pre-release access should be published on the website for each release. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.7.)
23. Pre-release of statistics to media by the National Institute of Statistics and Other National Authorities should be abolished, or be within controlled conditions of access. The list of those with pre-release access should be published on the website for each release. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.7.)

24. The National Institute of Statistics and all Other National Authorities should release within Romania all statistics supplied directly to Eurostat, and these statistics should be subject to routine statistical release procedures. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicators 6.5 and 6.7.)
25. The National Institute of Statistics should review the “Strategy for streamlining the statistical information dissemination system”, and develop an overarching dissemination policy, incorporating issues related to handling of provisional and final data, pre-release access arrangements, microdata access, customised analysis and guidance on good practice in presentation of statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15, indicator 15.2.)
26. The National Institute of Statistics should, in consultation with users, develop a programme to promote and facilitate safe access to microdata, raise awareness of potential benefits, improve the current arrangements for access to microdata and establish safe centre(s) for such access. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15, indicator 15.4.)

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This peer review report is part of a series of assessments, the objective of which is to evaluate the extent to which National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and the European Statistical System (ESS)<sup>1</sup> comply with the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP).

The CoP, which sets out a common quality framework for the ESS, was first adopted in 2005 by the Statistical Programme Committee and updated in 2011 by its successor, the European Statistical System Committee. The CoP – 15 principles and related indicators of good practice – covers the institutional environment, the statistical production process and the output of European statistics. The ESS is committed to fully complying with the CoP and is working towards its full implementation. Periodic assessments review progress towards reaching this goal.

The first global assessment, a round of peer reviews in 2006–2008, explored how the NSIs and Eurostat were progressing in implementing the parts of the CoP relating to the institutional environment and dissemination of statistics (principles 1–6 and 15). This resulted in reports for each NSI and Eurostat, available on the Eurostat website<sup>2</sup>. These reports also include a set of improvement actions covering all the principles of the CoP; these informed the annual monitoring of the implementation of the CoP in the ESS in the period 2009-2013.

The scope of this second round of peer reviews is broader: the assessment of CoP compliance covers all principles; the CoP compliance of selected other national producers of European statistics (as well as the NSI) in each country is assessed; and the way in which statistical authorities coordinate the production and dissemination of European statistics within their statistical systems is explored.

It should be underlined that there is a fundamental difference between the reports in the previous round of peer reviews conducted in 2006-2008 and the reports from this round. In the 2006-2008 round compliance with principles 1 to 6 and 15 of the CoP was assessed by means of a four-level scale (fully met; largely met; partly met and not met) and improvement actions were agreed on all 15 principles. After five years of continuous development most of the improvement actions have been implemented and significant progress towards full compliance with the CoP has been made. Therefore, rather than stating the state of play for all principles of the CoP, the reports from the 2013-2015 round mainly focus on issues where full compliance with the CoP has not been found or further improvements are recommended by the Peer Review team.

In order to gain an independent view, the peer review exercise has been externalised and an audit-like approach, where all the answers to the self-assessment questionnaires have to be supported by evidence, has been applied. As in 2006-2008, all EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA countries and Eurostat are subject to a peer review.

Each peer review in the Member States and EFTA/EEA countries is conducted by three reviewers and has four phases: completion of self-assessment questionnaires by a country; their assessment by Peer Reviewers; a peer review visit; and the preparation of reports on the outcomes. The peer

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<sup>1</sup> The ESS is the partnership between the Union statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), the national statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. This Partnership also includes the EFTA /EEA countries.

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/first-round-of-peer-reviews>

review of Eurostat has been conducted by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

To test and complete the methodology, it was piloted in two countries, Iceland and Slovakia, over the summer of 2013.

The peer review of Romania was conducted by Hallgrímur Snorrason (chair), Jan Byfuglien and Jagdev Singh Virdee, who conducted a peer review visit to Bucharest on 20-24 April 2015. The programme of the visit is in Annex A and the list of participants in Annex B.

This report focuses on compliance with the CoP and the coordination of European statistics within the Romanian statistical system. The report highlights some of the strengths of Romanian statistical system in these contexts and contains recommendations for improvement. Improvement actions developed by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania on the basis of this report will be published within the four-week period starting when the final report is sent to the NSI.

### **3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

#### **Legislation**

The Law on the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania No. 226/2009 (hereinafter referred to as the statistical law) regulates the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania, based on the United Nations (UN) Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP). This law applies to all the natural and legal persons residing in Romania as well as to the non-residents performing activities on Romanian territory. The National Institute of Statistics (NIS) is the main producer of official statistical data of the country. The NIS is also the coordinator of the National Statistical System (NSS), according to the same law.

The statistical law is in harmony with Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and the Council on European statistics and is currently subject to revision according to the amendments to that Regulation. The main changes of the Romanian statistical law envisaged as a result of this revision are: strengthening the professional independence of the NIS and of the other producers of data, particularly regarding the nomination and dismissal criteria of the NIS President; enforcing and extending the use of administrative data; the promotion of some national authorities as other producers of official statistics; the enlargement of the coordination role of the NIS; the need for the adoption by the Government of the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics; extending the functions of the NIS President, particularly concerning his/her exclusive responsibilities regarding decisions on methods, standards and other statistical procedures, as well as other aspects linked to the internal management of the NIS.

#### **Structure of the National Statistical System**

The NSS includes: a) the NIS and its subordinates, the territorial directorates (8 regional and 34 county statistical directorates); b) statistical units of central government; c) statistical units of local government; d) the National Bank of Romania (NBR); e) statistical units of other public authorities and institutions (other than the ones within the structure of the NBR). There are 45 other national institutions that produce official statistics, with 10 of them being National Authorities producing European statistics (ONAs).

#### **Co-ordination and functioning of the National Statistical System**

The NIS coordinates the statistical activities of the public authorities and institutions included in the NSS. The NIS monitors, co-ordinates and technically assists the producers of official statistics to ensure application of methodologies, classifications, methods and techniques for the collection, processing and dissemination of the official statistical data produced, in accordance with the annual national statistical programme and the requirements of the European Statistical System (ESS). The statistical programme covers data and information necessary for both European and national needs. The NIS plays the role of the single contact point for statistical matters for EU bodies. The NIS, member of the ESS, and the NBR, member of the European System of Central Banks, co-operate and co-ordinate their activities with a view to increasing efficiency, reducing the response burden on primary data providers, improving the quality of statistical data and disseminating them at national and international levels.

#### **Advisory bodies**

The National Statistical Council (hereinafter referred to as the Statistical Council) represents the highest forum for promoting and developing official statistical activity at the national level. Its membership includes representatives of the main providers of data, and producers and users of official statistics and information in the statistical process. The Statistical Council aims to ensure

objective, transparent and scientific methodologies, indicators, nomenclatures and classifications in the conduct of statistical activity. Members of the Statistical Council can also be involved in different activities of the NIS, in particular in the Methodological Endorsement Committee (MEC) and in working groups within the MEC framework.

The Committee of the National Statistical System (COMSTAT) is established with a view to implementing and monitoring the Strategy of the NSS and the annual statistical programme. COMSTAT is an advisory body, made up of representatives of the producers of official statistics. COMSTAT is consulted with a view to adopting and using the concepts and classifications as well as the best collection, processing and dissemination methods and techniques, and increasing coherence and comparability among the statistics produced.

The MEC is the professional authority within the NIS in charge of endorsement of methodological projects related to the organisation and performance of statistical surveys, statistical classifications and nomenclatures, statistical tools and other statistical works. The MEC is composed of 11 members with professional authority, elected mainly from among the members of the Statistical Council or upon the proposal of the specialised departments within the NIS.

### **Mission and vision of the NIS**

The mission of the NIS is to satisfy the information needs of all users of official statistics, through the production of reliable statistical data, provided on impartial and non-discriminatory basis for substantiating decisions on the country's economic and social development. The vision is that at the end of 2020, the NSS shall function as an integrated, coordinated, efficient and innovative structure, fully aligned with the European acquis in statistics and the CoP.

### **Structure of the NIS**

The NIS is organised and functions as a specialised body of central government, with its own legal status, subordinate to the Government. It is co-ordinated by the General Secretariat of the Government. The NIS is headed by a President acting as secretary of state and secondary authorising officer, assisted by three Vice-Presidents acting as sub-secretaries of state. They are appointed by Decision of the Prime Minister. The President of the NIS is the institution's representative in its relations with the President's Office, the Parliament of Romania and the Romanian Government, third legal persons, natural persons, and national and international organisations. The NIS has 1,799 posts in 2015, with 95 per cent of these currently filled. 25% of staff are based in the headquarter offices in Bucharest, and the rest in the 8 regional and 34 county offices.

### **Dissemination and communication**

The NIS has recently developed a communication strategy which emphasises transparency of the Institute, proactive and open communications with users, mass media in particular, and distribution of statistics and statistically based information to the various types of users. The NIS runs a comprehensive dissemination programme for which its website is the main vehicle offering simultaneous, indiscriminate access to the NIS databases but still supplying most of its publications also on paper to cater for the needs of all users.

### **Data collection**

The NIS has developed and implemented an online system for data collection from businesses. Currently, the NIS collects around 90% of its data from businesses through a web-portal.

## **4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

### **4.1 STRENGTHS OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE IN RELATION TO ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND TO ITS COORDINATION ROLE**

Current Romanian statistics have a basic starting point in 1990, the first year of democratic rule of the country following the revolution in 1989. From that time on, the statistical institutional framework has been developed, initially influenced by the cooperation within the Conference of European Statisticians of the UN Economic Commission for Europe and later by the alignment of Romanian statistics with European statistics and partnership in the ESS resulting from the membership of the EU in 2007.

Official statistics in Romania are based on the statistical law No. 226/2009. This law was much influenced by the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics but also drawn up to reflect the then current European statistical legislation as set out in Regulation (EC) No 322/97 on Community Statistics and the CoP from 2005. The statistical law was later amended in line with the changes made to the European statistical legislation as set out in Regulation (EC) No 223/2009. For these reasons, the Romanian statistical law is comprehensive and contains provisions on all the main issues of official statistics, notably being quite strong on coordination and confidentiality. (All principles, coordination). At the present time the NIS is preparing for amending the statistical law, mainly to reflect the recently agreed amendments to Regulation (EC) No 223/2009, and for drawing up a specific law on demographic statistics as discussed later in this report.

The Peer Review team encountered in the NIS a close-knit and well-functioning NSI which coordinates both the territorial offices subordinate to it and the NSS. Since 2007, the NIS has had to cope with substantial budget and staffing reductions which have limited its capabilities to develop and modernise the statistical operations and infrastructure. This notwithstanding, the NIS has managed to maintain its regular production and even to implement modern facilities for data collection from businesses. (Principles 9, 11, 12 and 13).

The statistical law provides for the operation of several bodies of cooperation and coordination within the NSS and the NIS. The most important of these are the Statistical Council, the Committee of the National Statistical System (COMSTAT) and the Methodological Endorsement Committee (MEC). The Statistical Council brings together representatives of academia, research and educational institutions, government institutions and local government, and users such as trade unions, employers, media, and trade associations. COMSTAT is the coordinating committee of the NSS, in particular as regards common strategies and the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the annual statistical programme. The MEC is an advisory committee for the NIS on issues of methods and standards related to the annual statistical programme. (All principles, coordination).

Official statistics in Romania are implemented in accordance with the annual statistical programme. The programme is prepared by the NIS and COMSTAT, discussed and endorsed by the Statistical Council and finally approved by a Government Decision. The continuous activities on the annual programme, as regards preparation, implementation and monitoring of all statistical surveys, their content, timing and methodologies, are an important factor in ensuring regularity, continuity and coordination of Romanian official statistics. (Principles 7-13.)

The NIS with its territorial and other subordinate offices enjoys full professional independence according to the statistical law. This appears to be fully respected in practice. The autonomy of the NIS is endorsed by users of official statistics and partners within the NSS. All users with which the Peer Reviewers met described the NIS as an institute of integrity and professional independence that is seen to be carrying out high quality work with objectivity and regularity. It was evident from the peer review discussions that the NIS is well trusted by both users and data providers. (Principles 1, 5 and 6).

The NIS was praised for its openness to users and good communications with media. The NIS has recently been placing special emphasis on communications which has for example resulted in the establishment of a communication department with the objective of facilitating cooperation and interactions with users, data providers and other producers. (Principles 11 and 15).

The NIS has good working relations with the academic community. This is realised at several levels. Members of academic institutions are involved in the Statistical Council and the MEC and thus contribute to and participate in the determination of methods and standards of statistical surveys and the statistical processes. Some of the young staff members of the NIS participate in post-graduate courses at universities. The NIS collaborates with the Romanian Statistical Society in conducting workshops and conferences on a regular basis. (Principles 4 and 7).

The NIS runs an extensive dissemination programme. The NIS website has become the main channel for statistical releases and publications as well as offering access to the main databases of official statistics. The development of the Tempo-online database, including its metadata database, and its publication on the NIS website in 2007 are particularly significant in this respect. Nevertheless, the NIS continues to supply most of its publications on paper; this is done with a view to both the prevailing culture and preference of users and the need of rural and less digitised parts of the country for access to statistical information. (Principles 11 and 15).

A recent and particularly important development at the NIS is the creation and implementation of an online system for data collection from businesses. This has reached the stage of NIS being able to collect the great majority of its data from businesses through a web-portal. The importance of this was endorsed by the representatives of the businesses with which the Peer Reviewers met during the peer review visit. (Principles 8, 9 and 10).

As mentioned earlier, the NIS has in recent years been subject to substantial reductions in its budget and staffing. This and the freeze of salaries imposed on government institutions greatly limited the capabilities of the Institute to hire new staff, including replacing retiring staff, and to undertake modernisation of its activities, including updating information technology (IT) systems, software and hardware. This situation changed radically with Government Decisions in 2014 on raising the salaries and easing the budget situation. Effective from the beginning of 2015, salaries at NIS were raised to the same level as that of the General Secretariat of the Government. This involved an average rise of 45% as well as a decision of linking the NIS salary scale to that of the General Secretariat of the Government. Furthermore, the NIS budget was increased considerably allowing the Institute to undertake both maintenance and modernisation of infrastructure including IT and office facilities as well as easing operating expenditures. This is a major achievement for the NIS and Romanian official statistics and constitutes increased capabilities for progress and modernisation. (All principles).

## **4.2 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The NIS and the relevant institutions of the NSS have participated actively in the European statistical cooperation since Romania joined the EU in 2007. European tasks and priorities have been incorporated in the annual statistical programme of the NSS as well as the multi-annual programme and the strategy of the NSS. The methods and standards of the ESS have been applied in Romanian official statistics. The relevant Romanian statistical legislation has been aligned with the European legislation and statistical practices have been developed with a view to fulfilling the requirements of the CoP. Reviewing the current situation, the Peer Reviewers are of the opinion that the activities of the NIS and the NSS are to a considerable degree in compliance with the CoP.

Through the peer review, several issues and areas have been identified where there are things yet to be done; where there is a need for improvements to enhance the institutional framework, the organisation and the activities of the NIS in line with the principles and indicators of the CoP. Hence, the Peer Reviewers recommend that specific actions are taken to bring the official statistical practices closer to the CoP.

### **4.2.1 PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE**

The statistical law No. 226/2009 does not contain specific provisions regarding the selection, recruitment, appointment, duration of mandate, dismissal or reasons for termination of the term of office of the President of the NIS. The appointment and dismissal of the NIS President are determined by the Law on the organisation and the functioning of the Romanian Government and ministries, No. 90/2001. According to that law, the Prime Minister appoints and dismisses the President of the NIS. The selection process does not appear to be transparent and the appointment is made for an undetermined period of time. The law does not specify any reasons or conditions for terminating the term of office of the President.

In the peer review discussions it was revealed that since 1990 all Presidents of the NIS had been selected on professional grounds, they had all held Ph.D. degrees in economics and the majority of them had had substantial professional experience. However, it has also been noted that most of them held their tenure only for a short period of time. Be that as it may, it is clear that the present legal arrangements for the recruitment, appointment and dismissal of the President of NIS do not conform to the CoP.

In order to comply with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 1. The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote an amendment to the Law on the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania No. 226/2009, laying down specific provisions on the appointment and the dismissal of the President of the Institute, in line with the European statistics Code of Practice. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1, indicator 1.8.)**

## 4.2.2 COORDINATION OF THE OFFICIAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

In the statistical law, official statistics are defined in the following way (Article 4, j):

- “official statistics – activities regulated by this Law or by other legislative acts adopted pursuant to it, as well as by the Statute of the National Bank of Romania, in accordance with the fundamental principles of national statistics;”

Furthermore, “Chapter II, Fundamental principles of official statistics”, Article 5, lays down “the Significance and implementation of the fundamental principles”. These provisions are more or less in accordance with the CoP.

In Article 6, the composition of the NSS is further specified and it is said in point (2) that statistical offices “shall be authorised as producers of official statistics, provided the activities they perform fully observe the provisions of this Law and are included in the national statistical programmes approved by Decisions of the Romanian Government.”

Article 7, points (1) and (2), of the statistical law determines the role of the NIS in relation to the NSS and other producers as follows:

(1) “Without prejudice to the position of the National Bank of Romania as producer of official statistics relating to its competence areas, the National Institute of Statistics shall coordinate the statistical activities of public authorities and institutions included in the National Statistical System.”

(2) “The National Institute of Statistics shall monitor, co-ordinate and technically assist the producers of official statistics mentioned in art. 6 paragraph (1) b)-d), in order to ensure the unitary character of the methodologies, classifications, methods and techniques used for the collection, processing and dissemination of the official statistical data produced, in accordance with the annual national statistical programme and with the requirements of the European Statistical System.”

At the present time, 45 public authorities and institutions are considered to be producers of official statistics as they are included in the annual statistical programme. The Other National Authorities (ONAs) producing European statistics, however, are much fewer, at 10.

Based on the review of three organisations as Other National Authorities producing European statistics (ONAs), some study of the annual statistical programme and discussions during the peer review visit, it appears that some of the institutions listed as producers of official statistics may not qualify as proper producers. This is because they may not have the capacity, the competence and the organisational framework to do so in compliance with the principles laid down in the statistical law. Several of them seem to be providers of summary statistics or administrative data to the NIS rather than proper producers. This can create problems regarding the quality, coherence and sustainability of parts of the statistical system, even for providing European statistics.

The main vehicles for the coordination of the NSS are the annual statistical programme and the COMSTAT. The NIS operates a small, internal Public Policy Unit for working on coordination issues. The peer review indicates that for the NSS as a whole there are things yet to be done and that there is a need for increasing the engagement of the NIS in its coordinating activities. The large number of public authorities, which seem to be engaged one way or another in official statistical

activities, alone calls for substantial coordination. Furthermore, given the heterogeneity of the organisations involved in producing official statistics there is a need for stronger coordination and increased exchange of common methods and tools to increase efficiency of the statistical production processes and quality of the products provided. Of specific issues yet to be resolved, mention can be made of the need for establishing annual reporting of the implementation of the annual statistical programme as a whole (such reporting is currently limited to the activities performed by the NIS) as well as the various issues concerning dissemination discussed elsewhere in this report.

In light of the foregoing and in order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

2. **The National Institute of Statistics should review the division of labour with the other producers of official statistics to identify the extent to which they have the professional capacity and competence to act as producers of official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1; coordination.)**
3. **The National Institute of Statistics should revise the annual national statistical programme in accordance with the review of the division of labour between the various statistical authorities. The programme should show a clearer distinction between the producers/surveys that are part of official statistics and the deliveries of data to the National Institute of Statistics, which should also be more consistent with the many agreements on data deliveries. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7 and 10; coordination.)**
4. **The National Institute of Statistics should strengthen its efforts as a coordinator and provider of technical assistance to other authorities that are considered as producers of official statistics in order to increase the use of standard methods, increase efficiency and quality, and ensure compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice as well as with the fundamental principles of official statistics as specified in the Law on the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania No. 226/2009, Article 5. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7 and 10; coordination.)**

### **4.2.3 USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES**

The statistical law contains provisions on the collection of data which appear to be quite clear. The mandate for data collection is spelled out in Article 22, point (1) as follows:

“The National Institute of Statistics, the territorial directorates subordinate to it and the other producers of official statistics shall be authorised to collect statistical data from any available source, in accordance with the activities set out in the annual national statistical programme, while complying with the provisions of Chapter X.” (Chapter X of the law contains stipulations on confidentiality and protection of statistical data.)

Article 26 of the statistical law provides that the NIS and the other producers of official statistics “can collect data from statistical and administrative sources”. Article 28 contains more detailed provisions on administrative sources, such as that the NIS and its territorial directorates are entitled to access “data from records of public authorities and institutions, including individual identification data”, and to “obtain individual data from public-use administrative registers”. The access to the administrative data is conditional upon the NIS and the other producers complying

with the chapter on confidentiality and protection of statistical data and is based on agreements concluded with the owner of the source.

In spite of the provisions of the statistical law, decisive as they may seem, the NIS is in many instances unable to access the administrative data it needs as the owners of the data deny the NIS access to the data or refuse to hand it over, either in deference to the legislation pertaining to the administrative data in question or because they consider that handing over data to the NIS is in breach of the law on personal data protection. Thus, the NIS has encountered difficulties in obtaining certain administrative records. This is mainly the case where the laws of administrative registers which may be used for statistical purposes contain clauses which contradict the provisions in the statistical law; in such cases the obligation of holders of administrative registers and records to submit microdata to the NIS or grant the NIS access to microdata is in doubt. Furthermore, there are insufficient provisions obliging the holders of administrative registers and records, which are or may be used for administrative purposes, to inform and consult the NIS on planned development of registers or changes in registers in order to ensure that they are suitable for statistical purposes. The possibility for the NIS to influence the development of administrative sources is also limited.

The NIS considers this to stand in the way of further modernisation of data collection from individuals and households. The NIS is in particular eager to obtain a good coverage of migration and social mobility of the population and to continue the development started with the population and housing census in 2011 to base future censuses, starting in 2020, mainly on administrative records and registers. Hence, the NIS has reacted to this situation by preparing a “bill of law on demographic statistics”. This bill is formulated in such a way that – if approved – the ensuing legislation would set aside other legislative provisions which are applied by the various register authorities in question to refuse to hand over data for statistical purposes. According to this bill, the NIS will be responsible for creating a statistical population register based on existing administrative data. This register would not only contain demographic characteristics but also various social and economic information on individuals and households, such as educational attainment, employment status, income, social insurance and social protection as well as on specific professions of the health sector. The authorities who hold administrative data will, according to the proposals of the bill, be obliged to provide the NIS with their data for the purposes of establishing and maintaining the statistical population register. The NIS would also be authorised to match and link data from the different administrative sources in the database envisaged for the purposes of the statistical population register.

The Peer Review team is not in a position to assess the course of action taken by the Romanian statistical authorities in this respect. However, if the bill of a law on demographic statistics is approved by the Romanian Parliament and enacted as legislation, the NSS will find itself with two statistical laws of which the one on demographic statistics will contain more far-reaching and decisive provisions on data collection from households and individuals than the general statistical law. The Peer Reviewers are of the opinion that such an imbalance between the two laws should preferably be corrected by strengthening the more general data collection provisions of the statistical law. This should be done in order to ensure that the NIS and the ONAs have decisive rights to full access to administrative microdata for statistical purposes and full authority for its utilisation and processing, including matching and linking of data from different sources for statistical compilations by use of ID numbers. There is also a need to insert in the statistical law a general provision obliging holders of administrative registers to inform and consult with the NIS on planned changes to registers which are or may be used for statistical purposes.

The NIS is currently preparing for changes in the statistical law which will be necessary following the amendments to Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics. Some other changes in the law are also planned in order to modernise it. The Peer Reviewers propose that the NIS uses this opportunity to revise the provisions of data collection in the law so as to determine the right of access to and utilisation of administrative data for official statistical purposes while fully respecting confidentiality of individual data and the obligation of protection of statistical data. That would be in conformity with both the CoP and the Regulation on European statistics.

In light of the foregoing and in order to strengthen and ensure compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

5. **The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote the necessary legislative amendments, strengthening the authority of the National Institute of Statistics and other national authorities to access and use microdata from administrative registers and records, including tax records, held by public authorities, for the purposes of compiling official statistics. These amendments should override the current legislative obstacles to such utilisation and include authority to match and link data from different sources based on ID numbers while fully respecting obligations of confidentiality and protection of individual data. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 2, Principle 8, indicators 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9, Principle 9, and Principle 10, indicator 10.3.)**
6. **The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote the necessary legislative amendments, making it mandatory for holders of administrative records and registers which are or may be used for statistical purposes, to inform and consult the Institute on planned changes to registers and on the design and specifications of registers in order to make them more suitable for statistical usage. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 2, Principle 8, indicators 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, and Principle 10, indicator 10.3.)**

#### **4.2.4 ORGANISATION AND PROCESS MANAGEMENT**

The NIS has a traditional 'stove-pipe' organisation that used to be based on data collection through a territorial network of 42 offices with a total of around 1,450 employees. During the last few years, the NIS has implemented an online collection system for business data with the result that the major part of data collection (90%) in the field of business statistics is now being collected via a web-portal. As a consequence of this, data from businesses is mainly collected directly by the NIS headquarter office for control, editing and further processing. The territorial offices have been assigned tasks of strengthening the data collection effort, related to enhancing motivation and training of respondents as well as carrying out some follow-up in the editing process.

In the area of household surveys, the territorial network, including the network of interviewers, is still very important. The methods used are very much based on face-to-face interviewing using paper and pencil, followed up with data entry, control and editing. These methods seem ripe for modernisation while at the same time efforts should be made to increase the utilisation of administrative data for compiling statistics on individuals and households.

The NIS at present applies different methods and tools for the different production stages within different subject areas. More harmonized and standard tools and methods would, however, give more robust production processes, easier transfer of skills and improved quality.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

7. **The National Institute of Statistics should continue to modernise data collection by extending online collection to new surveys and by using new technology and tools for household surveys. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)**
8. **The National Institute of Statistics should review to what extent there is a need to plan and use more standardised methods and tools for data processing, especially for data control, editing and imputation. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)**

In light of the current different modes of data collection and the changes brought by the online collection of business data, there seems to be reason to review the production process in general, and the roles of the different departments and territorial offices. This is particularly pertinent as further modernisation and rationalisation of the data collection from households may be foreseen, especially using new technologies such as computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), and computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI) and through enhanced use of administrative records and registers. The Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) would provide a useful framework for this modernisation process. In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

9. **The National Institute of Statistics should plan for a gradual implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model in order to improve process management, standardisation, documentation and efficiency. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7, 8 and 10.)**
10. **The National Institute of Statistics should in parallel conduct a review of how the organisational setup and competences may have to be adapted in order to support the implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model and improve the workflow within the organisation. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)**

#### **4.2.5 QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

##### **Comprehensive quality management system**

In the last few years, the NIS has placed increasing emphasis on ensuring the quality of its statistical processes and output. A unit for quality management is in place and there are many initiatives and plans to improve quality management. There exist for instance 'Quality Guidelines for Official Statistics', partly based on Statistics Canada quality guidelines. The document comprises most elements of quality and describes principles and good practices, including quality management, quality model and quality assessments. However, not all elements have been followed up and there seems to be a lack of a coherent approach to quality management. The possible adoption of a quality management framework, such as the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model has been discussed, but no concrete plan is in place. It was also made clear during the peer review discussions that there is a general need for enhancing competences in the field of quality management and quality assessment, both for the staff in the quality unit and for staff in general. A central element of the practical implementation of quality management would be quality reviews both of the statistics produced by the NIS and official statistics provided by other producers.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 11. The National Institute of Statistics should immediately initiate actions to enhance the competences of the quality unit, possibly with support from relevant partner countries. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 4.)**
- 12. The National Institute of Statistics should design a plan for developing and implementing quality management with clear priorities and a timetable for the key tasks related to the possible adoption of a quality framework, quality documentation, quality reviews and reporting. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4.)**
- 13. The National Institute of Statistics should review its training programme with a focus on quality issues. This should be targeted at the needs of all staff, including staff of the territorial offices. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 4.)**
- 14. The National Institute of Statistics should immediately start to implement quality reviews and quality audits, utilising the experience of other countries, in the first phase through pilot projects. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4, indicator 4.4)**

#### **Indicators on response burden**

A general target for the ESS and for national statistical systems is to reduce the burden of providing data as much as possible. This requires monitoring of the response burden in the different statistical domains.

So far, the NIS does not have any procedures in place for measuring the response burden related to different surveys. It is assumed that the implementation of online collection of data has reduced the response burden for businesses, but no measurements or estimates of response burdens are available to verify this development. In the peer review discussions it was revealed that it would be possible for the NIS to develop estimates of response burden, especially related to online surveys.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 15. The National Institute of Statistics should develop performance indicators on response burden both for businesses and households. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 9, indicator 9.2.)**

## **4.2.6 USER ENGAGEMENT**

### **Consultation arrangements**

The Statistical Council is established to act as the highest level advisory body for official statistics in Romania. Membership of the Statistical Council includes representatives of the main groups of data providers, producers and users of official statistics. The Statistical Council aims to ensure objective, transparent and scientific methodologies, indicators, nomenclatures and classifications in the conduct of statistical activity. It also aims to play a key role in developing and endorsing the annual and multi-annual statistical programmes, taking account of the needs of users. The Statistical Council is the main formal mechanism for consulting with users of statistics.

Unfortunately, in recent years the Statistical Council has become less effective in its key roles. There has been a lack of appropriate nominations for membership from some organisations. Also,

due to financial austerity measures, allowances for members of the Statistical Council have been reduced and, effective from 2013, the allowances have been withdrawn through an amendment of the law No. 226/2009 by the law no. 211/2010. This has led to a relatively low level of attendance at meetings. The Statistical Council secretariat, based in the NIS, has made considerable efforts to maintain the Council operational by ensuring at least 50% meeting participation of the members.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 16. The National Institute of Statistics should make proposals to strengthen the operational effectiveness of the National Statistical Council, including securing sufficient resources and appropriate appointments to meet its objectives of representing the interests of data providers, producers and users of official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 11, indicators 11.1 and 11.2.)**

### **Relationship with users**

The NIS recognises that the level of statistical awareness in Romania as a whole is lower than it would like it to be. The NIS has taken useful steps to increase awareness. Between 2007 and 2013, 151 training courses were run for users of statistics, with 2,188 participants. The NIS has a section called “Statistical Culture” on their website, with links to European resources aimed at children and teachers. However, it is recognised that there is much to do in this area, possibly with targeted training for particular professions such as journalists, politicians, government officials, and teachers. The NIS is organising every two years seminars with representatives of ministries and institutions and with students (at NIS headquarter or the faculties) for raising awareness of the availability of online statistical products.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 17. The National Institute of Statistics should increase activities to raise statistical awareness and ensure more widespread use of official statistics within public administration and among decision makers at local, regional and national level, building on the training programmes for users of statistics and working with partners such as the Romanian Statistical Society and academic institutions. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 11.)**

### **Customised analysis**

The NIS does not provide a service for users to request any customised analysis. The present staffing and resource situation has led to lack of people to develop the capacity for such analysis. The main users and potential users of such a service appreciate the practical situation within NIS and have therefore not been very demanding in this respect. However, if the capacity was there, then they would be likely to make use of it. As with the lack of sufficient access to microdata, there are low expectations for customised analysis and low awareness of the potential benefits for policy analysis. The Peer Reviewers feel that increased awareness of the potential of customised analysis and the offer of such a service on a chargeable basis would lead to greater use of such a facility, which could, over time, become self-financing.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 18. The National Institute of Statistics should develop the capacity to provide customised analysis of data, if necessary on a charging basis, and publish details of such analysis carried out. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15, indicator 15.3.)**

#### **4.2.7 DISSEMINATION**

##### **Release calendar**

The NIS website has a “Calendar of Press Releases” on the home page, with links to monthly lists of planned statistical releases for the current year. Each monthly list is ordered by the date of publication, and contains a short description of the statistics to be released. The monthly calendar is set for the year ahead in December of the previous year. The time of the day for the press release is not shown on the monthly lists. If there are any changes to the timetable from the pre-announced dates, they are announced on an ad-hoc basis. The procedure for notifying users of any change to the timing of publications is not published on the website.

There is a separate link to downloadable releases in Portable Document Format (PDF) for the current week, which also shows the time of official release, normally 10.00 am. However, the document “Strategy for Streamlining the Statistical Information Dissemination System” suggests that “Press releases should be published at 10.00 or 11.00 am”.

In order to comply with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 19. The release calendar covering official statistics produced by the National Institute of Statistics should include the precise time and date of all statistical releases, be flexible and searchable by theme, and be regularly updated during the year. The procedure for updating the calendar should also be published. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 13, indicators 13.2 and 13.4.)**

The release calendar on the NIS website only covers statistics published by the NIS. Official statistics produced by ONAs are published on their own websites. Most of the ONAs do not publish a release calendar. The Peer Reviewers are of the view that, over time, all official statistics should be released in accordance with a pre-announced release calendar and a single release calendar should be developed, encompassing all official statistics produced by the NSS.

In order to comply with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 20. The National Institute of Statistics should work towards extending the release calendar to cover all official statistics produced by Other National Authorities. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.5, and Principle 13, indicator 13.2.)**

##### **Error correction and revision policies**

The NIS has internal procedures in place to correct any errors in published statistics and for planned revisions to statistics. However, in the Self-Assessment Questionnaire and during the peer review visit, the Peer Reviewers observed that there was little or no distinction between the treatment of published errors and routine planned revisions in the procedures applied.

A new “Revision Policy of the National Institute of Statistics Romania” has been adopted and published in Romanian on the NIS website. This was shared with the Peer Review team during the visit. This revision policy document recognises the distinction between types of revisions as

“Scheduled revisions” and “Unscheduled revisions”, with errors being included in the latter. However, even in this policy there is no distinction between errors and revisions in terms of how they are handled.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 21. The National Institute of Statistics should make a clear distinction between the processes for correction of errors in statistics that have already been published, and planned revisions due to other reasons, preferably in two separate policies that are published on the website. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicators 6.3 and 6.6, and Principle 8, indicator 8.6.)**

### **Equal access to statistics**

The CoP emphasises that all users should have access to statistical releases at the same time and any privileged pre-release access should be limited, controlled and publicised.

The practice by the NIS is that most statistical releases are published at 10.00 on the day of publication, but are all made available under embargo around or shortly before 9.00 to the Presidential Administration Office, 18 ministries, and 58 media organisations (press agencies, TV and radio stations). The list of those with the pre-release access was provided to the Peer Reviewers during the visit. This list is not published on the NIS website.

The Peer Reviewers believe that the current level of pre-release access is excessive and poses potential risks of misuse and leaks of data before the official publication time, while acknowledging that there has been no such incident in the past. Pre-release access should be limited to those who need access to particular releases, rather than all releases being sent to all organisations on the list. There should also be differentiation in procedures applied for media organisations and for ministries.

Some official statistics that are sent to Eurostat by members of the NSS are not published within Romania. The Peer Reviewers believe that these statistics should also be released within Romania at the same time as when they are sent to Eurostat, and subject to routine statistical release procedures.

In order to comply with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 22. Pre-release of statistics to Ministries by the National Institute of Statistics and Other National Authorities should be abolished, or be restricted to relevant Ministries for individual releases based on need. The list of those with pre-release access should be published on the website for each release. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.7.)**
- 23. Pre-release of statistics to media by the National Institute of Statistics and Other National Authorities should be abolished, or be within controlled conditions of access. The list of those with pre-release access should be published on the website for each release. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.7.)**
- 24. The National Institute of Statistics and all Other National Authorities should release within Romania all statistics supplied directly to Eurostat, and these statistics should be subject to routine statistical release procedures. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicators 6.5 and 6.7.)**

### **Dissemination policy**

The NIS developed in 2006 the “Strategy for streamlining the statistical information dissemination system” as an internal document. This document is updated whenever necessary. This includes sections on defining the goals of the dissemination policy, products of dissemination, pricing and payment for statistics, marketing, promoting statistical literacy, media relations and risks. The Peer Reviewers consider that there is a need to develop this further, into an overarching dissemination policy, which should also be published on the NIS website. In particular, there is a need to review the balance of formats of statistical outputs, between printed publications such as yearbooks, and online publications such as databases and electronic compendia publications.

The dissemination policy should include issues covered in some of the other output-related recommendations in this report, such as revisions, pre-release access arrangements and microdata access. In addition, the Peer Reviewers believe that improvements could be made in the presentation of statistics in NIS publications, including the application of good practice in the format of tables, charts and maps. There may be need for training and development in respect of this, as well as guidance on good practice.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 25. The National Institute of Statistics should review the “Strategy for streamlining the statistical information dissemination system”, and develop an overarching dissemination policy, incorporating issues related to handling of provisional and final data, pre-release access arrangements, microdata access, customised analysis and guidance on good practice in presentation of statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15, indicator 15.2.)**

### **Microdata access**

The NIS provides limited access to microdata for researchers. Individual researchers can apply for access to particular datasets by providing information about specific projects requiring such access. On approval by the NIS, anonymised datasets are provided on a compact disc (CD). The NIS has only been receiving a few microdata requests per year (up to five) and investments in remote access applications have not been considered justifiable.

There are no facilities for online access or access in a secure environment. Also, it is not possible to provide linked datasets from multiple surveys or administrative sources.

Discussion with users and with NIS staff indicated that researchers accept the current situation, and there appears to be a lack of awareness and low expectations of the potential benefits of using microdata for research and analysis. The current rules for access to microdata are on the NIS website, with links to the Eurostat facility being prominent. Users reported that it was often easier to obtain Romanian microdata through Eurostat rather than directly from the NIS. The NIS stated that users are informed about the rules and procedures for microdata access but not consulted on their preferred approaches.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 26. The National Institute of Statistics should, in consultation with users, develop a programme to promote and facilitate safe access to microdata, raise awareness of potential benefits, improve the current arrangements for access to microdata and establish safe centre(s) for such access. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4.)**

### **4.3 NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE VIEWS WHERE THEY DIVERGE FROM PEER REVIEWERS' ASSESSMENT**

National Institute of Statistics has no diverging views from the Peer reviewers' findings.

# ANNEX A: PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT

## PEER REVIEW VISIT TO ROMANIA

20 - 24 APRIL 2015

### AGENDA

TO BE HELD IN: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS  
LIBERTATII AVENUE, NO. 16  
ROOM: DIONISIE POP MARȚIAN

#### Peer Review Team (PR Team):

Hallgrímur Snorrason, Chair  
Jan Byfuglien, Reviewer  
Jagdev Virdee, Reviewer

#### National Coordinator Team (NIS coordinator team):

Gabriela Popa, Daniela Ștefănescu, Ilie Dumitrescu, Lucia Sinigaglia, Răzvan Pavel

**Eurostat Observer:** Claudia Junker

Time	Programme	Participants
<b>Day 1 – Monday, 20 April 2015</b>		
From-To	Subject	Name, position
09.00 – 9.45	1 Peer Review Team internal meeting	<b>PR Team</b>
09.45 – 10.15	2 Preparatory meeting with the NSI coordinator team to discuss practical aspects of the visit.	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS coordinator team:</b> Popa Gabriela, Daniela Ștefănescu, Ilie Dumitrescu, Lucia Sinigaglia, Răzvan Pavel
10.15 – 10.30	Coffee Break	
10.30 – 12.30	3 Welcome and introduction of the programme. General information session with a description on how the NSS is organised. Statistical plans.	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS participants:</b> Tudorel Andrei, Dan Ion Gherguț, Mihaela Iagăr, Beatrix Gered, Adriana Ciucea, Gheorghe Vaida Muntean, Gabriela Popa, Daniela Ștefănescu, Ilie Dumitrescu, Lucia Sinigaglia, Răzvan Pavel, Florinel Sgârdea, Bogdan Pătărlăgeanu, Viorica Sălăgean, Mariana Pietreanu, Cristian Vitty Chiran, Camelia Chirniciuc, Maria Rădulescu, Mariana Brebuleț, Cristina Sacală, Mihai Gheorghe, Liliana Pintilia, Liviu Ghilencea, Ioana Dima, Nina Alexevici, Florica Cîrstea, Florentina Gheorghe, Andreea Cambir, Laurențiu Gavrilă, Mariana Mihalache
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 14.45	4 Statistical legislation and related legislation, confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity (CoP principles 1, 2, 5 and 6)	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS participants</b> <u>Principle 1 and 2:</u> Tudorel Andrei, Ilie Dumitrescu, Daniela Ștefănescu, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel, Lucia Sinigaglia, Bogdan Pătărlăgeanu, Florica Cîrstea, Nina Alexevici, Laurențiu Gavrilă, Mariana Mihalache, Virginia Balea, Liviu Ghilencea, Florentina Gheorghe <u>Principle 5 and 6:</u> Andreea Cambir, Maria Rădulescu, Lucia Sinigaglia, Gheorghe Vaida Muntean, Camelia Chirniciuc, Ilie Dumitrescu, Daniela Ștefănescu, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel, Mariana Brebuleț, Silvia Piscă, Bogdan Pătărlăgeanu, Adriana Ciucea,
14.45 – 15.00	Coffee Break	

15.00 15.30	- 5	Resources and cost effectiveness (CoP principles 3 and 10)	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS participants</b> <u>Principle 3 and 10</u> : Răzvan Profiroiu, Viorica Sălăgean, Mihaela Iordache, Gheorghe Vaida Muntean, Mariana Constantinescu, Florinel Sgârdea, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel, Lucia Sinigaglia, Daniela Ștefănescu, Ilie Dumitrescu
15.30 16.30	- 6	Coordination of the NSS	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NSI participants</b> : Ilie Dumitrescu, Daniela Ștefănescu, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel, Lucia Sinigaglia, Mariana Pietreanu, Bogdan Pătărlăgeanu, Maria Rădulescu, Mihaela Iordache, Mariana Constantinescu
<b>Day 2 – Tuesday, 21 April 2015</b>			
09.00 10.45	- 7	Meeting with main users – Ministries and other public/private institutions, representatives of labour and employers' federations	<b>PR Team</b> <b>Invited institutions and names of their representatives:</b> Dumitru Sandu, Ion Ghizdeanu, Camelia Neagu, Constantin Anghelache, Alina Truică, Mihaela Kanovits, Angelica Vlădescu  <b>NIS participants</b> : Lucia Sinigaglia, Silvia Pistică, Mariana Clipcea, Adriana Ciucea, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel, Daniela Ștefănescu, Tudorel Andrei, Ilie Dumitrescu
10.45 11.00	-	Coffee Break	
11.00 12.45	- 8	Quality and statistical Processes (CoP principles 4 and 7-9). Including a presentation of the NSI's Quality management system.	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS participants:</b> <u>Principle 4, 7, 8, 9</u> : Lucia Sinigaglia, Liviu Ghilencea, Adriana Ciucea, Florentina Gheorghe, Silvia Pistică, Nina Alexevici, Florica Cîrstea, Virginia Balea, Lavinia Bălțeanu, Andreea Cambir, Steluța Rădoi, Ioana Dima, Daniela Ștefănescu, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel, Ilie Dumitrescu
12.45 13.45	-	Lunch	
13.45 15.00	- 9	Statistical output (CoP principles 11-15)	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS participants</b> <u>Principle 11, 12, 13, 14, 15</u> : Dan Ion Gherguț, Maria Rădulescu, Bogdan Pătărlăgeanu, Lucia Sinigaglia, Liviu Ghilencea, Adriana Ciucea, Florentina Gheorghe, Silvia Pistică, Nina Alexevici, Florica Cîrstea, Andreea Cambir, Steluța Rădoi, Ioana Dima, Răzvan Pavel, Gabriela Popa, Daniela Ștefănescu
15.00 15.15	-	Coffee Break	
15.15 16.30	- 10	Cooperation/level of integration	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS participants</b> : Daniela Ștefănescu, Ana Maria Ranta, Lucia Sinigaglia, Florentina Gheorghe, Nina Alexevici, Virginia Balea, Adriana Ciucea, Silvia Pistică, Maria Rădulescu, Camelia Chirmiciuc, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel, Ilie Dumitrescu
<b>Day 3 – Wednesday, 22 April 2015</b>			
09.00 10.45	- 11	Meeting with main data providers/respondents	<b>PR Team</b> <b>Invited institutions and names of their representatives:</b> Ovidiu Dima, Mihaela Denciu, Ioana Bakter, Iuliana Circu, Traian Becheanu, Alma Gănceanu, Anca Popescu  <b>NIS participants</b> : Nina Alexevici, Florica Cîrstea, Florentina Gheorghe, Mariana Mihalache, Laurențiu Gavrilă, Virginia Balea, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel, Daniela Ștefănescu

10.45 11.00	-		Coffee Break	
11.00 - 12.45	12	Meeting with academia, researchers etc.	<b>PR Team</b> <b>Invited institutions/individuals</b>  Marian Preda, Constanța Mihăescu, Cristina Lincaru, Gheorghe Zaman, Vasile Ghețău  <b>NIS participants:</b> Bogdan Oancea, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel	
12.45 13.45	-		Lunch	
13.45 - 14.30	13a	Meeting with ONAs: Ministry of Health - National Centre of Statistics and Informatics in Public Health	<b>PR Team</b> <b>Representatives of the Ministry of Health - National Centre of Statistics and Informatics in Public Health:</b> Constantina Cristea, Lucia Dragomir, Emilia Niciu, Alexandra Cucu, Carmen Ungureanu, Adrian Pană <b>NIS participants:</b> Silvia Pisică, Steluța Rădoi, Gabriela Popa, Lucia Sinigaglia, Răzvan Pavel	
14.30 - 15.15	13b	Meeting with ONAs: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	<b>PR Team</b> <b>Representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development:</b> George Pătrașcu, Radu Galis, Marius Neagu, Elena Chicosu <b>NIS participants:</b> Mariana Clipcea, Ioana Dima, Carmen Romaniuc, Marius Brodeală, Bogdan Gavrilă, Gabriela Popa, Lucia Sinigaglia, Răzvan Pavel	
15.15 - 16.00	13c	Meeting with ONAs: National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture	<b>PR Team</b> <b>Representatives of the National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture</b> Constantin Stroie, Mirela Pavel <b>NIS participants:</b> Mariana Clipcea, Ioana Dima, Carmen Romaniuc, Marius Brodeală, Bogdan Gavrilă, Gabriela Popa, Lucia Sinigaglia, Răzvan Pavel	
<b>Day 4– Thursday, 23 April 2015</b>				
09.00 10.45	-	14	Meeting with junior staff	<b>PR Team</b> <b>Names of junior staff members and their areas of work (dept.)</b> Liliana Mititiuc, Ana Maria Dobre, Sultana Elena Stan, Andreea Drăxineanu, Ruxandra Georgescu, Andreea Mirică, Iulia Bajenaru, Andreea Mesteacă
10.45 11.15	-		Coffee Break	
11.15 13.00	-	15	Meeting with media	<b>PR Team</b> Sorin Pâslaru, Dan Popa, Paul Angelescu, Viorel Andronic, Dan Străuț  <b>NIS participants:</b> Bogdan Pătărlăgeanu, Vladimir Alexandrescu, Gabriela Popa, Răzvan Pavel
13.00 14.00	-		Lunch	
14.00 15.15	-	16	Clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS participants:</b> Tudorel Andrei, Gabriela Popa, Daniela Ștefănescu, Maria Rădulescu, Bogdan Pătărlăgeanu, Ilie Dumitrescu, Răzvan Pavel
<b>Day 5– Friday, 24 April 2015</b>				

09.00 11.00	-	17	PR team discussion	<b>PR Team</b>
11.00 13.00	-	18	Meeting with senior management: conclusions and recommendations	<b>PR Team</b> <b>NIS participants:</b> Tudorel Andrei, Dan Ion Gherguț, Mihaela Iagăr, Beatrix Gered, Gabriela Popa, Daniela Ștefănescu, Ilie Dumitrescu, Lucia Sinigaglia, Răzvan Pavel
13.00 14.00	-		Lunch	
14.00 15.00	-	19	Preparation of the report: task sharing	<b>PR Team</b>

## ANNEX B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<b>Peer Review Team</b>	
1	Mr Hallgrímur SNORRASON, Chair
2	Mr Jan BYFUGLIEN, Reviewer
3	Mr Jagdev SINGH VIRDEE, Reviewer
<b>Eurostat observer</b>	
4	Ms Claudia JUNKER, Head of unit "Statistical cooperation"
<b>NIS management</b>	
5	Mr Tudorel ANDREI - President
6	Mr Dan Ion GHERGUȚ - Vice-president
7	Ms Mihaela IAGĂR - Vice-president
8	Ms Beatrix GERED - Vice-president
9	Mr Răzvan PROFIROIU - General Secretary
<b>National coordinator team</b>	
10	Ms Gabriela POPA – Director, Public Policies Unit
11	Ms Daniela ȘTEFĂNESCU – Director, Department of European Affairs and International Cooperation
12	Mr Ilie DUMITRESCU – Director, President’s cabinet
13	Ms Lucia SINIGAGLIA - General director, General Department of Operations and Management of the Statistical Data Sources
14	Mr Răzvan PAVEL – counsellor, Public Policies Unit
<b>Other NIS staff members</b>	
15	Mr Bogdan OANCEA - President’s adviser
16	Ms Adriana CIUCHEA – General Director, General Department of National Accounts and Macroeconomic Syntheses
17	Ms Silvia PISICĂ - General Director, General Department of Demography and Social Statistics
18	Mr Gheorghe VAIDA MUNTEAN - General Director, General Department of IT and Statistical Infrastructure
19	Ms Maria RĂDULESCU – Director, Department of Dissemination of Statistical Data
20	Mr Mihai GHEORGHE – Director, Department of Prices Statistics
21	Ms Liliana PINTILIA – Director, Department of National Accounts
22	Ms Lavinia Elena BĂLTEANU – Director, Department of Indicators on Population and International Migration
23	Ms Andreea CAMBIR – Director, Department of Social Statistics

24	Ms Steluța RĂDOI - Head of Section, Demographic, health, culture and justice statistics Office
25	Ms Mariana BREBULEȚ - Director, Department of Administration, Processing of Administrative Sources
26	Mr Liviu GHILENCEA – Director, Department of Methodologies, Classifications of Statistical Registers
27	Ms Ioana DIMA – Director, Department of Agriculture and Environment Statistics
28	Ms Nina ALEXEVICI – Director, Department of Short Term Economic Indicators Statistics
29	Ms Florica CÎRSTEA – Director, Department of Business Structural Statistics
30	Ms Virginia BALEA – Deputy Director, Department of Business Structural Statistics
31	Ms Florentina GHEORGHE – Director, Department of Foreign Trade Statistics
32	Ms Mariana CLIPCEA – Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture and Environment Statistics
33	Ms Carmen ROMANIUC - Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture and Environment Statistics
34	Mr Marius BRODEALĂ - Head of section, Department of Agriculture and Environment Statistics
35	Mr Bogdan GAVRILĂ - Head of section, Department of Agriculture and Environment Statistics
36	Ms Camelia CHIRNICIUC – Director, Department of IT Applications Projections and Maintenance
37	Mr Cristian Vitty CHIRAN – Director, Department of Statistical Publications Editing
38	Ms Cristina SACALĂ – Director, Dissemination of Romanian Statistical Information
39	Mr Bogdan PĂTĂRLĂGEANU – Director, Department of Communication
40	Ms Mariana PIETREANU – Director, National Center for Statistical Training
41	Ms Mihaela IORDACHE – Director, Department of Human Resources Management
42	Ms Viorica SĂLĂGEAN – Director, Department of Budget and Accounting
43	Ms Mariana CONSTANTINESCU – Director, Department of Acquisitions, Investments and Services of General Administration
44	Mr Florin SGĂRDEA – Auditor, Department of Internal Audit
45	Mr Laurențiu GAVRILĂ – Director, Regional Statistical Division BUCUREȘTI
46	Ms Mariana MIHALACHE – Director, County Statistical Division ILFOV
<b>Junior staff of the NIS</b>	
47	Ms Liliana MITITIUC – counsellor, Department of Dissemination of Statistical Data
48	Ms Ana Maria DOBRE – counsellor, General Department of Demography and Social Statistics
49	Ms Sultana Elena STAN – counsellor, General Department of Demography and Social Statistics
50	Ms Andreea DRĂXINEANU – counsellor, General Department of Demography and Social Statistics
51	Ms Ruxandra GEORGESCU – counsellor, General Department of Demography and Social Statistics
52	Ms Andreea MIRICĂ – counsellor, Communication Department
53	Ms Iulia BĂJENARU – counsellor, National Accounts and macroeconomic syntheses Department
54	Ms Andreia MESTEACĂN – counsellor, Department of Dissemination of Statistical Data

<b>Representatives of main users</b>	
55	Mr Dumitru SANDU – Phd, university of Bucharest
56	Mr Ion GHIZDEANU – Phd, President of National Forecasting Commission, National Statistical Council vice president
57	Ms Camelia NEAGU - Director, National Bank of Romania
58	Mr Constantin ANGHELACHE – Phd, Vicepresident of Romanian Society of Statistics
59	Ms Alina TRUICĂ – researcher, National Council of Small and Middle Private Enterprises in Romania
60	Ms Mihaela KANOVITS – Director, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly
61	Ms Angelica VLĂDESCU – Director, Ministry of European Funds
<b>Representatives of data providers/respondents</b>	
62	Mr Ovidiu DIMA– economist, National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering
63	Ms Mihaela DENCIU - human resources director, SC Porsche Romania SRL
64	Ms Ioana BAKTER - economic director, SC Fabryo Corporation SRL
65	Ms Iuliana CIRCU - taxes consultant, SC Vodafone SA
66	Mr Traian BECHEANU - chief accountant, SC Ernst & Young SRL
67	Ms Alma GĂNCEANU - statistician, head of office, National Society of Railway Freight Transport " - Marfă CFR" SA
68	Ms Anca POPESCU - head of office, National Society of Passenger Railway Transport "CFR - Passenger" SA
<b>Representatives of the academia, researchers</b>	
69	Mr Marian PREDA - Dean, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work
70	Ms Cristina LINCARU – researcher, National Scientific Research Institute for Labour and Social Protection
71	Mr Gheorghe ZAMAN – director, Romanian Academy, Institute of National Economy
72	Mr Vasile GHEȚĂU – director, Center for Demographic Researches of Romanian Academy
73	Ms Constanța MIHĂESCU – Phd, researcher, Academy of Economics Studies, Bucharest
<b>Representatives of ONAs</b>	
74	Ms Constantina CRISTEA – head of Office, National Centre of Statistics and Informatics in Public Health (Institute of Public Health/ Ministry of Health)
75	Ms Lucia DRAGOMIR- economist, National Centre of Statistics and Informatics in Public Health (Institute of Public Health/ Ministry of Health)
76	Ms Emilia NICIU – primary doctor, National Centre of Statistics and Informatics in Public Health (Institute of Public Health/ Ministry of Health)
77	Ms Alexandra CUCU – General Director, Institute of Public Health
78	Ms Carmen UNGUREANU – director, Institute of Public Health
79	Mr Adrian PANĂ – primary doctor, Institute of Public Health

80	Mr George PĂTRAȘCU – counsellor, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
81	Mr Radu GALIȘ - counsellor, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
82	Mr Marius NEAGU - counsellor, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
83	Ms Elena CHICOSU - counsellor, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
84	Mr Constantin STROIE – counsellor, National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture
85	Ms Mirela PAVEL – public manager, National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture
<b>Representatives of mass - media</b>	
86	Mr Sorin PÂSLARU – chief editor, Financial Newspaper
87	Mr Dan POPA – editor, Hot News Agency
88	Mr Paul ANGELESCU - press corespondent, ProTV Television
89	Mr Viorel ANDRONIC – editor, AMOS News
90	Mr Dan STRĂUȚ- economic editor, “Adevărul” NewsPaper