

The organisational structure of statistics in Spain

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1. The highest-ranking Spanish statutory provision on statistics is article 149.31a of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, which provides that “the State shall have exclusive authority over statistics for central government purposes.”

2. The *Ley 12/1989, de 9 de mayo, de la Función Estadística Pública* (“the Government Statistics Act” or “LFEP”)¹ is the foundational statute of statistical practice by central government. LFEP lays down the principles governing statistical efforts, regulates data collection and storage and the dissemination of results, sets the terms of compulsory response, governs statistical confidentiality, introduces statistical production planning and regulates the role of executive and consultative statistical bodies.

3. Under LFEP, the central government’s statistical role is carried out by the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (the Spanish national statistical institute, or “INE”), by the statistical units of individual government ministries, by other public bodies attached to central government and entrusted with statistical duties, and by the *Consejo Superior de Estadística* (the “Higher Statistical Council”). In addition, the *Comisión Interministerial de Estadística* (the “Interdepartmental Statistical Commission”) and the *Comité Interterritorial de Estadística* (the “Inter-Territorial Statistical Committee”) operate as consultative bodies.

4. The *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*,² INE, is an autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (“MEH”). The President of INE, who has the government rank of Under-Secretary, is appointed and removed by the Cabinet under a Royal Decree, at the proposal of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. INE is the central body of government statistics in Spain. Its important functions and duties, set forth in LFEP article 26, are summarised as follows: coordination and oversight of statistical services; framing of the draft *Plan Estadístico Nacional* (the national statistical plan, or “PEN”); drawing up of the inventory of statistics; proposal of standards and methodological research; maintenance of statistical confidentiality; compilation of general censuses, major surveys and integrated systems of economic accounts and population and social statistics; use for statistical purposes of data from administrative sources and promotion of such use by other statistical units; formation of directories; design and execution of statistical projects commissioned under PEN; management of international relations in statistical affairs; and professional development of statistical staff.

5. *Statistical units*³ operate in almost all central government ministries and in some ministries’ attached autonomous bodies. Ministries’ statistical units are involved in the framing of the first draft of PEN, the national statistical plan, and conduct the

¹ http://www.ine.es/en/normativa/leyes/l1289_en.htm

² http://www.ine.es/en/normativa/leyes/rd508_01_estat_en.htm

³ http://www.ine.es/en/normativa/leyes/resumenorg2_en.pdf

statistical operations commissioned from them under the plan, and other operations relating to their own activities.

6. The *Consejo Superior de Estadística*,⁴ or “Higher Statistical Council”, is a consultative body to the statistical units of central government. As a forum for reporting units, producers and users of government statistics, members of the Council include representatives of trade unions, employer associations and other social, economic and academic groups and institutions, as well as government ministries, the Bank of Spain and INE. The Council is chaired by the Minister of Economy and Finance. The vice chairperson is the President of INE. About forty members sit on the Council, whose role is to support the harmonisation of statistics, optimise the use of the resources allocated to producing statistics, help bring statistics into better alignment with users' needs for information, and facilitate reporting units' supply of primary data. The Council issues an opinion on the draft PEN and on all proposals to introduce new statistics laid before it; in addition, it draws up recommendations and deals with consultations.

7. The *Comisión Interministerial de Estadística*,⁵ or “Interdepartmental Statistical Commission”, is attached to the Ministry of Economy and Finance through INE. It provides a forum for the statistical units spread across central government. Chaired by the President of INE, the Commission's membership includes INE directors general, the sub-directors general of the ministerial divisions handling the main statistical coordination or production activities, and the head of the Bank of Spain's statistics department. The key aims of the Commission are to coordinate horizontally the activities of statistical units, integrate the statistical information systems associated with the various sector- and theme-related fields, encourage the rational use of the available data sources, and appraise plans to introduce, revise or suppress any administrative records or forms used as statistical sources.

8. The *Comité Interterritorial de Estadística*,⁶ the “Inter-Territorial Statistical Committee” or “CITE”, is a joint collegiate body of central government and autonomous communities⁷ (the self-governing regions of Spain). The Committee is chaired by the President of INE. The vice chair is an autonomous community member elected by a majority. Committee members include the representatives of the statistical offices of each autonomous community. The overall mission of CITE is to support coordination and cooperation among central and regional statistical units.

9. The *estatutos de autonomía* (regional constitutions) of the autonomous communities provide that the regions hold “exclusive authority over statistics for the purposes of the autonomous community.” All the autonomous communities, bar one, have introduced their own statistical legislation. Most autonomous communities operate statistical bodies equivalent to those of central government – central statistical offices, units producing statistics at the departmental level and a regional statistical board – under their respective regional statistical laws.⁸

For more information: www.ine.es

⁴ http://www.ine.es/en/normativa/leyes/rd1037_en.htm

⁵ http://www.ine.es/en/normativa/leyes/rd1036see_en.htm

⁶ http://www.ine.es/en/normativa/leyes/ley_citte_en.htm

⁷ The territory of Spain is divided into 17 autonomous communities and two autonomous cities. An autonomous community is a territorial entity which, under the Spanish Constitution, has its own legislative and executive powers and is governed by its own representatives. The division of Spain into autonomous communities is enshrined in the Spanish Constitution of 1978.

⁸ http://www.ine.es/en/normativa/leyes/legccaa/legccaa_en.htm