

REPORT ON THE WORK OF ELSTAT

AUGUST 2010 – AUGUST 2014



Report on the work of the Hellenic Statistical Authority

August 2010 – August 2014

In order to achieve its primary goal, which has been first to enhance the reliability of Greece's official statistics and then to consolidate the confidence of users at national, European and international level in the aforementioned statistics, the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), over the past four years, put emphasis on four (4) main pillars:

- a) Improving and continuously ensuring the quality and reliability of statistics, by unswervingly observing the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice and by restructuring the processes and more generally the approach for the production of statistics.
- b) Focusing on good governance in the Statistical Institute, regarding its operation and management, by applying a rules-based system, which enhances, inter alia, the effectiveness of statistical works.
- c) Cooperating closely with the users of statistical data and being responsive to their needs, as well as coordinating and cooperating with other producers of statistical data with a view to improving the quality of statistics.
- d) Cooperating intensively and undertaking initiatives in the European and the international statistical community.

Over the past four years, ELSTAT carried out a significant number of actions aiming at improving the quality of produced statistics. Many of these actions were carried out in the framework of the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP), which was agreed between the Greek authorities and Eurostat, and was put into operation in 2010. As a result of ELSTAT's actions, there was a strong recovery in the reliability and credibility of the statistics of Greece. In this context, there was a reestablishment of the confidence of Eurostat, the other National Statistical Institutes in the European Statistical System, the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international partners, as well as of the international markets, with many international recognitions for this.

Among the main statistical activities that have taken place in 2010 – 2014 are included three very important censuses (the Agricultural – Livestock Census, the Buildings Census and the Population – Housing Census), as well as a very extensive Post Enumeration Survey for the 2011 Population – Housing Census. Among the significant events during the above four-year period stands out the successful organization by ELSTAT of the European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2012), in Athens, in May 2012. Finally, ELSTAT accomplished significant task concerning the advancement of the statistical legislative work in the European Union in the context of carrying out its duties during the Presidency of the Council Working Party on Statistics (CWPS), in the framework of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first semester of 2014.

On 29 February 2012, the Hellenic Parliament authorized the Prime Minister to sign on behalf of the Hellenic Republic the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics, adopting at the same time the text of the Commitment which was enshrined in Law 4051/2012. The Greek Commitment was the first one signed by a Member State of the European Union. The Commitment, on the one hand, highlights the progress that has been made in improving the quality and reliability of the statistics of Greece. On the other hand, it outlines the commitments of the Greek Government to take all necessary measures to ensure that ELSTAT is independent and the statistics are accurate, reliable and fully meet European and international quality standards. The Commitment concerns, inter alia, the commitment of the Greek Government to guarantee and defend the professional independence of ELSTAT and promote it to the public through appropriate communication actions, as well as to support ELSTAT in upholding public confidence in Greek statistics and to defend statistics against any efforts to undermine their credibility.

In the framework of fulfilling the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics, the Greek Statistical Law 3832/2010 was amended by the Hellenic Parliament on 11 April 2012 so as to ensure the independence of ELSTAT and the observance of European and international standards and best practices.

Moreover, in the framework of fulfilling the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics, on 1 January 2013

ELSTAT made necessary steps towards its operational independence and its administrative and financial autonomy as a Legal Entity under Public Law, as stipulated in the Statistical Law 3832/2010. This took place, inter alia, by: decoupling the budget of ELSTAT from the budget of the Ministry of Finance; assumption by the President of ELSTAT of the competency to authorize the expenditures of ELSTAT (instead of the Minister of Finance); initiation of the independent implementation of ELSTAT's budget by the Financial Administration Division of ELSTAT (instead of the Fiscal Control Service of the Ministry of Finance). The implementation of ELSTAT's budget is scrutinized by the Hellenic Court of Audit and the competent Committee of the Hellenic Parliament.

In the framework of the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics, an independent Good Practice Advisory Committee for the Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS) was also established. The five members of the Committee are appointed by the Hellenic Parliament, the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB), the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC), the Greek Personal Data Protection Authority and Eurostat, respectively. The task of this Committee is solely to prepare an annual report, advisory in nature, on the implementation within the ELSS of principles 1 – 6 (Institutional Environment) of the European Statistics Code of Practice. In September 2013, the first Annual Report of the Committee was published, focusing on the observance of principles 1 – 6 of the Code with regard to ELSTAT.

A. Improving the quality and reliability of statistics

ELSTAT took a significant number of steps in order to enhance the quality of the statistics produced. Many of these actions were undertaken in the framework of the implementation of the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP).

Important actions and achievements:

Government finance statistics

- **Fundamental reengineering of the processes and more generally of the overall approach to the production of Government Finance Statistics –deficit and debt statistics– in line with:**
 - the strict observance of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice (focusing on the principle of professional independence, the principle of quality commitment and the principle of impartiality and objectivity),
 - the results of the European Commission's Report on Greek Government deficit and debt statistics (8/1/2010),
 - the rules of the European System of Accounts (Council Regulation 2223/96 – ESA95).
- **Publication without any reservations by Eurostat, in the framework of the biannual Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP), for eight (8) consecutive times since November 2010, of the Annual Government Finance Statistics –a series of unprecedented successes for Greece as regards the aforementioned statistics– and building the very important “track record” regarding the reliability of the fiscal statistics of Greece. The statistics refer to the period 2006 – 2013.**
- **Compilation of the Register of the Entities that are classified in General Government, on the basis of the criteria laid down in ESA 95 and publication of this Register on the internet.**
- **Update of the Register of General Government Entities, by examining the entities that pre-existed in the Register, which was used until 2010, as regards the correctness of their classification, and by re-examining a significant number of small entities as regards their classification by institutional sector of the economy.**
- **Continuous update of the Register of the General Government Entities, by adding new entities, which are classified into the General Government according to ESA 95 criteria, and by deleting other entities, which are either abolished or no longer meet the classification criteria. Regular publication of the updated Register on the internet, on a quarterly basis, according to the best European practices.**

- Upgrading of the questionnaires (annual, quarterly, monthly) used to collect the data of General Government Entities.
- Development and activation of web applications for the online collection of data from General Government Entities, such as Social Security Funds, Public Hospitals and Legal Entities under Private and Public Law, which are supervised by the General Government.
- Development, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government, of a web application for the online collection of data from Local Government Organizations and their supervised agencies.
- Training of the Statistical Correspondents appointed in General Government Entities on topics pertaining to the sound provision of the necessary primary data, through the updated questionnaires and the implementation of the new methods of data collection.
- Organization of seminars for training the Statistical Correspondents of Ministries and other General Government Entities on the rules of the Excessive Deficit Procedure, as well as on the obligations arising from the Statistical Law.
- Signing of pioneering –even by EU standards– memoranda of cooperation with all Government Ministries, the General Accounting Office and the Bank of Greece, with the aim of ensuring transparency, timeliness and accuracy in the compilation of Government Finance Statistics.
- Publication on ELSTAT’s website of the EDP Consolidated Inventory of Sources and Methods for the annual fiscal data, as well as of an Inventory for the compilation of the quarterly data of General Government.
- Recompilation of Quarterly Government Finance Statistics, from 2009 onwards, by using data from primary sources and with a methodology fully harmonized with ESA95, so as to depict more accurately fiscal developments from quarter to quarter.
- Cooperation of ELSTAT with the Ministry of Finance in corresponding the transactions of ESA 95 to the transactions of the national Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
- Implementation of a project for the recompilation and release in October 2014 of updated and harmonized –without breaks– Government Finance Statistics for the entire period from 1995 – 2013, in line with the new European System of Accounts ESA 2010 and pursuant to the relevant European Regulation. The successful completion of the project presupposes the provision of selected data of the Ministry of Finance for the years 1995 – 2005.
- Significant reinforcement and training of ELSTAT staff, who are responsible for the compilation of the Government Finance Statistics of Greece.

National Accounts and Economic Statistics

- Revision, in 2011, in the framework of a special project and with the cooperation and assistance of Eurostat, of the Annual National Accounts, with the compilation and publication of a revised series for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other macroeconomic aggregates for the period 2005 – 2010. Publication of the inventory of Methods and Sources for the GDP revision.
- Implementation, in close cooperation with Eurostat, of projects aiming at enhancing the quality of Regional and Quarterly National Accounts. The project for enhancing the Regional Accounts was completed in December 2011.
- Conduct of preparatory works for the compilation, from October 2014, of seasonally adjusted quarterly data for GDP, and on this basis, release of estimates of quarter-on-quarter GDP growth rates.
- Implementation, in close cooperation with Eurostat, of a project aiming at enhancing the quality of Sector Accounts.
- Publication on the website of ELSTAT of tables containing Gross Value Added (GVA) and employment data for 64 branches of economic activity, for the years 2000 – 2011 and for 10 branches, for the years 2000 – 2013.
- Publication on the website of ELSTAT of data on Consumption Expenditure of Households, by

consumption purpose, at constant prices, for the years 2000 – 2011.

- Implementation of an extensive project, with the support of Eurostat, for the implementation of the new European System of Accounts, ESA 2010 which will be completed with the publication of results in October 2014. In the framework of the tasks undertaken for the implementation of ESA 2010, ELSTAT will compile long time series for National Accounts, from 1995 to 2013, with harmonized methodology and without breaks, which were not available in the past. For the production of ESA 2010 data, special surveys and studies have been undertaken, so that the methodology that will be followed for the implementation of the new system is fully in line with its requirements.
- In the framework of the memorandum of cooperation signed between ELSTAT and the National Documentation Centre (EKT), the surveys on “Innovation” and “Research and Development” have been jointly conducted with immediate usage of the results by ELSTAT for compiling National Accounts in compliance with ESA 2010 and by the EKT for fulfilling obligations arising from Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 995/2012.
- Significant reinforcement and training of the ELSTAT staff that are responsible for the compilation of the National Accounts of Greece.
- Elaboration, implementation and completion, during 2011 – 2013, in cooperation with Eurostat, of an action plan for improving the quality of Foreign Trade Statistics, involving further modernization of the data collection and data processing systems, as well as cooperation with other agencies.
- Initiation of publication of quarterly Press Releases for the Index of Wages in the economy as a whole (branches B – S of the European Statistical Classification of Branches of Economic Activities, NACE Rev.2) after re-examination of the hitherto applied methodology.
- Publication of the following revised Indices with 2010 as a new base year: Material Costs Index in Construction of New Residential Buildings; Price Indices of Work Categories and Construction Cost Indices for New Residential Buildings; Input and Output Price Indices in Agriculture – Livestock; Cost Indices for the Factors of Agricultural – Livestock Production; Import Price Index in Industry; Industrial Production Index; Turnover Index and Index of Volume in Retail Trade; Turnover Index in Wholesale Trade; Turnover Index in Motor Trade; Index of Persons Employed in Retail Trade; Turnover Indices in Transport, Information – Communication and Tourism.
- Publication of the revised Consumer Price Index with 2009 as a new base year and update of the Index by updating the weights, taking into consideration the results of the 2012 Household Budget Survey and by implementing the “chain-linking” method.
- Development, with the assistance of Eurostat, and implementation of a project for redesigning and upgrading the Statistical Business Register of ELSTAT.
- Development of a project, with the assistance of Eurostat, for enhancing the quality of the Farm Register.
- Compilation, for the first time, of a Register of Supplementary Accommodation Establishments (rooms for rent and apartments), in the framework of upgrading Tourism Statistics. Design and conduct of a new survey on rooms-for-rent in Greece.
- Upgrading the web application for the submission of data on the arrivals and overnight stays in hotels as well as rooms-for-rent.
- Signing of a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism for the compilation of Tourism Statistics and of a Satellite Tourism Account. In the framework of the memorandum of cooperation, ELSTAT processed the data so that the Ministry of Tourism could compile a Satellite Tourism Account.
- Initiation of work, with the assistance of Eurostat, aiming at developing a project for the creation of a Vehicles Register, which is necessary for designing the surveys in the Transport sector and providing more complete information to users.
- Exploration of the possibility of creating a Single Entry Point for the submission of data by en-

terprises.

- Signing, in April 2014, of an updated memorandum of cooperation between ELSTAT, the General Secretariat of Public Revenue (GSPR) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the General Secretariat of Information Systems (GSIS) of the MoF and the Social Insurance Institute (IKA) for the provision to ELSTAT of information for the needs of compiling Business Statistics and National Accounts. The full implementation of this memorandum from 2015 onwards will result, inter alia, in the following: a) enhancing the quality and timeliness of statistics, b) significantly reducing the burden on enterprises on account of responding to survey questionnaires and c) reducing the cost for the production of statistical results.
- Initiation of work, with the assistance of Eurostat, for developing a project aiming at enhancing the quality of Environmental Statistics.
- Improvement of Environmental Statistics, by the transmission, for the first time, of data on environmental accounts, air pollutants and material flow accounts to Eurostat, as well by the transmission of data on inland waters at a greater level of detail, both by Region and by Water Department. Cooperation of ELSTAT with the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, in the framework of a project, with the aim of further improving water statistics.

Censuses and Social Statistics

- Full observance, during the 2011 Population – Housing Census, for the first time, of the new quality requirements introduced by Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and its implementing Regulations, and by the methodological and organizational principles stipulated in the Recommendations of the Conference of European Statisticians for the 2010 Round of Population – Housing Censuses, which were the outcome of the cooperation between UNECE and Eurostat, and of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. As a result, the 2011 Census involved more and stricter quality assurance procedures and quality checks than any other Census conducted before in Greece.
- Conduct of a Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) for the 2011 Population – Housing Census on a sample of 19,380 households from across the Country, with a view to assessing the exhaustiveness and quality of the Census data, even at the level of Municipality (Kallikratis Program). It should be noted that a PES had not been used during the previous Census.
- Digitization of the census – administrative boundaries of Local Government, as these were recorded during the 2011 Population – Housing Census.
- Revision of the estimated Population for the years 2001 – 2011, on the basis of the results of the 2011 Population Census.
- Revision and correction of the data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for the period 2001 – 2013, on the basis of new population estimates based on the data of the 2011 Population Census.
- Signing and implementation of a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and the University of Athens pertaining to the development of a System of Health Accounts (SHA). Publication, for the first time, of statistics on Health Expenditure in Greece, on the basis of the SHA of OECD (for the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012).
- Augmenting the sample of the 2014 Household Budget Survey (HBS) and of the 2014 Survey on Income and Living Conditions of Households (EU-SILC) in order to provide representative results at the level of Region (NUTS 2). Augmenting the sample of the Job Vacancy Survey and Labour Cost and Employment Indices in Enterprises from the second semester 2013 onwards, with the aim of improving the quality of the data and of the relevant indices.
- Cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights aiming at preparing for the electronic collection of statistical data on justice by the supervised agencies of the Ministry.
- Cooperation with the Division of Road Traffic Police of the Hellenic Police, with a view to developing an application for the electronic collection of the necessary data for the Survey on Road Accidents.

- Exploitation of administrative data sources of the Ministry of Interior by granting access of ELSTAT to the ARIADNE system of the Ministry in order to compile Vital Statistics.
- Increased use of new technologies for data collection: electronic collection of data from administrative sources for the annual Survey on Accidents at Work; extension of electronic data collection for the annual Survey on In-patient Hospital Care to all hospitals in Greece; conduct of the Time Use Survey with the use of tablets for the first time. Replacement of paper questionnaires used for all the surveys of ELSTAT in the field of education statistics by web questionnaires.
- Use, for the first time, of Optical Character Readers (OCR) and of automated checks for the processing of the data of: the 2009 Agricultural – Livestock Census, the 2011 Population – Housing Census and from 2013 onwards of the Household Budget Survey, as well as of the Farm Structure Survey from 2013 and of the Survey on Sea Fishery from 2014.

Human resources and technical infrastructure

- Development of a project, with the assistance of Eurostat, for upgrading the existing ICT infrastructure and the corresponding services provided by ELSTAT. Initiation of the implementation of the project which is planned to be completed within 2015.
- Development of a project for the training of ELSTAT staff.

B. Good governance by implementing a rules-based system

During the past four years, aiming at upgrading the processes and procedures for the production of statistics, great emphasis was given to the implementation of rules and to transparency in the operations and management of the Statistical Institute, as well as to the saving of resources.

Important actions and achievements:

- Adoption of the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT.
- Selection of temporary survey workers (Heads of Census Sectors and Enumerators) for the conduct of the 2011 Buildings and Population – Housing Censuses through transparent, standardized procedures and according to meritocratic criteria.
- Creation of an electronic Register of External Survey Workers who are utilized by ELSTAT for the collection of statistical data in the numerous statistical surveys conducted every year, as well as of a centralized and uniformly applied system for their ranking and for the assignment of surveys to them based on rules, transparent procedures, impartiality and meritocratic criteria.
- Rationalization of the remuneration of External Survey Workers of ELSTAT, by implementing a standardized, rules-based remuneration policy. Creation of a special web page on ELSTAT's website providing information to External Survey Workers.
- Development of a new system for programming and monitoring the progress of the statistical surveys/works of ELSTAT (by developing a relevant computerized application), in order for ELSTAT to fully meet its European and national obligations, both in terms of timeliness and high quality.
- Creation in ELSTAT of a Committee for Monitoring and Managing the Quality of the Statistical Works, with the participation of the President of ELSTAT, the two General Directors and the Directors of the competent Divisions of ELSTAT. The task of this Committee is to review the progress achieved concerning the conduct of the scheduled statistical works, to address any delays in their completion, as well as to identify and address any potential problems that may pose a risk to the quality and timeliness of the statistical product.
- Confirmation of ELSTAT's Managerial Adequacy.
- Preparation for the adoption of the new Organization of ELSTAT.

- Establishment of the list of duties and responsibilities for the employees in the Regional Statistical Offices (RSOs) and its monthly update, with the aim of better utilizing the personnel of the RSOs.
- In the framework of the conduct of necessary steps towards the financial autonomy of ELSTAT, the following actions were undertaken by ELSTAT:
 - Establishment of a Cashier's Office in ELSTAT. Keeping a complete Commitments Register. Implementation of the Double Entry Accounting System applied by the Legal Entities under Public Law.
 - Establishment of a fully computerized system for monitoring the operation of the Financial Administration Division (Accountant's Office, Cashier's Office, Budget, Public Accounting, Double Entry Accounting System, Commitments Register, Fixed Assets Register, Warehouse Management).
 - Compilation, for the first time, and posting on the internet of the Balance Sheet of ELSTAT, after its audit by two certified accountants.
 - Submission of data on ELSTAT's budget execution to the competent committee of the Hellenic Parliament on a monthly basis.
 - Submission of the first Report on Receipts – Expenditures for 2013, accompanied by the relevant Annual Report to the Hellenic Court of Audit.
 - Auditing and settlement at the central offices of ELSTAT of all the expenditures of the 50 Regional Statistical Offices of ELSTAT (this function was being carried out before by the local branches of the Services of Fiscal Control of the Ministry of Finance).
 - Compilation of Circulars on Administrative and Financial Procedures for ELSTAT in the context of the new financial management of ELSTAT.
- Initiation of the provision to ELSTAT and its staff of services by an Occupational Physician and a Safety Officer, pursuant to the provisions of the Law No 3850/2010 concerning the "Code of Acts on Health and Safety at Work".

C. Closer cooperation with producers and users of statistical data

One of ELSTAT's main concerns is the production of statistics adapted to the needs and requirements of users at national, European and international level, as well as the cooperation with national agencies that collect and produce statistical data, and the coordination of their activities with a view to enhancing statistical production within the Hellenic Statistical System.

Important actions and achievements:

- Establishment and operation of the Council of the Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS). The Council is composed of representatives of agencies involved in statistical surveys, studies and analysis, representatives of the National Authorities of the ELSS, which are responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics, and representatives of Eurostat and of the Union of ELSTAT's employees.
- Adoption of the Regulation on the Statistical Obligations of the Agencies of the Hellenic Statistical System.
- Establishment, from 2010 onwards, of annual User Conferences.
- Undertaking of actions on the basis of the results of the annual User Conferences.
- Production of the following Programs and Annual Reports, which were compiled using a user-oriented approach:
 - The Hellenic Statistical Program for 2011 – 2013 and the Hellenic Statistical Program for 2014 – 2016.

- The Annual Statistical Work Programs of ELSTAT for the period 2011 – 2015.
- The Annual Reports of ELSTAT for the period 2010 – 2013.
- Preparation for the certification as “official” of the statistics produced by the other ELSS Agencies with the support of Eurostat and the UK Statistics Authority: organization of a workshop for ELSTAT officials, with the support of the two aforementioned Agencies; development of a general methodological framework for the certification; setting out the requirements and the outline of the certification procedure of official statistics in the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT; elaboration of guidelines, models of reports and other forms and documents to be used during the evaluation and certification of statistics, such as the main document “Statement of Principles and Procedures for the Certification of ELSS Statistics”.
- Conduct of the first pilot certification exercise for an ELSS agency.
- Continuation of the certification of the statistics produced by the ELSS agencies in 2014 aiming at completing a big part of the certifications by the end of 2015.
- Redesigning the system and technology for publishing the Press Releases issued by ELSTAT, with a view to ensuring the simultaneous, equal and timely access of all the users to statistical data, and upgrading the content of the Press Releases in order to enhance their quality and newsworthiness.
- Increase of the number of Press Releases on statistical data issued by ELSTAT from 285 Press Releases in 2009 to 328 in 2014 (an increase of 15%), so as to provide users with an increasingly larger part of the results of the statistical works of ELSTAT and, more generally, broader and more comprehensive statistical information. Release on the portal of ELSTAT of tables on various statistical themes and for a number of years for which there was insufficient information.
- Implementation of a policy for simultaneous and equal access of all users, without exception, to statistical data.
- Undertaking by ELSTAT the coordination, at national level, of the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and the SDDS Plus of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Enriching the portal of ELSTAT (both the Greek and English version of the website), by implementing the following actions:
 - Release on the portal of ELSTAT of the results of the User Satisfaction Surveys, conducted by ELSTAT on a special web page on the portal under the title “Conferences of ELSTAT – User Satisfaction Surveys”.
 - Creation of a special web page containing a large part of the information material presented by ELSTAT in the annual Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF).
 - Creation of an official website for the 2011 General Censuses, providing information on the Censuses, where the key information was available in Greek and 8 foreign languages.
 - Creation of a special link for the 2011 General Censuses on the official web page of ELSTAT for posting the results of the Censuses.
 - Creation of a special website containing all the necessary information regarding the “European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2012)”, which was organized by ELSTAT and Eurostat in May 2012 in Athens.
 - Creation of a special web page for covering the needs of users for information in the context of the assumption by ELSTAT of the Presidency of the Council Working Party on Statistics (CWPS) during the first semester of 2014.
 - Undertaking of a project aimed at updating the tables and covering the gaps in the time series data posted on ELSTAT’s website, as well as for enriching the website with Quality Reports, the metadata for all the statistical surveys and products after having adjusted them to the European Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange System (ESMS).
 - Publication, for the first time, of the Mission Statement of ELSTAT, as well as of the updated legal framework of ELSTAT.

- Release, every second Friday, of the new bilingual publication “The Greek Economy”, which provides the latest and most significant economic data for Greece and other countries.
- Release, every two months, of the new bilingual publication “Living Conditions in Greece”, covering a wide spectrum of statistical data that depict recent social developments and also long-term social trends.
- Compilation of a special publication, entitled “Greece in figures, Special edition”, containing key statistics and comparative data of EU Member States, which was disseminated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the framework of scheduled events for the Greek Presidency.
- Creation of a special web page containing the latest official economic and financial data compiled by ELSTAT, the Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Greece and the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE), in the framework of the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the IMF.
- Creation of a special web page containing the Statistical Work Programs of the ELSS and of ELSTAT, as well as the Annual Reports of ELSTAT.
- Creation of a special web page containing, inter alia, the European Statistics Code of Practice, the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics, the list of the Agencies and the National Authorities of the Hellenic Statistical System, the Regulation on the Statistical Obligations of the Agencies of the Hellenic Statistical System, ELSTAT’s Revision Policy, ELSTAT’s Quality Policy, as well as the Memoranda of Cooperation signed by ELSTAT with Government Ministries, the General Accounting Office, the Bank of Greece and other agencies.
- Creation of a special web page containing all the information related to the conferences organized by ELSTAT (e.g., invitation, program, list of participants, minutes, press releases, etc.), such as the User Conferences, the High Level Conference “The European Statistics Code of Practice: Enhancing the Credibility of Official Statistics”, etc.
- Compilation and afterwards release on the internet of procedures, fully compatible with European standards, concerning the access of researchers to microdata of statistical surveys of ELSTAT, while fully securing the confidentiality of data of households and enterprises.
- Preparation of a specialized statistical web page addressed to young people aged 6- 18 years old.
- Digitization of the settlements (oikismos) of Greece counting more than 1,000 people at the level of city blocks and road axes, and provision of this information to interested users.
- Organising and hosting of guided tours of pupils on the premises of ELSTAT, in the context of fostering statistical education.
- Organization by ELSTAT, in December 2010, of a Conference on Poverty and Social Exclusion Statistics.
- Creation and promotion on the internet of the Digital Library of ELSTAT, which includes 3,443 books and magazines, as well as 6 atlases, with some dating back to 1859.
- Signing of a memorandum of cooperation between ELSTAT and the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE) pertaining to the development of a web application for exploiting the data of the Population – Housing Censuses of the years 1991, 2001 and 2011. This application will enable the direct access to, management, correlation and mapping of the above data, while at the same time fully ensuring statistical confidentiality.
- Participation of ELSTAT, every year, in the Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF), with its own stand.

D. Intensive cooperation with the European and international statistical community and undertaking of initiatives

During the past four years, ELSTAT put a lot of emphasis on full cooperation with Eurostat and the other services of the European Commission, as well as with the National Statistical Institutes of the other EU Member States, with a view to upgrading itself, so that it becomes an active member of the European Statistical System by substantially contributing in the system's workings and evolution.

Important actions and achievements:

- Joint organization by ELSTAT and Eurostat in Athens, in May 2012 of the European Conference on "Quality in Official Statistics – Q2012", which has been established as the traditional top-level meeting of statisticians, academics and representatives of national and international agencies and organizations concerned with quality in statistics.
- Joint organization by ELSTAT and the National Statistical Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of France (INSEE), in June 2011, of the conference "The European Statistics Code of Practice: enhancing the credibility of official statistics", with the participation of senior officials of Eurostat and of European National Statistical Institutes, members of the Greek Government and senior officials of the public administration, representatives of the social partners, members of the Council of the Hellenic Statistical System, as well as executives and senior officials of ELSTAT.
- Undertaking an increasingly active role within the European Statistical System through, inter alia, the assiduous, coordinated and effective participation of ELSTAT employees in the Working Arrangements/Groups (Task Forces/Working Groups and Sector/Directors'Groups) organized by Eurostat on various statistical topics, as well as in the workings of the Council Working Party on Statistics (CWPS).
- Intensive preparations, during 2013, in view of the assumption, by ELSTAT, of the Presidency of the Council Working Party on Statistics in January 2014.
- Accomplishment of a significant task concerning the advancement of the statistical legislative work in the European Union during the assumption by ELSTAT of the duties of the Presidency of the Council Working Party on Statistics (CWPS), in the framework of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first semester of 2014.
- Active participation of ELSTAT in the meetings and workings of international statistical agencies, such as the Conference of European Statisticians, the UN Statistical Commission, the International Statistical Institute, etc.
- Election of the President of ELSTAT by the European Statistical System Committee to the Partnership Group, whose mission is to further the development of the European Statistical System at the highest level, notably through ensuring the effective functioning of the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC). Representing the ESSC also in the Bureau of the European Statistical Forum and in the Editorial Board of the ESS Report.

E. Aspects of statistical production

Conduct of the Agricultural – Livestock Census, Buildings Census, and Population – Housing Census

During the last four years, in the framework of its scheduled regular surveys, ELSTAT carried out three major censuses, which are conducted every ten years and serve as the basis for policy making at national and Community level: the Agricultural – Livestock Census, the Buildings Census, and the Population – Housing Census.

The purpose of the **Agricultural – Livestock Census** is to record all the agricultural and livestock hold-

ings in the Country and to collect data on their structure and on the population employed in them. The 2009 Agricultural – Livestock Census was not conducted by the former National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG) in 2009, as scheduled, but was conducted in the 3rd quarter of 2010 by the newly established ELSTAT. At the same time it had to carry out the statistical works of another two major Censuses (see below), ELSTAT also had to address the outstanding obligation it had inherited, i.e., that of conducting and processing the data of the 2009 Agricultural – Livestock Census, in compliance with Regulation (EC) No 1166/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council (the not timely production of data of the Agricultural – Livestock Census would result in the imposition of significant sanctions against Greece by the EU). As a consequence, the processing of the Agricultural – Livestock Census data took place concomitantly with the conduct and the processing of the Population – Housing Census and the Buildings Census.

The purpose of the **Buildings Census** is to collect data on the buildings in Greece (total number of buildings in the Country and number of buildings by geographical area; detailed information on the characteristics of the buildings, such as use, tenure status, year of construction, size, construction materials, etc.). The aforementioned Census is the seventh census since the establishment of the Hellenic State and it is conducted with the view to fulfilling national needs.

In order to convert the data of the Buildings Census in the paper questionnaires into a digital format, so that they become processable and can undergo the necessary multiple quality checks and cross-checks, the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) method was implemented with the use of scanners. After the scanning, the correctness of the data entered for each questionnaire had to be optically verified (data verification) and the necessary corrections or additions were made, where appropriate. During this procedure, some first-stage logical checks took place (verification) as well, followed by more detailed checks (e.g., completeness checks, correlations of variables, etc.) in order to identify and correct any errors.

The purpose of the **Population – Housing Census** is to collect statistical data on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population, as well as on the composition of households and their housing conditions.

The 2011 Population – Housing Census was conducted in compliance with Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council, as well as with the methodological and organizational principles stipulated in the Recommendations of the Conference of European Statisticians for the 2010 Round of Population – Housing Censuses, and the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The 2011 Census focused on recording the Resident Population of Greece, unlike previous Censuses, which aimed at recording the de facto Population (i.e., individuals who were present at the site of the enumeration on a precise day). More generally, the methodology of the 2011 Census differs significantly in several respects from that of previous Censuses, such as the duration of the Census, the enumeration of individuals at the place of their usual residence, etc.

Prior to the publication of the Census results, the processing of the data took place using modern methods and technologies with a view to implementing stricter and more numerous quality controls than for any previous Census. More specifically, the questionnaires that were collected from the 58,684 Census Sections correspond to 34,780,000 handwritten pages. In order to convert the data in the paper questionnaires into a digital format, so that they become processable and can undergo the necessary multiple quality checks and cross-checks, the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) method was implemented with the use of scanners.

In order to check that the data of every questionnaire page were accurately and correctly captured and digitally recorded, and to eliminate any errors due to the optical character recognition after the scanning, ELSTAT staff also had to optically verify (data verification) the correctness of the data entered for each questionnaire and make the necessary corrections or additions, where appropriate. During this procedure, some first-stage logical checks also took place (verification), as well as other checks (e.g., for identifying and deleting double counts, for checking completeness, correctness of geographic codes, consistency of geographic codes with the corresponding word of geographic identification, uniqueness of the questionnaire code number, continuous ascending numbering of the individual in the household, enrollment in the municipal registers in relation with citizenship, plausi-

bility of the year of birth, etc.), so as to eliminate and correct any errors in the data entered. It should be noted that for the first time the codification of the Census variables was conducted using modern electronic methods, thus enhancing the quality of the results and saving human and financial resources.

On 31 July 2012, ELSTAT announced the results for the Registered Population of Greece, i.e., the number of citizens registered in each Municipality of Greece per Municipal Unit, as it was enumerated during the 2011 Population – Housing Census. On 28 December 2012 and on 15 March 2013 ELSTAT announced the results for the Resident and the de facto Population, respectively. On 23 August 2013 ELSTAT released the demographic characteristics of the Resident Population as regards sex, age, citizenship, marital status and type of household. The processing of the other variables of the questionnaire of the 2011 Population – Housing Census is continuing, with the aim of completing this work within 2014. On account of minor deviations from the initially published data that were identified after the completion of the processing and checking of the data collected in the 2011 Population – Housing Census, on 20 March 2014 revised data for the Resident, Registered and de facto Population were published.

On 17 April 2014, the Census Hub (central reference point of Eurostat for the dissemination of census results from all EU Member) was updated with the data of the Greek Census.

