

Good Practice Advisory Committee

10th Report

January 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Good Practice Advisory Committee (GPAC), hereinafter referred to as the Committee, was established under the provisions of Article 4 of the Hellenic Statistical Law (no. 3832 of 9 March 2010, as amended). The Law stipulated that the Committee should be comprised of five members as follows:

- a) One member nominated by the Hellenic Parliament;
- b) One member nominated by the European Statistical Office (Eurostat);
- c) One member nominated by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB);
- d) One member nominated by the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC); and
- e) One member nominated by the Hellenic Data Protection Authority.

The President of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) is entitled to participate in the Committee on a non-voting basis.

The task of the Committee, as stipulated in the Law, is to prepare an annual report on the implementation of Principles 1 to 6 of the European Statistics Code of Practice in the Hellenic Statistical System. The report is to be submitted to the Hellenic Parliament, having informed the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) accordingly, and shall be made public following submission to the Parliament.

In accordance with the Law, and having consulted with the various nominating bodies, the Minister of Finance issued a Decision (Ref. No. Δ6A1001384EΞ2013, as amended) in January 2013, convening the Committee and appointing five members for the two-year period 2013-2014 inclusive. In accordance with its mandate, the original Committee produced two annual reports in September 2013¹ and December 2014 respectively over the course of its term of office, which terminated at the end of 2014. In line with the Law as then applying, the future of the Committee was reviewed by the Greek Authorities and it was decided that the Law should be amended to establish GPAC as a permanent advisory committee, with members appointed by the Minister to serve for two-year terms. The Law was duly amended in July 2015 and the Minister of Finance issued a Decision (Ref. No. 0002491EΞ2016) in March 2016 appointing new members for the period 2016-2017 inclusive. This Committee produced two annual reports in December 2016 and December 2017 respectively over the course of its term of office, which terminated at the end of 2017. Similarly, the Minister of Finance issued subsequent decisions in March 2018, April 2020 and March 2022 appointing new members of the Committee for two-year terms. Details of the composition of the current Committee are given in Appendix 1. Ms. Katerina Kalioti from ELSTAT was appointed Secretary to the

¹ All GPAC reports can be accessed at [Good Practice Advisory Committee \(GPAC\) - ELSTAT \(statistics.gr\)](https://www.statistics.gr/en/gpac)

Committee. Mr. Athanasios C. Thanopoulos, President of ELSTAT, participates in GPAC meetings in accordance with Article 4.5 of the Law.

The first meeting of GPAC in its current composition took place on 30 May 2022. Mr Michail Skaliotis, former Head of Unit of Eurostat, was unanimously elected as chairperson of the Committee. GPAC held two more meetings, in October 2022 and January 2023 respectively, in order to finalise the 9th report. The specificity of the 9th report was that it overlapped with the full-fledged Peer Review of the Hellenic Statistical System, which took place on 17-21 October 2022 in the context of the third round of the European Statistical System Peer Reviews. For this reason, there has been a strong coordination between the Peer Review Team and GPAC. In view of the similar objectives of the two exercises and taking into account the larger scope and depth of the Peer Review, it was decided to produce a 'lighter' GPAC report for 2022, focusing on selected strategic and recurring issues, while ensuring synergies and complementarities with the Peer Review exercise. Furthermore, GPAC agreed that its next report (10th report) could pay special attention to the Action Plan that will be developed by ELSTAT as a follow-up of the Peer Review recommendations. Mapping the two sets of recommendations (GPAC and Peer Review) in a matrix form, has been a useful tool for exploring synergies and ensuring consistency between the Peer Review and GPAC work.

This report was compiled on the basis of discussions held in three meetings which took place on 16 May, 10-11 October and 12 December 2023. GPAC had the opportunity to meet several stakeholders, both internal and external, including the national Peer Review Coordinator, the Head of Personnel Department, the Director of Business Statistics, the Director of President's office, the DPO, the Head of IT and Security of ELSTAT, the DG of Eurostat, Statistical Heads of ONAs, power users of ELSTAT and a representative of the Hellenic Parliament (President of the Parliamentary Committee on the Financial Statement and the General Balance Sheet and the implementation of the State Budget).

As a matter of fact, this was the first time that a Member of the Hellenic Parliament participated in a meeting of GPAC. The discussion focused on the value of the annual GPAC report for the Hellenic Parliament, the significant progress which has been made during recent years regarding the credibility, quality and independence of the Hellenic Statistical System, and confirmed the high level of trust in ELSTAT by the political parties and the society at large. It was agreed that future hearings of ELSTAT at the relevant Parliamentary Committee could be extended beyond budgetary issues and include statistical topics of particular interest to the Members of the Hellenic Parliament. Additionally, ELSTAT will explore the opportunity of extending the official statistics training module (included in the syllabus of the National School of Public Administration) to the Members and Officials of the Hellenic Parliament.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Box 1. ELSTAT at a glance

- The Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) is an Independent Authority established by Law 3832/2010 (Greek Statistical Law).
- The Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS) consists of ELSTAT and the other Agencies of the ELSS. Currently there are 22 agencies of the ELSS, 10 of which are ONAs (Other National Authorities).
- ELSTAT coordinates all activities of the other ELSS agencies pertaining to the development, production and dissemination of official statistics, as well as to the implementation of the national quality assurance framework of statistics.
- The mission of ELSTAT is the systematic development, production and dissemination of the country's official statistics, as well as the assurance and continuous improvement of quality of ELSS statistics.
- ELSTAT has 49 Regional Offices, located in the respective Regional Units of Greece.

While the history of official statistics in Greece goes back to [1828](#), the Hellenic Statistical System was established in its current form by legislation in 2010. The [Greek Statistical Law](#) and the [Commitment on Confidence in Statistics](#) represent the two most important legal foundations of official statistics in Greece. Complemented with additional relevant Regulations, Decrees, Laws and Decisions, they constitute a comprehensive [Legal Framework](#).

Along with the strong statutory framework and the commitment of top management to European standards, and the continuing progress achieved in recent years, some challenges persist from the past, while new ones have emerged. As it was mentioned above, the current, 10th, GPAC Report has benefited from the results of the Peer review round², carried out for Greece in October 2022, on the compliance with the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#) (ESCoP) which includes the in-depth review of the Hellenic Statistical System. GPAC analysed the improvement actions proposed by ELSTAT to respond to the recommendations and examined their relevance in terms of addressing the issues which have been identified in the 2022 GPAC report. The Committee is satisfied by the relevance, clarity and expected efficiency of the actions for their potential in improving the compliance of the Hellenic Statistical System as a whole. The areas, which are addressed in the recommendations of GPAC, are very similar to those of the Peer Review and relate to *enhancing coordination and strengthening of the statistical system, raising public awareness on professional independence and the principles of European statistics, expanding and optimising the use of administrative*

² Peer review Report on compliance with the european statistics code of practice and further improvement and development of the national statistical system - Greece
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/13566711/peer-review-report+Greece.pdf/7ca7790c-5382-7630-fe53-4da07106fe42?t=1689852957946>

and new data sources, human resources, quality monitoring, and the adoption of a long-term strategy for the future development of official statistics in Greece. Furthermore, GPAC issued a recommendation regarding the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP).

GPAC has paid special attention to align its recommendations in a way which reinforces, complements or facilitates the realisation of ELSTAT's planned improvement actions to address the recommendations of the Peer Review.

Recommendations

1. In order to evaluate progress towards enhancing coordination and strengthening of the statistical system as a whole, GPAC recommends ELSTAT and relevant ONAs to compile an annual monitoring report of "activities and outcomes" regarding the adherence of ONAs to the ESCoP.
2. By the end of 2026, all ONAs of the Hellenic Statistical System are advised to conduct a Peer Review of their compliance with the ESCoP. The programme of Peer Reviews should be initiated and coordinated by ELSTAT.
3. ELSTAT and ONAs are encouraged to undertake targeted actions which aim at raising the public trust in official statistics and the image and credibility of European statistics. Those actions could include conferences, workshops and statistical literacy events with specific user groups such as politicians, journalists, local authorities, and others.
4. GPAC advises ELSTAT to provide greater visibility and details of the work done with respect to the use of administrative data sources for the production of official statistics. If appropriate, consideration should be given to reinforcing with additional human resources the Division of Administrative and Big Data to increase the activities on the possible use of new data sources such as Big Data.
5. GPAC re-introduces its recommendation from the 9th report about the need for ELSTAT to explore the potential access and use of privately held data by concluding concrete strategic partnerships with holders of such data.
6. GPAC recommends the adoption, by ELSTAT, of a formal "training policy" and the development of an annual training plan which will be available to all ELSTAT's staff and potentially ONAs' staff. The ultimate objective will be to mainstream a

continuous training practice and gradually build a sustainable innovation culture across the organisation and to extend this culture to ONAs.

7. In view of a renewed attention to quality issues, GPAC believes that there is an opportunity for ELSTAT to revisit its 10-year-old Quality Policy, and, if appropriate, to align it with the latest developments.
8. GPAC advises ELSTAT to introduce a regular (annual or biennial) Quality Action Plan as a core part of its new quality system which is planned for 2025. Such an action plan will facilitate the scheduling of quality reviews, as well as their respective monitoring and evaluation.
9. Similarly to the 9th report, GPAC advises ELSTAT and the Agencies of the Hellenic Statistical System (in consultation with the Advisory Committee of the Hellenic Statistical System -SYEPELSS) to develop a long-term Strategy for the Hellenic Statistical System. Such a strategy becomes more obvious in view of the necessity to address continuously changing HR, IT, and new data requirements.
10. GPAC acknowledges the significant contribution of JOSGAP in restoring the reliability, credibility, and modernisation of the Hellenic Statistical System, and believes that its objectives have been achieved. Therefore, GPAC is of the opinion that ELSTAT should undertake the necessary actions, in consultation with Eurostat, in order to officially terminate JOSGAP.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND ISSUES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE IN THE HELLENIC STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Box 2. Progress during the last years

- Reduction of compliance issues with EU statistical regulations
- Alignment of status of remuneration of new employees to that of older staff members
- Public confidence and trust in official statistics continues to gain ground
- ELSTAT comments publicly on statistical issues, including on criticisms and misuses of official statistics
- Growth in the use of administrative sources
- Strengthening communication with user groups / statistical literacy

At the meeting (videoconference) held between Eurostat and GPAC on 11 October 2023, Eurostat re-confirmed that there has been a continuous, steady, and substantial progress in terms of compliance with EU statistical regulations. For Greece, like in several other EU Member States, there are some missing elements, namely for national accounts, GNI and migration. For national accounts, these missing elements concern historical data (e.g., after benchmarking revisions, etc.). It was noted that during the last two-three years, a significant improvement was observed, e.g. in 2020 there were 26 GNI reservations while currently only 7 remain as 19 reservations were lifted. Another example of improvement relates to inflation statistics: Greece is going to compile, by mid-2024, the House Price Index.

Migration and international protection statistics (compiled by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum) is a domain for which more effort is required. GPAC had the opportunity to meet the Statistical Head of the ministry and discussed with him a wide spectrum of issues. GPAC is pleased to observe that there is a strong commitment by the ministry to have their statistics being certified as official statistics, and the political hierarchy is keen on improving the situation regarding compliance.

ELSTAT managed to settle the discrepancy pertaining to the salary of its relatively new employees compared to the salary of older staff, as this difference has been causing tension among ELSTAT personnel. In the frame of the economic adjustment programme of Greece signed in the aftermath of the economic crisis back to 2010, the cost of the public sector wage grid had to be proportionally reduced. This meant that since then, the salary of the public servants was reduced gradually, yet preserving a “personal difference” making their earnings somehow higher than those of the newly-appointed personnel. In the case of ELSTAT, this difference concerned 45 employees whose net salary amounted to approximately 700 euro (even for university graduates or Master’s degree holders) compared to an average of 1500 euro earned by older ELSTAT staff (even for non-tertiary education). It should be noted that ELSTAT had foreseen the relevant appropriations in its budget. After the constant efforts and due to the commitment of ELSTAT hierarchy, the government passed a Law providing for the alignment of the salary of about 500 civil servants (45 of ELSTAT, and others from the General Accounting Office and the Legal Council of the State).

GPAC was pleased to be informed of concrete examples which confirm that the principles regarding the institutional environment are well observed by ELSTAT:

- In the general climate of parliamentary elections in Greece, in media outlets or political debates, there were specific references to data published by ELSTAT, mainly to flagship products, such as inflation, GDP, data on poverty, etc. Not only was there no criticism or challenging of ELSTAT data, but on the contrary, the data of ELSTAT are considered reliable and accurate. GPAC also noted that, according to examples from the Greek press, the public opinion seems to have matured and that ELSTAT now

stands well as a reliable and credible institution producing quality data, the President of ELSTAT having contributed a lot towards this direction.

- ELSTAT informed GPAC that some pressure was put on them (in the light of the municipal elections in Greece in October 2023) by some Mayors as regards the announcement of the final results of the Population-Housing Census, at the level of municipality. The Mayor of a well-known island complained to local newspapers about the poor quality of the Census data in his island, stating that he intended to appeal to the Administrative Court about the under-estimation of his municipality population according to the provisional estimates announced by ELSTAT. Finally, after the announcement of the final results by ELSTAT, which were satisfactory for him, he published an article in a local newspaper saying that only after his efforts and interference, did ELSTAT publish the “right” results. ELSTAT commented publicly on 17 May 2023 and provided a comprehensive response, clearly explaining the difference between provisional and final estimates, and underlining that the production of official statistics is subject to rigorous statistical methodology and a strict quality framework.
- One of the flagship products of ELSTAT, GDP, was published in October without any criticism from the media or policy makers. The inaccurate estimations by some economic journalists about the GDP figures some days before the publication of the data by ELSTAT is a token of the no-pre-release and equal access principles ELSTAT is unswervingly observing. An article in the Greek press referred on the stringent policy ELSTAT is implementing in terms of releasing its statistics: “no one (even high-ranked policy makers) has access to the data before their official publication”.
- Furthermore, ELSTAT gave an example that demonstrates its commitment to the statistical confidentiality principle. After the flooding in the Region of Thessalia, in early autumn, ELSTAT received a request by the relevant authorities to provide individual records of the population in the affected areas, for obvious policy-making reasons. ELSTAT possessed such data (during the recent Population-Housing Census, data on resident population were linked with the Tax Identification Number and the Social Security Number). Nevertheless, ELSTAT could not fulfil the relevant request in full compliance with statistical confidentiality. On the other hand, ELSTAT has fulfilled a request submitted by a Ministry pertaining to access to aggregated data on businesses in the Region of Thessalia. ELSTAT reiterated the importance of continuously safeguarding the citizens’ personal data, as this is the cornerstone of the existence of the Institution.

During its May 2023 meeting, GPAC had the opportunity to discuss in detail the state of play regarding the use of administrative data in Business Statistics. GPAC acknowledges the

significant progress made by ELSTAT in this field, which demonstrates that ELSTAT has already taken steps to respond to one of the Peer Review recommendations in terms of extending the use of administrative sources. It is worth noting that ELSTAT has established good cooperation with almost all the administrative sources that are the main providers for business statistics: Tax Authorities, Social Security Fund, Ministry of Interior, and the Bank of Greece. As regards, the Ministry of Labour, there are some delays, but ELSTAT is going to reactivate the communication channels. Specifically, ELSTAT has a long-lasting cooperation with the Tax Authorities and has managed to have an effective intervention in the restructuring of the income tax form for enterprises in order to get administrative data tailored to its needs. Of course, there are some limitations from their side, for instance as regards adding some more questions in the monthly VAT form, due to the increased burden to be put on enterprises.

GPAC welcomes ELSTAT's recent statistical literacy activities with specific user groups, and, particularly with the public sector. ELSTAT, after having identified the need to address its statistical literacy actions specifically to public servants, has managed, as a result of consistent and continuous efforts, to include in the syllabus of the National School of Public Administration (the public entity responsible for the formation of future managers of the public sector) and the Training Institute of the National Centre of Public Administration and Local government (responsible for the life-long training of civil servants) courses on official statistics. The programme comprises courses on statistics/official statistics/the Hellenic statistical system/main statistical concepts, etc. It differs from the syllabus of the European Master in Official Statistics (EMOS) programme offered by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in collaboration with ELSTAT. The programme for the National School of Public Administration will encompass a 3-hour course for 5 separate lessons, in line with all other courses in the School. The programme for the Training Institute will be in the form of one-week seminar. Teaching staff will consist of experts from ELSTAT.

ELSTAT is very optimistic about the impact of this initiative. On the one hand, it is a form of legitimisation of ELSTAT and on the other hand, incorporating official statistics in the list of seminars of the Training Institute will enhance the demand for this course, as the public servants will have an incentive (collect merits to advance their career) to undertake the specific course. Moreover, it will enhance the visibility of ELSTAT and, eventually, will attract civil servants from other ministries to ELSTAT through the mobility cycle.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Box 3. Issues for recommendations

- Enhancing coordination and strengthening of the statistical system
- Raising public awareness on professional independence and the principles of European statistics
- Expanding and optimising the use of administrative and new data sources
- Human Resources
- Quality monitoring
- Adoption of a long-term strategy for the future development of official statistics in Greece
- Evaluation of the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP)

In this report, the recommendations are grouped in to the following six categories: (i) *enhancing coordination and strengthening of the statistical system*, (ii) *raising public awareness on professional independence and the principles of European statistics*, (iii) *expanding and optimising the use of administrative and new data sources*, (iv) *human resources*, (v) *quality monitoring*, and (vi) *the adoption of a long-term strategy for the future development of official statistics in Greece*. Furthermore, GPAC issued a recommendation / opinion regarding the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP).

Enhancing coordination and strengthening of the statistical system

GPAC, as well as the Peer Review team, identified that the Hellenic statistical system, as a whole, should be strengthened in order to enhance its compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice (ESCoP). In particular, this relates to prioritising statistical qualifications in the selection process of the statistical heads of ONAs, and the creation of dedicated statistical entities earmarking the distinct core business of the ONAs. The path towards achieving full compliance of the statistical system with the ESCoP will be lengthy and will require legislative, administrative, cultural, and organisational changes in the respective ONAs. Furthermore, ELSTAT should lead the relevant activities and exercise its coordination and cooperation responsibilities stemming from Principle 1bis of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

GPAC was pleased to note that ELSTAT is putting special attention to this area (Coordination and Cooperation) by proposing several concrete improvement actions in this regard. Those improvement actions (together with all other actions) have now been finalised and are publicly accessible on ELSTAT's and Eurostat's webpages.

Over and beyond the improvement actions, GPAC believes that there is a need to formally assess progress in this area on a regular basis, and has issued the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1: In order to evaluate progress towards enhancing coordination and strengthening of the statistical system as a whole, GPAC recommends ELSTAT and relevant ONAs to compile an annual monitoring report of “activities and outcomes” regarding the adherence of ONAs to the ESCoP.

Given that the ultimate objective of the planned actions is full adherence of the entire statistical system to the ESCoP, GPAC’s opinion is that ELSTAT should lead, organise, and coordinate a dedicated Peer Review exercise for all ONAs by the end of 2026. Such an initiative will provide a thorough assessment of the efforts and actions undertaken by the stakeholders of the Hellenic statistical system in the period 2024-2026. Therefore, GPAC recommends the following:

Recommendation 2: By the end of 2026, all ONAs of the Hellenic Statistical System are advised to conduct a Peer Review of their compliance with the ESCoP. The programme of Peer Reviews should be initiated and coordinated by ELSTAT.

Raising public awareness on professional independence and the principles of European statistics

GPAC underlined in previous reports that ELSTAT has established itself in the public mind as an independent statistical authority, free from any statistical influence, enjoying a high level of reputation, trust, and credibility. All power users whom GPAC interviewed in 2023 have witnessed this as well. GPAC believes that there is now a momentum to enhance public awareness about the core principles of the ESCoP for the whole statistical system and the benefits thereof for the entire society by ensuring the observance of professional independence, impartiality, confidentiality, and all other principles. By undertaking a number of targeted initiatives in this regard, ELSTAT and ONAs will further strengthen the image of official statistics in a sustainable manner and minimise the risk of future political and other interventions which could undermine what has been achieved during the last decade. GPAC has therefore issued the following recommendation:

Recommendation 3: ELSTAT and ONAs are encouraged to undertake targeted actions which aim at raising the public trust in official statistics and the image and credibility of European statistics. Those actions could include conferences, workshops and statistical literacy events with specific user groups such as politicians, journalists, local authorities, and others.

Expanding and optimising the use of administrative and new data sources

GPAC welcomes the actions planned by ELSTAT as a response to the Peer Review recommendations. Formal strengthening of the cooperation with Ministries and other public agencies providing administrative data, and the expected conclusion of a Memorandum of

Cooperation with the Ministry of Digital Governance are significant steps in this regard. GPAC believes that the undergoing expansion and optimisation of the use of administrative data for producing official statistics should be reflected in the organisational structure and the website of ELSTAT. Additionally, GPAC invites ELSTAT to undertake concrete initiatives regarding the use of new (non-traditional) data sources. Consequently, GPAC has issued the following two recommendations:

Recommendation 4: GPAC advises ELSTAT to provide greater visibility and details of the work done with respect to the use of administrative data sources for the production of official statistics. If appropriate, consideration should be given to reinforcing with additional human resources the Division of Administrative and Big Data to increase the activities on the possible use of new data sources such as Big Data.

Recommendation 5: GPAC re-introduces its recommendation from the 9th report about the need for ELSTAT to explore the potential of access and use of privately held data by concluding concrete strategic partnerships with holders of such data.

Human Resources

GPAC is pleased with ELSTAT's proposals regarding HR issues, which include a more timely and flexible hiring and rewarding scheme, and the development of a 5-year human resources strategy mapped to the future needs of ELSTAT. GPAC believes that there is an opportunity for ELSTAT to complement the HR strategy and frame these initiatives with the adoption of a formal training policy, to be implemented with annual training plans and be evaluated regularly. Therefore, GPAC has issued the following recommendation:

Recommendation 6: GPAC recommends the adoption, by ELSTAT, of a formal "training policy" and the development of an annual training plan, which will be available to all ELSTAT's staff and potentially ONAs staff. The ultimate objective will be to mainstream a continuous training practice and gradually build a sustainable innovation culture across the organisation and to extend this culture to ONAs.

Quality Monitoring

Following the Peer Review recommendations ELSTAT is committed to designing and implementing an updated quality system for monitoring and managing the quality of its statistical work, in particular with regard to smoothing out processes belonging to stovepipe legacy approaches. GPAC believes that there is an opportunity for ELSTAT to revisit its quality policy and, if necessary, to update it in order to reflect emerging quality issues in a continuously changing data landscape where multiple data sources (often non-traditional) are used in statistical production. Furthermore, GPAC's opinion is that ELSTAT's new quality

system should include, by design, regular programming, monitoring, and evaluation of quality reviews of the various statistical areas. Hence, recommendations 7 and 8 aim at addressing the issues raised above:

Recommendation 7: In view of a renewed attention to quality issues, GPAC believes that there is an opportunity for ELSTAT to revisit its 10-years old Quality Policy, and, if appropriate, to align it with the latest developments.

Recommendation 8: GPAC advises ELSTAT to introduce a regular (annual or biennial) Quality Action Plan as a core part of its new quality system which is planned for 2025. Such an action plan will facilitate the programming of quality reviews, as well as their respective monitoring and evaluation.

Adoption of a long-term strategy for the future development of official statistics in Greece

The reasoning for developing a long-term strategy for official statistics had been discussed in the 9th report, and it is re-introduced in this report. The Hellenic Statistical System, like many other statistical systems, is at the crossroads of important developments, namely a changing data landscape with a multitude of new data sources, new technologies, advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, the revisiting of EU statistical legislation, the implications of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Act, the need for new statistical methodologies and new skills, the development of sustainable partnerships with holders of administrative and private data sources, etc. While the above recommendations help to address some of the emerging challenges, GPAC believes that there is a need for ELSTAT to develop a strategy stating the mission, vision, and the ways in which ELSTAT and the Hellenic Statistical System as a whole will meet the near future challenges. Such a strategy should be comprehensive (HR, IT, Communication, administrative and non-traditional data, AI, etc.), actionable, complemented with mid-term evaluations and, if necessary, with adjustments.

Recommendation 9: GPAC believes that there is a need for ELSTAT, together with the Agencies of the Hellenic Statistical System (in consultation with the Advisory Committee of the Hellenic Statistical System -SYEPELSS), to develop an overarching Strategy for Official Statistics for the next five to ten years. Such a strategy would provide the necessary vision and legitimacy for an action plan towards the development of the Hellenic Statistical System in the next decade.

Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP)

JOSGAP has been discussed within the meetings of GPAC and in particular with Eurostat. There is a common understanding that this Action Plan has contributed enormously in

restoring the credibility and in modernising the Hellenic Statistical System, by providing technical assistance and expertise to specific statistical domains. GPAC is pleased to note that the Hellenic Statistical System is now quite mature, credible, and efficient like any other member of the European Statistical System. As a result, during the last two years there has not been any use of JOSGAP by ELSTAT. GPAC is therefore advising ELSTAT to initiate the necessary administrative procedures for officially terminating JOSGAP.

In order to support this recommendation with additional evidence, GPAC requested Eurostat to provide information about the most significant contributions of JOSGAP in this regard. The response by Eurostat confirmed the important role of JOSGAP in enhancing (a) the Institutional and Governance Framework, (b) The Greek Statistical Capacity and (c) Public Finance Statistics. Furthermore, Eurostat has listed specific statistical domain achievements, as well as institutional and coordination improvements which were realised with the contribution of JOSGAP. Finally, Eurostat underlines that all achievements were made possible with the continuous contribution of ELSTAT.

Recommendation 10: GPAC acknowledges the significant contribution of JOSGAP in restoring the reliability, credibility, and modernisation of the Hellenic Statistical System, and believes that its objectives have been achieved. Therefore, GPAC is of the opinion that ELSTAT should undertake the necessary actions, in consultation with Eurostat, in order to officially terminate JOSGAP.

Appendix 1

Information on the members of the Good Practice Advisory Committee

- Michail Skaliotis, former Head of the Task Force – Big Data, Eurostat, nominee of the European Statistical Office (Eurostat), Chairman of GPAC;
- Eleni Bitrou, Head of the Parliament Members Support Division of the Hellenic Parliament, nominee of the Hellenic Parliament, Member of GPAC;
- Marjo Bruun, former Director General of Statistics Finland, nominee of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB), Member of GPAC;
- Marina Gandolfo, Head of International Affairs of the Italian National Institute of Statistics , nominee of the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC), Member of GPAC;
- Konstantinos Lambrinoudakis, Professor, Department of Digital Systems, University of Piraeus, nominee of the Hellenic Data Protection Authority, Member of GPAC.

Appendix 2

List of stakeholders invited to the GPAC

ONAs

- Ministry of Rural Development and Food
Statistical Head
Statistics Working Group
- Ministry of Migration and Asylum
Statistical Head

Power Users

- Embassy of France in Greece
Financial Department
- U.S. Embassy in Athens
Financial Department

Hellenic Parliament

- Parliamentary Committee on the Financial Statement and the General Balance Sheet and the implementation of the State Budget