

Good Practice Advisory Committee

12th Report

December 2025

1. 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 Parliament.

In accordance with the Law, and having consulted with the various nominating bodies, the Minister of Finance issued a Decision (Ref. No. Δ6Α1001384ΕΞ2013, 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. 0002491ΕΞ2016) 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, March 2022, and April 2024 appointing new members of the Committee for two-year terms. It should be noted that the latest Ministerial Decision has re-appointed the same members of the Committee for another term. Details of the composition of the current Committee are given in Appendix 1. Ms. Katerina Kalioti from

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

ELSTAT was appointed Secretary to the 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 (Mr Skaliotis was re-elected as Chairperson of the Committee in May 2024). The specificity of the 9th (as well as of the 10th) report was that it overlapped with the full-fledged Peer Review (PR) 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 PR-Team and GPAC, thus making the work of ELSTAT more productive and efficient in terms of addressing the recommendation actions of the two exercises. In view of the similar objectives of the two exercises and considering the larger scope and depth of the PR, it was decided to produce 'lighter' GPAC reports for 2022-2023 focusing on selected strategic and recurring issues, while ensuring synergies and complementarities with the PR exercise. Furthermore, GPAC agreed that the 10th and 11th reports could pay special attention to the Action Plan that would 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 PR and GPAC.

A major challenge for ELSTAT in 2023 and 2024, and to a large extent in 2025, has been the development and launching of [Improvement Actions](#) (IA) in response to the Recommendations of the [Peer Review of the Hellenic Statistical System](#). At the same time, ELSTAT had to accommodate the annual GPAC recommendations. GPAC had expressed its satisfaction regarding the relevance, clarity and expected efficiency of the improvement actions for their potential in improving the compliance of the Hellenic Statistical System as a whole. As several of the IA have entered the implementation phase already in 2025, GPAC is pleased to note that ELSTAT has rigorously followed the PR and GPAC recommendations and demonstrated substantial progress in strengthening the institutional environment, enhancing coordination and cooperation within the Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS), modernising quality processes, updating its training policy, and increasing organisational capacity.

The process of drafting this report, the 12th report, is the same as before, i.e. it is based on evidence gathered from discussions with stakeholders of the ELSS, including producers and users of statistics, as well as staff members of ELSTAT and senior management of Eurostat. In 2025, meetings of the Committee were held on 8-9 of April, 23-25 of September, and 10 of December. More specifically, the Committee had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of topics relevant to the principles of institutional environment, with the following stakeholders: a special Adviser to the President of ELSTAT, the two newly appointed Directors General of ELSTAT, the Heads of quality management and of human resources units of ELSTAT, six junior staff members of ELSTAT, the national PR coordinator, the Head of the Regional Statistical Office of Rethymno, the statistical Heads of three ONAs (National Centre for Social Research,

Civil Aviation Authority, and Ministry of the Interior), senior management of Eurostat, and journalists from national and local media outlets.

The structure of the 12th report remains nearly unchanged and includes (i) an executive summary with the list of this year's recommendations, (ii) a description of the main progress made during last years, and (iii) a presentation of the issues and recommendations to be addressed by ELSTAT in the near future.

Additionally, this report includes a special highlight which relates to **AI and official statistics**. Another feature of the 12th report is that it takes a retrospective view of changes over the entire period (2022-2025) rather than the usual one-year span of an annual report.

2. 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 24 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.
- Currently, there are 625 employees working in ELSTAT, while the statutory provisions of the 2019 organigram foresee 1076 permanent jobs.

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](#).

Over the period under review, GPAC witnessed continuous adherence and improvements of ELSTAT and the ELSS to the ESCoP principles regarding the institutional environment (which

fall under the mandate of GPAC). Lately, two major incidents provided another practical test of ELSTAT's commitment to transparency and professional independence. The first relates to the postponement of the publication of the June 2025 Labour Force Survey unemployment results due to inconsistencies detected during internal validation. ELSTAT informed Eurostat, issued a public announcement explaining the methodological concern, conducted additional checks, and later released consolidated results with a clear methodological note. The second incident involved public allegations concerning the estimation of GDP in relation to the treatment of inventories in the national accounts, which ELSTAT addressed promptly and clearly through a detailed methodological explanation. The Bank of Greece publicly confirmed the validity of ELSTAT's estimation approach (common methodology across all EU). In both cases, GPAC observed strong adherence to ESCoP principles and a proactive commitment to maintaining public trust.

It is also worth noting that the long-awaited recruitment of 99 new staff members in ELSTAT has resulted in a 4.7% net increase in staff despite ongoing retirements. For the first time the Authority has employees under 30 years of age. The age groups 30-39 and 40-49 expanded significantly, and the proportion of staff with post-graduate qualifications rose by 60%. These developments mark the most substantial rejuvenation of ELSTAT's workforce in many years.

The Committee also reviewed the design and launching of ELSTAT's updated Quality Policy, which introduces a structured and more agile model for internal quality reviews, including defined audit teams, GSBPM-based evaluations, a high-level monitoring group, and plans for the development of an automated, comprehensive and scalable information system which can effectively support the monitoring of quality.

In relation to the ELSS as a whole, the Committee acknowledges significant progress in coordination with ONAs, including targeted bilateral meetings, training sessions, and the December 2024 SWOT workshop, which provided an important diagnostic tool for understanding systemic strengths and weaknesses. ELSTAT's systematic engagement with ONAs has strengthened the coherence of the ELSS in terms of common statistical practices and helped identify areas where further support is required, particularly concerning administrative data, documentation, dissemination and IT capacities. The continuous and expanded outreach of ELSTAT to Other National Authorities has been highly appreciated by ONAs.

The new Training Policy of ELSTAT demonstrates the Authority's commitment to competence development, both within ELSTAT and across ONAs. The Committee believes that the renewed training policy has the potential of becoming an integrated component of ELSTAT's governance framework, contributing to the harmonisation practices, the professionalisation of staff, continuous staff development, and the reinforcement of quality-oriented processes across the ELSS.

In summary, the observations of the Committee reaffirm ELSTAT's commitment to the principles of the ESCoP, and its capacity to lead and coordinate the ELSS; ELSTAT has also demonstrated its ability to manage complex statistical and institutional issues with professionalism, transparency, and methodological rigor, prioritising statistical integrity over external pressures, including in instances of public scrutiny. It is therefore the Committee's opinion, based on its work during 2022-2025, that ELSTAT's institutional environment remains stable, credible, and aligned with ESS high standards.

The proposed recommendations are not entirely new but rather comprise a fine-tuning of past recommendations in view of achieving full compliance with the ESCoP and ensuring consolidation of progress achieved during the period under review.

Summary of Recommendations

- 1. It is the Committee's opinion that ELSTAT should adopt a long-term strategic plan for official statistics. Once adopted, the plan should be shared within the ELSS and published on the Authority's website.**
- 2. ELSTAT should introduce a programme of regular simplified Peer Reviews of ONAs with the aim of enhancing ONAs compliance with the ESCoP principles.**
- 3. In view of expanding adherence to the ESCoP across other agencies of the ELSS, the Authority should revisit and review the existing certification procedure.**
- 4. The GPAC encourages ELSTAT to update its Organigram in order to reflect the Authority's long-term strategic planning, multi-annual statistical programming and the renewed skills profiles of staff.**
- 5. To maintain forward progress in ELSTAT's updated quality policy, GPAC advises the Authority to accelerate its deployment, ensuring adequate allocation of financial and human resources.**
- 6. To consolidate the progress achieved in the development and launching of a comprehensive training policy, GPAC advises the Authority to accelerate its deployment, ensuring adequate allocation of financial and human resources.**
- 7. To build on the momentum, ELSTAT should continue expanding the use of administrative data and strengthen cooperation with Ministries and other bodies providing administrative data.**
- 8. To ensure continuity in meeting user expectations, the Committee encourages ELSTAT to enhance its data literacy and user outreach activities.**

3. 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

- Professional Independence, public confidence and trust continue gaining ground
- Exemplary follow-up of Peer Review and GPAC Recommendations
- Coordination of the Hellenic Statistical System
- Reduction of compliance issues with EU statistical regulations
- Leading role of ELSTAT in organising high level events regarding new challenges brought by AI and new data sources
- Significant increase of ELSTAT's workforce, rejuvenation and upskilling
- Updating Quality and Training Policies
- ELSTAT was included in the list of public services eligible for receiving a financial bonus under the Incentive for Achieving Fiscal Targets

Professional independence is the cornerstone of any Statistical Office. Above all, it requires a comprehensive legal framework which incorporates the principles of the ESCoP and the capacity of the leadership of the National Statistical Institute (NSI) to exercise and demonstrate professional independence whenever required. Throughout the period under review, the Committee had the opportunity to witness several instances where the President of ELSTAT demonstrated professional independence routinely and confidently according to the principles stipulated by the statistical law. Such cases include, but are not limited to, questions around the latest population and housing census, access to confidential individual records, parliamentary questions, and the recent criticism by a former minister about ELSTAT's methodology in estimating GDP. The unquestionable exercise of professional independence by the outgoing President of ELSTAT had important positive impacts in terms of continuously raising public trust in official statistics, as well as in terms of enhancing motivation and corporate self-esteem throughout the Authority at all levels.

Public confidence and trust in ELSTAT in particular, and in official statistics more generally, has been firmly established and continues to be at high levels within the Greek society. This observation is supported by independent surveys as well as by the opinions of main Users who have been interviewed by GPAC during the reporting period.

In this regard, it is important to underline two significant details of the Greek statistical law, which provide a strong background for enabling and, to some extent, safeguarding professional independence. The first relates to the criteria for the selection of the President of ELSTAT and the selection procedure (Article 13), involving an independent committee to carry out the interviews. As a matter of fact, in view of the departure of the current President of ELSTAT, a Ministerial decision for 'the establishment and appointment of members of the

committee of experts for the evaluation of candidates and selection of the President of ELSTAT' has already been issued on 19.11.2025. Moreover, on 10.12.2025 an international call for expression of interest for the position of the President of ELSTAT was issued by the Ministry of Finance, as stipulated in the Statistical Law. In view of the departure of the outgoing President of ELSTAT, it was ensured that a relevant amendment was passed to address a gap in the existing Law, providing for a designated person to assume the president's duties in the event of resignation or removal. This measure guarantees continuity in leadership and safeguards the uninterrupted and effective operation of the Service.

The second enabler is the existence of an ESGAB-like body, the Good Practice Advisory Committee (GPAC). In Eurostat's Peer Review report, both cases are presented as being 'best practices.'

As it was highlighted in last year's report, ELSTAT has been one of the very first NSIs to submit and agree with Eurostat a comprehensive plan of Improvement Actions (IA) in order to address the weaknesses of the Hellenic Statistical System which were identified at the Peer Review. ELSTAT has already implemented most of the IAs in a way which considers several recommendations of the GPAC as well. The Committee has been following closely the development, launching and implementation of the improvement actions since late 2023, throughout 2024-2025 and is, therefore, in a position to express an informed opinion. The Committee believes that ELSTAT and ONAs have demonstrated greater coherence and professionalism as a statistical system rather than as merely individual entities of the ELSS.

In particular, actions pertaining to the coordination of the Hellenic Statistical System, the raising of awareness about compliance with the ESCoP, quality reporting, confidentiality and statistical methodology have been the focus of extensive training organised by ELSTAT for the entire statistical system. A major milestone in system-wide coordination was the SWOT analysis workshop held with all ONAs in December 2024. Key strengths identified include the strong legal framework supporting statistical independence; the professionalism and specialised expertise available within several ONAs; the openness to cooperation with ELSTAT; and the broad recognition of the importance of quality standards. Identified weaknesses included uneven IT capabilities across ONAs; limited interoperability of administrative data systems; staff shortages and skills gaps, particularly in small ONAs; variability in documentation, metadata and release-calendars practices; and inconsistent familiarity with ESCoP principles. The Committee considers this SWOT analysis a best practice within the ESS. GPAC had the opportunity to interview several ONAs and is pleased to observe that they all confirmed their satisfaction regarding ELSTAT's continuous support and guidance in statistical matters. The Committee concludes that ELSTAT has made steady, structured, and meaningful progress in implementing the 2022 Peer Review Improvement Actions. While some actions—especially those requiring IT transformation or administrative-data interoperability—remain ongoing, the Authority has demonstrated sustained commitment and engagement, strong internal oversight, and clear prioritisation of tasks.

It is a standard practice for GPAC to hold a videoconference with Eurostat about the compliance of the Hellenic Statistical System with EU statistical regulations. Similarly to all previous meetings, Eurostat confirmed its satisfaction with progress made by ELSTAT. The most notable improvement over the last years relates to GNI data. During the 2016-2019 verification cycle, ELSTAT used to receive 21 specific reservations and 5 transversal reservations. All issues have now been resolved and closed. Also, it is important to note that no EDP reservations have been made for Greece since 2010.

Regarding the benchmark revision of National Accounts (an exercise taking place every 5 years) ELSTAT has transmitted the data, and Eurostat acknowledged the responsiveness and excellent cooperation with ELSTAT's National Accounts team in this process.

As regards compliance with EU statistical legislation, there are still some pending compliance issues with few data transmissions, in particular for energy statistics, and migration and international protection statistics. GPAC recommends ELSTAT, together with the relevant ONAs, to address this issue in the very near future.

The Committee underlined in last year's report the leading role of ELSTAT in organising high level events regarding, amongst others, new challenges brought by AI and new data sources. At the same time, the Committee held with ELSTAT an in-depth discussion about AI and Official Statistics. To keep the momentum and encourage ELSTAT to adopt a more formal approach regarding AI, the GPAC devotes a special section at the end of this report entitled 'Opportunities and challenges from the potential impact of AI on official statistics'.

Human Resources (HR) emerged as a dominant theme in all GPAC deliberations throughout the reporting period. Based on the latest statistical overview presented to the GPAC in September 2025, the Committee recognises that last year was one of the most significant in terms of staff recruitment, rejuvenation, and skills enhancement. At the same time, existing and emerging challenges underscore the need for a modern organigram, sustained investment in skills development, and strengthening workforce planning. Between 2023 and 2025, ELSTAT recruited 99 new permanent employees through the competitions of the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP). These new staff members represent a substantial infusion of talent and significantly alter the demographic structure of the Authority. As it was noted earlier in this report, for the first time in many years, ELSTAT has employees under 30 years of age, addressing a long-standing concern identified repeatedly in GPAC reports. The Committee reviewed the detailed staffing tables presented by ELSTAT, which show a 4.7% net increase in overall staffing levels despite numerous retirements, substantial expansion of the 30-39 age group, driven by new ASEP recruits; a notable increase in the 40-49 age group, reflecting both career progression and retention; and a gradual decline in staff over 50, reflecting natural retirement dynamics. This demographic shift is particularly important because, for over a decade, ELSTAT faced the dual challenge of an ageing workforce and limited opportunities for recruitment. The recent inflow of younger professionals contributes to improved technical capacity, enhances potential internal

mobility, and supports continuity of knowledge. Furthermore, ELSTAT is combining the renewal of its workforce with the implementation of a comprehensive and systematically monitored training policy, thereby ensuring the sustained adequacy and capacity of its human resources in line with the requirements of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

Equally important is the improvement of the academic profile of ELSTAT's workforce. The number of employees holding a Master's degree increased by approximately 60%, and the number of staff with PhDs rose modestly but significantly, in terms of strengthening methodological expertise in key areas. The overall share of postgraduate-educated employees is now at its highest level since many years. The Committee believes that these improvements directly enhance ELSTAT's ability to undertake complex methodological work, including in national accounts, price statistics, employment statistics, and emerging areas such as administrative-data integration, data science and Artificial Intelligence. At the same time, these developments will enable ELSTAT to participate more actively in research activities jointly with other NSIs of the European Statistical System.

However, despite the above-described significant progress, the Committee remains concerned that ELSTAT's staffing level (625 filled posts) remains well below the 1076 posts foreseen in the 2019 organigram. This gap, more than 400 persons, has profound implications for the Authority's capacity to exercise adequately its coordination obligations in the ELSS, and meet the growing demands of modern statistical production, often driven by EU regulations.

The recently updated Quality and Training Policies constitute two important milestones as well, and they respond to GPAC's repeated concerns in previous reports. There are several structural challenges which the new quality policy is aiming to address: fragmented quality review mechanisms; insufficient alignment with GSBPM; heavy reliance on ad hoc checks; insufficient documentation of quality decisions; variable application of SIMS guidelines across domains; and the need for clearer responsibilities and formalised internal structures. The updated framework provides a clearer and more systematic structure, assigning defined roles to quality evaluators, internal audit teams, and a high-level Review Group responsible for oversight and approval. This multilayered governance model is expected to ensure both operational continuity and strategic supervision. Each statistical domain is now expected to undergo a systematic review involving mapping of statistical processes, assessment of data sources and methodologies, evaluation of validation procedures, review of dissemination practices, examination of confidentiality safeguards, preparation of SIMS documentation, and final review by the high-level group. This process represents a substantial evolution from earlier practices, which relied on domain specific and often heterogenous approaches. The Committee recognises this shift as a fundamental improvement. The challenges now lie in the implementation of the new policy within ELSTAT and across the ELSS.

Regarding the renewed training policy of ELSTAT, the Committee observes that it establishes a comprehensive and legally grounded framework for the continuous professional

development of the Authority's staff, ensuring alignment with the Statistical Law 3832/2010, Regulation (EC) 223/2009, the Statute of ELSTAT and the ESCoP. The policy applies to all staff and promotes a culture of life-long learning. The governance structure underpinning the policy is robust and clearly defined. Content-wise, the policy covers a wide range of training areas, including methodological and quality assurance topics, legal and administrative competencies, digital and data-science skills, communication and dissemination, leadership development, and specialised modules tailored to the needs of production units, ICT, administrative services, and methodological and quality teams. The policy places strong emphasis on effectiveness, accountability and international cooperation. It prescribes mandatory recurring training in essential areas such, as statistical confidentiality, GDPR, the ESCoP, the legal framework, ethics and information security. Training is delivered through diversified methods, including classroom instruction, e-learning, blended learning, mentoring, and study visits, and its impact is evaluated systematically at four levels: participants satisfaction, knowledge acquisition, workplace application and effects on statistical quality. The training policy is reviewed annually to ensure responsiveness to technological developments, ESS requirements, and internal evaluation results, thus contributing to a dynamic and future-oriented capacity-building framework within ELSTAT. The Committee encourages ELSTAT to devote the necessary resources required for a full-fledged implementation of this ambitious and comprehensive policy.

Thanks to the efforts of ELSTAT's President, ELSTAT is eligible for receiving a special annual financial reward (the so-called Incentive for Achieving Fiscal Targets) by the Ministry of Finance. This financial incentive (subject to achieving the set targets) is similar to receiving an annual bonus for public sector employees. Notwithstanding its importance in financial terms, it also has a symbolic significance indicating that ELSTAT is part of the Greek institutions which have contributed towards achieving the country's fiscal targets.

4. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As it was stated elsewhere in this report, the following recommendations are, to a large extent, based on past observations and recurring issues, which are now fine-tuned on the basis of recent developments, and emerging challenges.

4.1 Adoption of a long-term strategic plan for official statistics

In a number of reports, the GPAC has underlined the importance for ELSTAT to adopt and implement a long-term strategic plan for official statistics. Such a plan will provide a high-level future orientation framework and will guide the Authority in setting annual priorities and making strategic choices. The fact that there will soon be a new President of ELSTAT (based on a rigorous and independent selection procedure) constitutes an additional opportunity for the incoming leadership to work out such a plan. Moreover, ELSTAT has already started

working on most of the core strands of the long-term planning like the future IT infrastructure, comprehensive quality and training policies, and identification of opportunities, weaknesses and challenges, in particular with regard to leveraging new data sources and effectively embracing AI, while safeguarding privacy and maintaining professional independence.

The Committee therefore has issued the following recommendation:

R1: It is the Committee's opinion that, ELSTAT should adopt a long-term strategic plan for official statistics. Once adopted, the plan should be shared within the ELSS and published on the Authority's website.

4.2 Enhance coordination and cooperation

To sustain the positive momentum in ELSS coordination, ELSTAT should maintain, (and if necessary, introduce new), structured follow-up mechanisms after the SWOT workshops and coordination meetings; provide updated tools and templates for documentation; ensure ONAs consistently apply the ESCoP principles; and continue with targeted capacity-building efforts and bilateral support where needed. The introduction of simplified Peer Reviews and the use of an updated certification procedure across the ELSS have been identified by the GPAC as efficient tools to be considered.

A key instrument for strengthening cooperation and ensuring compliance is the certification procedure, as established under the Statistical Law. ELSTAT works in close collaboration with ONAs and other ELSS agencies to ensure comprehensive awareness and understanding of the certification framework. To this end, a dedicated certification manual and a clearly defined, formalised procedure have been developed and disseminated. These efforts have contributed to substantial progress by many agencies in meeting the initial requirements and key milestones of the certification process.

Nevertheless, experience has shown that bottlenecks may arise during the implementation of the procedure, potentially slowing overall progress. In this light, it may be necessary to revisit and review the existing certification procedure, including the introduction of a more graduated or phased approach that better reflects the different levels of progress achieved by agencies.

In this regard, and in order to enhance compliance of ONAs and other agencies of the ELSS with the principles of the ESCoP, GPAC has issued the following two recommendations:

R2: ELSTAT should introduce a programme of regular simplified Peer Reviews of ONAs with the aim of enhancing ONAs compliance with the ESCoP principles.

R3: In view of expanding adherence to the ESCoP across other agencies of the ELSS, the Authority should revisit and review the existing certification procedure.

4.3 Updating and Modernisation of ELSTAT's organigram

ELSTAT should prioritise the revision of the 2019 organigram to reflect the ambitions for expanded use of digital tools and technologies, modern job profiles (e.g. data engineering, IT governance, AI, data science), the operational needs of the 2025-2028 Statistical Programme, and the skills profiles of newly recruited staff. At the same time, a modern organigram will support improved mobility, staff motivation, clearer job families, better allocation of resources, and overall enhanced workforce planning.

R4: The GPAC encourages ELSTAT to update its Organigram in order to reflect the Authority's long-term strategic planning, multi-annual statistical programming and the renewed skills profiles of staff.

4.4 Accelerate and consolidate deployment of updated quality and training policies

The Committee has appreciated ELSTAT's progress in these two domains, i.e. in developing comprehensive and up-to-date quality and training policies. The challenges now lie in the subsequent phases, namely their effective deployment, piloting, systematic monitoring and periodic reviewing. It should also be underlined that both policies require adequate and sustained resourcing in order to achieve their full potential and deliver measurable improvements in statistical quality and organisational capacity. GPAC has therefore issued the following recommendations:

R5: To maintain forward progress in ELSTAT's updated quality policy, GPAC advises the Authority to accelerate its deployment, ensuring adequate allocation of financial and human resources.

R6: To consolidate the progress achieved in the development and launching of a comprehensive training policy, GPAC advises the Authority to accelerate its deployment, ensuring adequate allocation of financial and human resources.

4.5 Expand the use of administrative data and strengthen cooperation with admin-data providers

Notwithstanding the tremendous progress of ELSTAT in this field, the Committee believes that ELSTAT should continue to deepen cooperation with Ministries and public bodies providing administrative data, with particular focus on improving interoperability, enhancing metadata documentation, promoting standardised data formats, clarifying responsibilities for data governance, and strengthening legal and operational frameworks for data sharing. Administrative data are becoming increasingly critical for today's statistical production;

weaknesses in this area can significantly affect quality, relevance and timeliness of official statistics.

R7: To build on the momentum, ELSTAT should continue expanding the use of administrative data and strengthen cooperation with Ministries and other bodies providing administrative data.

4.6 Enhance data literacy and user outreach activities

The Committee has on several occasions, underlined the excellent work of ELSTAT in terms of data literacy activities and user support. Nevertheless, based on evidence gathered from meetings with Users, there is a growing demand for a wide range of improved and enhanced services including methodological notes for complex indicators, greater clarity on revision policies, navigability and metadata availability on the website, and communication through user events, technical briefings and online tools. These improvements reinforce trust, support media understanding, and strengthen public perception of official statistics.

R8: To ensure continuity in meeting user expectations, the Committee encourages ELSTAT to enhance its data literacy and user outreach activities.

5. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FROM THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF AI IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The following section is a special highlight of an important emerging issue which the Committee considers to be of particular importance for the future of official statistics

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a peripheral topic for official statistics; it has become a central strategic concern for governments, international organisations and National Statistical Offices (NSOs). This is mainly due to the fact that data ecosystems grow more complex and that policy decisions increasingly depend on timely, reliable and granular information.

Eurostat initiatives such as AIML4OS, together with global efforts from PARIS21, UNECE and Open Data Watch, confirm that AI represents both a transformative opportunity and a governance challenge.

AI is redefining the boundaries of what is possible: richer data sources, faster production cycles, increasingly dynamic indicators and new forms of engagement with citizens and policymakers. At the same time, these developments raise serious implications for transparency, accountability, data protection, ethical use of demographic information and public trust. Policymaking in this domain must therefore consider not only technical feasibility but also institutional capacity, governance structures and long-term sustainability.

5.1 Strategic opportunities of AI for official statistics

AI enables statistical systems to respond to policy needs with new levels of speed, depth and precision. One of the most significant opportunities lies in the diversification of data sources. Traditional surveys and censuses, although foundational, often struggle to capture rapidly evolving social and economic dynamics. AI-supported integration of satellite imagery, sensor networks, administrative records and digital trace data allows NSOs to produce indicators that were previously too costly, too slow or too complex to generate.

At an operational level, AI enhances the internal functioning of statistical systems. AI can automate many stages of the statistical production cycle—classification, coding, imputation, anomaly detection, record linkage and the updating of methodological routines.

These advancements allow NSOs to reallocate human expertise from routine manual tasks to methodological innovation, analysis and quality assurance. Eurostat's AIML4OS initiative supports this potential by creating reusable models and shared infrastructures that reduce duplication and accelerate the development of AI capabilities across Europe.

AI also contributes to improving the analytical depth and interpretative value of statistics. Machine learning enables the identification of complex patterns within large datasets that traditional methods may overlook. In addition, natural language processing techniques allow statistical offices to make their outputs more accessible to policymakers and the public. Tools capable of creating summaries, contextual explanations and interactive narratives foster a more engaged and informed user community. The rise of explainable AI (XAI) also supports the use of Machine Learning (ML) systems in high-stakes decision making by ensuring that model outputs can be interpreted, justified and communicated with clarity.

A further opportunity relates to institutional capacity building and cooperation. AI adoption is most successful when embedded in collaborative frameworks that bring together statisticians, data scientists, policymakers, academia and international organisations. These partnerships help distribute expertise, promote methodological harmonisation, support shared learning and reduce implementation costs.

5.2 Emerging challenges

While the potential of AI is substantial, its responsible adoption requires addressing a series of policy challenges that extend beyond technical implementation. The first and perhaps most complex challenge concerns data governance. As NSOs increasingly rely on data produced outside their direct control—such as platform data, commercial datasets or sensor feeds—they must handle issues of quality, provenance, legal access, continuity of supply and representativeness. Changes in the characteristics of the datasets over time, threaten comparability and long-term stability of indicators. Without clear governance frameworks for evaluating sources, monitoring changes and documenting limitations, AI-derived statistics risk undermining the consistency on which policymaking depends.

Ethical and fairness considerations should be also addressed. AI models are highly sensitive to biases present in training data, and when used for official statistics, such biases can disproportionately affect vulnerable groups. The risks are amplified in contexts involving demographic data, where privacy, group visibility and algorithmic discrimination intersect. There is always a trade-off between protecting individual privacy and ensuring that population groups are sufficiently represented to allow for fairness assessments. It is therefore important to establish mechanisms that promote responsible access to data while maintaining compliance with privacy regulations and human-rights safeguards.

A third area of concern relates to public trust. The proliferation of AI-generated content online has contributed to a broader erosion of trust in digital information. If AI tools are used to produce or interpret official statistics without adequate transparency, there is a risk that citizens and policymakers may question the legitimacy of statistical outputs. NSOs must therefore adopt communication strategies that clearly explain when AI is used, how it contributes to the statistical process, and what safeguards ensure accuracy and impartiality. Transparency, rigorous documentation and visible human oversight are essential for preserving the social contract between statistical institutions and the public.

Institutional capacity is another central challenge. AI integration requires advanced skills in machine learning, data engineering, metadata management, cloud computing and cybersecurity—competencies that many NSOs do not yet possess. Resource constraints, create risks of asymmetric adoption, potentially widening global statistical inequalities. PARIS21 warns that without sustained investment in capacity building, the benefits of AI may build up disproportionately to countries with greater technological resources.

Regulatory and compliance obligations further complicate the landscape. AI initiatives must align not only with data protection and confidentiality standards but also with emerging AI-specific regulations. This includes evaluating re-identification risks, implementing robust anonymisation methods, ensuring auditability of models and maintaining documentation for public accountability.

5.3 Conclusions

AI offers unprecedented possibilities for strengthening official statistical systems, improving their relevance, timeliness and analytical capacity. Yet, these benefits cannot be realised without strong governance, transparent communication, robust safeguards and sustained investment in skills and infrastructure. Policymakers must recognise AI not merely as a technical upgrade but as an institutional transformation that affects trust, accountability and the long-term sustainability of national data systems. With responsible governance and international cooperation, AI can enhance the capacity of official statistics to inform public decisions and support societal progress in an increasingly data-driven world.

The Committee believes that AI should be reflected in any future organigram of ELSTAT with adequate resource allocation; gradually, AI should be embedded in the corporate culture of the Authority and implemented like any other transformative development in official statistics.

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

- National Centre for Social Research (EKKE)
Statistical Head
- Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority (YPA)
Statistical Head
Ministry of the Interior
- Statistical Head

Power Users

- Media
Bloomberg Greece
Eleftheros Typos, daily newspaper
Kritiki Epitheorisi, local newspaper of Crete

DG ESTAT

Head of Directorate B: Standards; Dissemination; Cooperation in the European Statistical System

Regional Statistical Offices

- Head of RSO of Rethymno