

**ELSTAT**  
**Annual Report**  
**2012**

## A. INTRODUCTION

In this Annual Report, ELSTAT accounts for its activities in 2012. Besides the activities concerning the statistical surveys and tasks outlined in the 2012 Statistical Work Program, the chapters of this Annual Report also contain information about the major issues in the area of statistics in 2012.

The main pillars of the work of ELSTAT in 2012 were the following:

- a) Continuing to enhance the quality and reliability of statistics, by unswervingly observing the principles of the National and European Legislation on Statistics in force and by following the highest European and international statistical standards.
- b) Carrying on the good governance in the National Statistical Institute by continuously upgrading the processes for the production of statistics through the implementation of clearly defined and transparent rules.
- c) Continuing and further enhancing the responsiveness to users' needs as well as the cooperation with other statistical producers with a view to improving the quality of statistics.
- d) Intensifying the cooperation with the European and the international statistical community and undertaking of actions in the abovementioned framework.

In 2012, ELSTAT implemented significant 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).

Among the major events that took place in 2012 is the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics, which was signed by the Prime Minister of Greece and the competent EU Commissioner—Greece became the first EU Member State to sign such a commitment—as well as the subsequent amendment of the Greek Statistical Law, so that it is fully harmonized with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice and to fulfill part of the aforementioned Commitment. Moreover, another significant event was the successful organization of the European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2012) in Athens.

**Given the above, 2012 was a very successful year for ELSTAT regarding both the implementation of its statistical work and the securing of its professional independence and the consolidation of the users' confidence in its statistical output, despite the significant losses ELSTAT incurred in human resources and the constraints in its financial resources.**

## B. IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND RELIABILITY OF STATISTICS

### 1. Commitment on Confidence in Statistics

On 29 February 2012, Greece's Commitment on Confidence in Statistics was adopted by the Hellenic Parliament and was signed by the Prime Minister and the competent EU Commissioner.

Greece became the first EU Member State to sign such a commitment. The Commitment on the one hand highlights the progress that has been made in improving the quality and reliability of Greek statistics and on the other hand outlines the commitments of the Greek Government to take all the necessary measures to ensure that ELSTAT is independent and the statistics are accurate, reliable and fully meet European and international quality standards.

### **Box 1. Commitment on Confidence in Statistics**

Among the measures that the Greek Government committed itself to take are the following:

1. Specific amendment of the Greek Statistical Law, bringing it into line with the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP) (Box 2).
2. Provision to the agencies of the ELSS of the necessary financial and human resources in order to deliver high quality statistics to users, in accordance with all obligations both at national and European level.
3. Full and timely access to administrative data sources and delivery of them, in accordance with the Greek Statistical Law.
4. Granting ELSTAT the right to have full and timely access, for statistical purposes, to the economic and financial accounts of all entities belonging to or controlled by General Government.
5. Implementation of the actions laid down in the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP) in an effective manner and in accordance with deadlines specified.

Besides the aforementioned specific measures, the Greek Government committed:

- to fully respect international and European standards for statistical data quality, in particular the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP),
- to guarantee and defend the professional independence of ELSTAT and to promote it to the public through appropriate communication actions,
- to support ELSTAT in upholding public confidence in Greek statistics and to defend them against any efforts to undermine their credibility.

The European Commission will monitor the implementation of the Commitment and will continue to support ELSTAT through the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan.

## **2. Full harmonization of the Greek Statistical Law with the principles of the CoP**

The Greek Statistical Law No 3832/2010 was amended in April 2012 by virtue of article 323 of Law No4072/2012 (Government Gazette 86, issue A/ 11.4.2012) and in November 2012 (Ordinance, dated 18.11.2012), in order for the Statistical Law to be fully in line with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice and in fulfillment of part of the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics signed by the Greek Government (Box 1). The amendment of the Greek Statistical Law specified or clarified, among others, issues pertaining to the development, production and dissemination of the statistics of ELSS agencies; the legal personality and financial management of ELSTAT; the establishment, composition, the role and competencies of the Good Practice Advisory Committee; and the selection and dismissal, as well as the competencies, of the President of ELSTAT.

### **Box 2. Major points of the Greek Statistical Law, following its amendment in 2012**

When developing, producing and disseminating statistics, the ELSS agencies implement the European Statistics Code of Practice, as in force from time to time.

ELSTAT is an Independent Authority with a separate legal personality (Legal Entity Under Public Law). The budget of ELSTAT includes all amounts, which are necessary to provide users with high quality statistics in accordance with all national and European obligations. The implementation of the budget is scrutinized by the Committee on the Financial Statement and the General Balance Sheet and the implementation of the State Budget, as specified in the Hellenic Parliament's bylaws. The accounts and annual report of ELSTAT are subject to both preventative and corrective audits by the Hellenic Court of Auditors. ELSTAT is exempted from the scope of article 25 of Law No 2362/1995, as in force.

An independent advisory committee is established (Good Practice Advisory Committee) for the ELSS. The five members of the Committee are appointed by the Hellenic Parliament, the European Statistical Office (Eurostat), the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB), the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) and the Personal Data Protection Authority, respectively. The task of this Committee is solely to prepare an advisory annual report on the implementation of principles 1 to 6 (institutional framework) of the European Statistics Code of Practice in the ELSS. The Committee submits its report to the Parliament, after having informed the ESGAB accordingly. The agencies of the ELSS are obliged to provide the Committee with the information required to perform its task, following a request submitted to the senior administrative officer of the relevant agency.

The President of ELSTAT enjoys personal independence in the performance of his duties and is bound by the relevant provisions in force. The grounds for his removal may not place at risk his professional and scientific independence. The President of ELSTAT takes the decisions relating to statistical methods, standards and procedures, the content of statistical data and the timing of publication thereof, decisions pertaining to the transmission of official statistics from the ELSS to Eurostat and in general decisions relating to the transmission, submission and notification of statistics in the context of European and international statistical cooperation. He is responsible for coordinating all the activities of other ELSS agencies concerning the development, production and dissemination of the official statistics of Greece, as well as the implementation of the national quality assurance framework for statistics.

### 3. Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan

The Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP) started being implemented in 2010, aiming at the harmonization of the Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS) with the European Statistical System. During 2010 – 2012, the JOSGAP was enriched with new actions intended to cover issues that had not been included in its initial form. More specifically, in 2012, pillar A of the JOSGAP was enriched with the improvement actions that are included in the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics.

With a view to the implementation of the actions within pillar A of the JOSGAP, which aim at enhancing the institutional framework of the ELSS, the following actions were implemented in 2012:

- **Amendment of the Greek Statistical Law**

The Greek Statistical Law No 3832/2010 was amended on 11 April 2012 (Paragraph 2 above), in order to be fully into line with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP).

- **Preparations for the certification as "official" of the statistics produced by the other ELSS agencies**

In 2012, ELSTAT carried out preparatory works pertaining to the certification procedure:

- a) organization in ELSTAT(21 and 22 February 2012) of a workshop on the certification of official statistics, with the support of Eurostat and the UK Statistics Authority,
- b) development of a general methodological framework for the certification,
- c) setting out the requirements for certification and the outline of the certification procedure of official statistics in the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT,
- d) elaboration of guidelines, preparation of templates of reports and of other forms and documents to be used during the evaluation and certification of statistics, etc.

- **Adoption of the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT**

In 2012, the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT was adopted and published in the Government Gazette. This Regulation is the basic organizing document regarding the internal operation and administration of the National Statistical Institute. Moreover, this Regulation specifies issues on the competencies of ELSTAT, pursuant to the Community and national legislation in force from time to time, and in compliance with the deontological rules and methodology governing the ELSS (Chapter B, Box 3).

- **Preparations for the establishment of the new organization of ELSTAT**

In 2012, the preparatory works begun concerning the elaboration of the new organization chart of ELSTAT. In April 2012, experts from the European Statistical System elaborated and submitted a proposal on the new organization of ELSTAT. In this context, in the 3rd and 4th quarter 2012, ELSTAT introduced, on a pilot basis, an amended system for distribution and assignment of responsibilities between the Central Offices of ELSTAT and the Statistical Offices in Prefectures, with a view to achieving a more active participation of the latter in the control and processing of the data of statistical surveys. The results of this exercise will be taken into consideration during the elaboration of the new organization chart of ELSTAT in 2013. In addition, ELSTAT will take into consideration the new needs stemming from the new independent financial administration of ELSTAT, which is being implemented since 1 January 2013. More generally, the new organization of ELSTAT must ensure the fact that ELSTAT, as a modern and independent National Statistical Institute, will be able to fully respond in the coming years to the rapidly evolving needs and conditions, both at national and international/European level.

In 2012, significant progress was achieved concerning the actions under pillar B of JOSGAP, which aim at improving the processes and capacity for the production of statistics in Greece, mostly through a program of medium-term technical assistance provided to ELSTAT by Eurostat. More specifically, these actions are:

- **Development of a three-year project for the training of ELSTAT staff**

The project plan was compiled in March 2012 with the assistance of a Norwegian expert on training issues and the relevant funding proposal was elaborated in order to be submitted for funding by the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). The implementation of the project is pending,

until the relevant calls for proposals for funding are released and until it is determined which of the training needs are going to be covered by the National Center for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA), as requested by the NSRF.

- **Development of a project for improving and upgrading the existing ICT infrastructure and the corresponding services provided of ELSTAT**

In 2012, ELSTAT completed a proposal on improving and upgrading its existing ICT infrastructure and the corresponding services provided, following which the relevant funding proposal was submitted for funding by the European Regional Development Fund. In December 2012, the Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Transport, Infrastructure and Networks returned to ELSTAT the project proposal with a significant cut (by 31 %) in the budget of the project. Finally, ELSTAT decided to undertake the project despite the risk of not being able to complete it consistently with the initially set high requirements and standards on account of the aforementioned budget cuts.

- **Development of a project for redesigning and upgrading the Statistical Business Register of ELSTAT**

The project plan was elaborated in December 2011 and in 2012 the proposal was submitted for funding by the European Social Fund. In November 2012, the project was approved for funding and it is expected to be completed in September 2013.

- **Exploration of the possibility of creating a single entry point for the submission of data by enterprises**

With a view to improving the quality of Structural Business Statistics (SBS) and reducing the administrative burden of enterprises, in 2011 ELSTAT began and in 2012 continued to explore the possibility of creating a single entry point for the submission of data by enterprises. In this context, ELSTAT addressed letters to all the main agencies that could potentially be interested in the creation of a single entry point (Government Ministries<sup>(1)</sup>, the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises – SEV and the Social Insurance Institute – IKA). The results from this exploration showed that, for the moment, there is no strong interest expressed for the creation of this single entry point.

- **Initiation of works for the development of a project aiming at improving the quality and update of the Farm Register**

In 2012, ELSTAT undertook the necessary works for improving the quality and update of the Farm Register, which is used as sampling frame for the conduct of the survey on the structure of agricultural holdings and for the annual agricultural and livestock survey of ELSTAT. In September 2012, Austrian experts on issues pertaining to Statistical Farm Registers provided ELSTAT with their expertise and produced a relevant report. In this context, in 2012, the competent Division of ELSTAT elaborated a proposal on a project for improving the quality and update of the Farm Register, which will be submitted for funding by the NSRF.

- **Initiation of works for the development of a project aiming at improving the quality of Environment Statistics**

In the framework of the works for improving the quality of Environment and Water Statistics, which were initiated in 2011, in September 2012, a Finish expert on Environment Statistics visited ELSTAT with the aim of providing expertise and producing a report on the organization of the collection and production of environment statistics and accounts. In this context, in 2012, the competent Division of ELSTAT elaborated a proposal on a project for improving the quality of Environment Statistics, which will be submitted for funding by the NSRF.

- **Release of Quarterly and Annual Sector Accounts**

In July 2012, ELSTAT published for the first time Quarterly Sector Accounts. More specifically, ELSTAT posted on its portal analytical tables by sector, metadata and a relevant Press Release. Moreover, during the 3rd quarter 2012 ELSTAT compiled the Annual Sector Accounts, on the basis of updated GDP data for the period 2006 – 2011 as well as updated administrative data. These results were published in November 2012.

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(1) Ministry of Administrative Reform and Electronic Governance, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Development, Competitiveness and Shipping, Ministry of Labour and Social Security and Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change.

- **Continuing the implementation of the action plan for improving the quality of External Trade Statistics**

In 2012, ELSTAT carried on the works intended for the improvement of the External Trade Statistics by implementing the relevant action plan, which was put into operation in September 2011.

As regards the actions in pillar C of JOSGAP, which focus on improving the quality of the Government Finance Statistics of Greece, ELSTAT gave priority to these actions because of the role that Government Finance Statistics had played in the lack of credibility of the statistics of Greece, but also because of the imperative need for reliable Government Finance Statistics for the planning and implementation of Greece's economic adjustment program. Most of the actions under pillar C were completed during the two-year period 2010–2011. As regards the remaining actions of pillar C, in 2012, the following progress was achieved:

- **Compilation of a report on the statistical processing of data on Public – Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

During the 1st quarter 2012, ELSTAT compiled a report on the statistical processing of data on the Public – Private Partnerships (PPPs), which was transmitted to Eurostat.

- **Release on the portal of ELSTAT of the manual on the main sources and methods used for the compilation of Quarterly Non-Financial Accounts for General Government**

During the 1st quarter 2012, ELSTAT posted on its portal a methodological manual, which outlines the main sources and methods used for the compilation of Quarterly Non-Financial Accounts for General Government.

- **Update of the Register of General Government Entities**

In 2012, ELSTAT continued on with the updating of the Statistical Register of General Government Entities, by incorporating in it new entities, which are classified in General Government, in accordance with the ESA 95 classification criteria, as well as by removing entities which are either abolished or do not meet the classification criteria anymore. In addition, ELSTAT, always following the highest international standards, initiated the regular, quarterly release on its website of the updated Register as well as of a table that reflects the evolution of the perimeter of the General Government during 2008 – 2012.

The result of the implementation of these actions under pillar C was the stabilization of the technical conditions for the production of quality and reliable Government Finance Statistics. This led to the release **without any reservations** by Eurostat an additional two consecutive times—after the releases of November 2010, April 2011 and October 2011—in April 2012 and October 2012 of the annual Government Finance Statistics (for the years 2006 – 2011) and to the building of the particularly important **"track record"** regarding the reliability of the fiscal data of Greece.

### **C. GOOD GOVERNANCE BY IMPLEMENTING A TRANSPARENT RULES-BASED SYSTEM**

In 2012, ELSTAT focused on further improving the procedures for the production of statistics. In this framework the following actions are included:

- **Establishment of the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT**

The establishment of the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT is among the most significant actions undertaken by ELSTAT in 2012, given that, through this Regulation, major issues pertaining to the organization and operation of the National Statistical Institute are regulated.

**Box 3. Key points of the Regulation on the Operation and Administration of ELSTAT**

The Regulation on Operation and Administration of ELSTAT regulates, among others, issues pertaining to:

- the cooperation of ELSTAT with other ELSS agencies, as well as the coordination of their activities and the certification of their statistics as "official statistics" by ELSTAT,
- the competent bodies for the conduct of censuses, statistical surveys and statistical tasks, as well as the undertaking by ELSTAT of works on account of third parties,
- the procedure for imposing administrative sanctions on the persons who are responsible for not providing ELSTAT with the necessary data for the development, production and dissemination of statistics, as well as to those responsible for violating statistical confidentiality,
- the participation of ELSTAT in operational and co-funding programs (national, European, international),
- the training of ELSTAT staff,
- the pricing policy of ELSTAT concerning its statistical product,
- the Statistical Confidentiality Committee,
- the economic administration of ELSTAT.

• **Establishment of a List of Duties and Responsibilities for the employees in the Regional Statistical Offices of ELSTAT and its monthly update**

Aiming at upgrading the work of the Regional Statistical Offices (RSOs) and their active involvement and participation in all the stages of statistical surveys, in 2012 ELSTAT initiated the compilation of a List of Duties and Responsibilities for the employees in the RSOs. This list contains records concerning both the experience of each employee on statistical surveys/tasks and on the actual hours spent by each employee on the different stages of the surveys/statistical tasks on a monthly basis. This way, it becomes possible for the personnel of the RSOs—who were up to that point mainly involved in the collection and transmission of data to the Central Office—to be better utilized for the benefit of the National Statistical Institute.

• **Enhancing the system for selecting External Survey Workers**

In 2012, several amendments were made to the system for the selection the External Survey Workers that had been developed in 2011, aiming at enhancing its effectiveness and achieving its more uniform implementation. The most important of these amendments pertained to the procedure for the selection and assignment of statistical surveys to the External Survey Workers, which now had to be made centrally (by the Section for Inspection and External Survey Workers of ELSTAT) and not by the Divisions of ELSTAT and RSOs responsible for the conduct of the surveys, as in the past. Moreover, *inter alia*, the following further improvements were made:

- Inclusion of additional questions/fields in the Electronic Application Form that the applicants have to submit for enrolling in the Register of External Survey Workers: a) choice of category of statistical survey (Households – Enterprises), b) availability of hours for work (30, 60, 90, 120 hours) and for months of the year, c) choice of Municipality for participating in the conduct of surveys (candidates can choose up to three Municipalities in the same Regional Unit).
- Inclusion of the experience of the candidates on surveys besides those conducted by ELSTAT in the factors taken into consideration by the point-ranking system implemented for External Survey Workers.
- Using of random numbers for the selection of External Survey Workers in cases where two or more candidates gather the same number of points.
- Compilation of lists of unfit External Survey Workers, on the basis of documented and justified proposals made by the competent Divisions and the RSOs.
- Invitation to the selected External Survey Workers for work on surveys sent by SMS message (using a special electronic application for sending and receiving messages via computer that also records the date of transmission and receipt of the message).
- Establishment of rules pertaining to refusals by the selected External Survey Workers to participate in the surveys and notification of these rules to them, with the aim of fostering increased responsibility among External Survey Workers and enhancing the management of the selection system.

#### **D. ENHANCED RESPONSIVENESS TO USER NEEDS AND CLOSER COOPERATION WITH PRODUCERS OF STATISTICAL DATA**

One of ELSTAT's main responsibilities, since its establishment, is the production of statistics adapted to the needs and requirements of users, at national, European and international level. In this context, ELSTAT gathers the comments and interventions made by the participants in the Users Conferences that ELSTAT has established on an yearly basis, as well as the results from the Users Surveys it conducts, with the aim of improving its statistical products and services, as well as identifying new needs and requirements for the production of statistics. In order to achieve this objective, ELSTAT also takes into consideration the comments and interventions made by the members of the Council of the Hellenic Statistical System (SYELSS), in which all the National Authorities are represented, i.e., the agencies of the ELSS that are responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics.

In this framework are included the activities of ELSTAT aiming to improve various aspects of the layout and content of ELSTAT's portal, as well as to enhance the other dissemination modes for statistics, by following the developing international standards in order to fulfill, to the maximum extent possible, user needs for timely and reliable information, both at national and international level.

- **Undertaking of actions, in 2012, responding to the conclusions of the 1st and 2nd Annual User Conferences**

Taking into consideration the comments and suggestions made during the 1st and 2nd User Conferences, held in October 2010 and in December 2011, respectively, ELSTAT included in its Annual Statistical Work Programs the conduct of a Time Use Survey, in cooperation with the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, and the development of a System of Health Accounts (SHA) at national level, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and the University of Athens. As regards the aforementioned actions, the following progress was achieved in 2012:

- *Conduct of a Time Use Survey*

The preparations for the conduct of the Time Use Survey started in September 2011 and data collection was initiated in 2013, with a view to disseminating the survey results in December 2014.

- *Implementation of a System of Health Accounts (SHA)*

In September 2011 began the implementation of the memorandum of cooperation signed, in 2010, between ELSTAT, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and the University of Athens, for the implementation of a System of Health Accounts (SHA) at national level. In 2012, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th project deliverables (out of the total 5 project deliverables) were delivered to ELSTAT, as they were envisaged in the aforementioned memorandum of cooperation.

- **Release of seasonally adjusted, monthly results of the Labour Force Survey**

One of the notable events that took place in 2012 is the change in the release mode of the Labour Force Survey results by ELSTAT. Starting with the Press Release on the January 2012 results of the Labour Force Survey, which was published on 12 April 2012, ELSTAT has been publishing the monthly results from the LFS seasonally adjusted, in accordance with Eurostat standards. Furthermore, in order to enhance the accuracy of the monthly results for unemployment at a level below Country level, ELSTAT is releasing the monthly results of the LFS at the level of the seven (7) Decentralized Administrations (as defined by the Kallikratis Plan).

- **Organization of the 3rd Annual User Conference**

In the framework of its 2012 Annual Statistical Work Program, on 18 December 2012 ELSTAT convened the 3rd User Conference on its premises in Piraeus. During the Conference, ELSTAT gave an overview of its work and the major pillars for its operation from the date of its establishment until the present time. Moreover, ELSTAT presented the tasks undertaken for satisfying users' needs as these had been identified in the 1st and 2nd Users Conferences. In addition, users had the opportunity to make their comments and express their needs with regard to statistical products and services provided by ELSTAT. Users pointed out, *inter alia*, the need for:

- a) compilation of long time series for National Accounts,
- b) production of seasonally adjusted data for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the quarterly



- data of the Labour Force Survey and the National Accounts,
- c) production of statistics on salaries from 2008 onwards and of more recent data from the Business Register,
- d) compilation of environmental indices and of analytical statistical data on suicide,
- e) adding more variables in several surveys in order to cover specialized needs (e.g., the variable of "gender" in all household surveys, the variable of "citizenship" with more detailed analysis, etc.),
- f) collection of data on the variables "year of arrival in Greece" and "period of residence in Greece" concerning immigrants,
- g) access to primary survey data and posting on the webpage of ELSTAT of databases with anonymized microdata from its surveys,
- h) reduction of the time for the production and improvement in the quality of population and demographic statistics,
- i) collection of data on the estimated value of real estate.

ELSTAT, taking into consideration the comments and observations made by the participants in the 3rd Users Conference, as well as in the other two Users Conferences, ELSTAT has recorded and processed the needs of users. The processing of these needs has resulted in identifying clear and specific requirements. Satisfying such requirements is among ELSTAT's priorities for the three-year period 2014 – 2016, as they have been integrated in the Hellenic Statistical Program for 2014 – 2016.

- **Upgrading the portal of ELSTAT**

ELSTAT aims at continuously improving various aspects of the layout and content of its portal and of the other dissemination modes for its statistics, with a view to adapting them to users' needs, both at national and international level.

A project that will contribute significantly to the achievement of the aforementioned objective is the project for improving and upgrading the existing ICT infrastructure and the corresponding services provided. The preparations for this project were actually initiated in 2012 (Chapter B, Paragraph 3) and it is expected to significantly upgrade the portal of ELSTAT by incorporating new tools and technologies. The works for redesigning the portal of ELSTAT and for enriching its content are included in the first two sub-projects of this project.

In 2012, the following actions were carried out for enriching the portal of ELSTAT (both the Greek and English version of the website):

- Release, every two months, on the portal of ELSTAT of the new bilingual publication "Living Conditions in Greece", covering a wide spectrum of statistical data that depict recent social developments as well as long-term social trends.
- Continuing the work initiated in 2011 for updating the tables and covering the gaps in the time series of data posted on ELSTAT's website, as well as enriching the website with the metadata for all the statistical surveys and works after having adjusted them to the European Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange System (ESMS). It is envisaged that the above works will be completed within 2013.

Moreover, in August 2012 ELSTAT signed a memorandum of cooperation with the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE), which envisages the development of new electronic applications providing for the immediate access to, management, correlation and geographical mapping of the data compiled during the 1991, 2001 and 2011 Population Censuses. Moreover, the already existing applications are to be upgraded. The aforementioned memorandum aims at facilitating free dissemination of geospatial data to the most demanding and specialized users, but also to the general public, while at the same time, fully ensuring confidentiality of the personal data of those enumerated during the census.

- **Fostering statistical education**

One of the goals that ELSTAT has set in the 2012 Annual Statistical Work Program is the undertaking of actions aiming at promoting statistical education in Greece. To this end, in 2012, ELSTAT initiated contacts with the competent Divisions of the Ministry of Health and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports. ELSTAT has already undertaken the preparatory actions in order to host guided

tours for groups of pupils on its premises. Such guided tours are envisaged to begin in 2013.

Moreover, in 2012, with the cooperation of the Division of Informatics and the Division of Statistical Information and Publications of ELSTAT, ELSTAT initiated the design of a specialized web-page that will be addressed to children aged 6 – 18 years.

- **Participation of ELSTAT in the 77th Thessaloniki International Fair**

In 2012, ELSTAT participated in the 77th Thessaloniki International Fair with its own stand, as in the last two years. The visitors to ELSTAT's stand had the opportunity to be informed about the mission of ELSTAT, its work during 2010 – 2012, the 2011 and 2012 Annual Statistical Work Programs and the 2011 Annual Report, the Regulation on the Statistical Obligations of the ELSS Agencies, the European Statistics Code of Practice, and the Declaration on Professional Ethics of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). Moreover, visitors to ELSTAT's stand were also provided with the latest updated editions of the publications "The Greek Economy" and "Living Conditions in Greece", as well as with the results of the statistical surveys/works of ELSTAT (labour force statistics, statistics on agriculture, livestock and fishing, tourism statistics, the results of the 2009 Agricultural and Livestock Census, data on the Registered Population from the 2011 Population – Housing Census and data on the National and Harmonized Index on Consumer Prices). The opening ceremony for ELSTAT's stand took place on 9 September 2012, in the presence of the President of ELSTAT, Mr. Andreas V. Georgiou.

- **Meeting of the Council of the Hellenic Statistical System (SYELSS)**

On 6 February 2012, the Council of the Hellenic Statistical System (SYELSS) was convened for the second time on the premises of ELSTAT, aiming at informing the members of the Council on the latest update of the European Statistics Code of Practice, which took place on 28 September 2011, and at presenting the draft Annual Statistical Work Program of ELSTAT for 2012, the results of the 2011 User Conference and the new publication "The Greek Economy".

During the meeting the members of the SYELSS had the opportunity to make their comments on the draft Annual Statistical Work Program for 2012, which were taken into consideration by ELSTAT for the compilation of the final program.

- **Exploiting administrative data sources for the production of statistics**

With the aim of improving its statistical products, while at the same time saving human and financial resources and reducing the burden on respondents, ELSTAT, since its establishment, integrated in its statistical work programs actions intended for the closer cooperation with producers of statistics and to the better use of administrative data sources.

In order to improve the quality of Structural Business Statistics and to reduce response burden on enterprises, ELSTAT, as already mentioned, began in 2011 and continued in 2012 exploring the possibility of creating a single entry point for the submission of data by enterprises (Chapter B, Paragraph 3). Moreover, in the same context, and by virtue of the memorandum of cooperation signed in November 2011 by ELSTAT, the General Secretariat of Information Systems (GSIS) of the Ministry of Finance—which is the main administrative source for data on enterprises—and by the Social Insurance Institute (IKA), in 2012, ELSTAT repeatedly submitted to the GSIS requests for the provision of data on enterprises, whose transmission to ELSTAT is provided for in the aforementioned memorandum. However, until the present time the GSIS has transmitted only part of the requested data, invoking the confidentiality of the tax data to be transmitted. It should be noted that the obligation of agencies to grant ELSTAT access to administrative and primary data—including confidential data—is clearly stipulated in the Greek Statistical Law, as in force (article 2, paragraph 3 and article 8, paragraph 2), in the Regulation on the Statistical Obligations of the agencies of the Hellenic Statistical System (article 8, paragraph 4) and in the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics (Box 1).

## **E. INTENSIFYING COOPERATION AND UNDERTAKING OF ACTIONS IN THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COMMUNITY**

In 2012, ELSTAT pursued the objective of its establishment as an active member of the European Statistical System, by substantially contributing to the system's work and evolution, as well as to its more active participation in decision-making centers within the European and the international statistical community. In this framework are included the following actions of ELSTAT in 2012:

- **Joint organization by ELSTAT and Eurostat of the "European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2012)"**

The European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2012), jointly organized by ELSTAT and Eurostat was held from 30 May to 1 June 2012 in the Athens Concert Hall. The day before the opening of the conference 5 parallel training seminars took place on statistical issues with trainers, who were experts on the relevant topics. Three hundred eighty nine (389) statisticians from 58 countries participated in the Conference and 129 high-level statistical papers were presented during the 37 sessions of the Conference along with 19 poster session papers.

The Conference was opened by Mr. Walter Radermacher, Director General of Eurostat, who noted the significant and ongoing initiatives undertaken by Eurostat and the European Statistical System for the promotion of issues related to the quality of European Statistics. Following Mr. Radermacher, the President of ELSTAT, Mr. Andreas Georgiou, in his speech outlined the necessary conditions for the production of high quality statistics. Three distinguished statisticians, as keynote speakers, set the framework of the Conference: Mr. Thomas Wieser, President of the Economic and Fiscal Committee and President of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB), Mrs. Iva Ritschelova, President of the Czech National Statistical Office and Mr. Svein Nordbotten, Professor at the University of Bergen (Norway).

The last day of the Conference a round table discussion was held on the impact of the economic crisis on the quality of official statistics. The moderator of the round table was Mr. Daniel Defays, Director in Eurostat, and among the participants were: Mr. Konrad Pesendorfer, Director General of Statistics Austria and President of the Partnership Group of the ESS, Mr. Aurel Schubert, Director General Statistics of the ECB, Mr. Ineke Stoop, Member of the European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC), the President of ELSTAT, and Mr. Markus Bensansson, financial reporter at Bloomberg News.

- **Assiduous, coordinated and effective participation of ELSTAT employees in Eurostat Working Groups**

ELSTAT has undertaken an increasingly active role within the European Statistical System through, *inter alia*, the assiduous, coordinated and effective participation of its 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 European Council on statistical issues.

- **More active participation of ELSTAT in the meetings and workings of international statistical agencies**

In 2012, ELSTAT had a more active participation 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 to the Partnership Group**

The President of ELSTAT was elected 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).

## F. ASPECTS OF STATISTICAL PRODUCTION

Among the major actions of ELSTAT, as regards statistical production, are the completion of the 2009 Agricultural – Livestock Census and the release of the results of the 2011 Population and Housing Census for the Registered Population and the Resident Population of Greece.

- **Completion of the 2009 Agricultural – Livestock Census**

The purpose of the Agricultural – Livestock Census is to record, every ten years, all the agricultural and livestock holdings of Greece and to collect data on their structure and on the population employed in them. In March 2012, ELSTAT completed the processing of the 2009 Agricultural – Livestock Census and the results were transmitted to Eurostat on 31 March 2012.

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 2010 by the newly established ELSTAT. At the same time that ELSTAT had to carry out the statistical works of the other two major Censuses, ELSTAT also had to address the outstanding obligation it had inherited, i.e., the conduct and processing of 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 census would result in the imposition of significant sanctions against Greece by the EU). It should be noted that this situation obligatorily led to the data of the Agricultural – Livestock Census data being processed at the same as the conduct and the processing of the Population – Housing Census.

- **Completion of the processing and release of the results of the 2011 Population – Housing Census concerning the Registered Population and the Resident Population of Greece**

The purpose of the Population – Housing Census is to collect, every ten years, statistical data on the demographic, economic and social characteristics of the population, on the composition of households and on their housing conditions. On 31 July 2012 and on 28 December 2012 ELSTAT published the results of the 2011 Population – Housing Census for the Registered Population (i.e., the number of citizens registered in each Municipality of Greece, by Municipal Unit) and the Resident Population of Greece, respectively.

The 2011 Population – Housing Census was conducted in full 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 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). 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 optically verified (data verification) the correctness of the data entered for each questionnaire and made 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, enrolment in the municipal registers

in relation with citizenship, plausibility of the year of birth, etc.), so as to eliminate and correct any errors in the data entered.

During 2012, ELSTAT completed the processing and checking of the questionnaires of the Post Enumeration Survey—which had been conducted in June 2011 on a sample of 19,380 households all over the Country—with the aim of assessing the completeness and the quality of the census results both as regards the characteristics of the population and regarding the undercount or overcount of the total resident population. First of all, the post enumeration questionnaires were matched with the corresponding questionnaires of the Population – Housing Census and then followed the calculation of raising factors and the tabulation of data. The results of the Post Enumeration Survey conducted for the 2011 Population – Housing Census showed an undercount of the Resident Population (coverage error) of 2.83% for Greece as a whole. This percentage is compatible with quality standards for Censuses. It should be noted that a Post Enumeration Survey had not been used during the previous census.

As the further processing of the Census data is advancing, ELSTAT will announce in stages—following the announcement of the final results for the de facto Population, which took place on 15 March 2013—all the characteristics of Greece’s population, as they were recorded during the Census.

## **G. HUMAN RESOURCES OF ELSTAT**

### **1. ELSTAT personnel**

In 2012, the number of ELSTAT staff recorded a significant decrease, compared with 2011, due to the retirement of employees, while at the same time there were restrictions and delays for the hiring of new staff by ELSTAT or the deployment of staff to ELSTAT from other government agencies. More specifically, on 31 December 2011, ELSTAT staff amounted to 865 employees: the permanent staff numbered 844 employees (307 men and 537 women) and the staff working under Private Contract of Unlimited Duration numbered 21 employees (5 men and 16 women). The total number of ELSTAT staff, on 31 December 2012, was 835: the permanent staff numbered 814 (296 men and 518 women) and the staff working under Private Contract of Unlimited Duration numbered 21 (5 men and 16 women). In 2012, 33 employees retired and only 3 employees were recruited or redeployed. Thus, in 2012 the total number of ELSTAT staff decreased by 3.5%.

During the last quarter of 2012 progress started being made on a specific commitment of the Greek Government, in the context of the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics it signed in February 2012 (Box 1), concerning the provision of sufficient human resources to ELSTAT, so that it can produce high quality statistics in compliance with all its national and European obligations. More specifically, the process was initiated for the redeployment of 37 appropriately qualified civil servants from other government agencies to ELSTAT, as well as for the recruitment from outside the government sector of 10 highly qualified experts. These procedures are expected to be completed in 2013 and they comprise the first phase of the actions for reinforcing ELSTAT’s human resources. The second phase, during the 2nd semester 2013, encompasses the redeployment of 50 more civil servants from other government agencies to ELSTAT for meeting the needs of the 50 Regional Statistical Offices of ELSTAT, as well as of the Divisions of the Central Office. In addition, a third phase would have to take place in 2014 which would provide another 18 new staff. At this stage, ELSTAT will have been provided with all the human resources that are necessary in order for it to fully meet its obligations, including the materialization of the Hellenic Statistical Program for 2014 – 2016<sup>(2)</sup>, and it will only have to maintain this level of human resources in order to cover any gaps generated from the retirement of employees<sup>(3)</sup>.

On 31 December 2012, out of the 835 employees of ELSTAT, 589 worked in the Central Office and 246 employees worked in the Regional Offices.

(2) Thus, in 2010 – 2014 ELSTAT will have acquired 125 new employees, while it will have lost 184 employees. In the projections for the 2nd semester 2013 and for 2014, only the employees who are entitled to retire from ELSTAT have been taken into consideration.

(3) The expenditure of human resources have been budgeted in the Medium-Term Fiscal Adjustment Program of Greece approved for 2013 – 2016.

The following table depicts the allocation of ELSTAT staff, by sex and education level, in 2011 and 2012 (31 December), respectively:

Education level	Men			Women			Total		
	2011	2012	Change (%)	2011	2012	Change (%)	2011	2012	Change (%)
University	178	176	-1.1	229	225	-1.7	407	401	-1.5
Technical	25	25	0.0	56	56	0.0	81	81	0.0
Secondary	104	95	-8.7	264	249	-5.7	368	344	-6.5
Obligatory	5	5	0,0	4	4	0,0	9	9	0,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>-3.5</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>-3.4</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>-3.5</b>

#### **H. ELSTAT BUDGET EXECUTION**

ELSTAT's expenses for 2012 are classified in the following categories:

- a) Labour cost (wages and salaries of ELSTAT permanent staff, including basic salary, allowances, social security contributions, additional and incidental benefits for the permanent staff, private insurance of the staff, etc.).
- b) Expenses related to the staff's travel within Greece and abroad: travel and subsistence expenses for the permanent staff of ELSTAT travelling for the purpose of conducting statistical surveys in the field or participating in meetings, seminars, etc. abroad, as well as expenses related to the transfer or detachment of ELSTAT employees to other agencies in Greece or abroad.
- c) Other operating expenses, including expenses related to ELSTAT's buildings (Central and Regional Offices), such as rents, heating, communication, water supply, security, cleaning and maintenance costs, as well as expenses related to advertising and public relations, temporary staff remuneration, etc.
- d) Expenses for the provision of goods, capital formation and subscriptions, including expenses for the provision of consumables (paper, stationery, medical and pharmaceutical supplies materials for the maintenance and repair of premises and equipment), fuel, furniture, PCs, printers, photocopiers and other office equipment.
- e) Expenses for the conduct of the Buildings, Population – Housing, and Agriculture – Livestock Censuses.
- f) Projects financed by Eurostat, including expenses in the context of the conduct of statistical works financed by Eurostat.

The allocation of ELSTAT's expenses in 2012, by type of expenditure, as well as the comparison of these expenses with the corresponding expenses in 2011 are presented in the following table (final data):

<b>TABLE 2: ELSTAT EXPENSES, BY TYPE OF EXPENDITURE: 2011 AND 2012</b>		
Type of expenditure	Amount paid (in euro)	
	2011	2012
Labour cost	34,843,670.49	28,189,199.08
Expenses related to staff traveling within Greece and abroad	108,623.84	132,363.49
Other operating expenses	5,025,374.53	4,580,070.14
Expenses for the provision of goods and capital formation, subscriptions	242,557.02	309,694.04
Expenses for the conduct of the Buildings, Population – Housing and Agricultural – Livestock Censuses	49,253,441.39	1,871,305.24
Projects financed by Eurostat	256,146.35	228,691.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>89,729,813.62</b>	<b>35,311,323.49</b>

The decrease observed in the expenses paid in 2012, in comparison with 2011, as regards the item "Labour cost", is due to the cuts in the salaries of the employees and to the decrease of ELSTAT personnel. The very significant decrease in the paid expenditure, in 2012, as regards the item "Expenses for the conduct of the Buildings, Population – Housing and Agricultural – Livestock Censuses" is explained by the fact that 2011 was the year of the actual conduct of the Population – Housing Census.

