

ber States that significant progress was achieved on these dossiers under the Greek Presidency:

- As regards Regulation (EU) No 223/2009 on European Statistics -after the recast by the Greek Presidency of the long-contested controversial text aiming at finding common ground and achieving a robust Statistical Law for the Union- a text, as a basis for negotiation and agreement with the European Parliament, was made available to the Italian Presidency.
- As regards the Regulation on the Provision and Quality of Statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure (MIP), significant progress was achieved after the recast by the Greek Presidency of this also controversial text, from a position a few months before, when there had not even been the willingness among Member States to begin discussing this dossier. In addition, one of the achievements was that the outstanding issues were cast by the Greek Presidency in a clear manner so that, with some further reflection and dialogue, a solution on the right basis could be found soon.

IV. End of the Greek Presidency

On 24 June 2014, the Presidency Team of ELSTAT handed over the Presidency baton to its colleagues of the Italian Statistical Office (ISTAT) during a hand-over ceremony that took place in Zappeion Megaron, in Athens, where the Greek Presidency presented its work and the state of progress of the dossiers, and shared its experience and lessons learnt from this important project. The ceremony was attended by delegations from the Statistical Offices of the countries of the outgoing Trio (Ireland, Lithuania, Greece) and the upcoming Trio (Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg).

V. The Presidency Team

The Presidency Team of ELSTAT consisted of the following members:

- Andreas V. Georgiou, President of ELSTAT, Chair of the Council Working Party on Statistics
- Ioannis Moschakis, Head of Organization, Methodology and International Relations Division, Co-chair
- Anna Ampatzoglou, Head of Population and Labour Market Statistics Division
- Fotini Vasileiou, Head of the International Relations Section of the Organization, Methodology and International Relations Division
- Sofia Balla, Representative of ELSTAT to the Permanent Representation of Greece to EU
- Georgia Panagopoulou, Organization, Methodology and International Relations Division
- Christina Karamichalaku, National Accounts Division
- Maria Dimitriadou, National Accounts Division

The Presidency Team was fully supported in its work by the units of ELSTAT.

The website of the Greek Presidency on statistical issues, which provides detailed information on the activities of the Presidency, the progress of legislative dossiers, as well as links to the relevant documents and to other websites, is at:

<http://eu2014presidency.statistics.gr>



Hellenic Presidency of the Council
of the European Union

The Hellenic Statistical Authority in the Greek Presidency

January – June 2014

Greece assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) during the first semester of 2014. In this context, the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) took the chair of the Council Working Party on Statistics (CWPS).

The Council Working Party on Statistics, chaired by the EU Member State holding the Presidency, drafts proposals for legislative acts in order to reach a common position at the Council concerning the legislative act proposed by the European Commission. On the basis of the text of the proposed legislative act agreed at the Working Party, the Presidency can have informal trilogues with the European Parliament (EP) and the European Commission, aiming at achieving an agreement and adoption of the proposed legislative act by the above two co-legislators (European Parliament and Council).

I. Program and priorities of the Greek Presidency in the field of statistics

The overall priorities of the Greek Presidency were set out in the Program of the Presidency Trio of Ireland-Lithuania-Greece. In this context, the Greek Presidency committed to continue the work under way for achieving the goal of providing relevant and high-quality official European Statistics to underpin the development, implementation and monitoring of European Union policies. It also committed to pay particular attention to enhancing confidence in official statistics, based on Community law on statistics, commitment of national governments and compliance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

Furthermore, as part of the effort to achieve the fundamental goals of ensuring and enhancing quality and confidence in European statistics, the Greek Presidency committed to promote the dialogue for a more integrated and independent European Statistical System (ESS), leading to more harmonised, high-quality and reliable European statistics, while at the same time improving the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the production of European statistics.

In order to respond to the most urgent statistical needs of the European Union, the Greek Presidency gave high priority to advancing the Proposal on amending Regulation (EU) No 223/2009 on European Statistics -the Statistical Law of the European Union- on the basis of the efforts of the previous four Presidencies. The advancement of the Proposal for a Regulation on the Provision and Quality of Statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure (MIP) of the EU was also among the priorities of the Greek Presidency. Furthermore, other open legislative dossiers also had to be advanced, which on account of various reasons were priorities, namely the amendment of Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98 on the organisation of a Labour Force Sample Survey in the Community, the amendment of Regula-

tion (EC) No 638/2004 on Community statistics relating to trading of goods between Member States, and the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1166/2008 on Farm Structure Surveys as regards the financial framework for the period 2014 – 2018. Finally, there was a commitment to advance the other legislative Proposals, which were at various stages of the legislative process and pertained to:

- Statistics relating to external trade with non-Member Countries (Extrastat)
- Rail transport statistics, as regards the collection of data on goods, passengers and accidents
- Statistics of goods transport by inland waterways

The conduct of the elections for the new members of the European Parliament, during the first semester of 2014 (May 2014), was an additional factor setting out the framework of the work of the Greek Presidency. More specifically, the time available to negotiate with the European Parliament, which is co-legislator in the aforementioned Proposals, was limited and predefined, inasmuch as all the negotiations had to be completed by the end of March 2014.

II. Meetings in the framework of the Council Working Party on Statistics

The Greek Presidency, taking into account the limitations set by the end of activities of the European Parliament due to the elections, presented a frontloaded and very intensive work program. Seven full-day meetings were held in Brussels, as initially planned, four of which were held in the first quarter. In addition, four trilogues with the European Parliament (EP) and seven discussions during the meetings of the Committee of Permanent (and Deputy) Representatives (COREPER I & II) were held. Despite the limited available time for negotiation with the EP, the Greek Presidency managed to accomplish significant work, which compares very favourably with that of previous Presidencies of other Member States.

III. Achievements

During the Greek Presidency four legislative Proposals were concluded and the relevant legislative acts (Regulations) were published in the Official Journal of the European Union. This was on account of the efforts made by the Greek Presidency so that agreement can be reached with the European Parliament and the willingness of all involved parties to advance these legislative Proposals. The aforementioned Regulations, which pertain to amendments of existing Regulations, are the following:

- Regulation (EU) No 538/2014 on European Environmental Economic Accounts
- Regulation (EU) No 545/2014 on the organisation of a Labour Force Sample Survey
- Regulation (EU) No 659/2014 on statistics relating to trading of goods between Member States (Intrastat)
- Regulation (EU) No 378/2014 on Farm Structure Survey (FSS) and the survey on agricultural production methods

The processing of the following dossiers was initiated under the Greek Presidency and progress was achieved in reaching agreement at the level of the Council Working Party:

- Statistics relating to external trade with non-Member Countries (Extrastat)
- Rail transport statistics, as regards the collection of data on goods, passengers and accidents
- Statistics of goods transport by inland waterways

In addition, the important dossiers of the Regulation on European Statistics (No 223/2009) and the Regulation on the Provision and Quality of Statistics for the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure (MIP) became the focus of significant efforts on the part of the Greek Presidency. Circumstances were not particularly favourable due to the end of the Parliamentary term. However, it is commonly accepted among Mem-