

Status and perspectives of European Microdata access and Legal Framework

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Decentralised access to European microdata – Kloster Johannisberg

Introduction

- Regulation on European statistics (R 223/2009)
 - Access to confidential data by researchers for scientific purposes should be improved without compromising the high level of protection that confidential statistical data require
 - Need for harmonised principles and guidelines for SDC
 - A new governance for Statistical Confidentiality

Introduction

- The Commission communication (COM 2009/404) on the production method of EU-statistics : a vision for the next decade
 - the integration of process at EU level (horizontal – across domains and vertical – between MS and Eurostat).
 - drawing on new information technology, cooperative development and the new governance structure for the ESS for achieving efficiency gains

Perspectives of European microdata access and Legal framework Eurostat priorities

1. Fully implement a risk monitoring approach for the release of confidential data
2. Make micro data release for scientific purpose part of the core business of Official Statistics
3. Improve access (streamlined procedure, reduced costs)
4. Open new modes for access to EU confidential data for scientific purpose
5. Improve harmonisation of methodologies (methods and tools)
6. Interoperability of microdata release processes among MS and Eurostat
7. Sharing tasks and delegations among partners

Current situation of European microdata access and Legal framework

■ Legal aspect

■ Two modes of release

■ Licensed Scientific Use Files on CD ROM

■ Luxembourg onsite access

■ Widening access hampered by Comitology

■ Still a cumbersome process

■ Methodology

■ Output harmonisation through input harmonisation

- Same methodology for all MS datasets
- Little flexibility
- Least common denominator effect
- Low information content (almost public use files)

Current situation of European microdata access and Legal framework

■ Governance structure

- ESSC responsible for Statistical Confidentiality issues
- Eurostat has the right of initiative (harmonisation, implementing regulation...)
- WGSC preparing strategic decisions for ESSC, monitoring EU microdata release (microdata anonymisation, ...)
- Need for a methodological governance (methods and tools) and SDC expertise for assessing the risks

Microdata access – work programme

3 strands for work

1. Methodology
2. Infrastructure
3. Legal framework

Microdata access – work programme

1) Methodology

- New framework for harmonisation of SDC in the ESS
 - Bounded flexibility proposed by ISTAT
 - New generation of tools drawing on Argus
- Launching of cooperative projects (ESSnets)
 - To define a common methodological and IT infrastructure for SDC in the ESS
 - To test the concepts
 - To issue guidelines and recommendations
 - To develop tools cooperatively (open source)
 - To assess risks and address recommendations on specific issues
- Start in 2010 with preparatory projects

Microdata access – work programme

2) Infrastructure

- Feasibility study on decentralised access to microdata (ESSnet completed in January 2009)
- Development of a remote access infrastructure in Eurostat (VIP project)
 - To enable MS to connect to ESTAT confidential environment
 - Develop a service for access to microdata for research purposes in synergy with MS
- Piloting of recommendations of feasibility starting in 2010 : new ESSnet for testing and setting up organisational mode
- Data without Boundary Infrastructure Research Project (DA and NSIs) possibly starting in 2011.

Microdata access – work programme

3) Legal framework

- Revision of Regulation 831/2002 ruling access to EU confidential data for scientific purposes
 - TF of the Working Group on Statistical Confidentiality met 2 times
 - Dec 2009: scoping the new regulation
 - March 2009: brainstorming on the key principles for the new regulation – informal consultation
 - June 2010: discussion on Eurostat proposal – common platform
 - Consultation of the WGSC: Summer
 - Strategic discussion at ESS level : Autumn
 - First draft of the regulation by Eurostat : October 2010
 - New regulation published : second half of 2011

Microdata access – work programme

3) Legal framework

- New legal framework proposed by Eurostat
 - Flexible to cope with future development (data sets, modes, procedures)
 - Implementing risk monitoring approach (classes of access facilities and classes of confidential data)
 - Opening new mode of access (remote access, ...)
 - Streamlined access for researchers
 - focus on researcher and research project
 - Low impact data more easily accessible
 - More transparent implementation and possibilities to delegate

Conclusions

- Great perspective/expectation for the SDC and microdata release
- In line with a long term vision aiming at integration of processes
- Implementation starting in 2010 – some tangible outputs expected by 2013