

Recent and future developments related to ‘GDP and beyond’

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Almost at the same time of the release of the Sitglitz-Sen-Fitoussi (SSF) report, the European Commission published - in August 2009 - its Communication on ‘GDP and beyond: measuring progress in a changing world’. Both documents have triggered the launch of a series of actions undertaken by the European Statistical System (ESS) on complementing the existing instruments measuring growth, such as ‘GDP’ by measures on environmental sustainability and social inclusion. Through a co-operative project (Sponsorship Group), co-chaired by Eurostat and INSEE (France), the recommendations from both the SSF report and the ‘GDP and beyond’ roadmap have been translated into a plan with about 50 actions to be carried out by 2020.

In November 2011, the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) adopted this action plan, which also builds on Eurostat’s existing work on Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI). For most of these 50 actions, work has either been accomplished or is in good progress. Concrete results are the publication of real household disposable income data, the establishment of a Regulation on environmental economic accounts and the development of a first set of quality of life indicators (with objective and subjective measures). Further challenges lie ahead, such as reconciling macro and micro data sources on household economic resources such as to complement national accounts averages with distributional indicators. The work will be further developed with a view to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be established at global level and in line with the post-2015 development agenda.

Key words: European Statistical System, environmental sustainability, quality of life