

The Framework Cooperation Agreement between Oesterreichische Nationalbank and Statistics Austria: Providing official statistics in a more efficient way

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At the beginning of 2000, the former Austrian Central Statistical Office was separated from Government Services by a new Federal Statistics Act. It is since then an independent and non-profit-making federal institution under public law and is called Statistics Austria (STAT). It is responsible for performing scientific services in the area of federal statistics. In the performance of its duties, Statistics Austria has to observe a number of principles in the interest of its clients, other users and respondents. These principles are laid down particularly in the United Nations (UN) Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice. UN-principle 8 reads: “Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.” With Austria’s accession to the European Union in 1995 new challenges arose for the production of official statistics and for providing them better, cheaper and faster. To meet these new challenges STAT has endeavored to intensify already existing informal cooperation on international and national level and to formalize cooperation with the most important partners in providing official statistics. The Framework Cooperation Agreement (FCA) with the Oesterreichische Nationalbank (OeNB) is the outstanding example for assuring coordinated work. It has been signed in 2002 and amended – so far – twice, in 2007 and 2012. It covers two areas of cooperation: Statistical domains for which an intensive cooperation seems useful and statistics compiled by one institution for which the cooperation partner has a vital interest as a user. Examples for these Statistics are National Accounts or Government Finance Statistics on the one side and Price Statistics or Monetary and Banking Statistics on the other. To translate the principle cooperation into practice individual working agreements are signed, additionally. Regular meetings of a high level steering committee are held to discuss strategic issues and overcome eventual weaknesses in the day by day cooperation.

Key Words: Fundamental principles, intensive cooperation, vital interest