

Identical variables in different business and trade-related statistics - a challenge for European statistics

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The program for Modernization of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS) encourages the development of an integrated system of business and trade-related statistics in which all statistics are coordinated and their results can be combined easily to get new results without additional burden for respondents. Within this system of economic statistics, different methods of data collection should be used and combined with each other. In this context the changeover from a stove-pipe approach to a data warehouse approach is an urgent need and consistency becomes imperative. To this end, a core project of MEETS “on consistency of concepts and applied methods of business and trade-related statistics” (ESSnet Consistency) was launched. The third work package (WP3) of this project aims to identify inconsistencies regarding characteristics and their definitions within the area of business and trade-related statistics within the European Union and countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). To achieve this goal, all available sources of information have to be evaluated and their relevance has to be assessed. Therefore, a database has been developed, which allows the stocktaking and analysis of all relevant variables and definitions of the European legal acts under discussion. This database is based on information sheets for each Member State (MS) and each variable considered in the context of this WP3. Beside of input and output definitions, data sources and quality reports all information related to vertical and horizontal consistency can be stored and analysed. This data collection will enable us to understand the reasons for the identified inconsistencies, to assess their importance and to elaborate proposals by which these inconsistencies could be avoided or at least reduced. The results of this project are also important for the further development of a new Framework Regulation for Integrated Business Statistics (FRIBS) for the European Statistical System. Additionally they are preconditions for the implementation of the recommendations of other related European projects like “on micro data linking and data warehousing in statistical production” (ESSnet Data Warehouse).

Key Words: Modernization of business statistics, quality improvement, consistency