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Citizen's summary for Commitment on Confidence in Statistics

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: SURS) together with the National Institute of Public Health is part of the European Statistical System (hereinafter: [the ESS](#)), which develops and disseminates European statistics in line with Regulation (EC) No. 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 [on European Statistics](#) and repealing Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 1101/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transmission of data subject to statistical confidentiality to the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 on Community Statistics, and Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom establishing a Committee on the Statistical Programmes of the European Communities (OJ L No. 87 of 31 March 2009, p. 164), amended for the last time with Regulation (EU) 2015/759 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics (OJ L 123 of 19 May 2015, p. 90) (hereinafter: Regulation 223/2009/EC). The ESS is the main provider of statistical services and the most important provider of information for the European Union and its Member States. Based on scientific principles and methods, the ESS provides and constantly improves European statistics, which is the basis for democratic processes and progress in the society. Reliable statistical data are namely one of the key elements enabling decision-makers in the society, government, public administration, the private sector, researchers, journalists and the people in general to make informed decisions. The credibility of statistical data is also one of the necessary conditions for trust in measures adopted and implemented by the governments of individual countries.

The ESS is constantly striving for high-quality and reliable European statistics, i.e. for its development, production and dissemination in line with the principles laid down in Article 338 of [the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#), Article 7 of Regulation 223/2009/EC and further elaborated in the European Statistics Code of Practice (hereinafter: the Code). Nevertheless, in statistical quality management framework some deficiencies were identified in some Member States (e.g. the Greek case – data on the general government deficit), so in its communication of 15 April 2011 entitled "[Towards robust quality management for European Statistics](#)" the Commission proposed measures to abolish these deficiencies and strengthen the governance of the ESS, particularly the targeted amendment of Regulation 223/2009/EC. Changes were adopted with the Regulation (EU) 2015/759 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics (hereinafter: [Regulation 2015/759/EU](#)) and included in particular: strengthening professional independence of national statistical authorities and their heads, strengthening the leading role of national statistical institutes in coordinating statistical activities at the national level, providing free access to administrative records and their integration with statistics, and involving national governments in the responsibility of applying the European Statistics Code of Practice.

[The Code](#) is based on fifteen principles combined into three areas: institutional environment, statistical processes, and statistical output. The condition for ensuring and maintaining confidence in statistics is strict adherence to and implementation of the principles of the Code, particularly the institutional environment. Institutional factors namely have the largest impact on the efficiency and credibility of

statistical authorities. The essential factors are: professional independence of national statistical institutes and their heads, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity.

Article 1 of Regulation 2015/759/EU obliges all Member States to take all necessary measures to maintain confidence in European statistics, stipulating that to this effect “Commitments on Confidence in Statistics” shall further aim to ensure public trust in European statistics and progress in the implementation of the statistical principles contained in the Code of Practice. Based on annual reports submitted by Member States, the Commission regularly monitors the commitments by Member States, which shall be updated as necessary.

The decision for the proposed form and content of the document “Commitment on Confidence in Statistics” was adopted on the basis of the fact that in Slovenia the appropriate institutional environment for implementing official statistics is provided by implementing the principles of professional independence, adequacy of resources, mandate for data collection, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity as set out in [the National Statistics Act](#) (hereinafter: the Act). The Act provides a solid legal basis for professional independence of SURS and its head, a clear and broad mandate to collect data from all existing records and the possibility of direct cooperation in the process of preparing the budget and in negotiations to obtain proper financial and human resources. In addition, the Act ensures complete implementation of statistical confidentiality. Professional independence is additionally set out in the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Act stipulating that SURS’s Director-General is directly accountable to the Government and the Prime Minister, and the Civil Servants Act stipulating in detail the procedure of selecting the appropriate candidate for SURS’s Director-General, since the selection must be based on professional criteria. [Within the ESS](#), a peer review on the [compliance of the Slovene statistical system](#) with the European Statistics Code of Practice was implemented in 2014. [The final peer review report](#) states that the structure of the national statistical system is in line with the needs, that the Act regulating national statistics lays a strong legal foundation for the operation, that there are no doubts about professional independence, and that the authorisation for data collection is well defined and enables wide use of administrative sources. The final report contains guidelines for improving financial and human resources.

To preserve and improve the institutional system of Slovenian national statistics, and considering the above facts, at its 116th session on 5 January 2017 under item 1.52 of the agenda the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted »[Commitment on Confidence in Statistics](#)«, the aim of which is to provide high-quality national and European statistics and thus public confidence in the reliability of statistical data.