



Press Release
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Auditors look into the quality of EU statistics

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) is currently looking into the quality of EU statistics that cover a wide range of aspects of society and economy. Specifically, the audit will examine the role of the European Commission in providing high-quality statistics to the EU and its Member States.

Official statistics play a key and growing role for economic and social development. They guide public policies, they support business decisions, and they allow citizens to compare and evaluate progress made. So it is crucial to make sure that EU statistics fulfil the requirement of quality and even excellence. This is exactly what the ECA is seeking to evaluate in its recently launched audit.

This audit is being started amid major changing circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic has required statistical bodies to make rapid changes to their procedures, and has further highlighted the need for timely, comparable and reliable European statistics.

“Facts and figures: the need for quantitative evidence has never been so obvious. Speed, quality, content and usefulness of data are essential in a digital society”, said Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, the member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. *“There is no question that statistics count. But how can we count more on European statistics? This is the issue our audit will seek to address.”*

Member States, through their national statistical institutes, collect the data on which European statistics are based. But the European Commission, through Eurostat, is responsible for compiling and producing EU-level aggregate statistics. Common standards are therefore in place to ensure that concepts, definitions and methods are harmonised and comparable. The European Statistical System (ESS) embodies this partnership. The ESS's work is also coordinated with other Commission directorates-general and agencies, with the European Central Bank and with international organisations such as the United Nations, the OECD or the IMF, to name but a few.

The audit will cover the period from 2013 until 2021. Among other things, the auditors will review the Commission's statistics strategy and programme, its quality assessments of European statistics and its adherence to the code of practice. The auditors have selected three major thematic statistical areas: 'Labour market', 'European businesses', and 'Health'.

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' audit preview. The full preview is available at eca.europa.eu in English.

ECA Press

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Background information

The audit preview, published today, provides information about an ongoing audit task on the European Commission's role in providing high-quality statistics. The audit is scheduled for completion in mid-2022. Audit previews are based on preparatory work undertaken before the start of an audit and should not be regarded as audit observations, conclusions or recommendations. The full audit preview is available in English on the ECA's website (eca.europa.eu).

Meanwhile, the ECA is also starting an audit on the use of big data and data analytics for the common agricultural policy.

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