



Press release

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Eurostat experts' report: Switzerland has a high-quality statistics system

The European statistics authority Eurostat has published a peer review report on its country examination of Switzerland in the area of public statistics. The experts conclude that the European Code of Practice for Official Statistics is well-implemented in Switzerland and that the Swiss statistics system achieves a high level of quality overall. The report also contains 15 recommendations.

As a member of the European statistical system (ESS), Switzerland took part in the third European peer review from 20 - 24 March 2023. The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and other actors in federal statistics, who produce statistics, as well as external stakeholders from the media, the economy, government administration and politics were consulted for the review. A few months after completion of this country review, the four experts from other European statistical offices are now presenting their report. It gives a very positive assessment of the Swiss statistics system.

Objectivity and impartiality as strong points

In particular, the report emphasises the solid basis for the professional independence of statistics producers based on legal foundations in Switzerland. The objectivity, impartiality and reliability of the information produced are also highly rated in this country and are much appreciated by the clients of official statistics.

Also mentioned are the new areas of activity assigned to the FSO in recent years in addition to statistics: data management, data science and artificial intelligence – as well as the challenges they bring with them. The fact that the FSO has been entrusted with these new activities bears witness to the Office's credibility and the skill and expertise of its employees.

Innovative practices at the FSO

The experts go on to conclude in their report that the FSO is perceived as a trustworthy producer of public statistics, as are the other three statistical units of national authorities that were selected for the peer review: the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, the Federal Finance Administration FFA and the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security FOCBS. Mention is also made of the FSO's coordinating role at various regional levels within the Swiss statistical system.

Furthermore, the peer review team identified several innovative practices at the FSO. The first is the establishment of a platform to support the exchange and reuse of public sector data, known as the interoperability platform (I14Y). Second is the development of data science consultancy services and support. Thirdly, the Data Science Competence Center

(DSCC) and fourthly, the creation of a comprehensive framework for the development and dissemination of experimental statistics and their transfer into official statistics.

The experts highlighted the Charter of Swiss Official statistics as another strong point. This supplements legal requirements with rules of conduct and indicators and monitors their implementation by means of an independent ethics council.

Various challenges remain

However, the team of experts also identified various challenges in terms of strengthening the Swiss statistics system and its tasks. It has formulated several recommendations in this regard. Particular emphasis is placed on the need to strengthen the coordinating role played by the FSO in the Swiss statistics system, to better support the different stakeholders in their activities, especially regarding innovations in statistical methodology, data science and artificial intelligence, as well as the standardisation and reuse of statistical services.

The FSO's financing model has proven itself over time to ensure adequate funding for the operation of statistical production processes and to provide funds for investment in innovation. Nevertheless, the experts argue that the new areas of activity mentioned above will challenge the sustainability of this financial framework, which should therefore be reviewed, so that the implementation of the new areas of activity can be ensured in the longer term.

Praise for FSO personnel

Lastly, the team of experts praised the employees of the FSO. The Office's staff are competent and dynamic. In recent years, they have contributed a great deal to the high-quality statistical products and the high level of trust that users place in the statistics.

Thanks to its policy on personnel, the FSO is able to attract talented individuals with the right skills to fulfil its statistical tasks and to supervise investments in innovative projects. This is supported by close cooperation with the scientific community on specific projects. To modernise statistical production and to achieve the FSO's objectives, it is important to continuously develop skills in the area of methodology. This will enable the FSO to successfully fulfil its new activities in data management and data science. To do so, it is necessary to deploy enough qualified personnel with the right skills.

The extra-parliamentary Federal Statistics Committee will take the experts' recommendations into account in its further consultation with the Federal Council and statistics producers and intends to support the FSO and other stakeholders in meeting the challenges mentioned.

Purpose of peer reviews

Great importance has always been attached to quality in official statistics. Users must be able to trust the findings of official statistics.

In a world experiencing a growing trend for instant information and new challenges arising from exceptional circumstances or the constant need for faster, but quality-assured data, it is generally recognised that the quality of official statistics represents a comparative advantage. The European Statistics Code of Practice (ES CoP) is the cornerstone of the joint quality framework of the European Statistical System (ESS) and the ESS statistical authorities have committed themselves to complying with it.

In this context, it is crucial that the ESS be equipped with a review mechanism, the peer reviews, which credibly underpins this voluntary commitment to compliance with the ES CoP. The aim of this review mechanism is to strengthen the integrity, professional independence and accountability of the ESS statistical authorities. The first round of peer reviews was conducted in 2006-2008, followed by a second round in 2013-2015. A third round took place from 2021-2023.

Further information: [Peer Review 2021-2023 | Federal Statistical Office \(admin.ch\)](#)

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