



Press release

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Revised charter strengthens Swiss official statistics

The Conference of Swiss Regional Statistical Offices (CORSTAT) and the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) have published a revised Charter of Swiss Official Statistics – a modern code of practice with an emphasis on quality and ethics.

The charter serves as the cornerstone for official statistics in Switzerland, providing a code of practice for all federal, cantonal, and communal statistical offices. By establishing common quality standards, the charter supports the credibility of Swiss official statistics. This is the fourth iteration of the charter, which was first adopted in 2002. It complements the existing legal framework and offers guidance adapted to the changing environment.

A foundation for informed decision-making

The aim of the charter is to boost confidence in official statistics and address the increasing demands on official statistics in a data-driven world. Data is readily available in ever increasing quantities, but is not always easy to verify. Accurate official statistics produced in accordance with standards of professional independence are the foundation for informed decision-making, scientific research and public debate at local, regional, national and European levels.

A cornerstone of the democratic system

Official statistics are a crucial foundation for informed public debate in a democratic society. Producers of Swiss official statistics work within a strict legal framework, in accordance with professional ethics and quality requirements that meet the highest international standards. The charter also draws on the European Statistics Code of Practice.

New challenges

The revised charter is also a response to new developments. In recent years, statistics offices have been given additional tasks in the areas of data management, data science and open government data, which also need to be taken into account. One such task is the multiple use of data (once-only principle) to reduce administrative burden on companies and citizens.

Principles and indicators

The charter comprises 16 principles, each with a set of indicators. These include professional independence, which means that statistical offices must be independent of both political authorities and private sector operators. Further principles include compliance with data protection regulations, the anonymity of data providers and impartiality. Ensuring that all users have access to the data at the same time is one aspect of impartiality, and is why all publications and press releases are subject to a strict embargo.

A code of conduct for the whole of Switzerland

The new charter is designed to be flexible in order to take into account the diversity and different organisational structures of statistical services at all levels of government. It is intended to serve as a reference for all producers of official statistics and thus make a lasting contribution to quality assurance at local, cantonal and federal level. The revised charter will also support the existing well-established exchange between statistical services on matters of professional ethics. These efforts are supported by an independent body, the Swiss Ethics Council for Official Statistics, which acts in an advisory capacity, disseminates the charter and monitors compliance.

Through the revised charter, the Swiss statistical services send a clear signal in favour of transparency, quality and innovation and against disinformation and fake news in an increasingly data-driven world.

Information

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Further information and publications: www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home.gnpdetail.2024-0347.html

Swiss Ethics Council for Official Statistics: www.conseilethique-stat.ch

Statistics counts for you: www.statistics-counts.ch

NewsMail subscription in German, French and Italian: www.news-stat.admin.ch

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