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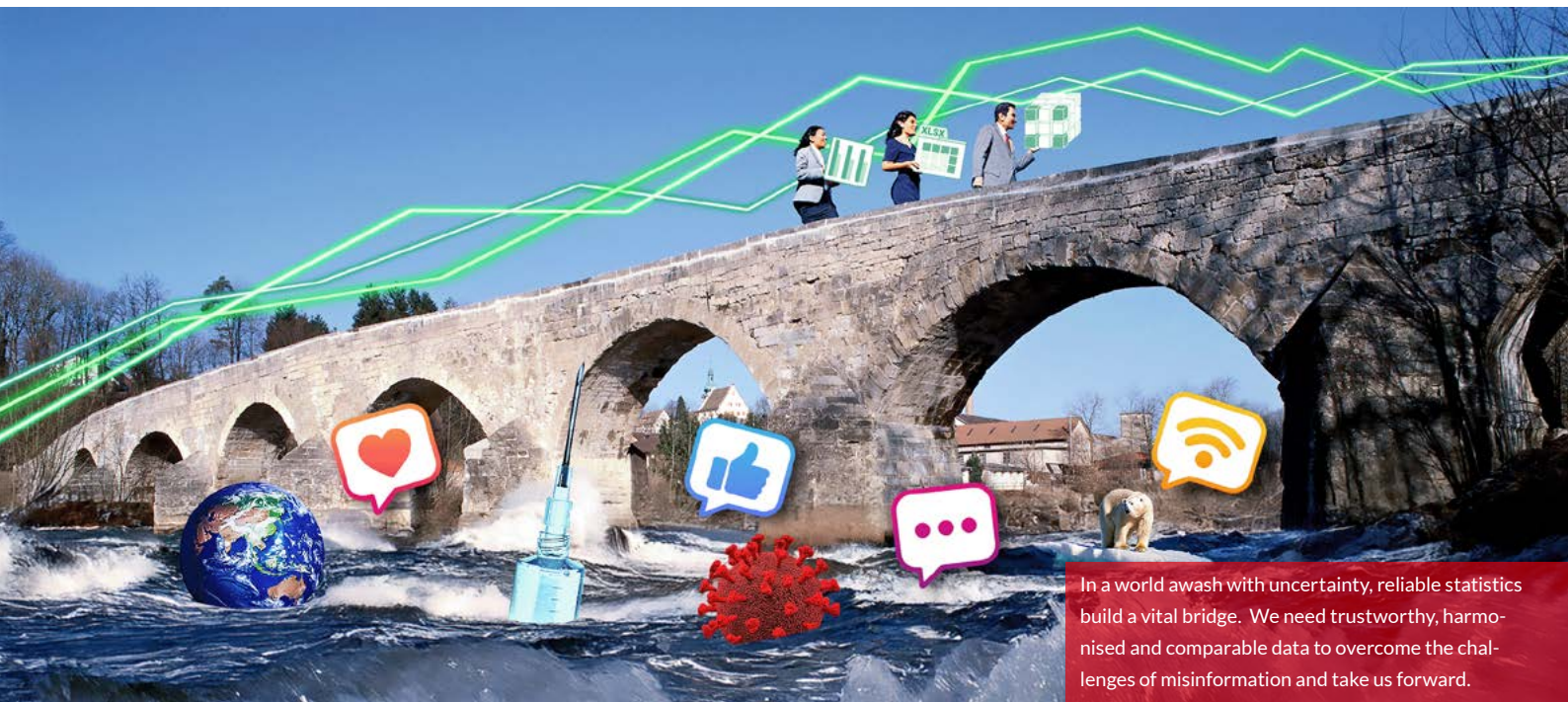
Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Federal Statistical Office FSO

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BEYOND THE HORIZON

INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER FROM THE SWISS FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE



In a world awash with uncertainty, reliable statistics build a vital bridge. We need trustworthy, harmonised and comparable data to overcome the challenges of misinformation and take us forward.

EDITORIAL

RELIABLE DATA IN A CHAOTIC LANDSCAPE

Dear readers

The world in 2025 is shaped by uncertainties – geopolitical, environmental and digital. And in the centre of it all: data. Data can help us navigate these uncertainties by informing decisions and revealing structures and changes in the real world. But what if this function of data is under pressure? When statistical offices in many countries are underfunded, how can they stand out in the crowded information landscape and provide reliable figures?

It was clear to all at the 56th session of the UN Statistical Commission in New York in March that there is a greater need than ever for reliable, comparable and standardised data. However, collecting and maintaining



Georges-Simon Ulrich,
Director General, FSO

Content

- 1** Editorial:
Reliable data in a chaotic landscape
- 2** Looking back at the 56th Session of the UN Statistical Commission: a step towards more reliable, comparable and standardised global data
- 4** Panel discussion on the value of trusted data at the World Economic Forum (DAVOS 2025)

Opinion
Consuming ourselves to death. Data for all and everyone – is this the solution to combat misinformation?
- 6** Swiss Community Day on Data: Data, public goods, and democracy
- 7** How to Rebuild Trust in Data in Times of Uncertainty? Highlights from the Geneva Data Community Spring Gathering Geneva, 3rd April 2025
- 8** Switzerland sees significant progress in open government data
- 9** Empowering Public Sector Data Science: Two new ESTP Courses on Differential Privacy for Official Statistics and Algorithmic Fairness
- 10** Outlook

this data costs money. The representatives of the Member States were unanimous in stating that without targeted investment in national data and statistical systems, the vision of a robust global data landscape will remain unfulfilled. While this vision is largely undisputed in theory, it often fails in practice due to a lack of resources. Many countries' statistical offices face chronic underfunding, despite their work being central to fact-based policy, international cooperation and combating disinformation.

I once again had the honour to represent Switzerland at this session – and was confirmed for a second year in office as Chair of the UN Statistical Commission. This role fills me with gratitude and motivates me to work hard to strengthen official statistics at international level. We live in a world in which many people are competing for attention, even if that means sharing unreliable information. Making trustworthy data visible is

therefore more important than ever. At a recent event organised by the FSO during the World Economic Forum, Danish philosopher Vincent F. Hendricks captured this idea succinctly and reminded us that today's battle for attention was already foreseeable in the early 70s. He shares his insights on the topic in this newsletter.

For official statistics to serve as a neutral authority in the digital landscape requires adequate resources. This will not happen on its own. As the OECD's chief statistician Steve MacFeely put it at the recent Swiss CommUNITY Day, official statistics are not a nice-to-have; they are a public good. As such, they play a critical role in safeguarding the deliberative public space. They ensure that political debate is not dominated by "bespoke facts", but is instead built on a shared foundation. MacFeely also warns of a dangerous trend: data-driven processes are becoming increasingly important, and are often

algorithmic, non-transparent and divorced from democratic accountability. However, data must not replace politics. Its role is to support decisions, not dictate them. You can find excerpts from MacFeely's speech in this issue.

From the global perspective of the UN to the philosophical and political questions of the digital present, this newsletter invites you to consider the importance of data and statistics in a democratic society, and our collective responsibility for trusted data.

I hope this issue holds your attention amidst the flood of information and offers some fresh perspectives. I wish you an inspiring read.

Georges-Simon Ulrich,
Director General,
Federal Statistical Office

LOOKING BACK AT THE 56TH SESSION OF THE UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION: A STEP TOWARDS MORE RELIABLE, COMPARABLE AND STANDARDISED GLOBAL DATA

The 56th session of the UN Statistical Commission was held from 4 to 7 March 2025 at the UN Headquarters in New York. Joining the Chair of the Statistical Commission in the city that never sleeps, the Swiss delegation actively represented the interests of the Swiss data and statistics community during the session.

Before the official discussions began, Friday's seminar addressed the challenges and opportunities involved in strengthening national data and statistical systems. The event focused on strategies to mobilise funding for official statistics and emphasised the importance of data not only for monitoring but also as a critical tool for policymaking and evaluation. It highlighted the need for reliable, standardised and comparable data, especially in view of future challenges such as artificial intelligence-related issues and combating misinformation. Data is more important than ever in view of these future challenges.

At the 56th session, Georges-Simon Ulrich was unanimously re-elected Chair of the Statistical Commission for the second year in a row. After the opening speech, the Statistical Commission got straight to business debating more than 30 different topics. On the agenda: the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, discussions on data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, innovations in data collection methodology, and the growing importance of real-time data in public policy. The participants also discussed cross-cutting topics such as artificial intelligence and the modernisation of statistical systems.

This important meeting paved the way for better cooperation to improve the quality and accessibility of data worldwide, a real must for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite concerns about the political situation and the financial resources available to national statistical offices, a spirit of consensus and collaboration prevailed at the 56th session of the Statistical Commission. Key decisions included the adoption of two draft resolutions: one on the [System of National Accounts 2025](#), and one on the [2030 World Population and Housing Census Programme](#). Changes to the indicator framework for the Sustainable



Development Goals (SDGs) were also adopted, including the introduction of a new indicator proposed by Switzerland in collaboration with the FAO and UNICEF to measure the prevalence of minimum dietary diversity. This update will ensure that the indicators continue to meet the latest challenges in the lead up to 2030. On behalf of the Bureau, Switzerland also presented a report on the future of the Statistical Commission that emphasised the importance of addressing emerging issues in the field of data.

In his closing speech, Georges-Simon Ulrich said the work of the UN Statistical Commission showed progress was possible despite the many crises and challenges faced around the world. Reliable data helps us to understand global problems and find solutions. Even if we only achieve some of the SDGs by 2030, it is still worth making a commitment to a better world, because every step in the right direction makes a tangible difference to the lives of millions of people.

Ambre Crettenand,
International affairs, FSO



Mr. **Lee Hyoung II**, Vice-Chair of the UN Statistical Commission and Commissioner of Statistics Korea • Ms. **Apolonija Oblak Flander**, Vice-Chair of the UN Statistical Commission and Director-General of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia • Mr. **Georges-Simon Ulrich**, Chair of the UN Statistical Commission and Director General of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) • Mr. **Li Junhua**, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations • Ms. **Graciela Márquez**, Vice-Chair of the UN Statistical Commission and President of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, INEGI • Mr. **Stefan Schweinfest**, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division • Mr. **Andrew Bob Johnny**, Rapporteur of the UN Statistical Commission and Statistician General and CEO of Stats Sierra Leone

PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE VALUE OF TRUSTED DATA AT THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Professor Vincent Hendricks was one of the high-ranking panellists who took part in a discussion at the World Economic Forum on 21 January 2025 to discuss how trusted data can help counteract misinformation. The event, which was opened by Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider, drew an interested and knowledgeable audience to the House of Switzerland in Davos.

One of the solutions presented was the creation of a Trusted Data Observatory. The observatory would operate a metadata platform that could be used to easily find and compare data from reliable sources. In addition to promoting transparency and fact-based political decision-making, such a platform would also help to combat misinformation.

OPINION

CONSUMING OURSELVES TO DEATH

DAVOS 2025: DATA FOR ALL AND EVERYONE – IS THIS THE SOLUTION TO COMBAT MISINFORMATION?

Vincent F. Hendricks
Professor of Formal Philosophy
Department of Philosophy / Section for Philosophy
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

As humans, we have always cannibalised and capitalised on something. In the information age, cannibalism must be taken quite literally, for we are indeed in the process of eating ourselves.

First, we were hunter-gatherers, then we began cultivating the land. Ownership of land and systematised agriculture gave rise to feudalism, where lords owned land which was leased to their subordinate vassals. Typically, these were peasants who had usage rights over the land while forced into a dependency and loyalty relationship with the landowning lords. Significant wealth accumulated in the hands of these lords from rent and kickbacks through this leasing system. According to Marxist theory, such feudal arrangements characterised society until industrialisation.

With the advent of the steam engine, humanity could now cannibalise and capitalise on nature in unprecedented ways. Producing

materials and processing raw resources from nature led to new products that could be traded bilaterally for profit. Capitalism, where ownership of the means of production took precedence, outcompeted feudalism, as profits became greater and more valuable than the lords' leasing of land plots to vassals.

With industrialisation and capitalism, the Age of Enlightenment brought new philosophical ideas about societal systems, emphasising individual autonomy, agency, and independence in a government “Of the people, By the people, For the people.” Thus, the idea of Western liberal democracy was born, the societal system we have pursued to this day. But it is undergoing a transformation in the

LINKS

Press release on the event in Davos

Article by Pádraig Dalton in the latest issue
of *Beyond the Horizon* (p. 6)

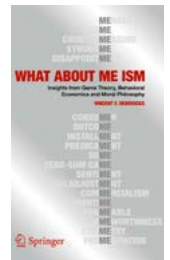
Feasibility study on the Trusted Data Observatory

Trusted Data Observatory

NEW BOOK

WHAT ABOUT ME ISM

Insights from Game Theory,
Behavioral Economics and
Moral Philosophy
by Vincent F. Hendricks
Springer Cham 2025



21st century. **Capitalism is dying, possibly taking democracy with it.**

Now that humanity had mastered nature from feudalism to industrialisation, humanity in the information age has turned its gaze elsewhere for something new to cannibalise and capitalise on. And in the mirror, we caught sight of ourselves – most notably, our attention, which, through ingenious construction, may be exceedingly profitable. More profitable than anything humanity has previously laid hands on.

The first to recognise this was psychologist and Nobel laureate in economics, Herbert Simon (1916–2001), who, as early as 1971,

made a profoundly prophetic statement about an era characterised by an abundance of information:

“In an information-rich world, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence, a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.”

Today, microchips and oil are not the new gold – human attention is. Not as a cognitive resource, but as something that may be turned into a capital asset in a bilateral trade: All information retrieval is in exchange for our attention. Welcome to the attention economy. Notice that in English, it is “to pay attention” – to pay *with* attention – it is an expenditure in hope of a return.

A little over half a century after Simon’s prophetic insight, the public and political systems are beginning to grasp the business model of the attention economy, which underpins tech companies, online services, and, most importantly, Big Tech. Allocating users’ attention through information consumption, generates engagement, which in turn drives traffic to platforms. Online traffic generates data about users, which is then harvested, analysed, and

sold as targeted advertising packages to interested advertisers. This data is also used to predict users’ and, by extension, citizens’ behaviour – long before they themselves know what they want or will do.

The real customers are the advertisers: If you are not paying, you are not the customer – you are the product. While it appears that having a profile on TikTok, Facebook, or Instagram is free, users simply pay in a different currency: Attention and data about their online and offline behaviour. In this way, users are reduced to mere products.

The longer we stay online, the more attention we pay, and the more data is generated, which may then be used for everything from advertising over behavioural prediction to surveillance. The greatest threat to the attention economy’s business model is, therefore, that we withdraw from online platforms, reclaiming our autonomy, independent decision-making, and free will. That is why online services, social platforms, and apps incorporate attention-retaining, behaviour-modifying, and addiction-inducing designs specifically meant to keep us engaged – whether through gaming, entertainment, political activism, commerce, trends, or absurd viral videos. Users are kept online much like gamblers are kept at a casino – by stripping them of autonomy

while stimulating their compulsions. Big Tech and the companies operating under the attention economy are clandestine casinos.

The vast techno-structure – comprising data, computing, communications, and information networks – is omnipresent: in data and cloud solutions, space exploration, food and agriculture, education, research and innovation, communication, transportation, defense and (inter)national security, banking and finance, and healthcare. And it is controlled by just a few hands: Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta, Microsoft, and X (formerly Twitter) dominate most of the information-based infrastructure. They direct traffic, own both public digital spaces and user data, manage the leasing of profiles, server centers, and fiber optics, and profit from virtually all online activities and transactions – they take a cut every time. They possess what is best described as cloud capital – a form of wealth that surpasses capitalism’s outdated driver, profit. It’s about owning the information borne infrastructure and renting out to vassals and end users.

Welcome to the age of techno-feudalism, where Bezos, Musk, Zuckerberg, Thiel, and their fellow tech bros are the new techno-feudal lords. The ones who killed capitalism and are taking liberal democracy down with it. Small and medium-sized businesses serve as techno-vassals, while users are reduced to the techno-proletariat. As users we resemble addicted gamblers in a casino or merely dependent sex workers, with the techno-feudal lords as our global pimps.

The most important book of the 21st century so far is undoubtedly *Techno Feudalism: What Killed Capitalism* by Greece’s former finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis. If you truly consider yourself an independently thinking human being, read the book now before we all consume ourselves to death.



Samira Asma, Assistant Director-General for Data, Analytics and Delivery, World Health Organization; **Georges-Simon Ulrich**, Director General of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office; Professor **Vincent F. Hendricks**; **Elisabeth Baume-Schneider**, Swiss Federal Councilor (from left to right)

SWISS COMMUNITY DAY ON DATA: DATA, PUBLIC GOODS, AND DEMOCRACY

Today, data have assumed a new importance for economies and societies. A ubiquitous, globalised commodity, easily shared, duplicated and traded. They are the secret sauce in the digital economy, communications, government, social media, the cloud, blockchain, the internet of things, crypto-currencies and even politics. Given the importance of data to the economy, surveillance, politics and AI, there will be few more important geopolitical issues in the coming years.

Data, a fuel or a driver of modern economies and societies, need supporting infrastructure. In common with many other inputs, data require production, transportation, security, storage, refinement and dissemination. They require investment and continual maintenance.

Key message #1 – The architectural design of data infrastructure should not be left to chance but should be carefully designed and constructed.

Official statistics are recognised as public goods and prerequisites for democratic dialogue, playing a critical role in safeguarding the deliberative public space – the neutral arbiters in political debate, the antidote to bespoke facts. They are essential to participatory government, to political, economic, and personal liberty, and to freedom of agency.

The idea of official statistics as a public good was formalised when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Principle 1 states:

“Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens’ entitlement to public information.”

Thus, when UNGA endorsed the Fundamental Principles, heads of State explicitly endorsed official statistics as public goods. Data quality is also implicitly incorporated, as the UN is concerned with the benefits to, and the wellbeing of, the public. In other words, dissemination of poor quality or misleading information is a public bad, not a public good.

Key message #2 – All data and statistics are not made equal. Good quality, impartial statistics are essential to qualify as a public good.

The concept of public good also, explicitly, rests on the assumption that government statistics should be open and available to everyone equally.

Key message #3 – Equal access to data is absolutely critical; the public are entitled to access all official statistics.

Recent years have witnessed an important change in rhetoric; from evidence-informed decision making to data-driven decision making. The former acknowledged and made transparent the judgements and trade-offs involved in democratic decision making, the latter implicitly adopts an algorithmic approach, suggesting data alone are sufficient to make decisions.

The data driven approach coincides with the “end of theory”, where traditional hypothesis-based science is being replaced by correlation. This Copernican shift in discovery and decision-making poses profound epistemological questions regarding the meaning of knowledge. This transition is also at the heart of concerns regarding the use of artificial intelligence in decision making, with subsequent loss in transparency and accountability.

The Swiss Community Day on Data is a one-day yearly event in December that brings together all the members of the different committees that the FSO coordinates. The main topic varies from year-to-year (Open Government Data, data science & artificial intelligence, interoperability, data platforms, etc.) within the FSO’s domains of responsibility, which are official statistics, data management and data science.

The goals of the event are:

1. to maintain and expand the flow of information;
2. to showcase relevant projects;
3. to exchange good practices; and
4. to promote networking.

Participation in the Swiss Community Day on Data is exclusive and free of charge.

Algorithmic decision-making is data driven, but those decisions may be difficult to query, understand or challenge. Furthermore, it may remove politicians from decision making. Counter intuitively then, the data deluge may reduce political accountability, not improve it.

Key message #4 – Data should inform decisions, but they should not drive decisions. That is the role of our elected officials; they must retain responsibility for decisions.

Steve McFeely,
OECD Chief Statistician and Director of
the Statistics and Data Directorate
Excerpts from keynote “From Statistics to Data
Science: Implications for Democracy” delivered
to Swiss CommUNITY, December 2024



HOW TO REBUILD TRUST IN DATA IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY?

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GENEVA DATA COMMUNITY SPRING GATHERING GENEVA, 3 APRIL 2025

As crises multiply and misinformation spreads, the Geneva Data Community met this April to address a pressing challenge: how can data remain a trusted and accessible foundation for decision-making – especially in fragile and complex contexts?

Hosted by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and Data for Change (the PARIS21 Foundation), the gathering brought together leaders from NSOs, international organisations, civil society, academia and the private sector. The aim: build a resilient ecosystem where official data is discoverable, trusted, and used effectively.

A central focus was the development of the Trusted Data Observatory (TDO), a global platform designed to improve access to meta-data – without storing the data itself. The TDO will act as a bridge between official statistics and the tools that people increasingly rely on – search engines, AI models, and digital platforms. It is set to launch as trusteddataobservatory.org, and governance is now taking shape, with an advisory board in formation.

Participants emphasised that Geneva – home to 38 UN entities, advanced digital infrastructure, and a tradition of neutrality – is uniquely positioned to host such an initiative. Technical presentations highlighted Geneva's ability to safeguard public values in an age of proprietary platforms, cooling lakes for data centers, and growing corporate dominance over digital infrastructure. In this environment, Geneva stands out as a place where data can serve both public good and digital sovereignty. A compelling panel on misinformation and disinformation, moderated by Hannah Redders (Data for Change – the PARIS21 Foundation), brought diverse perspectives together. Johannes Jütting, Executive Head of PARIS21, warned that misinformation threatens decades of development progress and called for renewed investment in trusted data systems.

Panelists included:

- Dr. Vincenzo Chiochia (Deloitte) on AI-enhanced governance and digital trust.
- Sharada Prasanna Mohanty (Alcrowd) on stress-testing AI to mitigate misuse.
- Pascal Marmier (SICPA) on a "Trust App Store" built on Swiss values.
- Hassan Thuillard (Swiss Mission to the UN) on Geneva's diplomatic leadership in global digital governance.

The consensus was clear: misinformation is not just a technical risk, but a democratic one. Inaction is no longer an option.

As the Geneva Data Community looks ahead, it invites partners to co-create the TDO, contribute expertise, and ensure that trustworthy data systems are not an afterthought – but a cornerstone of digital cooperation.

Hannah Redders,
Project Manager at Data for Change, PARIS21 Foundation



What is the TDO ?

The Trusted Data Observatory is a future global metadata platform which will describe trusted data from trusted sources, making them visible, comparable, and accessible. This initiative is being driven by the Swiss Confederation in collaboration with the Geneva data community. The aim is to incorporate this platform into official UN processes sooner or later.



SWITZERLAND SEES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN OPEN GOVERNMENT DATA

The results of the **Open Data Maturity Report 2024** have confirmed the country's steady progress in the field of open government data. This year, Switzerland moved up the European rankings, demonstrating a strong commitment to high quality, meaningful open public data.



Adoption of open access by default

Switzerland's strengthening of its open data policy shows its determination to fully embrace the principles of data transparency and accessibility. With the entry into force of the Federal Act on the Use of Electronic Means to Carry Out Official Tasks (EMOTA) in 2024, the country anchored its open data strategy in law, promoting cooperation between the various institutions and encouraging the publication of open data at all levels of government.

An effective, user-friendly portal.

The Swiss open data portal opendata.swiss is constantly evolving to better meet the needs of its users. This, together with the growing interest in open government data has resulted in growing numbers of visitors to the platform (around 400 000 in 2024, up 3.2% over the previous year), which uses the latest technologies to make it easier to find, access and reuse datasets.

Quality keeps getting better

As the high quality of open government data and its metadata is essential for value creation and data enrichment, the Confederation is actively championing these ongoing improvements in quality. For example, the dashboard provides a tool to periodically assess the quality of the metadata published on opendata.swiss.

Growing impact on society and the economy

Beyond providing access to public data, open government data in Switzerland demonstrably fosters innovation, research, and economic development, as can be seen from the many examples of reuse of public

data in fields such as the environment, smart cities and administrative transparency.

New opportunities for innovation

This progress reinforces Switzerland's image as a transparent, digital country, where open government data is becoming an important driver of improvements and innovation in public services. The ongoing advances in the country's open data infrastructure and policies show that it is well-anchored in Europe's drive for digital innovation.

Maik Roth, Head of OGD Office
Maurine Junod, Communications Manager
Open Government Data Office FSO

What is open government data (OGD)?

Open government data (OGD) is data produced or collected with the aim of fulfilling a public service mandate and made accessible without legal, financial or technical restrictions. The OGD movement first gained momentum in 2009 when Barack Obama launched the data.gov platform, inspiring other countries to adopt similar approaches. OGD helps cities to optimise their services, companies to develop useful solutions and citizens to stay informed of government activities. OGD has become a pillar of modern democracy, fostering trust and more open governance.

To find out more about open data in Switzerland, visit opendata.swiss.



EMPOWERING PUBLIC SECTOR DATA SCIENCE: TWO NEW ESTP COURSES ON DIFFERENTIAL PRIVACY FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND ALGORITHMIC FAIRNESS

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office's Data Science Competence Center is excited to announce two new ESTP (European Statistical Training Programme) courses for 2025. In September, we will offer a course on "Differential Privacy for Official Statistics: From Theory to Practice", followed by a course on "Algorithmic Fairness and Explainability" in November. The courses are described in more detail below.

Differential privacy for official statistics: from theory to practice

The widespread adoption of digitalisation has led to extensive data collection, resulting in unprecedented levels of data availability. While this presents new opportunities to improve day-to-day quality of life, such as enhancing healthcare services, or optimising transportation systems, it also raises significant concerns about individual privacy. National statistical offices (NSOs) must recognise the risk of exposing personal data when they publish official statistics, or any kind of data generated product. Understanding protective measures and their implications is essential in this context. To address these challenges, the course aims to equip NSO collaborators with the knowledge required to manage privacy concerns effectively. It offers insights into state-of-the-art attacks designed to extract confidential information from data products and introduces differential privacy (DP) as a robust mathematical framework for quantifying disclosure risks. Practical implementations of DP algorithms are also discussed, including synthetic dataset generation and local randomised response. Additionally, participants will be introduced to open-source libraries offering standard software for differential privacy including summary statistics, and machine learning model training. The course combines ex-cathedra lectures with hands-on Python coding sessions on a modern data science platform.

Algorithmic Fairness and Explainability

The "Algorithmic Fairness and Explainability" course is a comprehensive two-day programme designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to help promote fairness and improve the explainability of algorithms used in data analysis and statistical production. Day one focuses on the fundamentals of algorithmic fairness, including definitions of fairness and how it is measured. Participants will engage in interactive sessions to identify sources of bias in statistical production and how it can be mitigated. Day two delves into explainability where attendees will learn about various techniques

(including causal inference) to make complex algorithms more understandable, in addition to their advantages and disadvantages. Through hands-on exercises and real-world case studies, participants will gain knowledge of available tools and the ability to evaluate fairness and explainability measures in their work. By the end of the course, participants will be better prepared to develop and deploy algorithms that uphold ethical standards and foster public trust in statistical practices.

Yara Abu Awad and Raphaël de Fondeville,
Senior Data Scientists, group leads at
Data Science and AI Section, FSO

Interested in joining one of our courses?

If you would like to participate in one of our upcoming courses, please complete the [registration form](#) and send it to international@bfs.admin.ch.

For the course Differential Privacy for Official Statistics: from Theory to Practice, please submit your registration by 19.08.2025.

For the course Algorithmic Fairness, please submit your registration by 19.09.2025.

Officials and employees of National Statistical Institutes or corresponding Other National Authorities (ONAs) of EU Member States, EFTA countries, candidate countries and potential candidate countries as well as Eurostat can apply for the ESTP programme.

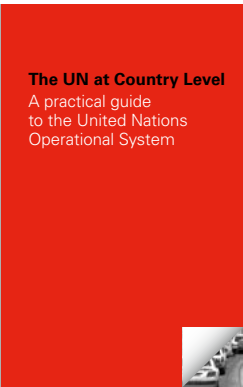


OUTLOOK

Dear readers

This issue of our newsletter illustrates the diverse and dynamic nature of the international cooperation taking place in data and statistics. Given the mounting challenges faced at present, we must foster dialogue that goes beyond national borders. The various articles in this newsletter reflect the importance of learning from others and developing shared solutions.

The future of International Geneva remains a key topic for Switzerland and for many international organisations. The financial situation facing these organisations poses a real risk in terms of loss of valuable expertise. This makes it all the more important that we create spaces where stakeholders can meet in person and truly break free from their silos.



The United Nations is often perceived as a single, unified organisation, but in reality, it functions as a network of diverse entities – each with its own mission, structure, and funding. To help navigate this landscape, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has published The UN at Country Level, a practical guide that sheds light on how the UN operates in different national contexts.

How the UN operates at country level – a practical guide



The 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville (30 June to 3 July 2025) made it clear that the international community is facing some major challenges.

There, the delegations particularly emphasised the need for fair financing and equitable governance. The importance of data and statistics in achieving these objectives was underscored through their inclusion in the “Compromiso de Sevilla”, which was adopted following the conference. As stated in the final report: “We recognize that high-quality and disaggregated data and statistics enable evidence-based policy decisions and enhance accountability and transparency, fostering public trust and international cooperation.”



In the second half of this year, the **World Statistics Congress** will take place in the Netherlands. Switzerland will chair the UN Statistical Commission until March 2026 with a continued focus on the efforts needed to meet these challenges (data governance, the duties of the Commission, making data AI-readable and of course the Trusted Data Observatory).

We thank you for your interest and support. Your feedback and input are invaluable for our work.

On that note, we wish you a relaxing summer break – with plenty of time to rest, reflect and perhaps even look to the future.

**Benjamin Rothen, Ambassador,
International and national affairs INA, FSO**

About the cover illustration:

It shows the **Bischofszell Thur Bridge**, built in 1487, which has undergone numerous reinforcements and restorations over the centuries due to frequent flooding and increased traffic. The original condition of the historic bridge was restored between 1971 and 1975, followed by an extensive renovation from 2000 to 2005. The people representing those who deliver reliable data to the public were added by the FSO Creative Lab using artificial intelligence, together with the roaring river and the floating symbolic images of current challenges.



© original photo of the bridge: viastoria.ch

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