

The International Year of Statistics - "Statistics2013" - is a worldwide initiative that aims to promote the recognition of how important Statistics are for the Society.

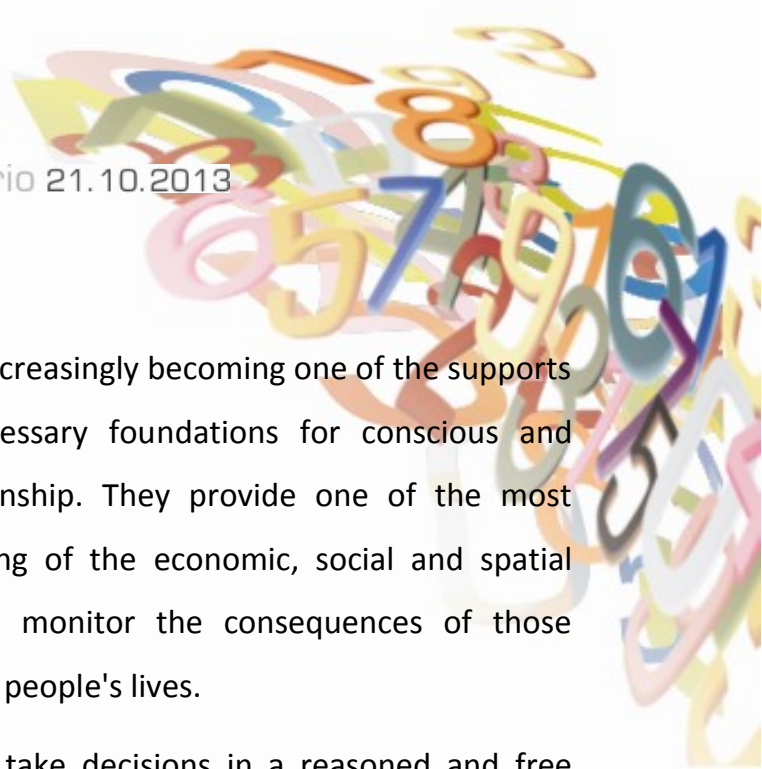
The Statistical Council and Statistics Portugal have decided to mark this annual celebration on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2013, by organizing a seminar *"What is the use of Statistics. How do we use them daily"*, in accordance to the strategic objective for the Portuguese National Statistical System (NSS) for the next five years:

***"Meet the statistical information needs of society with quality and timeliness, contributing to strengthen the trust in official statistics and their best use, improving communication and promoting statistical literacy."***

1

### Seminar objectives:

- To foster, in a coordinated way, within the national statistical system, statistical literacy eliminating barriers to the use of official statistics.
- To increase awareness as regards the impact and recognition of the role of official statistics in all aspects of Society, and to promote the exchange of ideas on how to best communicate official statistics, in order to facilitate their understanding and their correct interpretation and use.
- To draw the attention for the relevance of official statistics and the need of their appropriate reading, interpretation and use, increasing the awareness for the unquestionable fact that production of good statistics requires the involvement of society in general and of each one in particular.
- To recognize the fundamental contribution of statistics to a better understanding of reality and to support decision-making process.



## Conclusions:

1. Anywhere in the world statistics are increasingly becoming one of the supports of democracy and one of the necessary foundations for conscious and consequent exercise of active citizenship. They provide one of the most important tools for the understanding of the economic, social and spatial reality for decision making, and to monitor the consequences of those decisions on the most diverse areas of people's lives.
2. Statistics are crucial for societies to take decisions in a reasoned and free manner.
3. Society (consumers, politicians, policy makers, businessmen, journalists, researchers, analysts and others) benefits and requires more and more information.
4. Portuguese official statistics have legislative and regulatory framework at National and European level. They are solid and reliable, with strict underlying principles of independence and quality, backed by legislation, regulations and Codes of Practice.
5. The quality of statistics is the foundation of the pyramid of knowledge, and should provide deeper understanding of reality.
6. Figures do not lie, yet people may not be prepared to read and interpret them correctly. Hence the need for greater investment in specific actions to promote statistical literacy.
7. Metadata is a key component to the understanding of statistics.
8. The challenges faced by the statistical systems arise from reality itself, which is constantly changing, a balance should also be constant between the growing need for information on specific and complex areas, human and financial resources becoming scarcer, and reducing the burden on respondents.

We should invest in opportunities for obtaining information through new and diverse sources, such as the administrative ones.

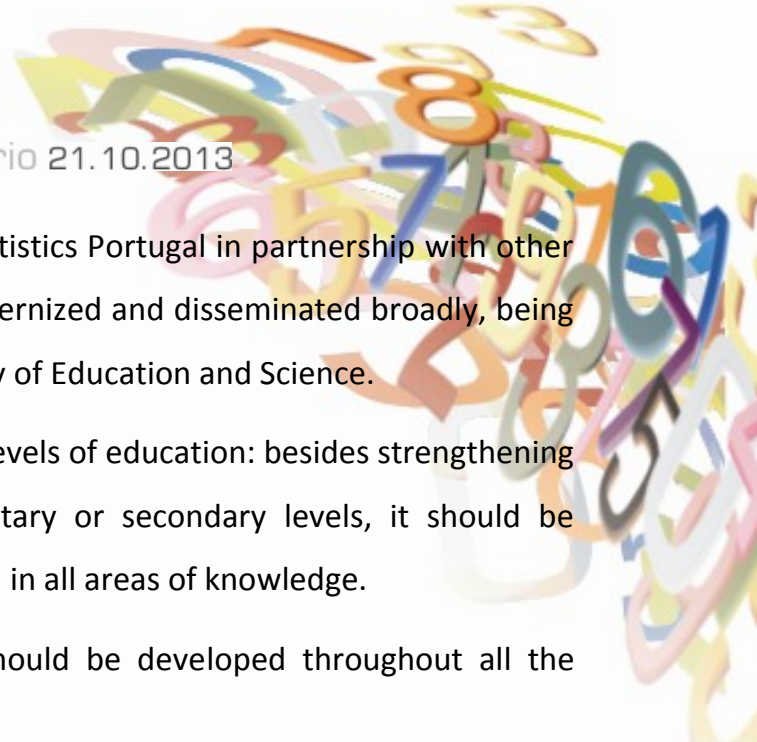
9. Along with the financial and economic crisis European Statistical System and the national statistical authorities are facing increasing challenges.

## The Challenges to the Statistical Authorities:

- To become centers of excellence in the production and reporting of stats.
- To adopt predominantly proactive communication policies, diversified communication channels, and simple language adjusted to different target audiences.
- To promote the proper use of statistics, presenting them in a simple and clear way, which is not always easy given the complexity of the reality they seek to measure.
- To invest in communication through their statistical websites, providing appealing and easily accessible contents and an extensive set of functionalities.
- To cooperate with communities of users, trying to anticipate their needs in statistical information and identify any related problems, reflecting on these issues and presenting appropriate solutions.
- To have autonomy and resources to define priorities for action in several statistical areas.

## Other actors to increase the statistical literacy:

- PORDATA, which came to play an important role in enhancing and facilitating access to statistical information produced by the Statistical Authorities.



- The “ALEA”<sup>1</sup> project developed by Statistics Portugal in partnership with other entities, which should be further modernized and disseminated broadly, being crucial the involvement of the Ministry of Education and Science.
- Schools have an important role in all levels of education: besides strengthening the teaching of Statistics in elementary or secondary levels, it should be brought to the higher advanced levels, in all areas of knowledge.
- The increase of statistical literacy should be developed throughout all the schooling.
- Journalists have the important task of disseminating statistical information correctly, and they are more and more required to work with social responsibility and professional accuracy. There must exist a serious concern to communicate more efficiently among the multiple actors, including the media.

4

## Stimulating factors of statistical literacy:

- Improving communication, promoting training on the proper use of statistics near schools, universities, companies, media, associations, public organizations, are all actions to strengthen.
- The free dissemination of information in different formats, platforms, social networks, not forgetting the actions of classroom training, are also crucial to make statistics a priority instrument for general use.
- The adoption of appealing broadcast formats in terms of visualization of information - by the use of charts and interactive maps adaptable to each user's goals - to facilitate the reading of the statistics and make them more clear, should be privileged.

<sup>1</sup> The “ALEA” emerged from a joint project of Tomaz Pelayo Secondary School and the Statistics Portugal, to which former Northern Regional Direction of Education later associated.