

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATISTICAL COUNCIL 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2008 was particularly relevant for the National Statistical System (NSS) due to the publication of the new NSS Law – Law No 22/2008 of 13 May.

Although all day-to-day management-related decisions, which were subsequently ratified pursuant to the new legal framework, were ensured from May to September, the number of Section meetings was limited in the interim period. The Statistical Council (hereinafter referred to as the “Council”) stepped up its work in the last quarter of the year, approving and/or assessing key documents to its functioning and to carrying out its powers and accomplishing the Vision defined for the National Statistical System (NSS) for 2012:

- Rules of Procedure
- Operating structure
- Principles governing the delegation of powers by Statistics Portugal to other services and model protocol for the delegation of powers
- Methodology for the preparation of the statistical authorities' Statistical Activity Plan and the respective Implementation Report, to be applied as of 2010

Within the scope of its mission, the Council had defined as goals for 2008:

- To change the Council's operating structure, following the Parliament's approval of the new NSS Law.
 - To enhance its ability to coordinate the NSS, by implementing and optimising the Council's deliberations and recommendations and developing reflection activities aimed at a better integration of the NSS.
 - To continue modernising processes associated with its internal organisation.

The exercise of the Statistical System's overall coordination powers has translated into:

- The updating of nomenclatures and classifications – ISO Alpha 2 standard (nomenclature of countries and territories), 1994 Administrative Area Code, 2007 Fields of Science and Technology Classification (FOS), use of ISCED97 for replying to international questionnaires, and Table of Crimes recorded by the police forces.
- Ongoing revisions of the Typology of Urban Areas.
- The pursuit of developments in approving/updating concepts for statistical purposes in the

following fields: air transport, tourism and restaurants, culture and science and technology, energy and disability and rehabilitation. Also, a reference conceptual system started to be used.

- Monitoring the preparation of the NACE classification of companies (Portuguese acronym: SICAE) and the appropriation of information included in the Simplified Business Information System.

Within the scope of powers in the statistical planning and quality fields, concerns remained as to compliance with the deadlines in the Business Plan of Statistics Portugal and other entities intervening in national statistical production, with recommendations being issued on a quarterly basis. Accordingly, an Action Plan was approved for compliance with cut-off dates for the availability of Portuguese statistics.

This Plan also contains provisions on initiatives in the field of human resources training; furthermore, it envisages inventorying administrative sources existing in Portugal and their effective and potential use for statistical purposes. This aims at proposing solutions to improve the functioning of the NSS at this level, namely as regards reducing the statistical burden on respondents.

In other areas of intervention and monitoring by the Council stress should be laid on:

- The presentation by Statistics Portugal of the Annual National Accounts for 2004 and 2005, the Quarterly National Accounts for the second, third and fourth quarters of 2007, the rapid estimate for the first quarter of 2008, the 2007 Preliminary National Accounts of the main general government aggregates, the 2005 Regional Accounts by NUTS 2002/NUTS 1989 referring to the areas of Regional Accounts by Branch of Activity and Regional Household Accounts.
- The monitoring of and proposals for the revision of ESA 95.
- The presentation by Banco de Portugal of monetary and financial statistics, balance of payments and international investment position statistics for 2007 and the annual financial accounts for 2006 and 2007.
- The presentation by Statistics Portugal of its “dissemination policy”.
- The monitoring of Statistics Portugal's 2011 Census, with the favourable assessment of the draft Decree-Law presented by Statistics Portugal on this operation and the background analysis of the “Action Programme for the 2011 Census”.
- A Workshop held on “Foreign direct investment statistics”, which resulted in a series of proposals and recommendations.

The Council participated in and monitored with great interest the work and rather favourable results of the Peer Review to Statistics Portugal conducted in January 2008.

With a view to continuously improving its functioning, operation and internal coordination, while simultaneously cutting costs, communication via email and the circulation of information via CIRCA – Communication & Information Resource Centre Administrator –continued to be preferably used. A contact database of the Council was also created, allowing for a simultaneous updating of all Council structure members, to a total of 450 participants.

Communication with society in general, in the sense of bringing Council works to the attention of the public, is considered to be a major goal. Hence, the Council's website has undergone a number of changes targeted at compliance with the accessibility rules defined by the Government for general government; there were also adaptations stemming from the new legal framework governing the System and a "History" domain was created, relating to the period ended in September 2008.

88 meetings were held, of which 3 were plenary meetings, 27 were Section meetings and 58 were Working Group meetings.

With the purpose of improving the structure of the Statistical Council's Annual Report, its presentation was simplified, although data made available were not reduced. Hence, documents containing more detailed information and purely informative documents were incorporated in annexes.