



Conference on
**Remuneration
Statistics**
eurostat 

Structure

- Title** Proactive transparency and innovative indices
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- Abstract** Transparency is an important statistical quality criterion, recognised by the 2019 quality assessment framework principle number 15 which sets indicators for accessibility and clarity. This paper presents information about dissemination policy and access rights for Eurostat remuneration statistics, and examinations scope for improvements.
- Keywords** Transparency, Quality Framework, Remuneration Statistics, Data Visualisation
- Disclaimer** The opinions expressed in this document represent the authors' points of view and are not necessarily shared by the European Commission (Eurostat).

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Data dissemination

In general, Eurostat's dissemination policy is characterised by free access for all users, subject to statistical confidentiality constraints, and respects principles laid down in Regulation No.223/2009 on European Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice. Generally, data and other content from Eurostat may be freely re-used, including for commercial purposes, according to conditions set out on the Eurostat website. Specific rules have been agreed with the National Statistical Institutes and other statistical authorities which provide price data and civil servant remuneration data to Eurostat.

The following dissemination policy is in place for Eurostat Remuneration Statistics:

- Statutory reports and supplementary appendices are published on remuneration statistics dedicated section web pages as soon as possible following formal transmission;
- Limited advance access is granted in accordance with European Statistics Code of Practice protocol on impartial access, for internal administration purposes (Commission DG HR, DG BUDG, PMO) and to equivalent partners in other EU institutions, EU agencies, and other international organisations whose remuneration systems have some link with EU system¹ subject to agreement that no data are communicated further prior to official Eurostat release;
- Specific presentations are made to social dialogue partners (staff representatives) and to budgetary authorities of EU Member States;
- Methodology and other discussion papers from meetings of Statistical Expert Working Group are made available via specific web pages on the CIRCABC archive ("Communication and Information Resource Centre for Administrations, Businesses and Citizens");
- Statutory values are published on Eurostat Free Data Tables website archive, together with metadata to assist understanding, as soon as possible after they have been compiled and validated;
- Supplementary material (eg. legislative framework, methodology manuals, explanatory brochures) are made available on remuneration statistics dedicated section web pages;
- Subject to resource constraints, answers are provided to queries received via Eurostat Media Support, Institutional Support and User Support contact points, parliamentary questions, etc. as promptly as possible;
- Also subject to resource constraints, ad hoc calculations and explanations are also provided to partner organisations;
- All Eurostat releases are objective and impartial.

Annual Report and Free Data Tables

The Statistical Expert Working Group on Articles 64&65 of the Staff Regulations has adopted rules about the precision for publication of country specific indicators, global specific indicator, inflation indices, purchasing power parities, exchange rates and correction coefficients.

The minimum requirement for the Eurostat annual report and intermediate reports is to satisfy statutory data requirements. The actual design and content of the Eurostat annual report and intermediate reports, and the associated complementary detail in the various appendices, have evolved over time in response to specific user requests. Due to scarce resources it is generally preferable to programme the inclusion of information "ex-ante" in future reports, than to produce it "ex-post" in response to a retrospective query. The 2018 annual report main text, appendices 1a-1c, appendices 2a-2c, and appendix 3 now comprise 423 pages altogether. This total compares with just 89 pages for the equivalent 2004 annual report. This expansion partly reflects EU enlargement (increase from 15 to 28 countries) which effectively doubled the length of appendices 2b-2c. However the additional tables and explanations in appendices 1a-1c and the new content in appendices 2a and 3, have been added to directly satisfy user needs.

¹ Examples include: European Central Bank, European Investment Bank, European Patent Office, European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EuroControl), European Southern Observatory, European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN), European Schools.

The subset of remuneration information which is reproduced online in the Eurostat Free Data Tables has also evolved over time. For many years, information was limited to “A64” Intra-EU and Extra-EU correction coefficient values from the annual report (reference month July), with a delay of several months after formal transmission of the report (the delay was required in order to complete legislative procedures culminating in Official Journal publication). Reform of the Staff Regulations in 2013 recognised greater autonomy of Eurostat with an automatic application procedure, and there was a parallel status clarification that Remuneration Statistics fall within the ambit of the European Statistics Code of Practice. These developments were followed by major increases in transparency in 2014 for the report (immediate online publication following formal transmission) and again in 2015 for the free data tables (addition of “A65” global specific indicator and joint index) and in 2016 (expansion of “A64” tables to include data from intermediate reports) and in 2017 (addition of “A64” Intra-EU and Extra-EU purchasing power parity values). The time series of values currently available on the free data tables is summarised below:

A65 (prc_rem)	1983-2003	2004-2006	2007-2012	2013-
Net, real-terms	EU GSI			
Net, nominal	x	EU GSI	EU GSI	EU GSI
Gross, real-terms	x	EU25	EU27	EU28
Gross, nominal	x			
A64 (prc_colc)	1994-1999	2000-2003	2004-2009	2010-
CC PEN	x	x	EU28	EU28
CC STF-intra	EU28+5	EU28+5	EU28+5	EU28+5
CC STF-XTRA*	x	145	145	145
PPP PEN	x	x	x	EU28
PPP STF-intra	x	x	X	EU28+5
PPP STF-XTRA*	x	145	145	145

* with gaps according to data availability and changes to delegation status

Reporting constraints

There are data confidentiality and statistical quality constraints on the level of disaggregation with which information is released in remuneration reports. For correction coefficients and purchasing power parities, an agreed set of analytical categories applies. This set is modelled on the categories authorised under the legislation applicable for other price statistics produced by Eurostat, as the ECP and HICP data is a core input to the correction coefficient calculation process. Corresponding level of information is provided for consumption expenditure weights identified via family budget surveys. Additional detail is provided for rents price data identified via estate agency rent surveys. Microdata containing information about individual observations are not released. Release of precise information about item definitions and retail outlet samples is also prohibited. The same rules apply for access to ECP price data used for A64 purposes as apply for access to ECP data used for other purposes: it is only granted for genuine academic research projects.

The dedicated section web pages contain an overview section, a sub-section for correction coefficients (with sub-pages including links to free data tables), a sub-section for specific indicators (with sub-pages including links to free data tables), and a sub-section for publications. Intra-EU reports are available from 2004 to date. Intermediate reports are available from 2013 to date. Extra-EU reports are available from 2012 to date. Annex 2 reports are available from 2014 to date. Annex 3 reports are available from 2014 to date. These different dates reflect dates of decisions taken by the Statistical Expert Group on Articles 64&65. The various sections include the current version of methodology manuals, and additional information to ensure transparency about statistical production processes and assist interpretation of results.

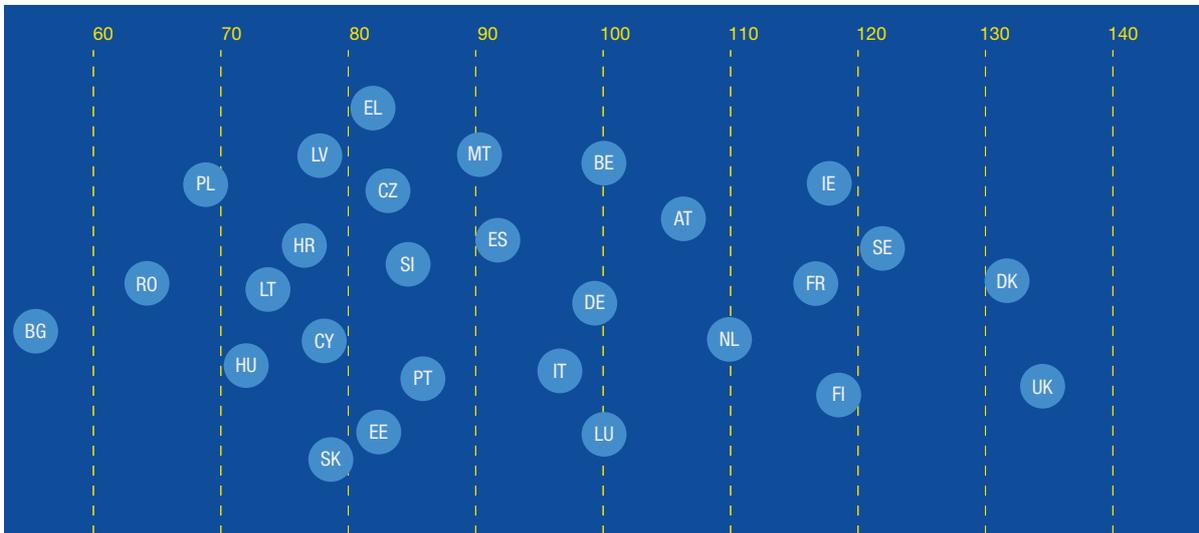
Scope for improvements: better visualisation techniques

“I am not a number, I am a free man” shouts the protagonist in the cult 1960s TV series “The Prisoner”. Summarising datasets inevitably involves a loss of individuality. But that does not mean there is a necessary loss of relevance. There is an important clarifying role to ensure dissemination remains accessible. Despite the myriad competing potential distractions, there are ways to make statistics interesting, beyond their inherent intrinsic content. In November 2019, a “Dataviz” conference was hosted by the Publications Office of the European Union to address specific needs of the public sector data visualisation community in this fast developing field. In recent years, Eurostat has developed an array of data visualisation tools to present different statistical themes in an attractive and easy-to-understand manner.

The [following website link](#) provides a first overview of these tools. For example, correction coefficients are one of the diagrams to appear in the [“my capital in a bubble” presentation](#) and inflation indices are one of the diagrams to appear in the [“my country in a bubble” presentation](#):

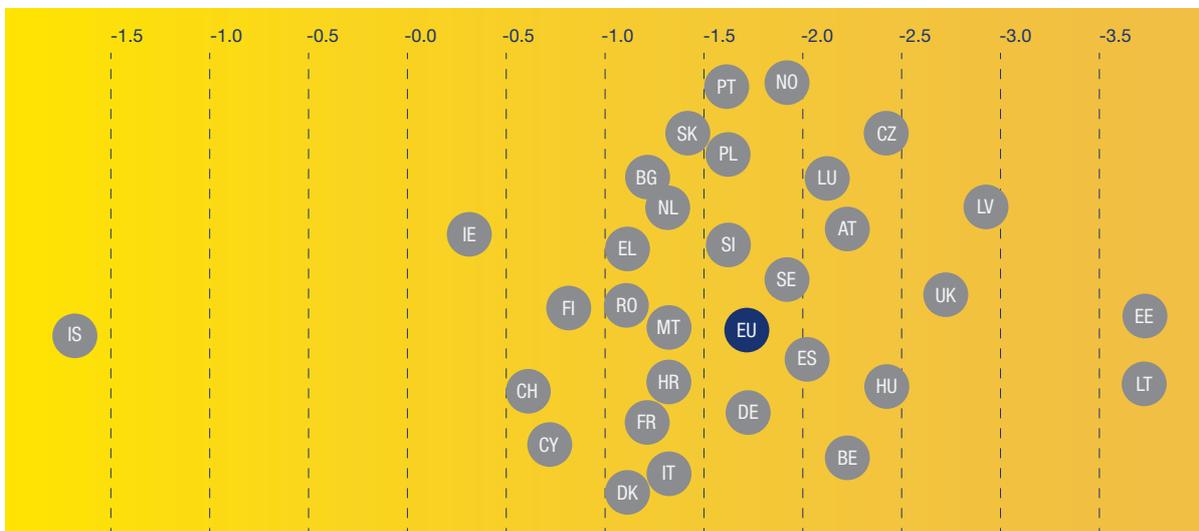
Cost of Living

(Brussels = 100) 2018



Inflation Rate

(% change compared to previous year) 2017



Such visualisation techniques may reach different audiences in different ways than traditional presentations. Of course, it is relatively easy for people to understand that they would rather have a higher nominal income (after adjustment for cost-of-living difference) than a lower one, or that they would prefer to experience a lower inflation rate and thus higher real incomes. But innovative presentation techniques like these, geographical presentations and other visual aids may become easier to apply as IT tools improve, and help with communicating remuneration statistics to various users in a more personalised way to complement the existing information. The 2019 conference suggested a number of pathways for exploration, subject to resource constraints.

Scope for improvements: other ways to personalise the information

Also subject to resource constraints, another potential area of investigation could be to develop small “apps” or “widgets” which for example might allow users to substitute their own estimated expenditure breakdown in place of the measured average consumption pattern in order to produce a personalised spatial cost-of-living index; or a tool to express the salary table for Brussels in local currency purchasing power standards for their own duty station. Such developments would not replace the existing high quality statistical output for administrative purposes: the complementary explanatory value simply provides additional understanding and support for those results.

There may also be scope to design and publish additional innovative indices. For example, to prove that statisticians do have a sense of humour, how about a “cost-of-loving” index to complement the standard cost-of-living index? Or a comparative index of restaurant prices to demonstrate that there’s no such thing as a free lunch? More seriously, subject to data quality, it may be possible to develop occasional experimental explanatory analyses such as separate CC for expenditure patterns of people with upper and lower quartile incomes, or separate values for singletons and married couples with children. Of course, not all individual requests can be satisfied, but some may be easier than others to implement, and there may be broad consensus about them.

Identifying and prioritising the demand

To help identify whether there is demand for such innovations, and to prioritise them, it would be helpful to run a specific survey to ask users for their opinion. This could also include user feedback about possible modifications including potential deletions and/or additions to the existing Free Data Tables, or the Annual Report. Delegates to this first conference on remuneration statistics are invited to already submit their comments!

Appendix: The cost of loving ♥ - a statistic for 14 February

As a one-off exercise, Intra-EU parities at July 2018 for the following six basic headings were combined (simple unweighted arithmetical mean): “chocolate and confectionery”, “wine”, “garments”, “flowers”, “restaurants” and “jewellery”. The compositional choice is somewhat arbitrary! If repeated on a future occasion, the index may be refined to integrate the parity for “hotels”...

Correction coefficient – The cost of loving

(chocolate, wine, garments, flowers, restaurants, jewellery)



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