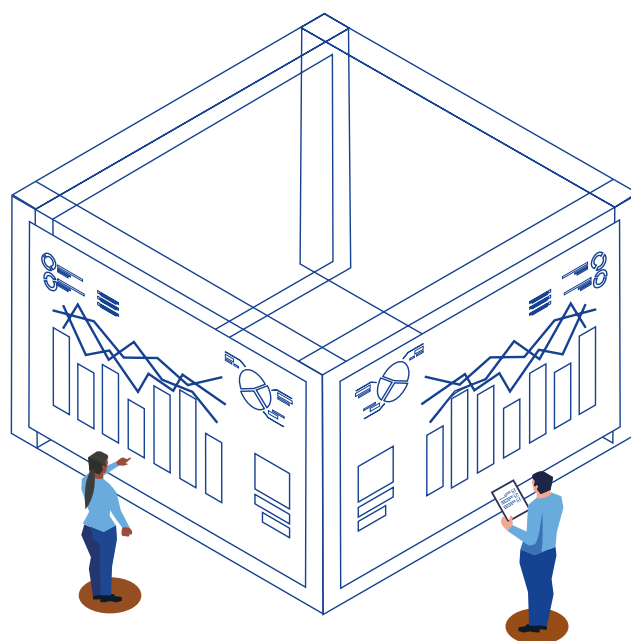


General introduction to the ESS peer reviews



The [national statistical authorities](#) of all the EU Member States and EFTA countries and Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Union) form a partnership called the [European Statistical System](#) (ESS). Together they develop, produce and disseminate European statistics. It is recognised that quality is one of European statistics' comparative advantages in a world experiencing a growing trend of instant information and new challenges, driven by exceptional circumstances and a continuous need for faster but quality-assured data. [The European Statistics Code of Practice](#) (ES CoP) is the cornerstone of the ESS common quality framework, and the ESS statistical authorities have committed themselves to adhere to it.

In this context, it is crucial for the ESS to be equipped with a review mechanism - [the Peer Reviews](#) - to support, with documented evidence, this self-commitment to adhere to the Code. The objective of this review mechanism is to enhance the integrity, professional independence and accountability of all ESS statistical authorities, thus reassuring users of the commitment of the ESS to quality and underpinning their trust in European statistics. The first round of peer reviews was carried out in 2006-2008, followed by a second round in 2013-2015.



In 2017, the Code was reviewed and extended and now encompasses 16 Principles. This revised version triggered a third round of peer reviews to be carried out from mid-2021 to mid-2023 in all members of the ESS.

The third round of peer reviews has the following two objectives:



- To review the compliance/alignment of the ESS with the ES CoP, in order to demonstrate to the ESS and to external stakeholders that the ESS is a system based on the principles of the ES CoP.



- To help national statistical institutes, other national authorities and Eurostat in their further improvement and development by indicating future-oriented recommendations; at the same time they should stimulate government authorities to support the implementation of these recommendations.

Each peer review is conducted by a team of four experts (both from inside and outside the ESS) with wide experience in statistics, auditing, governance and quality issues. The peer reviews are carried out in a standardised way, according to the description below:

- The completion of self-assessment questionnaires by national statistical authorities;
- Analysis of these self-assessment questionnaires by the peer review team;
- A country visit by the peer review team;
- Drafting of the final report and ensuing recommendations by the peer review team.

Following the peer review visit, the national statistical institute, in cooperation with the reviewed other national statistical authorities, will translate the recommendations into concrete improvement actions, and their implementation will be monitored by Eurostat on an annual basis.

It should be noted that the peer review of Eurostat was conducted by the [European Statistical Governance Advisory Board \(ESGAB\)](#). ESGAB will also monitor the implementation of these actions and report on an annual basis. More information on European statistics as well as the ESS Peer Reviews can be found on the [Eurostat website](#).

