



How can work of the highest professional calibre and ethical standard lead to prosecution?

ISI is very pleased to see the strong public statement by European Commissioner, Marianne Thyssen, (<http://europa.eu/rapid/midday-express-24-08-2016.htm>) calling upon *the Greek authorities to actively and publicly challenge the false impression that data were manipulated during 2010-2015 and to protect ELSTAT and its staff from such unfounded claims.*

As in previous public statements, the International Statistical Institute (ISI) again emphasizes the importance for all nations of adherence to the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and particularly underscores Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10. ISI also highlights the following extracts from the **Resolution adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council on 24 July 2013** (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/FP-Rev2013-E.pdf>):

- *The professional independence and accountability of statistical agencies are crucial;*
- *The fundamental values and principles that govern statistical work have to be guaranteed by legal and institutional frameworks and respected at all political levels.*

Based on scientific evaluations undertaken by statistical experts from the EU on a continuous basis, the statistics published from 2010 onwards on the Greek's government deficit and debt were compiled consistently with both international and European standards and were of good quality. These statistics, together with their specific compilation methods, have been fully validated by Eurostat since November 2010 for 12 consecutive biannual reviews, and have been repeatedly used by the Greek authorities as the basis for negotiations that resulted in substantial loans provided to Greece. Therefore, claims of a conspiracy of any type appear ludicrous to international observers.

Official statistics require both national and international credibility if they are to provide the basis for sound decision making, and such credibility depends on their compilation following agreed and accepted international standards. Statistics that satisfy such stringent criteria can only help Greece and its people in the long term, as they will provide the best measurements about the state of the Greek economy, and will give markets greater confidence, thus reducing the cost of borrowing.

ISI re-iterates its strong support of individuals and groups who uphold, often in the face of extraordinary pressures – whether they be political, professional or personal - the ISI's Code of Professional Ethics. Such adherence to statistical professional ethics should be applauded and appreciated by the countries and peoples who ultimately benefit. In association with this, ISI also draws special attention to Principle 4 of the UN's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics which states that:

Statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

The ISI is extremely concerned about the persecution/prosecutions of Mr Andreas Georgiou, Ms. Athanasia Xenaki and Mr Kostas Melfetas for doing their work with the highest professionalism, integrity and adherence to international standards and the UN Principles, regardless of political pressure. It is inconceivable that such work, independently verified and approved in line with international standards, could lead to prosecution, and even successful prosecution of those responsible. Instead, such work should be praised!

For the long-term well-being of Greece and its people, the ISI again urges the Greek authorities to:

- Drop the case against the above mentioned defendants;
- Support and preserve the quality of Greek statistics and the independence of the Hellenic Statistical System;
- Adopt and uphold the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics; and
- Protect individuals and groups who uphold both these principles and professional ethics.



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