

ISI STATEMENT ABOUT CONVICTION OF ANDREAS GEORGIU, FORMER ELSTAT PRESIDENT

The ISI is deeply concerned about the recent decision of the Greek Appeals Court to convict Andreas Georgiou, former President of ELSTAT (the Greek Statistical Authority), of violation of duty by not obtaining approval from the Board of ELSTAT to release the 2009 Greek Debt and deficit figures.

Mr Georgiou acted at all times in complete compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice, which he was required to do under the provisions of the Greek Statistical Law applying at the time. Specifically, Principle 1 of the Code, relating to Professional Independence, requires that "the Head of the National Statistical Institute (in this case the President of ELSTAT) has the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of releases". Thus, informing the Board of ELSTAT and seeking its approval prior to the release of the Debt and Deficit figures would have been completely at variance with the Principle of Professional Independence and the Code of Practice.

Official statistics should be produced according to scientific principles and methodologies determined by professional statisticians, not according to the votes of members of the Board. Nonetheless, the Greek courts have convicted, with a two year suspended prison sentence, Andreas Georgiou of not obtaining the Board's approval for release of data, even though doing so would have been contrary not only to the European Statistics Code of Practice but also to the ISI Declaration on Professional Ethics and the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

Not only is the verdict unfair to Mr Georgiou, it also has negative implications for the integrity of Greek and European official statistics. Accordingly, the ISI calls on the Greek Government and the EU Commission, in consultation with their respective statistical authorities, to take all necessary measures to challenge this verdict and seek its reversal as a matter of the utmost priority.

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