



The German Council Presidency in the field of statistics during the COVID-19 crisis

IPS '187: Communication and dissemination in the ESS in times of Covid-19'

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Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic has confronted official statistics with the task of finding solutions in a very short time and under difficult conditions in order to be able to provide reliable information on pressing economic and social issues at short notice. Innovative approaches at the national level as well as close cooperation and exchange at the European level have made it possible to provide relevant statistics.

During the IPS 'Communication and dissemination in the ESS in times of Covid-19', Destatis will present its experience of holding the Council presidency during the COVID-19 crisis as well as lessons learned, focussing especially on communication challenges related to it.

For the German EU Council Presidency, having the Presidency in the field of statistics in the second half of 2020, the emerging crisis meant being confronted with the need to refocus the presidency programme on the lessons learned from the crisis. At the same time, social distancing created new challenges for cooperation and requirements from national stakeholders concerning relevant and timely statistics had to be met. Together with its partners in the European Statistical System (ESS), especially its partners in the Trio Presidency, it was possible to bring official statistics in Europe closer together in terms of their objectives and the achievement of goals.

To this end, adequate solutions had to be developed. Cooperation had to be mainly transferred into the virtual space. At the end of the Presidency the German Council Presidency was able to hold a high-level meeting at the level of the Directors General of the ESS as well as a digital conference, thus enabling a Europe-wide exchange on concrete approaches in response to the Corona pandemic. Suitable formats ensured the best possible exchange, cooperation and coordination, also virtually. Among other things, event platforms, breakout sessions and world cafés in virtual rooms, audience questions for panel discussions and innovative forms of visualisation were used. Digital products, such as a podcast series and an interactive map of Europe, presenting the successful measures taken by national statistical institutes in response to the COVID-19 crisis, ensured the exchange of knowledge even in times of a pandemic. Furthermore, two main products were developed to address the impacts of the current and possible future crises: The European Statistical Recovery Dashboard, which provides access to relevant indicators across Europe for decision makers, and a coordinated response to future crises for the ESS, addressing coordination, statistical production, and communication.

Keywords:

Council Presidency; COVID-19; virtual cooperation; European Statistical Recovery Dashboard; coordinated crisis response