

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON CO-OPERATION AMONG THE STATISTICAL INSTITUTES OF THE VISEGRÁD GROUP COUNTRIES**

### **Preamble:**

According to the proposal made at the meeting held between Ms Gabriella Vukovich, Mr Alexander Ballek, Mr Marek Rojíček and Mr Dominik Rozkrut, respective Presidents of the National Statistical Institutes of Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland in New York on 7 March 2018, the above-mentioned institutes express the intent to promote co-operation in several statistical domains of common interest and to foster close and effective engagement between the countries in the long term.

Based on a positive assessment of existing co-operation, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, the Czech Statistical Office and Statistics Poland agree to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the future co-operation in statistical fields of common interest.

### **1. Objective and status**

This Memorandum represents a voluntary expression of intent between the cooperating institutes to work together in the statistical fields of mutual interest, aiming in particular at methodological and quality improvements, as well as the modernisation of the statistical business process and its related activities.

The Memorandum creates a general framework and conditions for efficient co-operation. It supports a variety of activities and promotes to set objectives and procedures of mutual co-operation for sharing information and exchanging views and experience in order to facilitate methodological developments, the implementation of common statistical activities, and the production of a yearly common publication.

The cooperating institutes express the intent to meet regularly on a yearly basis and on any separate occasions or that of any European or international statistical event, if considered appropriate. The meetings shall provide the opportunity to share preliminary positions which include the topics listed in the Annex, before international events, to facilitate more active engagement and to gain better understanding of the cooperating institutes' postures as part of a region.

### **2. Aims and scope of co-operation**

In principle, all topics, but especially questions of a methodological kind, are potential fields for action in the framework of this Memorandum. The selection of specific topics is a matter of mutual agreement.

The cooperating institutes express the intent to undertake activities appropriate for the objective implementation, such as sharing best practices, exchanging experiences, issuing joint publications, creating contact networks, and exchanging data among national institutes in selected areas.

The cooperating institutes acknowledge that no data files may be used, transmitted or disclosed to any other third parties without the written authorisation of the National Statistical Institute that shared the data files.

Furthermore, this co-operation shall promote professional behaviour in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the Recommendation of the OECD Council on Good Statistical Practice and the European Statistics Code of Practice.

### 3. Financing

Common activities are in accordance with the relevant national work programmes and shall be financed by the respective national budgets of the Visegrád Group's NSIs or by one of the EU-funded projects, or by other mechanisms available for the development of statistics. The financing of the activities will be determined on a case by case basis.

### 4. Organisation

The co-operation is chaired by the President of the national statistical institute for a period of one year in accordance with the rotation of the presidency of the Visegrád Group.

The co-operation will be organised based on the list of statistical topics for the planned activities to be agreed by the cooperating institutes.

Rather than specifying projects or dates in this Memorandum, the cooperating institutes acknowledge this co-operation initiative as an ongoing activity to bring together the Visegrád Group's national statistical institutes.

The topics for co-operation between the Visegrád Group countries in 2018 are listed in the Annex to this Memorandum of Understanding. The topics may be updated each year in a different annex.

This Memorandum of Understanding was made in four copies.

Read and approved.

Budapest, 19 April 2018



Dr Gabriella Vukovich  
President  
on behalf of  
the Hungarian Central Statistical Office



Mr Alexander Ballek  
President  
on behalf of  
the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic



Mr Marek Rojíček  
President  
on behalf of  
the Czech Statistical Office

Dr Dominik Rozkrut  
President  
on behalf of  
Statistics Poland

*on behalf of Gmovařoch*

## Annex

The topics included in this Annex reflect some of the themes currently being discussed by international organizations at larger statistical conferences. The benefits of statistical co-operation in these domains include more in-depth dialogues and a focus on better coordinated feedback and collaboration between the Visegrád Group's national statistical institutes.

The cooperating institutes have identified areas of common interest, particularly in the following list of statistical fields:

### *A) Population Census 2021: methodological discussions*

The cooperating institutes propose opening the floor for methodological discussions in preparation for the population census round of 2021. The aim is to identify individual strengths and weaknesses from the previous census round, and anticipate key areas that would benefit from an exchange of experiences for the benefit of data comparability, better use of administrative data and electronic devices, and other methodological issues.

### *B) Regional Statistics: evidence for cohesion policy and regional development*

Based on previously positive bilateral experiences, the cooperating institutes would like to highlight the exchange of information and good practices. This includes cooperation in the field of NUTS classifications and the support of cohesion policy with quality statistical evidence.

### *C) Farm Structure Survey (FSS) 2020: methodological discussions*

The cooperating institutes seek to open a preliminary discussion on data harmonisation on the topics of the digitalisation of agriculture, joint actions against food waste, and further exchanges of information on forest policy and best practices regarding climate change.

### *D) Income Consumption Wealth: methodological discussions*

The 2016 DGINS Conference in Vienna concluded with calls for a harmonised statistical framework to improve coverage of the distributional aspects of household ICW for the measurement of poverty and the concentration of resources. Such efforts rely on conceptual similarities and reconciliation of information at macro and micro levels. Given the enormity of this task, the cooperating institutes agree that it would be advantageous to first take on methodological discussions at a smaller level to allow for exchanges of good practices that will facilitate its accomplishment, taking into account the outcome of international discussion and cooperation on measurement of joint distribution of Income, Consumption and Wealth.

### *E) Mirror Statistics – Foreign Trade: methodological discussions*

Mirror analysis of foreign trade data is a useful tool for statistical comparison between trading countries. However, asymmetries, due to valuations, discrepancies in definitions, differences in the trading systems, product classifications, and errors, among other factors, bring forward methodological lagoons that require thorough methodological revisions to improve the accuracy of mirror analysis insofar as possible. Therefore, mirror statistics are a suitable topic for discussion between the cooperating institutes.

*F) Migration Statistics: discussions on data collection*

The cooperating institutes propose a discussion on data collection and the use of administrative data sets to complement census data in order to improve timeliness in the capture of the evolution of migration. In addition, a terminological discussion on the use of migration and residence terms, concepts and definitions to fine-tune the issue of data comparability would be advantageous. The aim is to improve accessibility to regularly updated information on migration patterns that is aligned and fully comparable with that of fellow Visegrád Group countries.

*G) Time use surveys: methodological discussions*

A discussion between the cooperating institutes could be decisive on methodological questions, including the type of sampling units and the dimension of time (particularly in the measurement of time use during the holidays), which would advance the harmonization process and result in similar samples. In terms of international comparisons, the main issue lies in the definitions of concepts used in time use analysis, for instance, between types of work and leisure activities.

*H) Globalisation: methodological discussions*

The cooperating institutes propose a methodological discussion to find common ground and solutions for the improvement of the consistency of MNE data among different statistics domains, while balancing the issues of costs and respondent burden.

*I) Smart data: pilot projects*

Smart devices are expected to embed the production of statistical information in the near future; therefore, as part of our innovative drive, the cooperating institutes propose developing pilot projects on a Visegrád Group scale to explore applications, big data sources, and forecast legal considerations and possible challenges in our respective countries.

*J) User outreach: discussion on data dissemination*

Among the relevant topics for discussion are: approaches to the role of social media in the dissemination of statistics, the use of various platforms to reach and communicate with users, the diversity of user profiles and their equally varying needs and interests, and the underlying theme of public trust in national statistical institutes. In order to make improvements in these areas without compromising data quality for the sake of faster results, it is necessary to gain a more detailed understanding of who the target users are in the Visegrád Group countries, their understanding of statistics and the quality of their interactions with online statistical dissemination tools.