



Challenges for Albania as a Candidate Country

**Seminar at INSTAT
11-12 September 2014**

Torbiörn Carlquist

Overview

Political process

The challenges for statistics

Code of Practice (separate file)

European Statistical System (separate file)

Abbreviations and glossary

- Acquis = the body of EU law, treaties, decisions by the Court of Justice, declarations
- CC = Candidate Country (currently 6 CCs: AL,IS,ME,MK,RS,TR)
- COM = European Commission
- DCP = Draft Common Position (on a chapter)
- ECOFIN = Council for Economic and Financial Affairs
- EEA = European Economic Area (EU+IS+LI+NO)
- EFC = Economic and Financial Committee
 - established under the Maastricht Treaty to discuss issues related to the European Monetary Union (EMU)
- EP = European Parliament
- MS = Member State of the EU (currently there are 28 MS)
- WG = Working Group (in various contexts)

Political process

- See the examples of other Candidate Countries
- In this presentation, examples from the following countries are used:
- Iceland
- Montenegro
- Serbia

Political process, overview

Step	Iceland	Montenegro	Serbia
EU Application from the country	16.7.2009	15.12.2008	22.12.2009
Commission receives a mandate to draft an opinion	27.7.2009		25.10.2010
Commission adopts opinion	24.2.2010		12.10.2011
Candidate country status (Council)	17.6.2010	17.12.2010	1.3.2012
Negotiations start	DD.6.2010		28.6.2013
Screening of first chapter	15.11.2010		25.9.2013
First Intergovernmental conference	27.7.2010	29.6.2012	21.1.2014
Screening of last chapter	21.6.2011	27.6.2013	25.3.2015
Accession treaty signed by CC and COM	no date	no date yet	no date yet
Accession treaty ratified by all MS	no date	no date yet	no date yet

The "chapters"

- A total of 35 chapters (depending on country)
- Ch. 18 Statistics
- *Other chapters of particular interest to the NSI:*
- Ch. 11 Agriculture
- Ch. 22 Regional policy
- Ch. 33 Financial and budgetary provisions
- The Serbian NSI contributed to around 15 other chapters in the Opinion and in the Screening

Difficult and easy chapters

- Difficult in many countries
- Ch. 17 Economic and Monetary policy
- Ch. 23 Judiciary and Fundamental Rights
- Ch. 27 Environment
- Easy in many countries
- Ch. 25 Science and Research
- Ch. 26 Education and Culture

- Ch. 18 Statistics is average in terms of difficulty and timing within the overall process

Actors on the EU side

- European Council (heads of gov't/state)
- Council (MS ministers in each set-up)
 - Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN); General Affairs Council, several others
- Working groups within the Council
 - COELA for enlargement issues; STATA for statistics; several others
- European Parliament
- European Commission, with its 30+ DGs
 - DG Enlargement (ELARG) - coordinator
 - DG Eurostat (ESTAT) – responsible for ch. 18
 - DG Economy and Finance (ECFIN)
- Within COM there are formal consultations, involving the relevant DGs

Challenges for statistics

- Questionnaire
- Opinion
- Data transmission
- Organisation of work

Time table for the statistics chapter

Step	Iceland	Montenegro	Serbia
Questionnaire sent to country		22.7.2009	DD.11.2010
Country replies to questionnaire	1.10.2009	9.12.2009	31.1.2011
Additional questions	none in ch.18	none in ch.18	none in ch.18
Draft opinion on the application by COM			15.6.2011
COM adopts the Opinion on the application	24.2.2010		12.10.2011
COM recommends to start talks			22.4.2013
Screening ch. 18 explanatory	2.5.2011	3-4.6.2013	20-21.5.2014
Screening ch. 18 bilateral	14-15.6.2011	24-25.6.2013	25-26.11.2014
Country sends negotiation position to COM			
Draft common (CC-COM) position adopted			
Ch 18 opened for negotiations	24.10.2012	no date yet	no date yet
Ch 18 is provisionally closed	no date	no date yet	no date yet

Questionnaire

- After receiving the mandate from Council, Commission sends a questionnaire to the CC
- Covers all chapters
- Usually a tight deadline
- In the case of Serbia, there were 2500 questions in total, of which 3 in chapter 18 (but one of the statistics question had sub-questions for every statistical theme)
- Albania received the questionnaire in November 2009
- Albania provided replies to the questionnaire in April 2010

Opinion

- Commission drafts an Opinion on the EU membership application by the CC. The Opinion contains a recommendation whether accession negotiations should start or not and may also contain conditions
- The Opinion is sent to the Parliament and the Council
- In the case of Albania, Commission drafted an Opinion in 2010, with adoption on 9 November 2010. The Opinion contained 12 key priorities for Albania to fulfil
- An action plan for the 12 priorities was adopted on 10 June 2011
- Commission recommended on 10 October 2012 that Albania should receive candidate status
- Council followed up the progress on the 12 priorities year by year
- European Council granted Albania candidate status 27/6/2014

Acquis in statistics

- Regulations, directly applicable in all MS (the dominant part of the acquis in statistics)
- Directives, to be transposed in the national law of MS
- Eurostat compiles the Statistical Requirements Compendium with all acquis in a thematic structure (the publication is updated annually)
- Candidate countries are not directly bound by the acquis, however, a CC is preparing for EU accession, when it will have to be compliant.
- The Code of Practice is strictly speaking not part of the EU acquis, as it is based on self-regulation within the ESS
- Gentleman's agreements exist in some statistical domains

Acquis in statistics - process

- *The political process of adopting Regulations in statistics*
- Eurostat discusses with NSIs of MS and CC in the relevant WG for the statistical field
- CCs are involved through WG participation
- ESSC adopts a legal proposal (comitology)
- European Commission adopts a legal proposal (Commission Regulation)
- COM notifies Council, EP
- Negotiations with Council and EP, trialogue meetings
- Amendments, first reading, second reading
- Adoption by Council and EP (Council and Parliament Regulation)
- Final acquis is published in Internet and enter into force on date specified in the legal act itself
- <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>
- Eurostat publishes the Statistical Requirements Compendium annually

Acquis in statistics - evolution

- The acquis is constantly evolving
- New legal proposals are first discussed in WG meetings, where Albania is usually present, thus informed, and has the right to speak (as observer)
- Legal proposals are then treated in the ESS Committee
- At a later stage, new legal proposals are discussed in the STATA working group of the Council. The Presidency usually publishes draft regulations.
- The European Parliament is also discussing legal proposals and may propose amendments. Documents from these discussions are available on the Internet.
 - It is useful for a CC to follow the discussions about new legal proposals
- Between the time of the screening and accession to EU by a CC, the acquis will change to some degree
- The CC is bound by the acquis at the time of accession, just like all MS are bound by all new acquis

Acquis in statistics - derogations

- Derogations are temporary exemptions from a part of the acquis.
- The screening will show where and why a CC has problems to reach compliance in reasonable time.
- Derogations are asked by the CC in its negotiation position after the screening and agreed with COM in duly justified cases.
- An example could be that for backward series, derogations are granted to shorten the time series
- See Croatia!

Screening

- Series of formal meetings between a CC and EU Commission services
- For each chapter of the acquis:
- A systematic review of all the acquis within that chapter
- Explanatory meeting – Eurostat explains all important aspects of the acquis, including data delivery
- Bilateral meeting – the CC explains which parts it is compliant with and where it still has to improve
- At the end, the CC has to accept or reject the EU acquis as a basis for EU membership negotiations
- A report is drawn up for the screening of each chapter

Benchmark

- Condition for opening or for closing a chapter
- If there is an opening benchmark in a chapter, this condition will have to be fulfilled before the chapter is opened for negotiations.
- In chapter 18, it has been common with closing benchmarks in the domains of National Accounts and Agriculture statistics
- The benchmark(s) is defined by the COM and agreed with MS in Council.
- Benchmarks are formulated differently, depending on the country
- To fulfil the benchmark(s) is not the only requirement for a CC!

Technical adaptation

- A process of updating the acquis due to a new Member State
- All legal acts where there is a list of countries, list of currencies and similar will be updated to include Albania, Lek, etc.
- Simplified legal procedure – no amendment is needed for each legal act subject to technical adaptation

Organisation of work in Eurostat

- Unit A3 Statistical Cooperation
- Subject-matter units for all statistical fields, organised in 4 Directorates
- Data collection by A3 and by some other units
- Screening is coordinated by A3, involving almost all subject-matter units
- European Statistical System

Main tasks of Eurostat related to a CC

- Formulate questions related to statistics for the questionnaire
- Contribute to the Opinion (ch.18)
- Screening of chapter 18
 - **Explanatory meeting: Eurostat presents the acquis**
 - **Bilateral meeting: Eurostat listens to the CC**
- Make assessment of the readiness of CC to start negotiations
- Define benchmarks in chapter 18
- Follow-up negotiations
- Recommend provisional closure of chapter 18

Tasks which do not change for a CC

- Sub-committee meetings continue
 - **Annual sub-committee on statistics**
- Progress reports (for one year it may be replaced by the Opinion)
- Assessments of compliance in statistics (SMIS+)
- The CC can and should continue to attend Eurostat WG meetings
- Support under MBP IPA continues

Data transmission

- Increased demand for data from Eurostat and from the EU
- CCs are involved in EDP notifications, potential candidates are not
- Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) has a sub-committee on Statistics which produces a statistical report on candidate countries and submits it to ECOFIN each year (usually in May).
- Eurostat provides the statistical data to the EFC report and may ask CCs to complete data

Challenges for Albania in statistics - summary

- 1. To prepare for the Screening. In the bilateral meeting, Albania will make the presentations
- 2. To successively transmit more and more high-quality statistical data to Eurostat
- 3. To coordinate the National Statistical System

Code of Practice

- (See separate presentation)
- Peer Reviews are based on the European Statistics Code of Practice
- Carried out in Member States and Eurostat
- Light Peer Reviews in CC and some potential candidates
- Peers are experienced statisticians from other MS

European Statistical System ESS

- (see separate presentation)
- Candidate countries are not members of ESS
- DGINS – candidate countries are invited

Thank you for your attention