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42. Further emphasises that in situations where the life or physical and mental health of a human rights defender might be at risk, Member States and EU delegations should also support and develop other protection tools and urgent response mechanisms; considers that this should be done in close cooperation with local human rights defenders and civil society;

43. Welcomes current cooperation between the existing protection mechanisms at European and international level, which could be further strengthened through systematic exchange of information and strategy, so as to ensure a better complementarity between all of them in terms of both sharing information for emergency cases and coordination for long-term support actions, e.g. through the use of a secure online platform accessible to all official stakeholders; welcomes in this respect the annual meetings organised by the Council of Europe as well as the 'inter-mechanisms' annual meetings organised by the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), with the aim of strengthening the interaction between international and regional mechanisms and institutions for the protection of human rights defenders; invites the existing taskforces on human rights defenders in Europe, within the framework of the Council Working Party on Human Rights and the Council of Europe - the latter being an initiative of the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights - to explore ways to work more closely together;

44. Calls, in the context of the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, for the EU institutions to establish an inter-institutional cooperation mechanism on human rights defenders; understands that the creation of such a mechanism could be eased by the setting up of focal points for human rights defenders in all the EU institutions and organs, with such focal points working in close cooperation with those responsible for human rights and democracy in EU missions and delegations;

45. Invites the Council and Commission to explore the possibilities of creating an alert system mechanism to be shared between EU institutions and all other protection mechanisms;

46. Believes that information sharing would also be facilitated by the creation of specific data bases, or 'log books', in order to keep track of activities undertaken, especially in regard to individuals, while guaranteeing full respect for confidentiality;

47. Calls on the Commission to follow and monitor regularly the short- and long term implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and report back to the Human Rights Subcommittee of the European Parliament;

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48. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and to EU Member States.

Quality of statistical data in the Union and enhanced auditing powers by the Commission (Eurostat)

P7_TA(2010)0230

European Parliament resolution of 17 June 2010 on the quality of statistical data in the Union and enhanced auditing powers by the Commission (Eurostat)

(2011/C 236 E/11)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2010)0053),

— having regard to Commission proposal (COM(2005)0071 – 2005/0013(CNS)),

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- having regard to the opinion issued by the European Central Bank (ECB) on 31 March 2010 (CON/2010/28),
 - having regard to the report by the Commission on Greek Government Deficit and Debt Statistics (COM(2010)0001),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (A7-0227/2009),
 - having regard to the question of 4 June 2010 to the Commission on the quality of statistical data in the Union and enhanced auditing powers by the Commission (Eurostat) (O-0080/2010 – B7-0314/2010),
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Commission (Eurostat) has so far lacked the necessary investigative powers to improve the quality of European statistics,
- B. whereas recent events have demonstrated that a properly functioning statistical system is a precondition for reliable data; whereas the political will to comply with common rules and make real progress towards stronger statistical governance has been lacking,
- C. whereas the Greece case is a clear illustration of the lack of quality fiscal statistics in the Union: it shows that progress since 2005 has not been sufficient to bring the quality of Greek fiscal data to the level reached by other Member States,
- D. whereas the 2005 Commission proposal already called for more audit-style powers for the Commission (Eurostat) and for commonly agreed minimum standards for statistical data,
- E. whereas in 2005 several key Member States were opposed to a strengthening of Eurostat's powers, despite the already clear evidence that the rules and their implementation were inadequate,
- F. whereas it is commonly understood that the current situation has to be improved and that the Commission (Eurostat) needs to be allocated more investigative powers; whereas there seems to be a lack of political will, particularly in the Council, to take the necessary steps to enforce the powers of the Commission (Eurostat),
- G. whereas the human resources required to provide a comprehensive and detailed overview of national statistics are clearly lacking, a problem which needs to be addressed at both EU and national level,
- H. whereas it has been demonstrated that reliable data on social security funds, hospital arrears and transactions between governments and public enterprises is crucial,
1. Calls on the Council to ensure that political undertakings in the area of statistics are honoured and to accept in full the Commission proposal (COM(2010)0053) and the relevant amendments tabled by the ECB and Parliament;
 2. Calls on the Council to strengthen the role and independence of the Commission (Eurostat);
 3. Calls on the Council and the Member States to accept that the Commission (Eurostat) should be given responsibility to carry out unannounced inspections in Member States to verify statistical data;

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4. Regards the Commission proposal as the minimum needed in the light of the Greece case; emphasises that the reporting obligations need to be enforced in all Member States and that reporting should include details of any previous off-balance-sheet activity;
5. Calls on the Member States to end the use of off-balance-sheet debt structures of any kind; calls on the Commission to propose binding legal measures to oblige Member States to end the practice of using off-balance-sheet debt structures of any kind;
6. Calls on the Commission to state what powers and staff it needs to carry out effective and real monitoring of national statistics in the medium and long term;
7. Draws attention to the tendency among Member States to keep certain liabilities off their balance sheets, in particular in respect of future payments necessitated by public-sector pensions and by long-term contracts with the private sector for the leasing or provision of public facilities; calls for a solution that ensures consistent and open disclosure of such liabilities in national statistics;
8. Calls on the ECB to cooperate closely with the Commission (Eurostat) to ensure the consistency of the Member States' statistics;
9. Calls on the Commission (Eurostat) to do its utmost to prevent methodological shortcomings and unsatisfactory administrative problems, as in the Greece case, from appearing again in any Member State;
10. Calls on the Council and the Member States to provide the Commission (Eurostat) with public finance data based on a standardised and internationally accepted method of accounting;
11. Calls on the Member States to provide the Commission (Eurostat) and the national statistical institutions with the necessary access and resources in order to make real checks on the underlying data possible;
12. Calls on the Member States which are already in or are applying for membership of the eurozone to allow the ECB to take part in unannounced inspections and to empower its staff to have access to any of their statistics;
13. Calls on the Member States to establish clear responsibilities as regards the production and compilation of statistical data; clear national responsibilities, including personal responsibilities, are a necessary requirement for the work for the Commission (Eurostat);
14. Calls on the Commission to tighten up the implementation of the European Statistical Code of Practice, which strengthens the independence, integrity and accountability of the National Statistical Institutes and of the Commission (Eurostat) with the aim of promoting the application of best international statistical principles, methods and practices by all producers of European statistics in order to optimise their quality;
15. Calls on the Council and the Member States to accept unreservedly the need for regular dialogue and in-depth monitoring visits by the Commission (Eurostat), so as to enhance monitoring of the reported data and provide permanent assurance of the quality of the data;
16. Calls on the Council to increase support for OLAF's work, which Parliament sees as playing an essential role in protecting the financial interests of the European Union and, thereby, EU citizens, as well as a major role in upholding the reputation of the European institutions; considers, therefore, that a human resources strategy which raises staffing levels and ensures that the current high staff quality standards are maintained should be drawn up;

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17. Calls on the Commission and the Council to involve the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board more closely as an independent adviser; the Advisory Board may assist the Commission (Eurostat) during its visits to the Member States;
18. Stresses that accurate statistics and improved verification of the reliability of aggregate data provided to Eurostat are essential prerequisites if any improved surveillance is to be effective;
19. Stresses that Eurostat's powers should be enhanced;
20. Considers that open and transparent statistical information should be a precondition for obtaining Structural Fund support;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Council, the President of the Eurogroup and the European Central Bank.

Gender aspects of the economic downturn and financial crisis

P7_TA(2010)0231

European Parliament resolution of 17 June 2010 on gender aspects of the economic downturn and financial crisis (2009/2204(INI))

(2011/C 236 E/12)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 October 2008 entitled 'A better work-life balance: stronger support for reconciling professional, private and family life', (COM(2008)0635),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 26 November 2008 on A European Economic Recovery Plan (COM(2008)0800),
- having regard to the Commission communication for the Spring European Council on Driving European Recovery of 4 March 2009 (COM(2009)0114),
- having regard to the Commission working document on Consultation on the future 'EU2020' Strategy of 24 November 2009 (COM(2009)0647),
- having regard to the Commission report of 3 October 2008 entitled 'Implementation of the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for pre-school-age children' (COM(2008)0638),
- having regard to the Commission report of 27 February 2009 on equality between women and men – 2009 (COM(2009)0077),
- having regard to the Commission report of 18 December 2009 on equality between women and men – 2010 (COM(2009)0694),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 7 June 2000 entitled 'Towards a Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005)' (COM(2000)0335) and the Commission's annual reports on equality between women and men in the European Union for 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 (COM(2001)0179, COM(2002)0258, COM(2003)0098, COM(2004)0115, COM(2005)0044, COM(2006)0071, COM(2007)0049 and COM(2008)0010) respectively,