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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

**on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament
and of the Council concerning European statistics on tourism**

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1. BACKGROUND

Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 concerning European statistics on tourism¹ ('the Regulation') established a common framework for the systematic development, production and dissemination of statistics on tourism in the European Union. It reflected the changes to the tourism economy and of tourist behaviour that had occurred since the entry into force of Council Directive 95/57/EC² and responded to the ensuing changes in user needs.

Article 7 of the Regulation states that, every 5 years, *'the Commission shall submit an evaluation report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the statistics compiled pursuant to this Regulation and, in particular, on their relevance and the burden on business'*.

A first evaluation report was issued in 2016³ and this is the second such report. It gives an overview of European statistics on tourism, in particular:

- the requirements laid down in the Regulation (Section 2);
- the rationale for the implementing measures and delegated acts adopted since the first report (Section 3).

Moreover, it discusses how the Regulation is implemented, with reference to the established quality criteria for official statistics (Section 4), and looks at measures taken to reduce the burden on businesses (Section 5). Finally, the report explores the possible revision of the current legal framework with a view to modernising tourism statistics (Section 6).

2. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

- The Commission, in close cooperation with its partners in the European Statistical System, executes the Regulation effectively. Recently, the statistical framework also helped to meet the needs of users monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector.
- The tools for adopting delegated acts helped to improve the level of detail and timeliness of the available data.
- Pilot studies on tourism satellite accounts (TSA) were conducted every 3 years, which may lead to the integration of TSA when modernising the Regulation.
- New sources and methods were actively and successfully explored, and previously unavailable data is being published as experimental statistics.

3. KEY INFORMATION ABOUT EUROPEAN STATISTICS ON TOURISM

The EU tourism ecosystem encompasses globalised and interconnected value chains. These comprise off-line and on-line information and service providers (tourist offices,

¹ Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism and repealing Council Directive 95/57/EC (OJ L 192, 22.7.2011, p. 17).

² Council Directive 95/57/EC of 23 November 1995 on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism (OJ L 291, 6.12.1995, p. 32).

³ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on tourism (COM/2016/489 of 29.7.2016).

digital platforms, travel technology providers), travel agents and tour operators, accommodation suppliers, destination managing organisations, attractions and passenger transport related activities (for example, trips made by air, trains and cruises). Very small companies operate alongside large multinational corporations, and private and public capital are intertwined⁴.

Tourism refers to the activity of visitors taking a trip to a main destination outside their usual environment for less than a year, for any main purpose, including business, leisure or another personal purpose, other than to be employed by a resident entity in the place visited. The EU's tourism sector is important for the economy of all Member States and represents a significant source of employment. Any appraisal of its competitiveness requires a good knowledge of the volume of tourism, its characteristics, the profile of the tourist, the level of tourism expenditure and the benefits for European economies.

Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 is the primary basis for official, harmonised statistics on tourism supply and demand. The Regulation covers, on the one hand, data on capacity and occupancy of EU tourist accommodation establishments and, on the other, data on trips made by EU residents. The former is generally collected from businesses in the accommodation sector (monthly and annual data transmitted by Member States to the Commission, in the form of aggregate tables); the latter is generally collected via household surveys (annual data transmitted by Member States to the Commission, partly in the form of aggregate tables, partly in the form of micro-data).

Comprehensive datasets, summary tables and articles are available on the Eurostat website⁵.

In addition to the statistics disseminated in the context of the Regulation, Eurostat complements the data on tourism flows with information on tourism-related employment and on the economic dimension of tourism industries, based on existing labour market statistics or structural and short-term business statistics. Every 3 years, Eurostat also publishes a report on tourism satellite accounts, including a methodological state-of-play on the implementation of TSA across Europe, as well as data⁶.

4. DELEGATED ACTS AND IMPLEMENTING MEASURES

Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 empowers the Commission to adopt delegated acts:

- amending the definitions to reflect changes to international definitions (Article 2(2));
- amending the deadlines for data transmission to take account of economic, social and technical developments (Article 9(5)); and
- adapting the Annexes to take account of economic, social and technical developments.

However, the Commission may not change provisions in the Annexes on the optional nature of the required data and on limits to its scope (Article 3(2)).

During the reporting period, the Commission adopted two delegated acts:

⁴ Commission Staff Working Document on 'Scenarios towards co-creation of transition pathway for tourism for a more resilient, innovative and sustainable ecosystem' (SWD(2021)164 final of 21.6.2021).

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/tourism> (available only in English, French and German).

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/7870049/10293066/KS-FT-19-007-EN-N.pdf> (2019 edition, English only).

- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/1681⁷; and
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/1569⁸.

The former improved the relevance and timeliness of European statistics on tourism, given the changed user needs since the adoption of the Regulation in 2011. The latter aligned the Regulation with the United Kingdom being a non-EU country (third country) since 1 February 2020.

A report on the exercise of the power to adopt delegated acts⁹ was submitted by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council in February 2021.

Regulation (EU) 692/2011 stipulates that the Commission is to define, in the form of implementing acts, the arrangements for and structure of the quality reports (Article 6(4)) and the practical arrangements for the transmission of data (Articles 9(2) and 9(3)).

During the reporting period, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1179¹⁰ was adopted to align Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1051/2011 with the amended requirements laid down in the above-mentioned Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/1681.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

Under Regulation (EU) No 692/2011, Member States collect, compile, process and send harmonised statistics on tourism supply and demand. The Commission (Eurostat) assesses the quality of the data it receives and publishes it on the Eurostat website in the form of predefined tables, multi-dimensional databases and analytical articles. This section evaluates the implementation of the Regulation based on standard quality criteria for European statistics.

Based on the most recent user satisfaction survey carried out by Eurostat (2020)¹¹, 75% of the respondents (n=180) rated the overall quality of European statistics on tourism as ‘very good or good’ and 19% as ‘adequate’.

5.1. Relevance

Relevance refers to the degree to which statistics meet users’ current and potential needs.

⁷ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/1681 of 1 August 2019 amending Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on tourism, as regards the transmission deadlines and adaptation of Annexes I and II (OJ L 258, 9.10.2019, p. 1).

⁸ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/1569 of 23 July 2020 amending Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council, on the classification of countries of residence of guests staying at tourist accommodation establishments in the context of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union (OJ L 359, 29.10.2020, p. 1).

⁹ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council on the exercise of the power to adopt delegated acts conferred on the Commission under Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on tourism (COM/2021/86 of 25.2.2021).

¹⁰ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1179 of 16 July 2021 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1051/2011 as regards the aggregate tables and micro-data files for the transmission of the data (OJ L 256 19.7.2021, p. 89).

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4375449/Report_USS_2020.pdf

The entry into force of Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 improved the completeness and timeliness of tourism statistics and, as such, increased the data's relevance for users. The Commission continued to address user needs through the legal framework, but also in a more experimental, ad hoc approach.

On the one hand, a delegated act was adopted, which improved: the measurement of new phenomena such as the use of booking platforms; the timeliness of monthly accommodation statistics (reducing the transmission delay from 3 months or 8 weeks to 6 weeks); and the level of detail in annual accommodation statistics, by including data on NUTS3 regions and cities and monthly data for NUTS2 regions, allowing better monitoring of the seasonality of tourism.

On the other hand, voluntary or ad hoc initiatives were initiated to make data available on TSA, or to allow responses to urgent user needs (e.g. monthly data by guests' country of origin, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic). In 2021, the Commission also released first experimental data on short-stay accommodation services booked through online collaborative economy platforms, collected directly from the platforms via agreements. The Commission also continued to explore innovative data sources and methods, to further improve existing statistics or to produce statistics and indicators with high policy relevance that were previously not available.

In terms of relevance, the main challenges for European statistics on tourism for the next 5 years are: a more in-depth assessment of tourism's economic importance via the statistical framework of tourism satellite accounting; measuring the sustainability of tourism; and embracing innovative approaches to producing tourism statistics.

5.2. Accuracy

Accuracy refers to the closeness of estimates to the unknown true values.

Member States generally coordinate the methodology for data collection based on national statistical systems and available sources, in line with the subsidiarity principle. However, the Regulation requires that 'Member States shall take any measures they deem appropriate to maintain the quality of the results' (Article 8).

To monitor data quality, the Commission subjects each dataset to strict validation procedures. Each year, the Member States send a metadata report covering the main quality aspects of the statistics sent to Eurostat. These metadata reports are publicly available on Eurostat's website¹².

Since the 2016 report, the Commission has explored alternative approaches to improve coverage of smaller players in the accommodation sector, who are often not covered by statistical business registers or administrative tourism registers. The appearance of online collaborative economy platforms boosted the importance of this segment of the short-stay rentals market; it also opened opportunities to measure the activity of these service providers via the digital footprint that they leave on the platforms that connect them with potential guests.

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/tour_occ_esms.htm (for Annex I of the Regulation, English only); https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/tour_dem_esms.htm (for Annex II, English only).

In 2020, the Commission signed agreements with four major international platforms¹³. In 2021, Eurostat released the first data pursuant to these agreements¹⁴.

Eurostat supports the Member States in exploring innovative ways to improve the quality of tourism statistics. This helped to improve statistics on tourism demand in several Member States by using auxiliary information from, for instance, mobile network operators or webscraping. Such initiatives will remain a priority for Eurostat, building on the reference paper *'Tourism statistics: early adopters of big data?'*¹⁵, published in 2017.

5.3. Timeliness and punctuality

Timeliness refers to the period between the availability of information and the event or phenomenon it describes. Punctuality refers to the delay between the date of release of the data and the target date (the date by which the data should have been delivered).

European statistics on tourism are generally released a few days after receipt of the data, subject to successful validation. Eurostat now publishes EU-27 aggregates for all series; if data is not available for all 27 Member States, estimation techniques are used as soon as data is available for at least 15 Member States that jointly represent at least 65% of the total value of an indicator during a previous reference period.

Regarding transmission deadlines, in 2020 less than 1 in 9 monthly datasets was not sent by the indicated deadline, and only 1 in 50 files arrived more than a week late. It should be noted that 2020 was the first reference year for shortened deadlines, following the entry into force of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/1681. The good timeliness of monthly accommodation statistics led to the inclusion of these series in European statistical Recovery Dashboard¹⁶ (established during the pandemic).

For the annual datasets, due 6 months after the end of the reference year, between 85% and 90% of the files arrive within the stipulated deadline. The more persistent cases are closely monitored by Eurostat and discussed with the national authorities at the appropriate level. Compliance reports are discussed with the Member States at regular intervals.

Further improvements of the timeliness remains on the agenda of the Commission (Eurostat).

5.4. Accessibility and clarity

Accessibility and clarity refer to the conditions and modalities by which users can obtain, use and interpret data.

All statistics are freely available on Eurostat's website. Data is available as pre-defined tables or as multi-dimensional tables that users can customise according to their research needs. Eurostat also makes customised extractions to address specific user requests; to foster transparency, such extractions are made available for the general public via the CIRCABC extranet.

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_194 (English, German and French).

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_3293 (English, German and French).

¹⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3888793/8234206/KS-TC-17-004-EN-N.pdf> (English only).

¹⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/recovery-dashboard/>

Besides the data tables, users can also consult regularly updated or ad hoc articles focusing on specific aspects of tourism, often accompanied by highly visible news items or news releases. Finally, Eurostat actively promotes releases on tourism statistics through its various social media channels.

5.5. Comparability

Comparability refers to measuring the impact of differences in applied statistical concepts, measurement tools and procedures where statistics are compared between geographical areas, sectors, or over time.

The Regulation established a common framework for the systematic development, production and dissemination of European statistics on tourism (Article 2). An underlying objective of this framework is to foster the harmonisation of concepts, definitions, classifications and methodologies. Eurostat and the national authorities responsible for tourism statistics discuss and align methodological issues in dedicated task forces, working groups or expert groups. On a day-to-day basis, recommended guidelines in the Methodological Manual for Tourism Statistics¹⁷ (Article 10) contribute to harmonised, comparable tourism data for the European Union. As a result, comparability over time and across countries and regions is fairly good.

5.6. Coherence

Coherence refers to the adequacy of data, so that it can be reliably combined in different ways and for various uses.

The statistics show a strong degree of coherence with data produced by national and international organisations. Cooperation between domains at Eurostat or within the European Statistical System contributed to the coherence of tourism statistics with related economic, business or labour market data. To this end, existing data from related domains is re-used for a more in-depth analysis of industries that are relevant for tourism. In this context, a further improvement of the coherence of sector level data from different Eurostat statistical series could improve the analysis of industries belonging to the tourism ecosystem.

In the future, a systematic implementation of tourism satellite accounts could also contribute to stronger coherence with, in particular, national accounts.

6. BURDEN AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS

The Regulation offers flexibility to national data compilers to choose the most suitable data sources (Article 8): surveys, administrative data and appropriate statistical estimation procedures. Burden and cost-effectiveness are typically significant parameters in the Member States' choice of data sources and methodology. Since the previous report, the potential of new data sources has continued to increase and Article 8 allows, in principle, the use of such innovative sources or methods as part of the production system.

Burden and cost-effectiveness often involve a trade-off with data quality. Annex I of the Regulation allows Member States to limit the scope of observation laid down in Article

¹⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/6454997/KS-GQ-14-013-EN-N.pdf/>

4(a) to include only establishments above a certain capacity threshold. This limitation of scope significantly reduces the burden imposed on the smallest businesses, but can also cause an under-coverage of this segment in official statistics. However, recent developments such as exploring data from online collaborative economy platforms helps to fill the data gaps in a more cost-effective way. Other innovative approaches currently being explored by Eurostat, in cooperation with the Member States, also have the potential to address the burden, while enhancing data coverage.

Finally, the use of rotating modules (data required every 3 years) and optional variables or breakdowns helps to limit the burden put on respondents.

7. OUTLOOK

The implementation of Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 has certainly provided users at international, national and subnational level with a solid, reliable, harmonised system of tourism information. However, ten years on, the tourism sector and the policy or societal priorities related to tourism have evolved. Furthermore, official statistics have entered the 21st century and are trying to move away from traditional, survey-based techniques and to modernise the production of statistics.

Therefore, the Commission (Eurostat) has started exchanging views with users and producers of tourism statistics to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current framework and improve the relevance of indicators. In parallel with this revision process, innovation initiatives have led to promising research on the use of alternative data sources and to the release of experimental statistics comprising previously unavailable indicators.

First discussions identified tourism satellite accounts and measuring the sustainability of tourism as important dimensions of any revision to the legal basis. It is not a coincidence that these topics were already highlighted in the Regulation, albeit as a call to draw up a programme for pilot studies in these areas (Article 5). In addition, the revision process should take account of the ongoing efforts to collect basic data from new and innovative sources with a view to improving the relevance, timeliness and coverage of the statistical framework.