Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 October 2019 establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples, amending Regulations (EC) No 808/2004, (EC) No 452/2008 and (EC) No 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1177/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98 (Text with EEA relevance)

REGULATION (EU) 2019/1700 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 10 October 2019

establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples, amending Regulations (EC) No 808/2004, (EC) No 452/2008 and (EC) No 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1177/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 338(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure[(1)],

Whereas:

(1) Statistical data and indicators are the backbone of responsible evidence#based policies. In the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the strengthening of economic governance, social indicators play an essential role in informing and supporting the Union’s key priorities. Those priorities relate in particular to inclusive and sustainable growth and job creation; social cohesion; the reduction of poverty, inequalities and social exclusion; the inclusion of people with disabilities, and equal treatment; and skills, mobility and the digital economy. In particular, social indicators are needed to provide a sound statistical basis for developing and monitoring the policies introduced by the Union and the Member States to address those priorities. High#quality social statistics are needed to improve the resilience of the Union and its cohesion targets and to preserve its welfare levels. Sound data are also of utmost importance as a bulwark against misinformation.

(2) To strengthen the social goals of the European semester, social statistics have a paramount role, and it is essential to improve the availability of social indicators in

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order to ensure that they are provided in due time for the relevant policy frameworks. Enhancing the social dimension of the European semester would improve the resilience of the Union and its cohesion targets, and would ensure that welfare levels are maintained.

(3) In line with the 'Beyond GDP' initiative, it is important to address social aspects of progress with strong indicators focusing on the situation of citizens, describing the distributions of material living conditions and inequalities as well as investigating better the multiple dimensions of quality of life.

(4) European social statistics should be provided on the basis of equal treatment of all types of users, such as policy#makers, public administrations, researchers, trade unions, students, civil society representatives including non#governmental organisations, and citizens, which should be able to access statistics freely and easily through Commission (Eurostat) databases on its website and in its publications. In that regard, the timeliness and user#friendliness of the Commission (Eurostat) website should be further improved.

(5) It is therefore of paramount importance that social indicators are of the necessary high quality, in particular in terms of their accuracy, timeliness, usability and accessibility, their relevance, their adaptability to new users' requests, as well as their comparability, coherence and efficiency. In particular it is essential to improve the timeliness of social indicators so that they are available in due time for the relevant policy frameworks, including the European Semester. Moreover, more accurate and timely indicators could significantly benefit the monitoring of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

(6) In order to assess the situation of households and persons, it is important to measure income and estimate the minimum level of resources required to participate adequately in society. It is therefore essential to improve data collection and the methodology of standardised indicators in order to provide reference budget estimations on a regional basis, as well as to aim to ensure better coverage of the populations concerned. Statistical data should provide a robust basis for the setting up of indicators adapted to the variety of possible users.

(7) Income is widely used when assessing the situation of households. However, it is also important to measure consumption, wealth and debts, including possible debts in foreign currency, both from a household and from a macroeconomic perspective. Moreover, poverty, in particular child poverty, is a multifaceted phenomenon which involves not only material living conditions, such as level of income, consumption, wealth and debt, but also health, education, and access to and use of services. Furthermore, in order to address unemployment adequately, in particular youth unemployment, and new employment trends, especially in the context of digital economy, it is important to have extensive, sound and comparable statistical data.

(8) European statistics relating to persons and households are currently collected on the basis of a number of legislative acts covering surveys on persons and households, demographic statistics, population and housing censuses and data mainly collected from administrative sources. Some data are also gathered from business surveys. Despite

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significant improvements in recent years, there is a need to further integrate and streamline the data collection for statistics in a more holistic manner, based on surveys conducted on persons and households throughout the Union. In order to obtain sound data for research and policy#making, it is essential to increase investment in high# quality, more accurate and holistic data collection, because sound data are a pre# condition for responsible policy#making.

(9) To improve data quality and efficiency, the use of administrative records should be encouraged to the extent possible. The possibility of using administrative sources for statistical purposes has already widened significantly, thanks to technological advances. The use of administrative sources should be further actively promoted in the area of social statistics, while always ensuring the quality, in particular the accuracy, timeliness and comparability of those statistics. Other data sources adapted to persons or relevant subjects which cannot be accessed through administrative records should also be maintained, while safeguarding the right to the protection of personal data.

(10) The Commission Communication of 10 August 2009 on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade emphasised the increasing use of multiple data sources and innovative data collection methods as well as the growing importance of harmonising statistical concepts and methods across domains. It called for a new generation of statistical law that would address broader areas.

(11) In 2011, the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) established by Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council[(2)] endorsed the Wiesbaden Memorandum on a New Conceptual Design for Household and Social Statistics, according to which the European surveys that provide data relating to persons and households should be streamlined, and additionally less frequent microdata collection should be used to complement those core social surveys. Furthermore, access to administrative data should be enhanced, and the re#use of existing data sources and access to new data sources should be developed at Union and national level.

(12) The European Statistical System (ESS) is committed to engaging all users in a proactive manner by meeting their demands in a responsive manner and to reinforcing cooperation between the Commission (Eurostat), the national statistical institutes (NSIs), the national central banks, the European Statistical Advisory Committee and the Union agencies. It is therefore of the utmost importance that input by all stakeholders, including policy#makers, researchers and academics, data producers, civil society and other interest groups, be duly taken into account when adapting and modernising the social surveys.

(13) Those developments need to be gradually streamlined and statistical law in the area of social statistics needs to be modernised in order to ensure that high#quality social indicators are produced in a more integrated, adaptable, flexible, efficient and timely manner, in order to respond to developments in society. At the same time, due consideration must be given to the needs of users, to the burden on respondents, to Member States' capacities and resources, to the reliability and accuracy of the methods used, to the technical feasibility of producing the statistics, to the time within which statistics can be available and to the reliability of the results.

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(14) In particular, none of the measures taken for the purpose of applying this Regulation should impose significant additional costs which result in a disproportionate or unjustified burden on the respondents and the Member States.

(15) Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 provides the general legal framework for European Statistics and Article 13 thereof establishes the European statistical programme. This Regulation sets up a specific framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples. It specifies the data and information to be collected by Member States and transmitted to the Commission (Eurostat), and the fundamental quality requirements to be met. It provides for more detailed technical specifications to be given in delegated and implementing acts. It allows the various data collections to be integrated with one another and with the use of administrative records, while consolidating and simplifying existing law, in accordance with the European statistical programme.

(16) Union law concerning social statistics based on data at individual level was adopted to respond to certain policy needs existing at the time of its adoption. The social area is, however, characterised by new and fast changing realities. New social circumstances and phenomena are emerging, which make it necessary to update the existing legal framework at Union level. This Regulation should therefore provide for a rich statistical base that adequately covers and reflects current needs and allows for the development and production of statistical data that are responsive to the future needs of policy-makers, users and the public at large, taking into account statistical comparability at international level. This Regulation should, in particular, provide for high flexibility for further developments in the field of statistics relating to persons and households. It is also essential that data collection be carried out using the latest technological changes.

(17) In order to better streamline and rationalise the reference framework for European social statistics based on data collected from samples, existing European statistics relating to persons and households based on data at individual level should be brought together under one framework. This would guarantee that European social statistics based on data collected from samples including the labour force, income and living conditions, health, education and training, use of information and communication technologies, time use and consumption domains are produced in a more consistent and coordinated way.

(18) In accordance with the objectives of this Regulation, the Commission should institute feasibility and pilot studies aiming to improve the quality of the data sets and social indicators. Such studies should cover data comparability, developing new methodologies, modernising data collection and meeting users' new demands, especially addressing populations that are difficult to reach, data on specific sub#populations, in particular those that are the most vulnerable, making available statistics at NUTS 2 territorial level, and producing data at detailed local level in a cost#effective and responsive manner. Member States should cooperate with regard to those feasibility and pilot studies and the Commission should be able to provide financial support for their implementation.

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(19) For the labour force and income and living conditions domains, in order to adapt to users' needs and new expectations, it should be possible to collect data on ad#hoc subjects at a specific time in order to allow the variables collected on a regular basis to be supplemented by complementary variables, highlighting unexplored aspects of the labour force and income and living conditions. In justified cases, it should be possible for those data also to cover topics not provided for in this Regulation.

(20) A core set of harmonised variables should be provided for every domain, with a view to better exploiting and disseminating the data available to the Commission (Eurostat) and, in particular, as a prerequisite for data matching and cross#cutting analyses. That practice is likely to help increase the analytical potential of data sets through the application of modelling techniques and achieve economies of scale.

(21) Data collection in the time use and consumption domains at Union level provides important multi#purpose data for Union policies affecting the lives of citizens. Time use data has proven to be of utmost importance in assessing, inter alia, gender equality in sharing work and care responsibilities or in measuring unpaid work. Consumption is also an important element of the material living conditions of the citizens. Data collection, which in both domains is carried out voluntarily by many Member States, on the basis of agreements and general guidelines, should be further developed and modernised. Data collection should be mandatory for the consumption domain and optional for the time use domain. Where implemented, such collection should, however, take place in accordance with this Regulation, so as to ensure comparability. In the long term, all Member States should aim to participate in data collection for the time use domain. Where possible, Union financial support should be provided for the modernisation and implementation of data collection in the time use and consumption domains.

(22) Due to their specificities, demographic statistics within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council[(3)], population and housing censuses within the meaning of Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council[(4)], business surveys, and statistics based mainly on administrative sources, are not covered by this Regulation and should be governed separately by specific frameworks adapted to their characteristics.

(23) Statistics are no longer considered to be just one of many sources of information for policy#making purposes, but instead play a central role in the decision#making process. Evidence#based decision#making requires statistics that meet high#quality criteria, as set out in Regulation (EC) No 223/2009, in accordance with the purposes they are serving.

(24) High#quality social data are not only necessary for policy purposes but also for research and as a component of sound information infrastructure. Researchers acquiring access to microdata for scientific purposes, granted on the basis of Commission Regulation (EU) No 557/2013[(5)] as regards access to confidential data without direct identifiers for scientific purposes, would benefit greatly from having better linked statistical data sets.