



## Advisory Council

### **Advisory report on Statistics Netherlands' publication policy**

*12 May 2017*

At the beginning of 2017 the Director General of Statistics Netherlands (CBS) requested the advice of the advisory council on the CBS' publication policy. The advisory council endorses the formulated policy.

In the opinion of the advisory council, the publication policy clearly elucidates the guiding principles behind the publication of statistical information. These principles are derived mainly from European legislation and regulations. At a time when there is so much discussion about the nature of facts, it is particularly important that society can rely on the information provided by the CBS and that its information is circulated widely and in a user-friendly manner to policymakers, academics, media and the public.

The advisory council considers it important that the CBS publishes its information in such a way that it meets the needs of those that will use the data, both in terms of its form and its content. This will promote greater use of the statistics, and hence the practical effectiveness of the provision of statistical information. In that context, the Director General determines when the results will be published. Notice of the time of publication of statistics is posted on the CBS website.

The advisory council recommends that the publication policy should be regularly evaluated, for example annually, also having regard to the experiences of stakeholders. The advisory council further recommends that a transparent complaints procedure should be drawn up.

This report on the publication policy also includes information about the pre-release policy. It is the view of the advisory council that the sole purpose served by the limited right of pre-release access under embargo granted by the CBS, whereby it discloses what information is provided to which parties, is to give others the opportunity to prepare for publication of the press release. The advisory council recommends publishing the pre-release policy separately on the CBS website and treating it as an addendum to the report on the publication policy. The council also recommends periodic evaluations of the pre-release policy.

In its annual report, the CBS reports on non-financial performance indicators. They include indicators relating to the timeliness of publication and to corrections of published reports. The advisory council recommends that ambitious targets should be formulated during the forthcoming review of the performance indicators. The council also recommends the further elaboration of a performance indicator based on the use of the statistical information provided by the CBS.

The council recommends basing the publication policy on the "comply or explain" principle.

The advisory council requests that the Director General publish this advisory report by posting it on the CBS website.

**The Hague**

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