



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 05.12.1997  
COM(97) 665 final

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE  
COUNCIL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR  
RESTRUCTURING THE SYSTEM OF AGRICULTURAL SURVEYS  
IN GREECE

**1996**

(Article 5, Council Decision 85/360/EEC of 16 July 1985)



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The plan for restructuring agricultural statistics in Greece was adopted in 1985 (Council Decision 85/360/EEC of 16 July 1985, as last amended by Council Decision 92/582/EEC of 14 December 1992) with the following aims:
  - to set up a technical and administrative structure at central, regional and provincial level, capable of running all operations connected with agricultural statistics in both the present and the future;
  - to improve the sampling frames, above all by compiling a register of farm holdings;
  - to install at central, regional and sub-regional level a computer system to input, check and process data;
  - to put into practice, on a progressive basis, the Community programme of agricultural surveys and statistics in order to provide the Community with the information it requires for implementing the CAP.
2. As laid down in Article 5 of Council Decision 85/360/EEC, the Commission submits to the Council an annual progress report on the programme, setting out all the applications put into practice, the action taken and the measures adopted **during 1996** by the competent authorities (Statistical Office and Ministry of Agriculture) in order to complete the programme.

## **II. PROGRESS MADE**

In 1996, the last year in which the programme was applied, the action taken to improve the system for collecting, processing and presenting data was completed.

This year the emphasis was on improving the sampling frames by conducting a special micro-census to update the register (see Annex 1).

The most serious problem encountered in the past few years was that of updating the register drawn up on the basis of the 1991 agricultural census.

The initial solution was to update a central register for the whole country for use by remote users, with an on-line connection via the telephone network. This solution was not found to be satisfactory, since it does not guarantee the accuracy of the recorded data and is prone to the problems inherent in a public telephone system.

The information-technology directorate therefore decided in 1996 to set up local registers to be maintained by the staff of the local statistical offices and used as a basis for updating the central register in Athens.

ESYE (Greek National Statistical Institute) is able to confirm that all agricultural applications can both run and produce results at local level, wherever the methodology

permits. The applications were designed according to the client/server approach of the LAN of the local office, which comprises two to eight workstations, depending on the capacity and requirements of the office concerned. It should be stressed that all applications are designed for processing at local level, so that they can be used immediately to supply local information as soon as the methodology allows.

Given the continuous growth in the number of tasks, particularly of the staff of the local offices but also in the changes in the roles and objectives of the staff at the central office, the new system imposed new training requirements. We therefore drew up special courses to train and inform the staff dealing with agricultural statistics. These included continuing training and information for the staff supporting the geographical applications in the central and local offices, enabling them to specialise in the conduct and processing of agricultural surveys using modern methods.

Large-scale seminars were organised in 1996 on the special survey for updating the register: inspectors from all prefectures first attended seminars at two training centres in Athens and Saloniki; they themselves then organised local seminars to inform the assistant inspectors and interviewers taking part in the survey.

Finally, to complete the agricultural statistics restructuring programme and set up the new statistical information system, a major seminar entitled "**Agricultural statistics in Greece and the EU - developments and prospects**" was organised in Athens at the end of 1996 by the ESYE Secretariat General, the Ministry of Agriculture and Eurostat, and was attended by all employees involved in producing statistics in the **central and local offices** and the two organisations (the ESYE Secretariat General and the Ministry of Agriculture) and by users from various organisations in the agricultural policy domain, universities, research institutes etc. The aim was to make the new Greek agricultural statistics system known and to bring into contact those involved in producing statistics, enabling them to recognise their role within the production chain, express opinions and make proposals. Speakers from the Commission, the Member States and Greece dealt with the following subjects:

- ◆ the CAP and the need for statistics;
- ◆ agricultural statistics in the EU context;
- ◆ Greek agricultural statistics and the need for a national strategy;
- ◆ use of and prospects for the register of farm holdings.

The aim was to make the participants aware of the equivalent systems in the Member States, the new requirements arising from the CAP and the future of agricultural statistics.

This seminar also gave the various users an opportunity to get to know the results and capabilities of the new system and to exchange opinions and proposals, which will lay the foundations for permanent dialogue on the development and continuous improvement of the system.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

The new system has proved to work very satisfactorily. It is a modern system of statistical information able to provide, on time and with a degree of reliability, the data needed to meet national and Community requirements in the agricultural sector. The demonstration carried out in Lamia showed it to be a flexible and open-ended system capable of meeting the requirements of the future.

## ANNEX 1

### 1. REGISTER OF FARM HOLDINGS

The basic framework for the conduct of surveys is the register of agricultural holdings, drawn up from the 1991 agricultural and livestock census 1991, containing some 860 000 holdings active in agriculture, stockrearing or both and exceeding a given area threshold or a number of head of stock.

The design and management principles of the register are based on the procedure developed by Eurostat over the past few years to standardise the definitions, contents and management methodologies of registers and thus improve the comparability and quality of the data.

The main principles on which the register is based are:

- ◆ precise and individualised recognition of farm holdings;
- ◆ geographical referencing of holdings (address of the holding if it is a legal person or permanent address of the owner if he or she is a natural person);
- ◆ information on the presence and size of certain holding characteristics;
- ◆ capacity for individually recording and classifying farm holdings on the basis of characteristics.

When selecting the variables for the register we took into account the need, in annual surveys *inter alia*, for predetermined variables for stratifying holdings for sampling purposes and the need to update the list of holdings to be included in the future agricultural census.

The register is updated with the help of a mechanism for updating these variables, using data from internal and external sources.

The most important internal source is the results of annual sample surveys of a certain percentage of the holdings in the register, investigating certain changes affecting the holdings (births, deaths, changes in size class) and the specific characteristics of each survey.

External sources include administrative sources such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Economy etc.

Updating from administrative sources presented problems. The connection between the registers was unsatisfactory because there was no «key» enabling holdings to be linked one-to-one.

ESYE, which aims to keep a qualitative register guaranteeing the quality of the statistical information produced, conducted a special census in 1996 to update all the relevant variables for the whole of the register and to collect «key» information (identity card and tax registration numbers) to provide the necessary link with administrative data.

## 2. *SPECIAL SURVEY FOR UPDATING THE REGISTER*

The special survey to update the register was a census conducted in all municipalities in Greece from August to October 1996, based on the register of farm holdings drawn up from the 1991 census of agriculture and stockrearing. The data were collected by means of interviews with farm managers at their permanent residences. To locate new holdings we used the administrative registers and archives of agricultural directorates and cooperatives and various other organisations. This was made possible by the new Law No 2392/96 «on access to administrative sources and registers by the Secretariat General of the Greek National Statistical Institute (ESYE), on the statistical secrecy committee and on rules for the conduct of censuses and statistical work, etc. ».

Great care was taken in conducting the survey, the aim being to guarantee the quality of the data collected and achieve the desired result, i.e. an up-to date register and a quantitative framework for designing surveys.

### **The action and measures taken to this end were as follows:**

- a pilot survey in 1995, the results of which were used to optimise the targeting of the 1996 survey (micro-census);
- questionnaire design ;
- special information meetings were organised in the central and local offices at which oral and written instructions were given on how to complete and process the questionnaires;
- a central working party was set up at ESYE and local working parties were set up in municipalities with over 1 000 habitants and a large number of farm holdings;
- a major promotion campaign for the survey, using posters, information brochures and daily national television and radio broadcasts, ran throughout the survey period;
- special programmes were designed for the processing and quality control of the data collected by survey at local and national level;
- the survey was conducted and processed in accordance with the decentralised agricultural survey system. The data from the register of each prefecture were subjected to quality control at national level once the survey was complete. Lastly, the register was updated on the basis of these data.

## ANNEX 2

### *TIMETABLE REMINDER*

The plan was initially to have been completed in five years (1986-1990), with geographical dissemination starting in Thrace-Macedonia in 1986 and finishing on the Island of Crete in 1990. Following two extensions granted to Greece by Council Decisions 90/386/EEC and 92/582/EEC, however, the deadline for completing the plan was put back to 1996. The new timetable is as follows:

1986	-	first year	:	Macedonia;
1987	-	second year	:	Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, Epirus;
1988	-	third year	:	Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, Epirus, Central Greece and Ionian Islands;
1989	-	fourth year	:	Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, Epirus, Central Greece, Ionian Islands and Peloponnese;
1990	-	fifth year	:	Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, Epirus, Central Greece, Ionian Islands, Peloponnese and Crete;
1991	-	sixth year	:	Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, Epirus, Central Greece, Ionian Islands, Peloponnese, Crete, Aegean Islands (North and South);
1992	-	seventh year	:	First trial of the new system throughout Greece;
1993	-	eighth year	:	Creation of a sampling frame based on the 1991 general agricultural census; Extension of remote sensing to the whole of mainland Greece and the Island of Crete;
1994	-	ninth year	:	Synergies set up between the central and regional technical and administrative infrastructures installed by the Statistical Office and the Ministry of Agriculture respectively to manage the programme of surveys conducted by the Statistical Office;
1995	-	tenth year	:	New system established throughout Greece;
1996	-	eleventh year	:	Monitoring and critical analysis of the results achieved during the first year of proper application.

In November 1997 the Commission will submit to the Council a report on the implementation of the programme, including the results achieved.



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## ANNEX 3

### *1996 EXPENDITURE*

Ministry of the National Economy  
ESYE Secretariat General

Ministry of Agriculture

Expenditure category	Amount paid		1996 commitments to be paid in 1997	
	GRD	ECU	GRD	ECU
<b>I. INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS</b>	<b>629 906 908</b>	<b>2 078 983</b>	<b>181 465 160</b>	<b>598 918</b>
1. Development of computer system	430 448 413		181 465 160	
i) ESYE Secretariat General	329 719 674		181 465 160	
ii) Ministry of Agriculture	100 728 739			
2. Technical and scientific support	25 000 000			
i) ESYE Secretariat General				
ii) Ministry of Agriculture	25 000 000			
3. Miscellaneous expenditure	174 458 495			
i) ESYE Secretariat General	91 740 400			
ii) Ministry of Agriculture	82 178 095			
<b>II. EXPENDITURE ON STATISTICAL APPLICATIONS</b>	<b>894 971 235</b>	<b>2 953 817</b>	<b>73 707 020</b>	<b>243 267</b>
i) ESYE Secretariat General	757 396 624		51 574 391	
1. Animal surveys	42 100 000			
2. Wine-growing	13 000 000			
3. Fruit trees	27 466 419			
4. Cereals	16 000 000			
5. Special register-updating survey	541 054 502		51 574 391	
6. Restructuring of agricultural statistics	8 259 747			
7. Annual survey of agriculture	109 524 956			
ii) Ministry of Agriculture	137 574 611		22 132 629	
1. Statistical applications	72 094 331			
2. Remote sensing	65 480 280		22 132 629	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 524 878 143</b>	<b>5 032 800</b>	<b>255 172 180</b>	<b>842 185</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>1 780 050 323</b>	<b>5 874 986</b>

**1 ECU = 302,988 GRD**





# DOCUMENTS

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Catalogue number : CB-CO-97-683-EN-C

ISBN 92-78-28676-1

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