External statistics in the age of geoeconomics: challenges and opportunities in a changing global landscape

Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics, European Central Bank, Narodowy Bank Polski

Krakow, Poland, 28-29 May 2026

CALL for PAPERS

28 October 2025

The **External Statistics Conference (ESC) brings together users and producers of external statistics**. It aims at providing a platform for central banks, statistical offices, international organisations, academia and other stakeholders to discuss novel analytical issues, identify measurement challenges and exchange innovative best practices in the field of external statistics. The conference also includes keynote speeches from policy makers and academics, round table discussions and thematic sessions, as well as the "ESC Data Challenge", a competition showcasing innovative data projects by university students.

Building on past events, in Lisbon (2020) and in Madrid (2024), the third edition of the ESC will focus on the **central role played by external statistics to analyse and measure an increasingly fragmented and uncertain geoeconomic environment**. This event aims at shedding light on the evolving dynamics affecting international trade and finance against the backdrop of heightened geopolitical tensions, in the context of the methodological changes and measurement challenges to address the growing multidimensional user needs, as well as the opportunities offered by innovative data techniques. Papers presented at the conference will be published in a special edition of the IFC Bulletins.

The call for papers welcomes submissions related to the following **three main themes**:

1. **Evolving cross-border dynamics in a fragmented and uncertain world**
    *   Analysing **global trade and supply chains** trends, including reshoring, decoupling and trade restrictions.
    *   Capturing the main developments in **global finance**, particularly the key shifts in international financial flows and roles of international currencies as well as the growing importance of non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs).
    *   Investigating the **interplay of real and financial factors**, especially in relation to the complex activities of multinationals (MNEs).

- Assessing the **environmental impact of cross-border activities**, including carbon emissions linked to trade and foreign direct investments.

2. **Evolving statistical frameworks and challenges to address multifaceted user needs**
   - Advancing **statistical frameworks** to better capture the impact of globalisation on economic activity, international trade and investment, in particular in relation to the latest update of the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM7).
   - Measuring increasingly relevant cross-border phenomena, such as **digital trade**, cross-border e-commerce, trade in intellectual property, decentralised finance, digital currencies and crypto assets.
   - Enhancing external statistics to better assess issues linked to **wellbeing**, **environmental, social and governance** (ESG) factors, as well as to migration patterns.

3. **Leveraging innovation to enhance the compilation, communication and relevance of external statistics**

   - Using **innovative approaches**, such as **artificial intelligence**, to enhance the production of external statistics, in particular in terms of data quality, sharing and protection.
   - Improving the **communication** of external statistics, notably to ensure greater accessibility and usability by broader audiences.
   - **Linking data sources** to support analytical and/or compilation tasks (e.g. micro-macro, administrative or geospatial data integration).
   - Strengthening **global collaboration** between central banks, statistical authorities, international bodies and other relevant stakeholders to promote better data consistency and exchange of information.

Submission of papers

Please send the title and abstract (maximum 400 words) of your paper by **15 January 2026** to the email addresses below. The other **important deadlines** are:

- 15 February 2026: Acceptance notification;

- 15 April 2026: Submission of full papers;

- 30 April 2026: Submission of presentations;

- 1 July 2026: Final paper submission for publication in the special edition of the IFC Bulletin series

Contacts:

- IFC Secretariat: IFC.secretariat@bis.org

- NBP: external.statistics.conference@nbp.pl

- ECB: external_statistics_conference@ecb.europa.eu

Details on the ESC Data Challenge

The **ESC Data Challenge** is a competition open to **university students** (Bachelor's and Master's level) to showcase **innovative uses of external statistics**. Participants are invited to use data from the **ECB Data Portal** and the **BIS Data Portal** to create an innovative project in the field of external statistics that demonstrates **data visualisation, analysis and communication** skills. The winners will be invited to present the project at the **ESC in Krakow, Poland**.

Submissions are open until **31 January 2026** and the winners will be announced by **end-February 2026**.

For detailed information on the competition, including submission guidelines and eligibility criteria, please visit:
https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/conferences/shared/pdf/ESC3%20Data%20Challenge.pdf

Contact for the ESC Data Challenge

- ECB: external_statistics_conference@ecb.europa.eu