

Gent Sejko: Main challenges facing statistics

Welcome address by Mr Gent Sejko, Governor of the Bank of Albania, to the Joint Bank of Albania-European Central Bank Regional Statistical Seminar, Tirana, 13 June 2018.

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Dear participants!

It is a pleasure for me to be here today and open the regional seminar on central bank statistics.

On behalf of the Bank of Albania, I would like to thank the European Central Bank for co-organising this seminar in Tirana. Also, I would like to welcome all representatives of central banks from the region and beyond, and all the participants in this seminar.

The series of regional statistical seminars, organised by the ECB, provides an important forum for exchanging views on statistical requirements, formulating policies and discussing most recent developments on central bank statistics-related issues.

We are all aware that having reliable, adequate, and timely data is a key element for decision making.

Ten years on, after the latest financial crisis, the fundamentals of the global economy, the architecture of the global financial system and the decision-making process are set on a constant restructuring process. The statistical function faces similar challenges. While the economies, markets and institutions develop, pressures mount on statistics to “follow the trend and pace” of such development. The emergence of the so-called “information gap” is inevitable in a fast-changing world, but our duty as statistical agencies is to increase speed up efforts to close this gap as soon as possible.

In the following, I would like to focus on the main challenges facing statistics, especially those that are pivotal for the successful realisation of the central bank functions. Overall, the crisis revealed the need for richer and more effective statistics, to serve both the monetary policy and the macro-prudential policy.

Like never before, it is necessary for us to be informed and analyse economic data on several dimensions and at a granular extent.

The financial sector’s growth and complexity highlight the importance of safeguarding financial system stability, as an essential element of central bank functions. The objective of financial stability has existed since the very establishment of the central bank institution. But, in the last decade, there is a clear focus on identifying potential threats to financial system stability, and constant attention on minimising them.

Likewise, achieving and maintaining price stability through monetary policy has changed. Economic and financial analyses realised in central banks are becoming increasingly dependent on complex models, which enable a simultaneous analysis of the real economy, financial markets and interaction with foreign trading and financial partners. Therefore, the quality and reliability of the statistical information becomes particularly important.

In response, in recent years, the Bank of Albania has worked across several dimensions to enrich and enhance the statistical information.

Since June 2017, Albania has been implementing the IMF’s Enhanced General Data Dissemination e-GDDS) and is committed to fulfilling a series of strict requirements for the

production, dissemination and documentation of statistical data.

Moreover, in the framework of the European integration process, the Bank of Albania has intensified its work on methodological aligning of statistics with the international standards and their harmonization by *acquis communautaire*. Thus, the Bank of Albania has adopted the regulation on the reporting of interest rate statistics, approved for the first time the “Code of Practice on Statistics at the Bank of Albania”, and has started its work for the alignment of monetary and financial statistics reporting.

Modern statistics may not be perceived without the strong support of the information technology, regarding collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics. In this regard, in 2017, the Bank of Albania finalised the inclusion of all reporting entities to the Bank of Albania in the Electronic Regulatory Reporting System. We have also initiated a project on “Automated compilation and dissemination of external sector statistics”. This project is an important cornerstone to build a solid architecture for the further development of other statistical blocks.

Dear participants!

Economic data are becoming increasingly subject to research and analysis by policymakers and financial market participants. The mechanisms established by the European Commission are adding pressures on statistics to provide high-quality data.

On the other hand, inter-institutional coordination is the key to success for producing multi-dimensional statistical data. In this context, I would like to underline the importance of cooperation between the Bank of Albania and INSTAT, which has been very fruitful until now and I am confident it will continue to be successful in the future.

Concluding, I would like to extend my most sincere appreciation to the lecturers and contributors to the seminar, who will share their experiences with us. I hope that everyone will be able to benefit from the constructive discussions and contributions during this two-day seminar.