

Council Regulation (EC) No 23/97 of 20 December 1996
on statistics on the level and structure of labour costs

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 213 thereof,

Having regard to the draft Regulation submitted by the Commission,

Whereas, in order to carry out the tasks entrusted to it, the Commission must be kept informed of the level, trend and structure of employers' labour costs and employees' earnings in the Member States;

Whereas the development of the Community and the operation of the single market increase the need for comparable data on the level, trend and structure of employers' labour costs and employees' earnings, particularly as a means of analysing growth, competitiveness, employment, the progress of economic and social cohesion and for establishing reliable comparisons between the Member States and the regions of the Community;

Whereas the best method of assessing the situation as regards the level, trend and structure of employers' labour costs and employees' earnings is to produce specific statistics on labour costs, as was most recently done in 1993 pursuant to Council Regulation (EEC) No 3949/92 of 21 December 1992 relating to the organization of a survey of labour costs in industry and the services sector⁽¹⁾ referring to accounting data of 1992;

Whereas, because of the variations in the position and composition of expenditure by enterprises on wages and related employers' contributions, new Community statistics need to be produced based on accounting data for 1996 in order to bring up to date the results of the previous survey;

Whereas, pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 2223/96⁽²⁾ the European system of national and regional accounts in the European Community (ESA-95) is the term of reference for standards, definitions and accounting practices in the Member States in order to meet the Community needs; whereas this necessitates the establishment of complete, reliable and comparable statistical sources at national and regional level; whereas the levels of breakdown to be applied to the variables are limited to what is necessary to ensure comparability with previous surveys and compatibility with national accounts requirements;

Whereas the statistical information available in each Member State does not provide a valid basis for comparisons, in particular because of the differences between laws, regulations and administrative practices of the Member States; whereas Community statistics must therefore be produced and the results processed on the basis of common definitions and harmonized methodologies;

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Whereas, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the creation of common statistical standards enabling harmonized information to be produced is a proposed action the objectives of which can, by reason of its scale or effects be better achieved by the Community; whereas these standards will be implemented in each Member State on the authority of the agencies and institutions appointed to compile official statistics;

Whereas, pursuant to Council Decision No 93/464/EEC of 22 July 1993 on the framework programme for priority actions in the field of statistical information 1993 to 1997⁽³⁾, the production of Community statistics on labour costs is one of the priority actions of the statistical programme 1993 to 1997;

Whereas it may be acceptable for the countries which have administrative sources or other appropriate statistical sources to use these or perhaps link them up with a simplified questionnaire if this method is compatible with the definitions and methods approved and corresponds to the whole set of variables required;

Whereas it is necessary to simplify the administrative procedures for enterprises, particularly smaller and medium-sized enterprises, including the promotion of new technologies for data collection and compilation; whereas it may still be necessary to collect directly from enterprises the data necessary to compile labour cost statistics, using methods that are exhaustive, reliable and up to date, without giving rise for the parties concerned, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises, to a burden out of proportion to the results which the users of the said statistics can reasonably expect;

Whereas it seems appropriate to make provisions for exceptions for certain Member States, in order to take account of particular technical difficulties encountered by such States on the collection of certain types of information, provided that the quality of the statistical information is not affected;

Whereas the Committee on the Statistical Programmes of the European Communities established by Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom⁽⁴⁾, consulted by the Commission in accordance with Article 3 of the aforesaid Decision, has declared itself in favour of the present proposal,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

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- (1) OJ No L 404, 31. 12. 1992, p. 7.
- (2) OJ No L 310, 30. 11. 1996, p. 1.
- (3) OJ No L 219, 28. 8. 1993, p. 1.
- (4) OJ No L 181, 28. 6. 1989, p. 47.

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