

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

How can we further promote the worldwide compliance with professional, scientific and quality standards?

Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski

Irina Meinke

Aren't gardeners like statisticians?



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“The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising, and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better than they have ever done before.”

Vita Sackville-West

(*1892 - †1962, English author, poet and gardener)

Fundamental Principles with deep-seated roots

**... for 20 years,
the Fundamental Principles
have prospered greatly ...**



Fundamental Principles with deep-seated roots

1994:

**Adopted at global level by
the UN StatCom**



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Fundamental Principles with deep-seated roots

2013:

Reaffirmed with revised preamble by the UN StatCom

1994:

**Adopted at global level by
the UN StatCom**



Fundamental Principles with deep-seated roots

2014:
Endorsed by the UN General Assembly

2013:
Reaffirmed with revised preamble by the UN StatCom

1994:
**Adopted at global level by
the UN StatCom**



Periodic global reviews of implementation

Global reviews

- report the experiences of the UN Member States with the Principles
- assess the degree of implementation

Global review 2012/2013

- Which principle is the most and least implemented?



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Global review 2012/2013 (I)



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Most implemented:

Confidentiality (Principle 6)

- Confidentiality protection is part of the culture in statistical agencies in almost all countries
- Practices to prevent disclosure are well developed
- A large majority indicated that confidentiality is guaranteed in the statistical law

Global review 2012/2013 (II)



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Least implemented: Prevention of misuse and misinterpretation (Principle 4)

- Frequent vs rare reactions
- Some NSIs are not entitled to comment
- Most misinterpretations occur in the mass media
- Main reason is lack of methodological knowledge
- Regular vs irregular activities are conducted to educate users

Implementation guidelines to strengthen the Principles

- Give concrete recommendations for activities and practical examples
- Enhance the practical implementation of all Principles
- Address all UN Member States with their diversity and specific characteristics



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Actions recommended by the implementation guidelines (I)

Misuse and misinterpretation can be prevented by . . .

- authorising the head of the statistical agency to comment by defining clear provisions
 - e.g. in (supra)national policies or statistical laws
- commenting publicly, timely, unambiguously and transparently
 - e.g. letter, press conferences, website
- formulating a transparent publications policy
 - e.g. error policy



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Actions recommended by the implementation guidelines (II)

Misuse and misinterpretation can be prevented by . . .

- improving documentation on metadata
 - e.g. publishing manuals, guides, booklets
- releasing education programmes for users
 - e.g. press kits, seminars
- using incentives for users to refer to official statistics
 - e.g. “Open Copyright”



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A lot has been achieved “The crop is growing”



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However, a main concern remains:

- What does independence mean?
 - Scientific independence
 - Professional independence
 - Institutional independence
- And to what extent can it be implemented...
 - ...into the operational framework of a National Statistical Institute?

What remains to be done . . .

- Developing further the implementation guide
- Continuing the monitoring (every 5 years) at different levels using various modes
- Making further reflections on
 - how to deal with perceived violations
 - how to ensure full independence of national statistical systems and
 - how to extend the applicability of the Principles beyond the realm of official statistics



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... to further promote the
implementation of the Principles

... and to turn the growing crop into a
thriving (statistical) tree garden

Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski
Irina Meinke
Federal Statistical Office of Germany



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MANY THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski

Irina Meinke