



STEP

Statistics
Through
Eastern
Partnership

NEWS

STATISTICS THROUGH EASTERN PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

STEP CONSOLIDATES ITS ACTIVITIES IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

STEP is a three-year statistical cooperation programme for the six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. STEP is funded by the European Union (EU) and managed by Eurostat, the statistical office of the EU, as part of the EU's Eastern Partnership policy.

STEP has consolidated its activities since the previous newsletter issued last spring. It has not been an easy period for any of the partners. All travel and onsite training, workshops and study visits came to a grinding halt in March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Eurostat and Expertise France agreed to look into implementing activities online. Expertise France searched for the right software that met both the STEP requirements for interpretation between English and Russian and compatibility with the IT systems in the partner countries, as well as getting the short-term experts on board and adapting the training material to an online format. At the end of May, STEP was ready to implement its first webinar, which fittingly was on COVID-19 implications on labour market statistics. By the beginning of October, STEP had implemented 15 activities online. The offer of activities ranged from short webinars to trainings and workshops.

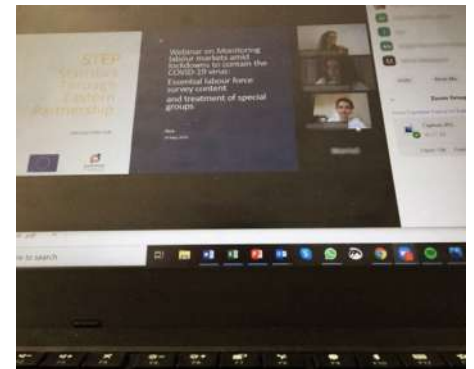
STEP also introduced so-called virtual groups. A virtual group is a combination of a webinar and an online discussion forum. In June, a virtual group was initiated on the coordination of the national statistical systems. The group met online every week for six weeks. Each session began with a presentation

on how the national statistical systems are coordinated in five EU Member States and the UK. Each presentation was followed by a Q&A session as well as a discussion among the participants.

Altogether, the participants were happy with the activities. One participant commented: "This is the best we can do at the moment and it works really well. Almost as good as being in the same room". The online format made it possible to include more participants. In particular, online activities made it possible for junior staff members and representatives from other producers of official statistics to participate. One of the participants said in the end-of-activity evaluation that, "As a young staff member, I would usually not be able to participate so I'm happy to have the possibility to listen and learn from the international experts". For financial reasons STEP activities are usually limited to two participants from each partner country but the online format allows for more participants.

STEP will continue to implement activities online for most of autumn 2020. STEP will resume onsite physical activities as soon as it is possible. However, the experiences with the online format have been good and it is possible that online elements will be integrated into regular training and workshop activities in so-called "blended learning". Blended learning can take the form of preparatory meetings before a training, workshop or study visit as well as follow-up sessions afterwards. Blended learning on the statistical software programme R is also expected to start in early 2021.

A dedicated website (www.eu-step.eu) for the STEP programme has been launched. Here you can learn more about STEP, its partner countries, its activities and follow news updates from the programme. You can also follow STEP on Twitter @EU_STEP.



Screenshot from COVID-19 webinar.

LABOUR MARKET DURING A PANDEMIC

Accurate and timely data are even more crucial during a pandemic to assess the impact on the labour market, for example. Eurostat, the European Union's statistical office, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have both issued guidelines on how to deal with the consequences of COVID-19 in labour market statistics.

The webinar on 'Monitoring labour markets amid lockdowns to contain the Covid-19 virus', was the first online regional event in STEP. It was a two-hour webinar to inform the participants on the guidelines and recommendations from Eurostat and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The short-term expert went through the main definitions of labour market status in labour market statistics and discussed how to treat people temporarily absent from the labour market due to furloughs. The short-term expert answered questions from the participants.

Simultaneous interpretation into Russian was provided. Altogether, there were around 30 participants from the six partner countries and they are now informed on how to manage the consequences of COVID-19 in labour market statistics, according to the recommendations laid out by Eurostat and the ILO.

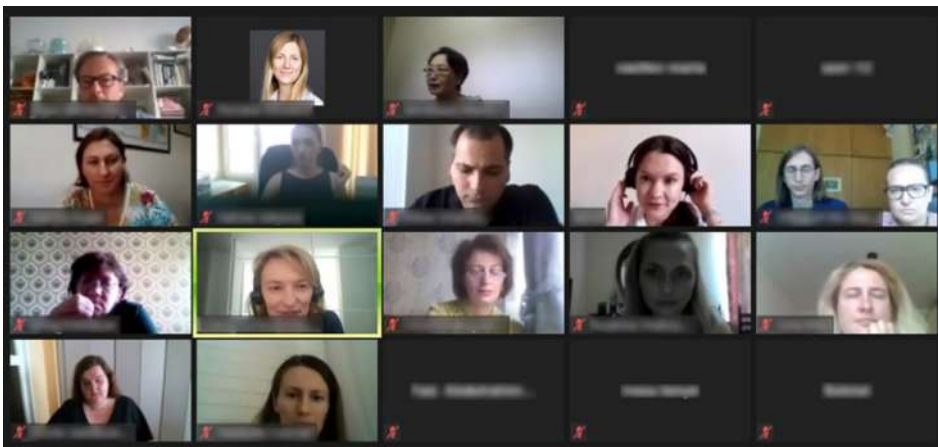
GENDER STATISTICS IS MORE THAN JUST DATA ON MEN AND WOMEN

On 7 July 2020, Statistics Lithuania hosted a one-day STEP workshop on gender statistics. The workshop was originally planned to take place in Vilnius but the COVID-19 pandemic prevented this so it took place online. The participants from the six partner countries learned about why gender statistics are so important and why gender statistics are more than just breaking down data on gender. The conference laid the foundation for a long-term work on gender perspectives in the partner countries. The European Institute on Gender Equality (EIGE), an autonomous body of the European Union, suggested that the participating countries start building their national Gender Equality Index (GEI), which is

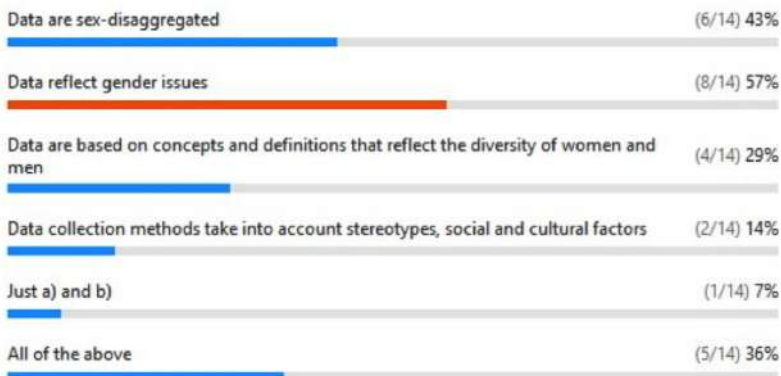


Experts online discussing the new law on official statistics in Georgia.

a composite index reflecting gender equalities at national level. The GEI is calculated for each EU Member State. It is an important tool to monitor the development of gender equality over time and to compare gender issues transnationally. The work on GEI in the STEP partner countries will be followed up with another workshop in 2021. Hopefully, by then it will be possible to implement the activity onsite rather than online.



1. Gender statistics are based on: (Choix multiple)



THE LAW ON OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN GEORGIA

Amidst the COVID 19 pandemic, STEP supported Geostat in drafting a new law on official statistics. An effective law on official statistics based on the generic law on official statistics is fundamental for high quality impartial data. The draft law will be submitted to the Government by Geostat at the end of this year. The STEP support was carried out entirely online through email and conference software. The STEP expert, Mr Mike Hughes, who was previously involved in work on the law on official statistics in Georgia as well as other experts contributed to its positive outcome.

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