

Organizational arrangements for producing statistics in Turkey

THE HISTORICAL AND LEGAL BACKGROUND OF TURKISH STATISTICS

THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

The modern Turkish State is a descendent of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire, founded in the late 13th century, was an extension of the Seljuk Empire. It was one of the major powers of its era, in terms of territory, military might, economics and technology. Its troubles in the 19th and 20th centuries derived from the gradual decline of its power during the preceding two hundred years and the consequent disintegration of what had once been a vast supra-national empire.

Collecting data has a considerably long past in Turkish history. We learn from historical documents that the Seljuks in Persia and the Ilhanids in India collected some information regarding population. The Ottomans conducted many censuses and regularly collected information on population and land. But in practice, statistical controls were usually relatively weak, and the compilations were never completed. Moreover, the counts were undertaken to determine labour and military obligations and were usually limited to the head of households, males of military age and landowners.

Statistical studies began in the early years of the Ottoman Empire. Special importance was given to collecting information about agriculture and land. For this purpose, between the years of 1326-1360 and 1360-1389 some land-population censuses were carried out. Later, between 1512-1520, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent initiated a general census and had it written in the constitution that it should be repeated every 100 years.

Mustafa Paşa, the chronicler, mentions a general land and population census taken between the years of 1566-1574 which covered the whole Empire. Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Paşa, the Grand Vizier between 1638-1643, appreciated the usefulness of censuses and decided to take a population census every 30 years to obtain regular information about the population and agriculture. Unfortunately, these censuses were not realized due to a several number of wars.

The first successfully completed population census during the era of the Ottoman Empire was conducted in 1831, during the time of Mahmut the 2nd. This census covered the entire Moslem and Christian male population in Thrace and Anatolia with the purpose of finding out the number of people who could be potentially soldier and tax sources.

After the census in 1831, other censuses were conducted, one in 1844 which included the female population, and another one in 1854 which could not be completed. In 1856, another census aiming at tax fixation covered Anatolia and Syria, only partially. Another general census planned for 1870 was not carried out. In 1874, a census over the Danube provinces was followed by the last census of the Ottomans. This census began after the 1878 Russian war and tried to estimate the populations of Tripolitania and Arabia. The regulations for population registration were issued, and the registries of births and deaths were established for the first time during the Ottoman Empire. The first Office of Statistics was formed in 1874 but closed in 1877.

From the beginning of the 20th century, statistics offices were opened with a centralized system in every ministry in Istanbul, and in every province and district. Additionally, a committee was formed to control and follow their studies. All statistical duties and services were brought into legal status by the formation of a central statistical council at Bab-ı Ali (the Central Office of the Imperial Government).

In 1918, a statistics department was established by a new law, and separate statistical activities were combined within the same office. But a year later, with the cancellation of that law, the old system was maintained until the Turkish Republic Period.

THE PERIOD OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

Based on scientific principles, modern statistical services began with the establishment of The Central Statistical Department in 1926 after the foundation of the Republic, functioning as a partially-centralized system.

In 1930, the title of the Department was changed to The General Directorate of Statistics, and The National Statistical System was changed to a centralized system.

In earlier years, statistical sources were relatively simple and data collection was confined to activities related to some of the relevant functions of the government with population censuses every five years, and with agriculture and industry censuses every ten years. Gradually the activities of the GDS widened in accordance with the increasing demand for new statistical data and statistics. Between the years 1926- 1960, it conducted 11 censuses and hundreds of surveys. In addition to those censuses and surveys, many continuous publications on economic, social and cultural subjects were published by this institute to provide necessary information.

With the introduction of Development Planning after 1960, it became clear that some statistical data needed for formulating and implementing economic plans were missing, and some of those available were inadequate. The need for improvements in the statistical system of the country became critical. Proposals were made for reorganizing the GDS into a State Institute of Statistics (SIS) with wider authority and responsibilities, and more resources. For this purpose, Law No. 53 was enacted in June 1962 to set up the State Institute of Statistics (SIS) under the Office of the Prime Minister.

For this reason, the State Institute of Statistics and its functions have been further reorganised and rearranged by the legal decrees numbered 219 and 357 in 1984 and 1989 respectively, taking into consideration Turkey's newly emerging needs and circumstances.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND DUTIES OF THE TURKISH STATISTICAL INSTITUTE (TURKSTAT)

With the growth and increasing complexity of the Turkish economy and the resulting societal changes, there has been an increasing interest in statistics as a means of monitoring many aspects of the country's development, including the functioning of government, at all levels. The almost universal recognition of the importance of statistics and the compliance studies to the EU standards have placed a heavy responsibility on the State Institute of Statistics. For this reason, a new statistical law has been prepared in compliance with the EU standards.

Turkish Statistical Law has been published in the Official Gazette No. 25997 on 18th of November, 2005 and entered into force on the same day. The new law has been adopted in accordance with our commitments on account of statistical system applied in EU countries. The new law has changed the name of our institute as the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT).

With the New Turkish Statistical Law some provisions concerning the organizational structure of the Institute are introduced and principles regarding the Official Statistics are set out. In accordance with the Law, preparation of a Multi-Annual Official Statistical Programme is proposed and implementation principles and authorities of the Programme are determined. On the other hand, functions and organization of the Statistical Council are re-arranged by including the Statistical Council into the organizational structure of the Institute.

STATISTICS LAW OF TURKEY

Duties and authorities of the Turkish Statistical Institute

ARTICLE 18- Duties and authorities of the Institute are as follows:

- a) to prepare the Official Statistics Programme,
- b) to organise the statistical activities specified in the Programme and ensure their realisation,
- c) to determine the statistical methods, definitions, classifications and standards to be used in the production of official statistics in line with national and international norms,
- d) to compile, evaluate, analyse and publish statistics in the field of economy, social issues, demography, culture, environment, science and technology, and in the other required areas,
- e) to provide scientific and technical explanations to the results of official statistics,
- f) to follow up the developments in scientific research techniques, and methods and information technologies in the field of statistics and to take relevant measures for the adoption of these developments,
- g) to determine the areas where statistical data is needed as well as data compilation methods in cooperation with the related institutions and organisations, by taking into account the national and international priorities,
- h) to follow the performance of tasks assigned by the Programme to the institutions and organisations in relation to official statistics, to examine statistics produced by these institutions and organisations in terms of their conformity to international standards, to perform quality control and to provide technical support and ensure coordination in these issues,
- i) to develop medium and long-term strategies and policies of the Institute within the framework of development plans, programmes, relevant legislation and principles adopted; to take measures to continually improve the organisational structure, service quality standards, and managerial services and processes in line with the strategic plans and annual objectives and targets of the Institute,
- j) to prepare Annual Monitoring Reports regarding the implementation of the Programme,
- k) to coordinate the establishment of a national and international information network and information flow system to ensure the storing of statistical information, its submission to users and development of systems pertaining to these areas,
- l) to identify the standards for the establishment of the national register systems, implement these standards, and to ensure their observance through inter-agency coordination,
- m) to follow, evaluate and publish, when needed, the indicators relating to other countries or country groups in order to make international comparisons,
- n) to draft, develop and implement research and technical assistance projects in cooperation with the national and international organisations and institutions for the production of data in the required areas and for the enhancement of existing technical capacity,
- o) to cooperate with other countries and international organisations, and to organise international meetings in the field of statistics,
- p) to perform other duties assigned by the Law.

The Presidency may establish national and international training and research centres regarding its working areas in cooperation with universities and other training institutions where the duties of the higher education institutions are reserved.

The new law has introduced the following changes:

- A framework was introduced to cover the official statistical activities of all public institutions including the State Institute of Statistics.
- The definitions, standards and the main statistical concepts used at international level were defined in legal documents so as to bind all the producers and users.

- New arrangements were made as regards statistical studies conducted by private organizations and persons.
- In line with the Official Statistics Program envisaged to be prepared every 5 years, the multi-annual programming system was adopted.
- The Statistical Council was formed.
- The State Institute of Statistics was reorganized and its name was changed to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT)
- The level of scientific and technical autonomy of the Institute was increased.
- The coordination role of the Institute was strengthened.
- The Council for Data Quality Control and Data Dissemination Council were formed.

The Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) which has undergone important processes since 1926 is an institution which plays a crucial role in the country's decision-making processes. In this context, TURKSTAT works in an effort to increase its scientific and technical level to the developed countries' standards, and improve the Turkey's modern statistical structure each and every day.

Developments in national and international arena lead to changes both in TURKSTAT's organizational structure and job descriptions, and the demand for statistics constantly increase. However, the resources to meet these demands are limited. For this reason, strategic planning is essential for the determination of priorities and scheduling of the required work.

The keystones of TURKSTAT

MISSION

With the aim of presenting economic and social structure of the country, to produce and disseminate statistics which are qualified, timely, reliable, objective and consistent with international standards respond to the expectations of decision makers, researchers and other users.

VISION

To become an information administrator of the country in the field of official statistics.

PRINCIPLES

Quality
Reliability
Timeliness
Up- to-dateness
Professional Expertise
Objectivity and Transparency
Confidentiality in Individual Data
Focusing on Data Suppliers and Users

Organization

Article 19- The Turkish Statistical Institute consists of the Statistical Council and The Presidency of the Turkish Statistical Institute.

Presidency

According to the Article 21, The Presidency of the Turkish Statistical Institute consists of headquarters and regional offices. The central organization of the Presidency comprises of main service units, advisory units and supporting units. The organizational chart of the Presidency is shown in Figure 1. Within the departments and regional offices of the Presidency, provisional or permanent groups or teams may be set up depending on the nature of works to be carried out. Reserving for their original staff positions, the President may appoint responsible persons to these positions.

The Regional Offices of TURKSTAT

The Regional Offices are charged with the compilation, assessment, quality control, analysis of the data produced by census and research activities held at national level and transfer to the headquarters as well as forming the infrastructure of the data at regional level and its production. The Regional Offices are directly responsible to the President of TURKSTAT for conducting all statistical activities and ensuring the coordination with local units. The Provincial Organization consists of 26 regional offices (NUTS Level 2).

REGULATIONS

The regulations issued to improve the work of the Institute after the enactment of Turkish Statistical Law are listed below:

- Regulation of Turkish Statistical Council
- Regulation of Promotion and Change of Title of Personnel of Turkish Statistical Institute
- Regulation of Foundation, Duties and Study Principles of Education and Research Center of Turkish Statistical Institute
- Regulation of Entrance Examination of TURKSTAT Expert Assistance and Examination of Competence of TURKSTAT Experts and their Appointment and Education
- Regulation of Procedure and Principles of Data Confidentiality and Confidential Data Security in Official Statistics
- Regulation of Foundation of Data Quality Control Board and its Study Procedure and Principles

- Regulation of Register Chiefs of Presidency of Turkish Statistical Institute
- Regulation of Discipline Chiefs of Presidency of Turkish Statistical Institute
- Directive about Persons doing Traineeship in Turkish Statistical Institute (including Application Form)

COMPILATION, DISSEMINATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Authority of TURKSTAT for requesting information, investigating the accuracy of information, controlling and storing.

In censuses and surveys that are related with the working areas of the Institute, the TURKSTAT Presidency is authorized to request directly the data and information which are deemed necessary for the production of official statistics, in all mediums and from all statistical units, in the form, period and standards specified by the Presidency. The Presidency is also authorized to investigate and control the accuracy of information or data, request additional information, and depending upon the results, to determine the genuine information and data.

All activities including the compilation and publication of data and information may be carried out and archived in electronic environments and electronic signatures may be used.

Access to administrative data and national register systems

In order to be used for the production of official statistics, the institutions and organizations are obliged to submit or open to the use of the TURKSTAT Presidency the records and other data files they compile, process and store regarding their working areas, and all kinds of maps and data obtained by remote sensing within the specified period and free of charge. Institutions and organizations are also obliged to establish, update and open to the statistical use of the Presidency their national register systems regarding their working areas in line with the standards defined by the Presidency.

Classifications

Institutions and organisations are obliged to use the statistical definitions and classifications introduced by the TURKSTAT Presidency.

Access to statistical results

TURKSTAT Presidency and institutions and organisations taken part in the Statistical Programme shall take the measures to ensure the easy and equal access to the official statistics by all users by obeying the standards and release calendar specified in the Programme. The statistical information compiled by the Institute cannot be given to any person or authority before this information is made open to public.

Confidential data

If the number of the statistical unit in any cell of the data table formed by aggregating the individual data is less than three or one or two of the statistical units are dominant even if the number of units is three or more, the data in the concerned cell is considered confidential. Confidential data can be published only as combined with other data so as not to allow any direct or indirect identification. The rulers of the institutions and organisations producing official statistics shall take all measures to prevent any illicit access, use or revelation of the confidential data.

The confidential data compiled, processed and preserved for the production of official statistics cannot be delivered to any administrative, judiciary or military authority or person, can not be used for purposes other than statistics or as an instrument of proof. Confidential data can be accessed only by the ones involved in the production of official statistics, to the extent that they need for performing their duties properly. Civil servants and other staff in charge of compiling and processing these data are obliged to comply with this rule. This obligation continues after the related personnel leave their duties and posts.

Civil servants violating bans and limitations shall be punished according to Article 258 of the Turkish Penal Code no. 5237.

Data or information obtained from sources that are open to all people shall not be deemed confidential and it ceases when a statistical unit gives written approval for the revelation of confidential data concerning itself.

Use of individual data

Individual data may be given with the written permission of the TURKSTAT Presidency after obscuring those parts which may lead to direct or indirect identification and on the condition that such data is used in scientific studies without any reference to distinct statistical units. People who are entitled to use individual data cannot give these data to third parties. Judiciary fines are imposed on real persons and organs and representatives of private law legal entities who fail to fulfil obligations.

Rights of the statistical units

The statistical units which are requested to provide data or information for the production of official statistics have the right to ask for compensation for all material and spiritual damages in case their confidential data is revealed without permission. In case of the TURKSTAT Presidency or other institutions and organizations are found faulty in the lawsuits brought against the revelation of confidential data, the personnel or other staff who is faulty, is held liable for the payment of compensation according to general rules.

Administrative fines

An administrative fine of 500 YTL is imposed on those who abstain from performing their duties in censuses without any valid excuse. Managers and senior level officers of public organizations and institutions who fail, without any acceptable

excuse, to send their personnel to trainings and meetings for which they are requested to attend or to issue permission for their participation to the performance of assigned duties are subject to an administrative fine of 500 YTL per each person that they did not give permission to go for such training or meeting, and this situation is reported to their respective organizations. Furthermore, those persons taking part in training courses to be assigned duties afterwards can be asked to refund the training costs in case they abstain from performing any duty, without reasonable excuse, that is related to training given earlier.

OFFICIAL STATISTICS PROGRAMME AND STATISTICAL COUNCIL

According to Article 3 of the Statistical Law of Turkey, No 5429, Official Statistics Programme establishes the framework for official statistics that shall be produced on subjects required at national and international level. Censuses and surveys are carried out within the framework of the Programme.

Taking into account the existing resources, the burden on the respondents and the cost-benefit analysis; the Programme covers statistics needed to determine and monitor the situations of the country in the fields of economy, social issues, demography, culture, environment, science, technology and any other required areas.

The Programme is drafted by TURKSTAT for a term of five years in line with the advisory comments of the Statistical Council and submitted to the Council of Ministers. The Programme shall be put into effect upon the publication of the decision of the Council of Ministers in the Official Gazette.

The first Official Statistics Programme (2007-2011) was decided by the Council of Ministers at 20/12/2006 and it was put into effect upon the publication of the decision in the Official Gazette No: 26392 of 30/12/2006.

TURKSTAT is in charge of implementing the Programme. In relation to the implementation of the Programme, TURKSTAT shall prepare annual monitoring reports to be submitted to the Statistical Council on the implementation of the Program and shall inform the public with appropriate means as it is stated in Article 3.

According to Article 4, in order to improve the quality of official statistics, statistics produced within the scope of Programme shall be prepared and implemented in accordance with the principles of reliability, consistency, impartiality, statistical confidentiality, timeliness and transparency.

The basic principles are as follows; ensuring the accuracy of official statistics, presenting the data to all users on the same time and on impartial base, respecting the principles of confidentiality and protecting the rights of the public to access the information.

It is stated in Article 6 that Official statistics are produced, disseminated and published by TURKSTAT and institutions and organisations specified in the Programme. The Programme shall clearly define the duties and authorities of the institutions and organisations regarding the compilation, evaluation and publication of data relating to official statistics in the context of their subject matter areas.

The work carried out by institutions and organisations in statistical areas which are not covered by the Programme and the results of censuses or surveys conducted by real persons and legal entities under special law shall not be considered as official statistics.

According to Article 20, the Statistical Council shall be established to advise on the preparation and implementation of the Programme and on the development and functions of the official statistics; to determine and assess the areas in which official statistics are needed and to provide opinions and suggestions for future works to be carried out.

The Council is composed of : Undersecretaries of Ministries; Undersecretary of the State Planning Organisation; Undersecretary of Treasury; Undersecretary of Foreign Trade; Undersecretary of Customs; Undersecretary of Maritime Affairs; President of the State Personnel Office; Governor of the Central Bank of Turkey; an academican to be designated by the Board of Higher Education from among those engaged in works related to the duties of the Institute; Head of Executive Board of the Union of Chambers and Stock Exchanges; Chairman of the non-governmental organization engaged in the field of statistics and having the highest number of academic staff in its membership and Chairman of the non-governmental organization having the highest number of real persons or legal entities that are engaged in surveys and researches with statistical outcomes.

The President and Vice-Presidents of the Turkish Statistical Institute are members as of right of the Statistical Council. The President of the Institute is also the chair of the Council and the Council meets at least once a year.

Working procedures and rules of the Council are laid down in the Statistical Council Regulation issued by the Council of Ministers.