

## Item 3i: International Comparison Programme

Switzerland takes note of the report of the World Bank and shares its conclusions about the International Comparison Program (ICP) 2011. The organization of this joint production process is deemed by us as remarkable success, having in mind the tremendous methodological, technical and organizational challenges of this unique statistical program.

Switzerland takes note of the report of the Group Friends of the Chair (FOC) too, presenting the first part of their evaluation of the ICP 2011.

Here is the Swiss view on the recommendations proposed by the FOC concerning future rounds of the ICP:

§ 81: We agree to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, fixing methods and procedures in advance. However, fixing methods on a very detailed level in advance, requires a simulation or dry run of the complete process during the initial stage, to ensure plausible results. As some methodological aspects of the ICP are still in the state of development, data validation is of paramount importance.

§§ 82 + 83: For data protection reasons we cannot agree to transfer ownership of all basic input data to the Executive Board of the ICP nor to the UN Statistical Commission. We have to respect our national data law. This reservation concerns in particular individual price data. However we agree to the exchange of PPPs and expenditure data on the level of basic heading between Eurostat and the global ICP (as it was laid down in the memorandum of understanding of the ICP round 2005).

§§ 82 – 88: We agree with all recommendations of the FOC to improve procedures, management process and methodology.

Concerning the second part of the evaluation of the FOC, foreseen for the 47th session of STATCOM in 2016, we agree that financing and frequency of the ICP exercise are crucial issues for the future of the program. – As we made good experiences with the rolling benchmark approach of the Eurostat/OECD PPP program, we suggest to adopt this approach by the global ICP (3 year cycle for consumer prices surveys, calculation of PPPs for 60 Analytical Categories every year).

We suggest to treat in the second part of the FOC's evaluation three other crucial issues:

- Handling of efficient data exchange between involved institutions on one side and respect of data protection laws of the participating countries on the other side.
- Guarantee of institutional independence of the global ICP, to ensure strictly professional and scientific decisions.
- Capacity building initiated by the ICP is impressive, however we ask ourselves how to safeguard this know-how.