The Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council (EC) on the structure and activity of foreign affiliates as the regulatory framework for the provision of foreign affiliates statistics (FATS) will enter into force in 2007. The Regulation will make sure that in future harmonised inward and outward FATS data will be available. This EUROSTAT FATS recommendations manual, as called for in article 7 of the regulation, will play a crucial role in the compilation process. It provides the definitions and guidelines for national compilers which are the indispensable precondition for obtaining FATS which can be added together to produce meaningful EU-wide aggregates. To make sure that the manual is not only in line with the rules in the FATS Regulation but also meets the needs and realities national compilers face in practice, it has been thoroughly discussed in various meetings of the FATS joint working group.

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