



HUNGARIAN  
CENTRAL  
STATISTICAL  
OFFICE

# DISSEMINATION POLICY

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## Dear Reader,

The Hungarian Central Statistical Office has been the depository of official statistics in Hungary since its foundation in the 19th century. First the document founding the National Hungarian Royal Statistical Office, dated from 1871, and then, in the form of legislation, Act of 1897 on Statistics designated **'the examination, compilation and processing of data, furthermore, their disclosure so that they can be used for scientific as well as legislative, government, administrative and other practical purposes'** as the task of the Office.

Nowadays an increasing emphasis is laid on this purpose, and due to developing certain areas of dissemination and adjusting them to user needs it needs to be addressed in more and more dimensions. Dissemination is the purpose of and the last stage in the statistical process, through which the data produced by the Office are utilised, to put it in another way, it is in this stage that efforts in earlier work processes bear fruit. At the same time this is the section of our work when users encounter our data, releases, analyses and services, therefore, it is of key importance to regulate our dissemination activity in such a way that users can find the data, releases and analyses that most meet their needs as easily as possible.

By publishing the dissemination policy our goal is to guide users in our diverse offer by presenting the principles, forms and structure of our dissemination activity. We disclose the dissemination policy in the hope that we draw the attention of users also to possibilities that they have not considered until now, and trust as well that by making processes more transparent we can promote to win your trust at a higher and higher level.

Our dissemination policy serves at the same time as a guideline for the management and staff of HCSO, too, in making decisions both in the longer run and concerning daily activities.

Please share your remarks on the dissemination policy and on the dissemination activity of HCSO [with us](#), so that we can adjust our services to your needs as much as possible.



Dr. Vukovich Gabriella

## I. Role and purpose of dissemination policy

Dissemination activity is the stage of work in the statistical office during which we make available our products and services in a format suitable for users and most meeting their purposes. A user encounters the Office mainly during the dissemination activity, and can make a notion of the quality of data and other products and the degree of their suitability for reaching their own goals based on this.

The purpose of formulating the dissemination policy is to disclose the major principles of this activity, which are put into practice via internal regulations and rules of procedure.

The dissemination policy is a document which is in line with the existing strategy of the Office and with the quality policy, its content is constant in a particular strategic period. The dissemination policy and the related documents relevant from the point of view of data use are public, accessible via the website of HCSO.

## II. Principles and cornerstones of dissemination

The purpose of statistical dissemination activity is to disclose as many data and as much information of as good quality as possible to as high a number of users as possible, via the channel and in the format most suitable for them, under conditions and for costs known in advance, ensuring the protection of the data of data providers.

From the aspect of the Statistical Office the goal of making data available is ultimately to co-operate in satisfying the purposes of users, and to improve statistical literacy through wide-range use; to balance the protection of the data of respondents and the access of data users to statistical data under equal conditions.

To achieve these goals we perform statistical activity in line with legislation, as well as recommendations and guidelines of quality. This framework does not only affect dissemination activity but users perceive its result in this stage.

We pursue the activity of the Office as a whole, so dissemination as well, in a way as transparent for external and internal users as possible, through which our goal is also to improve trust in data.

Legal framework:

- Act XLVI of 1993 on Statistics,
- Government Decree No. 170/1993 (XII. 3.) on the implementation of Act XLVI of 1993 on Statistics,
- Act CXII of 2011 on Right of Informational Self-Determination and on Freedom of Information,
- Regulation 223/2009/EC of the European Parliament and the Council on European statistics.

Guidelines closely related to dissemination are in line with the [Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System](#), the [Code of Practice of European Statistics](#), binding for the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, and the document entitled [Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics](#), adopted by the General Assembly of the UN. Taking into account all these as well as the practice and needs in Hungary, HCSO endorses the following principles in its dissemination activity:

### **A) Relevance**

- HCSO endeavours to know the needs of its actual and potential users, measure satisfaction with its data and services, and form its dissemination practice adjusted to these.

### **B) Impartiality and objectivity**

- Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations. These considerations are respected both in the whole process of data compilation and in dissemination. Users can know the quality guidelines evident in the process of data compilation, the procedures and methods applied and the indicators of data quality.
- Choices of sources, concepts, methods, processes and dissemination channels are based on statistical considerations and on the example of good international practices.
- The Statistical Office does not take part in political debates, does not make statements in political issues, the content and timing of its data disclosures, releases, publications and statements and of the statements of its staff are objective and impartial, free from the influence of parties and interest groups.
- All users can have equal access to statistical information at the same time, pre-release access is exceptional, its rules are public, and their violation – by external or internal users or persons – has legal implications.
- Statistical data are published on dates pre-announced in our dissemination calendar, any divergence from the calendar is announced and justified at the earlier possible date, and a new date of publication is disclosed.
- The rules of procedure and the use of choosing sources are public.

### **C) Timeliness and accuracy**

- When compiling statistics we take into account that the interest of users is to access data of as good quality as possible, provided with appropriate descriptions, as soon as possible. We endeavour to make data available to users in the appropriate form as soon as possible following data collection.
- When releasing data we co-operate with international organisations so that the data we published should be available in international databases as well, and that the data already sent to international organisations (and not under embargo) should be published by HCSO, too.
- To maintain the quality of data we keep balance between timeliness and accuracy, partly contradicting purposes. Before final data are available we possibly release – drawing attention to the preliminary character – preliminary data, too.
- Errors discovered in statistics published are corrected as soon as possible in a way determined in separate internal rules of procedure, and corrections are published.
- For releasing statistics a standard time in a day is fixed, which is made public.

### **D) Coherence and comparability**

- We endeavour to ensure that our data be suitable for comparisons over time. To this end we apply different methods, and we indicate clearly where comparability is limited.
- By adopting international methodologies, and especially the statistical methods of the European Union, the majority of data are comparable with those of EU member countries. To facilitate international comparisons we publish international data and analyses as well.

- During validation of data and making analyses we endeavour to harmonise the different data sources.
- We provide preliminary information to users on data revisions and larger changes to be expected in methodology, while smaller changes are disclosed posteriorly but clearly, too.

#### **E) Accessibility and clarity**

- We release metadata, conceptual and other explanations, facilitating the interpretation of statistics, and our analyses also serve this purpose.
- When determining the forms of disclosure of data, metadata and analyses, we take into account the opinion and needs of users. We use modern information and communication technology and, if necessary, traditional hard copy..

#### **F) Free public service**

- The Statistical Office is not a for-profit organ. We have been making accessible a larger and large volume of data and publications free of charge on our website for years.

#### **G) Provision of content that can be tailored to user groups**

- In addition to data production that can be automated we produce and provide different forms of products and services respectively, with different content, in line with the interest and purposes of the different user groups.
- Besides products tailored to user groups, tailoring to individual needs also gains ground: an increasing number of components on our website serves tailoring to personal needs, furthermore, reusability, in addition to which we satisfy individual requests for data as well as analyses.

#### **H) Close co-operation with the scientific community**

- HCSO supports scientific researches with the available tools, by extending the scope of data usable for research purposes and data access possibilities.
- HCSO co-operates with the scientific community in all areas where the knowledge and observations of researchers and teachers can contribute directly to distributing statistical knowledge and to producing statistics of better quality.

#### **I) Bilingual publication**

- The majority of our palette of products is bilingual: Hungarian and English. Special publications are issued in other languages, too. The English-language content of our homepage covers that of the Hungarian version at an ever-increasing rate.
- Users can contact us concerning professional questions in English, too.

### III. Free dissemination and services provided against payment

The Hungarian Central Statistical Office is a government organ, so it is not guided by the objective of making profits when performing tasks belonging to its basic activities. The products produced by the Office are generated predominantly from the money of taxpayers, in the interest of society, and are part of the national assets of data. The data managed by HCSO are data of public interest, the Office endeavours to make them directly and freely accessible to users in as large a volume as possible.

A very large volume of data and publications are made available continuously via the website. Payments need to be made only for information which is not available as a result of standardised work processes, so they need to be compiled upon individual requests, and which generates additional personnel and material costs.

Costs to be reimbursed are determined in line with legislation on accounting and based on cost calculation rules of the Office.

### IV. Release policy

A) The framework of our products and services is made up by the [Release calendar of publications \(Catalogue\)](#), and the [Dissemination calendar of first releases](#) – also available separately on our website – prepared in line with the annual Dissemination programme of the Office.

B) First releases and the related datasets are published strictly at 9 a.m. on days provided in the [Dissemination calendar](#). The release of further regularly issued publications and the related datasets is provided with weekly accuracy, release date of publications planned for the current year are given by monthly accuracy in the Catalogue. Publications are released after the process of authorisation is closed, and users can access information on publication on the homepage of our website, in the section '**In the spotlight**', as well as in the Publication repertory, under the '**Latest publications**' menu item. Users can access information on the release of data not related to publications in [STADAT](#), from the titles of tables in the table system, and in the [Dissemination database](#), from dates of update emerging when executing queries. Detailed information on the form and frequency of publication is disclosed in the [Metainformation menu item](#), available from our website. Data transmitted to international organisations are published by organisations with statistical profile, primarily Eurostat, the UN and its different specialised organisations, the IMF and the OECD in various databases and publications in line with their own dissemination practice, together with methodologically comparable data of other countries.

Though users can access the data thus transmitted in the publications of the particular international organisation as well, we endeavour to ensure that the primary source of data on Hungary should be HCSO. Data transmission to the European Union is regulated by EU legislation, which takes into account users' interests, too. Information on this legislation and on dates of data transmissions is supplied to users in the [Metainformation menu item](#) again, available from our website. Data compiled for the first time in the course of fulfilling individual data requests, not published in any form earlier on are made available in as short a time as possible after data requests were made, depending on the volume and complexity of data requests.

C) The **time of publication** is on the one hand influenced by the earliest availability of data compared to the implementation of the survey, the processing time necessary for good-quality datasets, on the other hand, we also consider that we should work in harmony with what is laid down in legal sources of Eurostat (or other international organisations in particular cases) on data transmission. So we produce the business indicators published at European level respecting the deadlines set in the relevant regulations and framework directives of the EU. In addition, it cannot occur either that Eurostat already publishes a business indicator on Hungary which is not yet published by HCSO, or that data for Hungary are not yet available or are indicated as confidential in a Eurostat new release, which contains the business indicators of all member states or of the majority of them. We follow up the timeliness of the publication of our data in the mirror of the relevant legislation and the European practice.

D) The **time of release** of principal business indicators – also including pre-access rules presented in chapter VIII – **within a day** is determined by their usability in socio-economic life as soon as possible and by the aspect at the same time that no one can abuse these (the time of website access and of contacting editorial offices in the pressroom is therefore adjusted to the beginning of the period of continuous trading in the Budapest Stock Exchange, while the date of pre-access – laid down in exceptional and public rules – on the preceding day to the closure of the same period).

E) The [Dissemination calendar of first releases](#) is available from the homepage of the website of HCSO. The calendar of infra-annual and annual business indicators, as well as the most important economic and social data releases (first releases), contains the exact dates (days) of publications for a calendar year, and is published at least in December of the previous year. The [release calendar of publications \(Catalogue\)](#) is also prepared for a year ahead, presenting the months or possibly the weeks of publications. With the aid of the [Event calendar](#) application users can search, too, among first releases. Rarely are we forced to diverge from the dates (days) set in the dissemination calendar. Such delay may occur only when substantial technical problems arise or in case of considerable concerns about data quality. Information on the reason for delay and the expected new date of publication is provided to users in advance in the dissemination calendar, in a statement and in news on the homepage.

## V. Channels of dissemination

One of the key factors of the efficiency of dissemination by the Office is the choice of the appropriate channel of dissemination. In addition to on-line forms of dissemination, HCSO goes on maintaining further channels, through which its products reach a wide audience.

A) Electronic dissemination is of priority for HCSO. Within this it is the **website** at present that reaches large audience numbers due to the volume of content published and the diversity of target groups served.

We respect the following principles concerning the website:

- Ease to read.
- Respect of the guidelines of the **World Wide Web Consortium** on barrier-free access.

- Availability of [barrier-free content](#) on a separate page (only in Hungarian).
- Easy orientation, which is served by the [site map](#), comprehensive thematic pages and the clear menu system. Much of the content is available in many different ways.
- When publications are released relevant datasets in the related tables and database are updated as well.
- Clear separation of archived content and new content.
- Simple use, e.g. icons related to tables indicate additional content; balloons helping use in case of [interactive charts](#), dissemination database [user's guide](#), description of functions in case of [ready-made tables](#) taken over from Eurostat (only in Hungarian).
- Quick and reliable operation.
- Availability of different channels for feedback to users and for contacting Office staff.

Main **target groups** served by the website: public administration, media, researchers, enterprises, students, private individuals, data providers, furthermore, non-Hungarian public interested in Hungary (for example, embassies' organisational units engaged in trade development or investment promotion). This is a very wide range, with heterogeneous needs. Accordingly, our website contains a very large volume of information, too, which we endeavour to disclose in line with the differing needs of the different groups of users. Dedicated sub-pages are available for the press ([pressroom](#)), researchers ([Research room](#)) and [data suppliers](#) (at present only in Hungarian) on the website at present, however, we attempt to establish special sub-pages and special information packages for other groups as well at the time of future developments.

The following **product** types and publications are available on our website: dissemination database, ready-made table systems, publications, visualisation tools. You can read more on these in chapter entitled 'Product portfolio'.

The **formats of products** made available on the website are databases or static tables, where data can be exported so that they can be further processed; textual documents are issued in PDF or HTML format, while maps and interactive charts can be seen in Scalable Vector Graphics format. The general display of the website is optimised for personal computers, but from March 2015 first releases are available in a format that mobile devices support, too. Displaying the website by the main browsers gives the same quality.

**Orientation within the website** is served by the site map, while searching among publications by the [Publication repertory](#). Grouping by themes provides a complex overview.

The application referred to as [E-shelf](#) allows registered users to access the publications they purchased or the electronic annexes of these at any time.

The way of **displaying data** can be of key importance for their interpretation. To support this, users can make use of a number of applications. In the Key figures section on the homepage line charts are displayed for five themes, showing the change of the particular indicators over time. Radar charts, cycle charts, interactive population pyramids and thematic maps for Hungary and Europe are available under the [Interactive charts](#) menu item.

A [dissemination calendar of first releases](#) and the [Catalogue](#) make it simple to follow up the dates of publication of first releases and regular infra-annual publications.

B) Our presence in the **public media** has been realized through two channels: since October 2014 HCSO has got official [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

- C) The largest volume of **communication via e-mail** is between Information Services or the Press and Communication Section and users. To standardise this we developed a system, which guides users towards giving the necessary information, through which we can receive the requests and comments of the users, and which accelerates response.
- D) The formerly largest segment of our dissemination activity, less significant today, is represented by our **printed publications**, reaching not only individual customers or buyers but also enterprises, institutions of public administration, and an even wider public via libraries. Their target group is – in addition to general government actors – the business sector, private individuals, the educational and the research sector, and in case of certain publications practically the whole society. The main target groups of online publications are the media, corporations, public administration and the academic sphere.  
We bear in mind the principles below when preparing them:
- **Stability.** The structure and style of a particular series of publications should not often change, there should be a serious reason for larger changes (for example significant user needs).
  - **Flexibility.** We do not print information becoming quickly obsolete. Large annual publications, either our major data stores (e.g. Statistical Yearbook of Hungary) or comprehensive reports (e.g. the Hungary series), however, are published in printed form as well.
  - **Reusability.** We make available for certain publications an annex downloadable through the E-shelf, including additional data contents, promoting further consideration of the statements of the publications and supplying further information related to the themes covered.
  - **Good readability.** The considered choice of letter size and colours helps easy reading, and clear understanding of figures and maps.
  - **Standard image.** Low-key image in harmony with content expresses the belonging of publications to a particular theme or series, and contributes to understanding the message.
  - **User friendly display.** Internal structure is clear-cut, various tools help navigation (contents, list of figures, list of tables). (In case of on-line and web publications there are naturally a higher number of possibilities.)
  - **Non-HCSO sources are supplied** (provided with clickable reference in case of on-line publications).
- E) The most important characteristics of the Office's dissemination activity based on phone inquiry are prompt bilateral exchange of information and faster provision of information. The main principles during this type of contact are:
- the clarification of the question of the partner,
  - accuracy,
  - quick response.
- F) Though the provision of information in **postal letter** – because of the longer deadline compared to electronic correspondence – has lost in significance, its use is still an accepted practice in case of certain types of matters. These types of inquiries typically arrive at information services from our clients.

G) The main frame of **information provision** in live, **personal** contact is represented by information services, besides, information can also be provided at different programmes, or at events organised for the wider public or for some special group of users. An example of the former is open days, and that of the latter is different press events.

**Off-line and on-line forms of publication** cannot always be separated, it is possible that the different channels complete one another. Examples of this are printed publications' internet annex with an extended quantity of figures, the print version of static tables on the website, and the optimisation of downloadable publications for printing, also including the clear distinction of colours, which is essential in case of figures and maps.

We decide on the choice of **preferred channels of dissemination** based on a complex system of aspects. The most important components of this:

- data security, data confidentiality, legal security: the data published could not be manipulated, overwritten, or sold as own intellectual property without the indication of source,
- possibility of further use: publication forms should allow for inclusion, further calculation with and combination of data, and visual tools should be interactive,
- cost effectiveness: to make a particular product available to as many users as possible at as low costs as possible,
- availability of info-communication devices to users,
- timeliness: the particular data or publication should be released as quickly as possible, with a minimum risk of errors.

In order to endorse these aspects we make use of the results of satisfaction surveys, as well as of weblog and sales data, and monitor the dissemination practice of and dissemination developments by other statistical offices and international institutions.

## VI. Product portfolio

The products are generated during controlled processes. Each sub-process is guided by laws, international and national quality guidelines, internal regulations and manuals, and the compliance with them is monitored and checked. Such regulations are, among others, the Quality guidelines, the Publications' Handbook and the Design Guidelines. These regulate, for example, the selection of sources, the choice between the methods to be applied and the mechanism of choosing between the dissemination channels. There are special procedures to correct the errors which may still occur, on which the chapter Data quality provides more detailed information.

Most of the products created by HCSO are prepared in a standard way, in a pre-defined format and for a previously outlined audience.

A) The most widely used products of HCSO are not individual **data aggregated** at some level. These are presented on the website grouped thematically and organized in database or in static (ready-made) tables. Tables are available in datawarehouse-type publications and as

an annex of other publications as well. Data are used by all target groups, and the difference is rather in the preferred formats of data.

Data are published on **different spatial level** (national, regional, county, micro-regional, district, settlement, as well as regarding the districts of Budapest and settlement groups), and international data allowing for comparisons across countries are also available. As a result of technical development, the publication of geostatistical data became also possible, but, for the time being, they are only available in a narrow field, connected to the data files of the agricultural census and the 2011 population census. The development of dissemination forms suitable for geo-coded data is in progress.

The **frequency of data publication**, depending on the characteristics of the data collection, is monthly, quarterly, biannual, annual or less frequent. Time series allowing for temporal comparisons are also made available for our users. We have the longest (**nearly half a century**) time series in vital statistics.

- B) The so-called descriptive **metadata** contain information accompanying the data which refer to their production and quality. They are indispensable for the correct interpretation of data and for drawing the right conclusions. HCSO endeavours to make metadata visible in connection with each data release: they are accessible by one click from our online tables and database. Metadata can be searched for on the website under menu item [Metainformation](#) alphabetically or by subject. Our readers find methodological descriptions and information in our printed publications as well.
- C) By the compilation or analysis of the data, HCSO produces **publications** which can be classified in different genres. These are made for different target groups in different style and for different purposes, and their content and formal characteristics serve to meet the demands of the different groups of the public. Types of the publications:
1. **Analyses.** The analyses of the Office can be classified in different sub-groups according to their users, the analyzed period and territorial unit, the topic as well as the volume and depth of the background information provided.
    - [First releases.](#) A short (1-2 pages) publication type about the most important short-term indicators including principal indicators produced by HCSO and containing a textual interpretation as well. First releases always contain the national data and, where it is possible, regional and county data as well (in case of some topics, data also broken down by other territorial units such as tourism regions or in town–village distinction). First releases contain short tables and interactive charts as well, and a table set belongs to them located in our ready-made table-system called STADAT. Their target group is first of all the media, the decision-makers of corporations and the public administration. First releases are all available in HTML format on the website free of charge.
    - Statistical analyses in [Statistical Reflections](#). These analyses are for the public interested in the different subject matter statistics. The depth of the analysis and the volume of the background information provided vary by publications, and the number of pages is typically not more than 10. Among the analyses belonging to the series, there are quarterly, biannual and annual ones as well. Both national analyses and analyses referring to a regi-

onal unit are published in this form. Charts and inline tables serve the easier interpretation of the analysis. Statistical Reflections are downloadable from the website free of charge.

- **Working papers** are analyses using higher-level statistical tools and methods.
  - **Annual reports** are prepared about the sub-fields of an independent topic at the earliest possible date following the availability of data. These publications together with their tables and methodology present the situation of the different statistical domains every year. The territorial dimension appears in these publications in a depth relevant to the topic, usually at regional and sometimes at county level. Their target group is the public administration, the business sector and the segment of researchers interested in the given domain. Annual reports are downloadable from our website free of charge, too.
  - **Comprehensive analyses.** They include large-scale publications mapping the relationship between some kinds of social or economic phenomena and processes as well as publications which examine the phenomena for example on the basis of indicator systems. Their target group is the media, the public administration, researchers, the business sector and the broader segments of the society. The period covered is usually one or a few years, but in some cases it can be longer (e.g. the publications entitled Hungary, 1989–2009 and Statistics of Centuries). Comprehensive analyses endeavour to show the territorial dimension as well in a depth relevant to the given topic. Some of these publications are available free of charge on the website as well, or they can be purchased in printed form.
2. **Data stores.** The data stores prepared by the Office include the yearbooks, the pocketbooks, the static data tables as well as the databases. The [Dissemination database](#) and the ready-made table-systems such as [STADAT](#), the tables of the [Indicator system of social progress](#) (only in Hungarian), as well as [the tables in Hungarian taken over from Eurostat](#) belong to our online accessible data stores. Some of our printed data stores have an internet annex, which can be purchased. Internet annexes of the previous years are also available free of charge. A special data store is the [Detailed Gazetteer of Hungary](#), which contains downloadable regional data and textual information about the settlements, and its figures can be downloaded in table format as well.
  3. **Publications for promotional** and educational purposes. These publications aim at the promotion of and the familiarization with statistics. In accordance with these objectives, their appearance is more colourful and their content is formulated more simply and concisely than the average. In addition to the printed version, they are available online as well. They rarely include a considerable mass of data, therefore they have no annexes. Their target group is the media, the broader group of lay readers and non-native Hungarian people who are interested in Hungary (e.g. embassies, tourists).
  4. Contents **edited for web.** They include the 'Szám-lap' statistical magazine and, since June 2014, the subsite Counties in Focus (both only available in Hungarian). From March 2015 first releases are web-based publications, too. Compared with the downloadable PDF publications, these contain further services.
  5. **Periodicals.** Currently, three periodicals are published by HCSO (one of them in co-operation with the Demographic Research Institute), which are prepared for different groups of the public. The monthly Statistical Review, the bimonthly Regional Statistics and the Demography

released four times a year publish scientific articles written by Hungarian and foreign authors. The number of their printed copies per issue is between 450 and 2000. From the month following the publication, the issues of the periodicals are also accessible in online format free of charge. The online version of the Statistical Review also has a separate function, the archive of articles from 1923, i.e. the year of its foundation.

6. **Methodological publications, classifications.** They present the changes in the nomenclatures on the one hand and provide the users with the methodological information helping the interpretation and understanding of data on the other. Their target group is typically researchers and data providers, e.g. the part of the business sector, which is concerned by the topic (in case of some nomenclatures, this may be a very broad range). In case of classifications, tables and text versions are accessible free of charge on the website, while the printed versions (paper-based publications) and the files (Excel, Word) provided on data carriers or electronically (by e-mail) can be obtained for a fee. The Administrative Gazetteer of Hungary also belongs to this category.
7. **Other publications:** On the one hand, different visualization tools, the interactive population pyramid, maps and diagrams are classified here and, on the other, such applications belong to this category as, for example, the 'Question of the week' (soon to be available in English as well), which intends to involve those interested in a given topic in statistics in a playful way. These are accessible on our website.

The other part of our products comprises **products customized for a group or an individual:** data compilations, micro-data, analyses made on user demand.

- D) **Compilations** prepared from **aggregated** – not individual – data can be requested by anyone. These are customized so far that either they are not available in the required breakdown on the website or they are available in a publication which the user does not wish to purchase fully or the data are available but the user does not want to deal with their query and copying and entrusts HCSO with this task. This service is not free of charge.
- E) HCSO allows access to **files not suitable for direct identification** for scientific research purposes in the secure environment of HCSO in strict compliance with laws protecting against the disclosure of individual statistical data and relating to privacy as well as access to anonymized micro-data in the form of anonymized micro-data provision. In the framework of access to files not suitable for direct identification for scientific research purposes, HCSO allows access both free of charge and for a fee. The range of data files, which can be researched free of charge is published and continuously updated on the website of HCSO. If the data request relates to data files researchable free of charge, HCSO ensures the access to and the control of research results generated in a secure environment in the aspect of data protection free of charge. If the data request relates to data files researchable for a fee and a data compilation according to specific aspects is necessary, the production of the data files and the control of the generated research results in the aspect of data protection is possible for a fee on the basis of a specific cost calculation in line with the rules of cost-price calculation. Researchers can access micro-data for scientific purposes in five different ways:

- **In the [Research room](#) in the Headquarters of HCSO.** In this case, the researcher receives the results of the research performed in the Research room which are verified in the aspect of the risk of disclosure and not the micro-data forming the basis of the research themselves. The rules of using the Research room and the terms of the use of results are determined by a contract between the researcher and the HCSO.
- **With remote access.** In this case, the researcher can access micro-data in a secure IT environment from specified access points in fully the same operating conditions as the operation environment of the Research room. As in the environment of the Research room, the researcher receives the results of the research which are verified in the aspect of the risk of disclosure and not the micro-data forming the basis of the research themselves. The rules of using the secure environment and the terms of the use of results are determined by a contract between the researcher and the HCSO.
- **With remote execution.** In this case, the researcher can perform analysis on the data file in a way that they do not see it. The staff of the Office carries out the necessary analyses and operations on the data files based on the specification made available to HCSO, and the researcher receives the results of the research verified in the aspect of data protection. The terms of producing and using the results are determined by a contract between the researcher and the HCSO.
- **With anonymized micro-data provision.** Researchers can request anonymized micro-data files compiled according to specific needs and protected against disclosure. The terms of the use of the data file are determined by a contract between the researcher and the HCSO.
- **With public micro-data files.** Three types of public micro-data files accessible for anyone on the internet are distinguished: test files including the full set of variables of the micro-data set, so the researchers can prepare for their analysis and make the program code; files for educational purposes usually including a limited number of variables which are not suitable for research purposes; public micro-data files suitable for research purposes which can be researched at once. Public micro-data files are accessible for anyone free of charge on the website of HCSO together with the terms of their use.

The [data protection policy](#), [data protection regulations](#) and [data access regulations](#) of HCSO include the current opportunities, rules and details of the access.

F) **Customized publications** prepared on order. Such publications – mostly analyses but they may be promotional brochures and other kinds of publications as well – are prepared on exactly specified user needs depending on our capacities. The fee for preparing the analysis is determined by an individual contract between the researcher and the HCSO.

## VII. Contact with users

- A) The final goal of our products and services is that they reach our users and meet their needs. Therefore, the feedback, criticism and suggestions of users are valuable sources of information for us. The opinions available from different surveys and the spontaneous incoming remarks are collected and systematized by HCSO and they are integrated in the course of the development of our products and services. Based on the information currently available, mostly the following **groups** can be distinguished among our users: international statistical organizations; public administration; the media; corporations; researchers; students; private individuals. Among them, the media has a special role in the sense that the products and information produced by HCSO reach the wide strata of the population through the different press organs. The other key group of users is the public administration, especially the government, which, in the knowledge of our data, makes decisions which affect our everyday lives as well.
- B) HCSO endeavours to ascertain user opinions in different **subjects**. These are as follows: data, statistical domains; publications; website and related services; other services; other topics, for example the image of HCSO, statistical literacy or the trust in the Office.
- C) We distinguish cases when users' remarks are available in a structured way, i.e. as a result of user forums, phone or personal (interview or focus-group-based) surveys and those when we obtain them in some other way (spontaneous feedback to an expert at an event where the experts of HCSO take part or through official channels such as the 'Contact us' menu on our website). The most common form of the surveys is the **questionnaire survey**. One of its tools is the application **Question of the week** well-known for users using our website which is suitable to show simple questions and possible answers as well as for the rapid evaluation of answers. Other methods are the **user forums, the focus-groups and the in-depth interviews**.
- D) In addition to direct interviews, **other methods** are also used to get to know the demands of our users. We analyse regularly the clicks and downloads of users visiting our website in order to publish information in a structure adapting to the logic of our users as far as possible and we examine the data domains and publications on the basis of the need for them. We inform our visitors on these in the [data protection information](#) accessible on our website.
- E) We are aware that all information submitted by our users, whatever sharp criticism it is sometimes, represents a value which must not be wasted. Our partners spend their precious time on sharing their opinion with us. Therefore, the survey results are used for determining the directions of development and planning the actual development measures.
- F) The main results of the satisfaction surveys carried out are published on our website, and the developments made on the basis of these are also reported.

## VIII. Simultaneous access and exceptions

The simultaneous access to our data and publications is a fundamental principle, which comes from the equality of users. Due to the role of some key user groups in the economic and political life, there is a greater interest that they access the information earlier. Such reason is, in case of the media, that they should also build background information belonging to the released data into their reports and articles and, in case of the highest-level politicians – members of the government –, that they should react to the data when they are published, know the reasons and envisage the possible consequences.

The pre-release access covers a very narrow scope, is controlled and connected to a target, therefore, the possibility of misusing the information received so is minimized. This is ensured by internal technical and other rules depending on the type of the preliminary access.

- A) At 8.30 a. m., prior to the publication at 9 a. m., journalists visiting the [press room](#) can read the first releases about the most important indicators, and they can prepare their reports, but they are allowed to transmit these macroeconomic data to the editorial staff only at 9 a. m. sharp, after the release by HCSO. All media must adopt the terms of using the pressroom in a written statement which includes the legal consequences applicable in case of the infringement of these conditions. In addition to the corresponding civil liability, these also suggest that HCSO can even permanently prohibit an organization violating these rules from using the pressroom.
- B) First releases not belonging to the above scope are sent electronically at 8.30 a. m. on the day of publication to **news agencies and editorial staffs** which requested them, based on a prior agreement.
- C) Certain first releases are sent to the members of the **government** and the president of the National Bank of Hungary at 5 p. m. on the day prior to the publication, after closing the continuous phase of trading in the Budapest Stock Exchange. All who are concerned receive first releases in the topic the knowledge of which is essential in their work. Within the given ministry and the National Bank of Hungary responsible use of our data is ensured by strict rules.
- D) Data files transmitted to **international organizations** may also be under embargo at the time of data transmission. During the data transfer to Eurostat, a secure channel excludes the access of unauthorized people to the data.

## IX. Data quality

A) Data quality has several components, some of which were addressed in other chapters, but they are mentioned here as well. The dimensions of quality in statistics are interpreted as follows:

- **relevance:** the data should be suitable for using for the purpose intended and for the one they are looked for by users;
- **accuracy:** the statistical data should be as close as possible to the real value which was intended to be characterized;
- **timeliness:** the length of time between the publication and the reference time of the phenomenon described should be as short as possible;
- **punctuality:** the date originally scheduled for publication should coincide with the date of the actual publication;
- **accessibility:** data should be accessible in a form, format which is easier to use for users;
- **clarity:** information helping the interpretation of statistical data (metadata, analyses) and information relating to data quality should accompany statistical data;
- **comparability and coherence:** statistical data should be consistent with other data which are connected to them in logic, economic and social context and should be suitable for temporal and spatial comparisons as well as comparability by subjects.

The quality dimensions of data and products are included in details in the [quality policy](#) of HCSO and the quality of statistical processes in the quality guidelines. On international level, the [Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System](#), the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#) and the document [Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics](#) adopted by the UN General Assembly form the – partly compulsory, partly recommendation-like – framework.

B) Users can use our data the best if they are aware of their quality. Out of the above quality dimensions, first of all the level of accuracy, clarity, and comparability and coherence must be taken into account in respect of dissemination.

**Accuracy** is measured by a number of indicators; these are published by statistical domains under the menu item metainformation on the website. Such indicators are the response rate, the rate and method of replacement and the sampling error.

Information on **comparability and coherence** (length of time series, international comparability, consistency between different statistical domains), which helps the orientation of users, is also published under the menu item metainformation on the website.

It is worth informing the users separately if the **data are not considered final**. Not final data are the so-called preliminary data. Preliminary data are published in all of our first releases and in many other publications, to which we draw the attention of our users. Preliminary data are indicated with a + symbol in printed publications and in blue colour in the static tables on our website.

The metainformation menu item on the website provides information on how much the quality of preliminary data differs from that of final data.

It is important to note that HCSO does not publish projections, since, in the practice in Hungary, this is the competence of research institutes.

C) Data quality is obviously closely connected to the issues of **revision and error correction**.

The two processes differ in terms of the reasons and the methods used, and users should also be able to distinguish between the two types of correction. The reasons for revision may be that, as time progresses, new, more precise and more detailed data are available, on the basis of which we can make our estimates more accurate; that the statistical methodology has changed; that a subsequent correction is necessary due to a reporting error and that a technical correction is needed because of methodological reasons. The intra-year monthly and quarterly data are generally considered to be preliminary and may be modified later. The reason for error correction may be that we learn after publishing the data that the content of the release is incorrect, which may result from a human or technical error during data processing, analysis or dissemination.

The practice of revision is different by statistical domains, information on which is also provided under the metainformation menu item on the website. We inform our users on larger changes in different forums as well. The general principles of the revision are included in the revision policy of the HCSO.

In case of an error, we endeavour to inform our users in a number of channels on the fact of the correction and its completion, or, if the correction has not been completed yet, but the incorrect publication or data were withdrawn, on the fact that the correction is in progress. The error correction rules contain details about the way how users are informed on the correction.

D) An aspect related to data quality is the release of information on the use of our data if such information and feedbacks contain criticism relating to the quality of our data or they stem from the incorrect use or misinterpretation of our data. In case of **criticism concerning data quality**, the statisticians of the given statistical domain review the user feedback and, depending on the justification and importance of the criticism and the size of the population concerned, they publish an answer or they feed back to the users directly. The reaction of HCSO to the reports and news published in the media or said in other forums, which stem from the incorrect use or misinterpretation of data, is also influenced by the importance of the error or misinterpreted information as well as by the size of the public reached.

## X. ANNEXES

### I. Error correction practices in HCSO

During the production of statistical data, HCSO applies strict quality assurance principles and rules. However, errors may occur even if all these are respected, and a uniform method of correction and the dissemination of the corrected information are indispensable for a statistical office which intends to work in a way as transparent for users as possible. The standard procedure for identifying and correcting errors helps our users to access the corrected information and, according to our intentions, minimizes the damages caused by using incorrect data.

A publication error is one discovered in statistical information, except for sampling and non-sampling errors. Data revised due to a planned revision do not belong to this category (unless an error occurs in the revised data). Errors in data can result in unplanned revisions, as stated in our revision policy. Also complying with the revision policy, correction of already published data is implemented in the frame of unplanned revision. A publication error by type can be:

- numerical (misinformation published in tables, figures, maps, texts),
- textual (spelling, grammatical, stylistic, drafting, or such a factual error, which is not explicitly numerical both in Hungarian and English),
- formal, editorial (any error emerged during printing or web display, for example, lines and pages difficult to read, non-distinguishable colouring in the legend, non-fitting publication page in the mirror, printing error on a brochure cover, false colouring in a map or diagram).
- methodological data protectional error can be all information display in which the risk of disclosing of statistical units is not minimal.

During error correction our aim is to

- increase the probability that the user will receive the relevant information especially in connection with the statistical information involved, the exact place of the corrected information, the corrected information, the time of correction and, if possible, with the cause of the error.
- ensure that HCSO can monitor the documents that proved to be incorrect and, if necessary, can draw conclusions to rationalize work processes and to reduce the possibilities of error.

### II. Rules of pre-release access to first releases of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office

HCSO publishes its first releases at 9:00 a. m. on the disclosure days specified in the Dissemination calendar and dissemination programme.

HCSO ensures preliminary access to first releases which are required by the organization in the narrowest possible personal circle for the following public decision-making bodies:

- Prime Minister's Office,
- Ministry of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
- Ministry of Human Capacities,
- Ministry for National Economy,
- Ministry of National Development, as well as
- Central Bank of Hungary.

In order to assist ministers and the leader of the Central Bank of Hungary, HCSO forwards the first releases which are required by the organization to the mailboxes of the persons given by the organization on the day prior to publication at 5 p. m. – in line with the closing of the continuous

phase of trading in the Budapest Stock Exchange. According to the rules of the embargo, data cannot be disclosed before the official publication. The leaders of the institutions for whom HCSO ensured prior access within an appropriate framework are responsible for respecting the embargo and maintaining the confidentiality of data.

For the editorial and news agencies which indicated their demand, HCSO sends the first releases on the day of publication at 8:30 a. m. to the mail address given by the editorial staff with the following exceptions:

- Gross domestic product (GDP) (flash estimate)
- Gross domestic product (GDP) (second estimate)
- Industry (flash estimate)
- Consumer prices.

In case of these publications HCSO ensures pre-release access for the press only in the pressroom, which is operated for this purpose. In the pressroom it is not possible to contact external parties until the expiry of the embargo.

Media professionals as well as the editorial offices and agencies are familiarized in advance with the rules of the pressroom data release and accept it with their signatures, thereby undertaking the responsibility of the violation of the embargo. Editorial and news agencies that undertook in writing to comply with the embargo are as follows:

- Balatontipp
- Bloomberg
- Dow Jones
- Duna TV
- Figyelő
- FN24
- Gazdasági Rádió
- Index.hu
- Infolát
- Magyar Hírlap
- Marketinginfo
- Menedzsment Fórum
- MTI
- MTV Híradó
- Napi.hu
- Napi Gazdaság
- Népszabadság
- Pannon Lapok
- Portfolio.hu
- Reuters
- Privátbankár
- Tőzsdefórum
- Trade M Magazin
- Wall Street Journal

The violation of the embargo entails the temporary or, in case of recurring embargo violations, the final withdrawal of the option of pre-release access provided by HCSO.

### **III. First releases of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office**

#### **First releases published monthly**

- Industry (flash estimate)
- Industry (second estimate)
- Accommodation establishments
- Agricultural producer prices
- Construction
- Consumer prices
- Earnings
- Employment
- External trade in goods (flash estimate)
- External trade in goods (second estimate)
- Industrial producer prices
- Retail trade (flash estimate)
- Retail trade (second estimate)
- Unemployment
- Vital events

#### **First releases published quarterly**

- Revenues and expenditures of general government sector
- Dwelling construction, construction permits
- Gross domestic product (GDP) (flash estimate)
- Gross domestic product (GDP) (second estimate)
- Investment

#### **First releases published biannually**

- Livestock

#### **First releases published annually**

- Preliminary production data of main crops
- Economic accounts for agriculture (first preliminary data)
- Harvested area, production and yield of ear cereals (preliminary data)