



Contribution ID: 2

Type: **not specified**

Statistics, a Matter of Trust

Monday, 28 September 2020 16:15 (45 minutes)

It is rightly pointed out that in the midst of a pandemic crisis of enormous proportions we needed high-quality statistics with extreme urgency, but that instead we are in danger of drowning in an ocean of data and information. Rarely has the lack of adequate statistics to make essential political decisions and to win popular support for their consequences been as visible and painful as it is now. Rarely have governments invested so much public money to combat the health, social and economic consequences of a crisis. The question is whether these monumental financial support programmes are associated with a direction or a mission, whether the investments are used for innovation in the sense and for the goals of “entrepreneurial states”. At this moment of confusion and in the search for orientation, it seems appropriate to take inspiration from previous initiatives in order to draw lessons for the current situation. More than 20 years ago in the United Kingdom, the report “Statistics - A Matter of Trust” laid the foundations for overcoming the previously spreading crisis of confidence through a soundly structured statistical system. This report is not alone in international comparison. Rather, it is one of a series of global, European and national measures and agreements which, since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, have strengthened official statistics as the backbone of politics in democratic societies, with the European Statistics Code of Practice being an outstanding representative. Therefore, if we want to address our current difficulties, the following three questions should address precisely those points that have emerged as determining factors for the quality of statistics: What (statistical products, quality profile)? How (methods)? Who (institutions)? The aim must be to ensure that the statistical information is suitable to facilitate the resolution of conflicts by no longer arguing about the facts and only about the conclusions to be drawn from them.

Presenter: RADERMACHER, Walter J. (President of the Federation of European National Statistical Societies (FENStatS), Director General of Eurostat and Chief Statistician of the European Union from 2008 to 2016)

Session Classification: Invited Plenary Talk