



BEYOND THE HORIZON

INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER FROM THE SWISS FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

EDITORIAL

PROJECT ROSLING

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Dear readers,

We live in a sometimes confusing and increasingly complex world. When facts compete with fake news, data and statistics are important tools that help us to both understand the state our world is in and to develop smart solutions. However, we cannot do this alone, we have to step out of our own communities and engage with politicians, academia and civil society in order to develop a common understanding of the role data and statistics can and should play in today's world.

Last year's UN World Data Forum showed us once again that to measure and monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals as well as evaluate outcomes, there needs to be a data-literate dialogue based on a much deeper understanding of data and information. In other words, to shape resilient societies, to deal with data in a meaningful and trustworthy way, a data culture broadly anchored in society and sustainably lived is urgently needed.

To foster this dialogue, Switzerland held a series of events under the label "Road to Bern" in preparation for the UNWDF. These events served exactly the purpose mentioned above: to promote open dialogue and understanding about the significance of data and statistics. The positive feedback we received has now led us to continue the spirit of the "Road to Bern". Switzerland is ready to contribute further to bridge the gap between data producers and data users. Making data and statistics relevant is our core task here, and fortunately, one in which we can count on a great deal of existing expertise and extensive prior work.

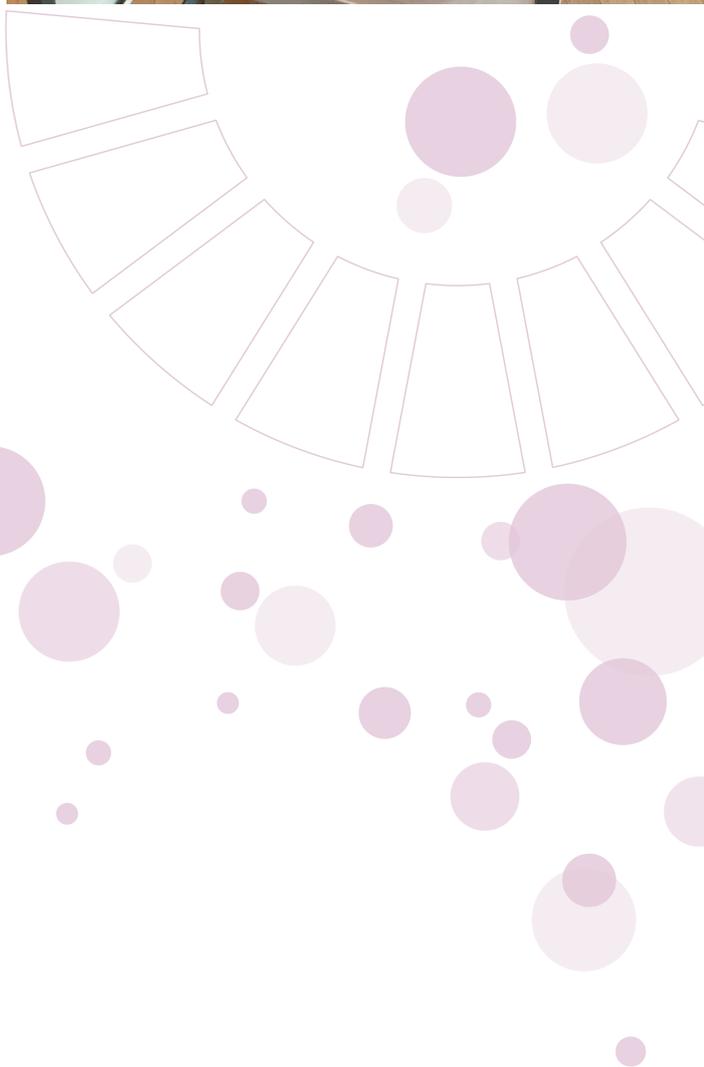
Hans Rosling, who probably understood better than anyone how to make data speak to people, was excellent in this field. In memory of him, his work and his passion for data and the stories hidden in them, we have decided to name the follow-up project to the “Road to Bern” after him: “Project Rosling”.

The major part of this newsletter is therefore dedicated to “[Project Rosling](#)” and its different workstreams. We even turned our newsletter purple to match the Project Rosling theme. After an overview of the project by Benjamin Rothen, our head of international and national affairs, our first guest contributor, Diego Kuonen, Professor at the University of Geneva and co-initiator of a data literacy initiative in Switzerland, shares his views on the importance of data literacy and draws a connection to the work of Hans Rosling. Our second guest contributor Johannes Jütting, Executive Head of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), will then elaborate on one of the main workstreams of the project: to improve the financing of data. Finally, I would like to mention specifically the interview with Professor Braun Binder, Chair of the Federal Statistical Commission, on the role and further development of official statistics in Switzerland.

On another notice, I am pleased to inform you that the Swiss Government, the Federal Council, has conferred the ambassadorial title to the aforementioned Benjamin Rothen. Though rather unusual in official statistics, this shall help us to foster networks not only within in the statistical community but especially with the international data world. I warmly congratulate him on his title and wish him much success for his contributions to our future work.

I wish you an informative and engaging read.

GEORGES-SIMON ULRICH, DIRECTOR GENERAL, FSO



PROJECT ROSLING

It has already been more than 9 months since we held the gala evening at the UN World Data Forum in Bern on 5 October. After midnight that evening, someone asked me what was going to happen now, since I had been in charge of organising the UNWDF from October 2018. We already knew that we wanted to continue the spirit that we had experienced at the gala evening and during the “Road to Bern”. However, we did not yet know exactly how, when and under what name this would take place.

The work started relatively quickly after the Forum: The aim we developed with the “Road to Bern” should be continued. We established various criteria to develop a follow-up name for the “Road to Bern”. Shortly before, I received a book called Factfulness by Hans Rosling, Ola Rosling and Anna Rosling Rönnlund for my birthday, a gift that put the name of this person in pole position. After various discussions with friends, colleagues and people involved in the “Road to Bern”, the name was decided: “Project Rosling”.

Hans Gösta Rosling (1948-2017) was professor for International Health at the Karolinska Institute and Director of the Gapminder Foundation in Stockholm. He spent years challenging most people’s pessimistic worldviews thanks to data and statistics. We can say that we have also dedicated the project name to this person who spent his lifetime working towards an objective (but also positive) view of the world - with the help of data and statistics.

Project Rosling will seek to maintain and expand. As such, it has two aims:

1) Expand the data and statistics dialogue

Partnerships are necessary to build more robust data ecosystems that provide support for evidence-based decision-making and make it possible to respond adequately to crises. The integration of the private sector, policy makers, academia and civil society in the data dialogue is key to broaden data literacy and offer a fact-based worldview

2) Deepen knowledge

Bringing together people from various fields will allow for the provision of new input and ideas into discussions

and enable fast progress to be made in data and statistical fields. Synergies, innovative practices, alternative methods and data sources will be explored to strengthen the data ecosystem and provide new information for the 2030 Agenda.

Project Rosling consists of various thematic workstreams that will bring together stakeholders to make progress on a specific topic at events and conferences. The UN World Data Forums, which provide a platform to bridge the gap between data users and data producers, will be milestones where results will be presented. Other conferences such as the World Statistics Congress, side events at the UN Statistical Commission, High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development or the World Health Assembly will offer additional platforms for dialogue and bring political players and civil society to the table.

Finally, Project Rosling also intends to create communication materials, such as videos or publications, in order to present its work to a larger audience.

The workstreams strive to put the spotlight on specific themes to make concrete advancements. Workstreams are flexible in their duration and new ones will be added as progress is made. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains an underlying feature of each of the workstreams, as they seek to support data accountability for the Agenda.



WORKSTREAMS:

1) Data Literacy

Reliable data and statistics now exist in nearly all fields. Nevertheless, people have difficulties in using data to form a fact-based worldview and instead are guided by emotions. This workstream will advocate the use of data for evidence-based decision-making for policy making as well as for everyday life. It will furthermore stress the importance of data accountability, especially in the case of the 2030 Agenda.

2) Financing Data

Statistical offices face budget cuts that limit development and the production of data and statistics that are necessary to gather evidence for decision-making. As the only ones counted, national statistical offices must have the resources to execute their mandate and collect data to support the 2030 Agenda and its target 17.J: Enhance availability of reliable data. Project Rosling will seek to bring this topic to the political scene.

3) Data Stewardship

National statistical offices are undertaking a transition towards data. While their original mandate of statistical production remains, new data management tasks are being added to their portfolios. As such, they are assuming the role of data stewards to coordinate data ecosystems. Switzerland has taken serious steps in this transition and will share its practice with the data community.

4) Data Science

There is a lot to learn about data to facilitate data-driven decision-making. The heart of data science is a problem-solving process through rigorous application of innovative methods. Thanks to this field, new solutions can be found to complement data for the 2030 Agenda.

5) Population Projections and Climate Change

While population development is taken into account in climate scenarios, climate change is not yet included in population projections, although it has already shown implications for human life and migration. This workstream will allow critical discussions on the relevance and possibility of developing climate-sensitive population scenarios for Switzerland and illustrate interactions between different areas of the 2030 Agenda.

6) Health Data

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how crucial data is to be able to respond to crises. Project Rosling will partner with the World Health Organization to maintain the spotlight on the need to develop a health data ecosystem that provides information on health developments for SDG3: Good Health and Well-Being.

Today we launched the www.projectrosling.ch website where you can find more information. We will be working with our partners to develop the workstreams in the coming months. By the end of September, we will publish more information on our website.

If you have any questions or ideas about the project, please contact us.

Kind regards

BENJAMIN ROTHEN, AMBASSADOR, INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL AFFAIRES, FSO

Website: www.projectrosling.ch



DATA LITERACY: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND!

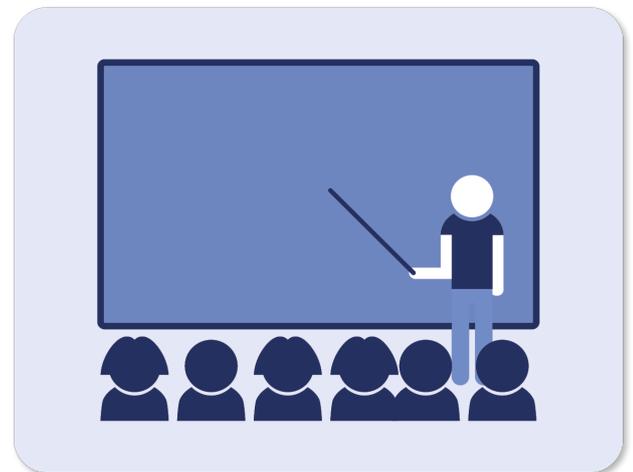
The COVID-19 pandemic impressively demonstrates that data are a key resource for the creation and assessment of adapted strategies to address important health and social problems. For this purpose, however, it is essential to understand these data and, in particular, to assess their value and comparability in the appropriate context. Especially in the coronavirus crisis, problems concerning the lack of data literacy have come to light in many facets. What do positive test numbers really say? How do we collect these data in a meaningful way? Can we compare data from regions and countries without limitations? How do we interpret those correctly? How much trust do we place in the data? What do we do with these data, how to share them and who has access to them? Answering these questions shows the complexity behind the creation, the access and the use of data.

It is important to note that this problem of “lack of data literacy in the society as a whole” is not new, but the enormous importance of trustworthy data in the preparation of difficult political decisions has rarely been as clear as in the coronavirus crisis.

In order to shape resilient societies to deal with data in a meaningful and trustworthy way, a data culture that is broadly anchored in society and sustainably lived is needed. Overall, it is about collectively realising how much our lives are being determined and controlled by more and more data. As data producers, we disclose everyday data without knowing if, where and how they are used. As data consumers, we are all inundated with more and more data from all areas of expertise and life every day. It is essential that we tackle the key competences of how we should handle these data in a meaningful and trustworthy way – whether in our personal lives (for example with various health applications and the use of social media) but also as a society. To do this, we need more data literacy than most of us have been given so far.

Therefore, the coronavirus crisis must be used as an opportunity to strengthen data literacy to ensure the responsible, critical, ethical and sustainable handling of data in the future. Empowering citizens to handle data with competence is not only essential for people’s health and quality of life but also for their informed and responsible participation in our democratic society.

But what exactly is “data literacy”? Data literacy is the ability to critically collect, manage, evaluate and use



data. Data literacy comprises five areas of expertise: conceptual framework, data collection (including data quality), data management (including data conversion, metadata management, data security and data reuse), data evaluation (including data analysis, data interpretation and data-informed policy making) and data use (including data ethics, data sharing and evaluation of decisions based on data).

Solid social data literacy is, just like reading and writing, crucial for the preservation of the fundamental values in our democratic society, such as freedom, equality and the right to participate.

Data literacy is for everyone! Or, in the 2020 words of David Spiegelhalter (former President of the Royal Statistical Society): “It is not only professionals that require data literacy – it is a basic requirement for informed citizens.”

Today’s fragmented datafied information landscape is susceptible to the pitfalls of misinformation, post-truth politics and societal polarisation – all of which call for a critical lens when dealing with data. There is an urgent need to develop data literacy at the level of citizens, organisations and society – such that all actors are empowered to navigate the complexity of modern data ecosystems. The relevant 2021 PARIS21 paper “Advancing data literacy in the post-pandemic world - A primer to catalyse policy dialogue and action” (paris21.org/news-center/news/new-paper-advancing-data-literacy-post-pandemic-world), which I had the pleasure of co-supervising, explores the state, understanding and practice of data literacy in today’s society as well as the path to the future of data literacy.

The paper identifies three key takeaways: it is crucial to forge a common language around data literacy; adopt a demand-driven approach and participatory approach to data literacy; and to move from ad-hoc programming towards sustained policy, investment and impact.

Our third takeaway is clearly in line with one of the ambitions of the FSO’s forthcoming “Project Rosling” to promote data literacy by bringing together different actors for scaled-up support and by becoming intentional about impact.

All of us have been greatly inspired by Hans Rosling. He has shown how narratives can be created using data, above all by constructing beautiful, expressive visualisations. On a personal note, I was elected during the Swiss Statistics Meeting 2009 in Geneva as President of the Swiss Statistical Society (a privilege and honour for me until 2015). At that meeting, Hans Rosling gave a keynote on “unveiling the beauty of statistics”. After having watched him virtually a countless number of times, seeing him presenting live and discussing with him personally afterwards is a memory that I will never forget!

Thanks Hans for your data stories and all your inspiration! We need to find ways to get everyone engaged in data. We need to make data and statistics accessible and usable for all. Data literacy is as important to this century as reading and writing!

Thanks to the FSO, as part of the “Project Rosling” workstream on data literacy, for making our above-mentioned call for action to develop data literacy for everyone a reality and hopefully achieving concrete progress.

Data literacy: leave no one behind!

PROF. DR. ÈS SC. DIEGO KUONEN, CSTAT PSTAT, CEO, STATOO CONSULTING & PROFESSOR OF DATA SCIENCE, GENEVA SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA & CO-INITIATOR “DATA LITERACY – SWITZERLAND” (DATA-LITERACY.CH)

FINANCING STATISTICS TO MAKE SENSE OF A TURBULENT WORLD

Hans Rosling was a self-proclaimed “possibilist”, someone who neither hopes nor fears without reason, and constantly resists the overdramatic worldview. Had he been alive to experience the turbulence of today’s world, beset by conflict, migration, climate change, poverty and COVID, his worldview might have been severely tested.

Hans Rosling used statistics and evidence to ground his thinking. The newly launched [Project Rosling](#) embodies this outlook by advancing data ecosystems to provide the information that we need for a fact-based worldview.

We require increasing amounts of data to understand and address the complex problems of modernity. While all the workstreams of Project Rosling will help increase access to better information, the financing data workstream is the one that underscores them all.

High-quality data—whether for health or climate change or literacy or stewardship—are not possible without sustainable and smart financing.

But evidence suggests a daunting and challenging path ahead. Available resources for statistics have not kept pace with demand: Official development assistance to statistics has stagnated at around USD 600 million and has not increased since 2015. Donors are grappling with pressure to divert funds and respond to urgencies brought on by the war in Ukraine and other global crises. And the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic still reverberate throughout the world, threatening a [backtrack of progress on the SDGs](#).

Yet part of being a “possibilist” is also having the ability to see where there is hope and where further progress is possible. While the road ahead is challenging, it is not impossible.

Funding for statistics is a heightened priority internationally, with the United Nations and World Bank launching new global funds such as the [Global Data Facility](#) and the [Complex Risk Analytics Fund](#). Countries such as Sierra Leone and Namibia are ramping up the mobilisation of domestic resources. Both are political

signals of the importance of quality investments.

The momentum continues with stakeholders joining up to amplify their calls for not only more financing but smarter financing. The [Bern Network](#), established in 2019 by the [Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation](#) and the [Swiss Federal Statistical Office](#), has been an active force in creating a space for discussion, debate and action.

At the UN World Data Forum in October 2021, the Bern Network launched the [Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data](#). Fast forward a few months and the Clearinghouse now hosts [17 donor profiles](#)—accounting for over USD 550 million of disbursed funds to statistics in 2019, the most recent year data are available. These new profiles, assembled in partnership with the existing [OECD’s Data for Development profiles](#), paint a comprehensive picture of global funding flows to statistics and are a catalyst for improved donor coordination and alignment with country priorities.

In addition to overall funding flows, the Clearinghouse also hosts [a specific channel on gender data](#) which provides trends on gender data financing flows, analyses country need by reviewing planned projects and budget allocations, and reviews the capacity of a country’s gender data system.

Hans Rosling once said, “Let the dataset change your mind”. And that is exactly the aim of the Clearinghouse.

Let the information housed on the platform change the minds of donors to better coordinate and collaborate. Let it change the minds of national statistical offices as they plan their national strategies for the development of statistics. And let it change the minds of advocates as they call for closing gender data gaps.



The Project Rosling financing workstream will be an opportunity to discuss the information needs in the financing for development data space and continue to improve the Clearinghouse to best serve those needs.

The year ahead offers ample opportunity to advocate more and smarter financing and to take the necessary actions to create change. While the official launch of Project Rosling is coming soon, this month's [UN High-Level Political Forum](#) is an important occasion to advance this agenda. We will take stock of whether national statistical offices have the resources to execute their mandate and collect data to support the 2030 Agenda and determine how policymakers can better support their work. On the road to the 2023 UN World Data Forum, the UN General Assembly is another moment to ensure financing statistics remains on the global agenda.

As we roll up our sleeves and look for solutions, we must look to data to help ensure that we neither fear nor hope for our collective future without reason.

*DEIRDRE APPLE, CLEARINGHOUSE COMMUNITY MANAGER,
PARIS21, JOHANNES JÜTTING, EXECUTIVE HEAD OF
PARIS21*



POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

With his claim for “factfulness”, Hans Rosling calls us to see the world as it really is – which is, in many respects, better than what most people think. Yet, Rosling does not shy away from the threats and risks accompanying the many positive global developments he highlights in his book. In 2018 he wrote: “The five [global risks] that concern me most are the risks of global pandemic, financial collapse, world war, climate change, and extreme poverty. Why is it these problems that cause me most concern? Because they are very likely to happen.”¹

Data collection and analysis is not only key to describing and understanding the world as it has been and is today. Indeed, solid empirical knowledge about the present world can also be the starting point for scenarios aiming to show how things might evolve in the future. Even though such projections stray from the firm ground of empirical observation, the hypothesis they rely on are, of course, derived from knowledge of trends observed in the past and present.

Understanding trends in our highly complex world often requires interdisciplinary approaches that combine data from various sources, measuring different but probably interconnected phenomena. Scientific reflections on the interactions between humans and their natural environment go back far in the past and have led to a great amount of literature on this topic. The current debate on climate change often addresses humans as the cause of the observed trend. Indeed, global and regional climate scenarios produced by academics and institutions systematically take into account population trends in their projections – considering not only the sheer number of humans but also their behaviour in terms of efforts to mitigate climate change.

On the other hand, the consequences of climate change on human life on earth are increasingly a focal point. Nonetheless, neither the UN nor Eurostat explicitly address climate change in the hypotheses underlying their population projections up to 2100. Among demographers, there is an emerging debate acknowledging the idea that “if global environmental change does influence fertility, mortality, and migration, then population estimates and forecasts need to adjust for climate feedback in population projections”², as Raya Muttarak puts it.

In this context, the aim of the work stream “Population scenarios and climate change” is to consider the consequences that climate change might have on the inhabitants of this planet. It will offer a platform for a broad, interdisciplinary and explorative discussion on the following questions:

- Where does international demographic research stand in taking into account climate change impact in population projections? What is the relevance of this debate for Switzerland and the population scenarios of the FSO?
- To what extent is it pertinent and possible to model evolutions in such highly complex systems? Can we produce solid climate-sensitive population scenarios for the world or for specific regions or countries?
- What may be the impact of climate change on migration, mortality and fertility in the next 50 or 100 years? What data and knowledge do we need to tie these factors into a viable statistical model?

“It is not necessary to look only at the worst-case scenario to see that climate change poses an enormous threat”³, as Rosling claims. If there is little scientific doubt on the climatic changes that will occur in the coming decades, it is hard to foresee their consequences on humans. In this situation, addressing the climate-population nexus appears as a relevant approach for any institution holding data and knowledge on the topic.

JOHANNA PROBST, DEMOGRAPHICS AND MIGRATION, FSO

¹ Rosling, Hans, *Factfulness*, Sceptre, 2018, p. 237.

² Muttarak, Raya, “Demographic perspectives in research on global environmental change”, *Population Studies*, 2021, p. 77.

³ Rosling, Hans, *Factfulness*, Sceptre, 2018, p. 239.

WHERE DOES SWITZERLAND STAND

IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is important to approach them knowing where we stand. In which areas is Switzerland lagging behind, where are measures being taken and where are there gaps in both progress and efforts? Switzerland's Voluntary National Review 2022 seeks to answer these questions.

Switzerland's second comprehensive Voluntary National Review (VNR) was published by the Federal Council in May 2022 and will be presented at the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs coordinated the overall VNR process and worked closely with the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) to bring together qualitative assessments and statistics to answer the question: Where does Switzerland stand in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)?

In a collaborative and digitalised stocktaking exercise, the federal administration evaluated each of the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets. This information was then used to draft the VNR, which shows the progress Switzerland has made since its last assessment in 2018 and outlines the remaining challenges to achieving the Goals by 2030. These qualitative assessments were combined with statistical data clusters, based on the FSO's indicator system (MONET 2030), to supply additional, complementary information on the status of progress towards the SDGs. While the VNR itself focuses on the key messages for each SDG, the entirety of the stocktaking and the statistics are available at www.SDGital2030.ch.

Switzerland's VNR finds that much action and coordination is still required. This is the case especially in the areas set out in Switzerland's new 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy, which was adopted by the Swiss Government in June 2021. These are 1) sustainable consumption and sustainable production; 2) climate, energy and biodiversity, as well as 3) equal opportunities and social cohesion.

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

Voluntary National Review of Switzerland 2022



In the area of sustainable consumption and sustainable production, a comparison of Switzerland with other countries shows how far Switzerland still has to go in counteracting resource over-consumption to mitigate its environmental impact both domestically and internationally. Additionally, the transformation of food systems presents a key challenge in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The second area of climate, energy and biodiversity presents a particular challenge, as the implementation of some of the goals in this field pushes the achievement of others further out of reach. As the data shows, biodiversity in Switzerland has been on a downward trend, therefore a goal has been set to protect and restore it. However, the climate goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 conflicts with this, as biodiversity loss is often the cost of new renewable energy sources. It therefore follows that the reduction of energy consumption, as well as energy efficiency, must be priorities in the future implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Thirdly, Switzerland still faces a challenge concerning equal opportunities and social cohesion. While certain steps forward have been made, illustrated by the expansion of marriage to same-sex couples or shown by

the data of increasing gender balance in local, cantonal and federal parliaments, much remains to be done. Gender equality has not been reached, as shown by continued difficulties in the reconciliation of work and family and the unequal distribution of domestic work and childcare between men and women.

While the VNR is an international reporting tool, it also serves to show the people of Switzerland where we stand and where we need to act. The 2030 Agenda can only be achieved if the whole of society works together to find solutions to these important issues. The VNR and the www.SDGital2030.ch website present the necessary information to find a common way forward.

HENRIKE BECKMANN, PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY DIVISION, FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CREATE MY REPORT:

1.



1. Select the stakeholders, SDGs and targets you are interested in

2.



2. Refine your selection

3.



3. Download your personalised report

Here you can [download a personalised PDF extract](#) from the Stocktaking Survey 2018-22. You can select the stakeholders, SDGs and targets you are interested in and can also choose to add the statistical data and analysis of the interactions. The information you download here corresponds to the data on this website. This is not the official Voluntary National Review of Switzerland that was adopted by the Federal Council. The official report is available [here](#).

BACK TO BUSINESS:

18TH CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A delegation from the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), comprising Georges-Simon Ulrich, Director General of the FSO, Manuela Lenk, Vice Director, Head of the Interoperability and Registers Division, and members of the International and National Affairs Section, travelled to Krakow to take part in the 18th conference of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) from 26 to 28 April 2022.



The conference brought together national statistics offices and the statistics divisions of international organisations to discuss the topic: “Worthy Information for Challenging Times”. The 3rd Congress of Polish Statistics was also held at the same time, commemorating the 110th anniversary of the Polish Statistical Association.

The Swiss delegation attended sessions on topics such as the core values of official statistics, privately held data, data stewardship and data for the sustainable development goals. Georges-Simon Ulrich also played an active part in the high-level panel discussion “Data Stewardship - a global perspective”, in which he was able to share Swiss experience. In fact, the FSO is in the midst

of a transition from statistics to data and its mandate now contains three main areas of focus: a) statistical production, b) data management and c) data science. Accompanied by Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the UN Statistical Division, Gabriella Vukovitch, President of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and Chair of the Bureau of the UN Statistical Commission, Ola Awad, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and Dominic Rozkrut, President of Statistics Poland, Mr. Ulrich was able to discuss, among other things, the role of data stewards and the importance of national statistics offices in this transition.

All participants were pleased to return to an in-person conference format, as breaks and social events are certainly useful moments for discussion and the strengthening of cooperation. For example, the delegation spoke with Stefan Schweinfest about the work of the Bureau of the UN Statistical Commission, with Paul Schreyer, Chief Statistician of the OECD, and with Tiina Luige from the UNECE Statistical Division about data stewardship and sharing Swiss experience. The Swiss Embassy also invited representatives from the World Health Organisation, from UNECE, from INSTAT Albania and Statistics Poland to get the most out of this reunion and to discuss possible cooperations for the Project Rosling.

The 18th IAOS conference thus turned out to be one full of discussions and ideas. The next edition will take place in April 2023 in Livingstone, Zambia. A date not to be missed!

FIONA FAULKNER, INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL AFFAIRES, FSO



“HABEMUS A NEW NACE”

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS WORKING GROUP (SWG) IN LUXEMBOURG

From 3 – 4 May 2022, hosted by Eurostat, the meeting of the Standards Working Group (SWG) took place in Luxembourg. The active participation of more than 30 national statistical offices of the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) as well as selected international organisations like the European Central Bank (ECB) contributed to a fruitful exchange of views.



Since the outbreak of the global pandemic in 2020, it was the first time the meeting was held on site in Luxembourg. The face-to-face exchanges enabled the Swiss representatives to foster existing relationships, establish new contacts, share experiences and national practices as well as informally discuss different problem-solving approaches with regard to new challenges to the statistical system.

This meeting was dedicated to the revision of the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE). NACE provides the framework for collecting and presenting a large range of statistical data by economic activity in the fields of economic statistics (e.g. production, employment, national accounts) and in other statistical domains. Statistics produced on the basis of NACE are comparable

at European and, in general, at world level. The use of NACE is mandatory within the European Statistical System (ESS). Some of the main drivers for the revision of NACE are globalisation and digitalisation, which have changed the way in which many economic activities provide goods and services. New activities have gained importance while others have lost importance in the global economy. Especially in the information technology environment, rapid and dynamic changes have taken place, which all need to be reflected in the classification.

The objective of the meeting was to jointly finalise the structure of the new NACE (→ NACE Rev. 2.1) and to discuss best practices for its implementation in the national business registers and statistical surveys. During the meeting, Eurostat acknowledged the work of the SWG and in particular the NACE Review Task Force since the official launch of the NACE revision in 2019. As a member of both working groups, Switzerland – represented by the Nomenclatures group – added to the various discussions by contributing the views of different national stakeholders.

“Habemus a new NACE” were the words of Martina Hahn, Head of Eurostat unit “Data and metadata services”, which concluded the meeting as the key message. It indicates that the major aim of finalising the new NACE structure has been achieved after three years of intensive work. This also represents an important milestone for the Swiss statistical system. The Swiss General Classification of Economic Activities (NOGA) is derived from the NACE. They are identical up to the 4th level in order to guarantee international comparability in statistics. The particularities of our national economy are incorporated in the 5th and thus last level of the NOGA. The finalisation of the new NACE structure therefore represents the starting point for the elaboration of this last level, which is expected to take until next summer. This will be followed by a national consultation. Subsequently, the new NOGA version will be submitted to Eurostat for validation in early 2024.



OLIVER GALLUSSER AND MARC FROIDEVAUX, BUSINESS REGISTERS DATA, FSO

INTERVIEW

THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL STATISTICS COMMITTEE IN THE SWISS STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Since 1 April, Nadja Braun Binder, a legal expert at the University of Basel, has been President of the Federal Statistics Committee (FStatC). In a joint interview with the FSO Director Georges-Simon Ulrich, she answers questions about the challenges and the future of the FStatC.

The Federal Statistics Committee helps ensure that official statistics meet the requirements of a democratic society. The committee advises the Federal Council, the Federal Department of Home Affairs, the Federal Statistical Office and other producers of statistics, with due regard also given to international practice, on important statistical matters such as:

- Drawing up and accompaniment of the multi-annual programme for federal statistics.
- Drafting of recommendations and guidelines for statistical works;
- Dissemination policy for statistical information;
- Improvement of official statistics in Switzerland.

Members are appointed to the Federal Statistics Committee for a period of four years (legislative period) by the Federal Department of Home Affairs. All members can be re-elected. The committee is comprised of a maximum number of 25 representatives from the cantons and communes, from the scientific and economic community, the social partners, the federal administration and the Swiss National Bank. The presidency is held by a representative from the scientific community. Nadja Braun Binder was elected President on 1 April 2022 and will lead the FStatC into the future.

[In the video, which was published on the YouTube channel on 4 July \(including English subtitles\)](#), Urs Frei, Head of the Communication and Publishing Department, puts questions to Nadja Braun Binder and Georges-Simon Ulrich:

- What role does the President envisage for data and statistics in a modern democracy?
- What legal aspects need to be considered in order to relate statistical production to pressing issues such as multiple data use?
- What tasks should the FStatC take on in the future?
- What role do data and statistics have in digitalisation?

We hope you find the interview informative.

YASMINA LEU, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLISHING, PRESS SERVICE, FSO



OUTLOOK

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Dear readers,

I am glad that after so many pages, you still have time to read this last text. We hope that the previous pages have provided you with the information you wanted. It is always a difficult task to choose texts that contain up-to-date information and are, of course, interesting to read.

This year, for example, we have chosen not to include a text about the WHO visit to the FSO. The WHO visited us for a better understanding of the new tasks assigned to the FSO (data management and data science). Such discussions are extremely important to us. That is why we will be meeting our colleagues from the statistics offices in Estonia and Finland in August and in the autumn. We will tell you about these visits in the next edition of *Beyond the Horizon* in December.

Apart from that, we will be busy in the coming months and up to the end of the year with the transformation of the International and National Affairs Section. As mentioned in the previous edition, our team is growing. We are able to make investments, particularly in the area of national coordination (cooperation with other official statistics producers and the cantons). The purpose of this is to bring our international work to the national and regional levels, as well as cantonal level, so that we can

take advantage of synergies.

We are currently planning events for 2023, most of which will be part of the Project Rosling. As mentioned above, the programme for this project will be published by autumn. Another important task that lies ahead of us is preparing for the Peer Review, which will take place in March 2023.

I wish you all a relaxing summer and look forward to the opportunity of meeting you soon in Switzerland or elsewhere.

BENJAMIN ROTHEN, AMBASSADOR, INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL AFFAIRES, FSO



WHO VISIT TO THE FSO, 15 JUNE 2022