



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Directorate A: Cooperation in the European Statistical System; international cooperation;
resources

Task Force Peer Reviews

REPORT ON THE EUROSTAT 2015 USER SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR MEDIA

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1. Background – about the survey

Eurostat's mission is to be the leading provider of high quality statistics on Europe. In order to measure the degree to which it meets its obligations towards its users, in particular, media representatives, Eurostat carried out a media user satisfaction survey over the period May – June 2015. The survey aimed to obtain a better knowledge about press and media users, their needs and satisfaction with the service provided by Eurostat. It was the third time that a specific survey for media representatives was carried out, using the same methodology and with few changes in the questionnaire, to allow a comparison of the results with those from the previous surveys in 2013 and 2014. The questionnaire is also similar to the one used for a general user satisfaction survey, allowing a comparative analysis with other user groups.

The survey covered three main aspects:

- information on types of media users and their use of European statistics,
- trust and quality aspects,
- dissemination of statistics.

The survey was carried out online, with a link provided on Eurostat website. It was launched on 18 May and remained open until 19 June. Email invitations were sent to more than 1000 journalists registered on Eurostat Press Office's mailing list. A total of 78 replies were received, against 101 replies in 2014 and 109 in 2013. Potential explanations for such a lower number of replies could be the frequency of the survey (yearly frequency may be too high) or the length of the questionnaire. Two new questions were added this year and the questionnaire might have become too long (20 questions plus additional comments) for some journalists. Eurostat will reflect on this before organising the next survey.

The results were very similar to the previous ones but a few changes, mostly positive, could be registered, such as the increased satisfaction with the interest and clarity of the news releases and with the content of the new Eurostat's website.

The results presented in this report constitute a summary of the findings, supported by graphs. While the results in general can be trusted and confirm what already observed in the past, changes at the level of single products or statistics may not be really significant as concerning a very limited number of replies and therefore are not treated.

2. Main outcomes

General aspects

- The large majority of press and media representatives who took part in the survey came from the current EU member states (92.3%). When looking at a country level distribution, the biggest group of journalists came from Belgium (23.1%), followed by France (15.4%) and Germany (10.3%), same as in 2014. However, the prevalence of Belgium reflects not the nationality, but the fact that most are accredited to the Commission or other European institutions in Brussels to follow EU affairs.

- With regards to media channels, print media was found to be the most popular type with 38.5% of journalists working with it. Compared to previous years, news agency channels continued to increase as the second most popular type with 34.6% of respondents using it, followed by online media and audio-visual with 28.2% and 18.0%, respectively.
- Respondents indicated that they mostly used “Economic and financial” data (82.1%). “General and regional statistics” as well as “Population and social conditions” were also among the widely used statistical themes, sharing 57.7% and 56.4%, of the responses respectively. On the contrary, “Agriculture and fisheries”, “Transport” and “Science and technology” were the least used, with respective shares of 16.7%, 16.7% and 20.5%. On average the respondents selected a bit less themes than in 2014, 3.86 compared to 4.35 and so the shares of all themes decreased.
- In relation to Eurostat product usage among journalists, “News Releases” remains a clearly dominant product with 87.2% of journalists using it most frequently. Concerning the usage of the other products, a change could be observed for the “Main Tables” (-12.0% points) and for “Statistics Explained” (+12.0% points), opposite to last year and which brings their respective shares very close to those of 2013. This confirms that with small number of replies such kind of changes must be taken with caution.
- Users expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the “News Releases” produced by Eurostat. 88.2% specified that the interest of the releases was “very good” or “good”, as 84.2% did concerning their clarity and 80.0% for the range of topics covered. Among them the share of respondents who were very satisfied grew significantly compared to 2014, with an increase of the “very good” answers of 19.0% points for the interest of the news releases, of 14.4% points for their clarity and of 9.1% points for their topics. No respondent gave a negative opinion on the interest of the news releases, and only two respondents were not satisfied with their clarity and another two with the range of topics. This year for the first time users were also asked if they were satisfied with the format in which the news releases were sent to them and almost all, 97.4%, declared they were.
- Similarly as in 2014, European statistics was stated to be either “essential” or “important” for 79.5% of journalists and the remaining 20.5% tended to use it as background information. Given the high level of importance attributed to European statistics, it comes as no surprise that statistics is used very frequently: half of journalists stated they tend to use European statistics on a weekly basis and a quarter utilise statistics in their day-to-day activities.

Quality aspects

- *Timeliness.* Similarly to 2014, 70.5% of journalists on average found timeliness of Eurostat data to be “good” or “very good”, while around one ninth (11.2%) described

timeliness as “poor” or “very poor”. The highest positive evaluations were received by the domains of “General and regional statistics” (79.5%), “Economy and finance” (72.6%) and “Population and social conditions” (72.5%).

- *Completeness.* Journalists were a bit less satisfied with the overall completeness of Eurostat data than in 2014, coming back more or less to what was expressed in 2013. On average, 66.2% of journalists were satisfied (-1.1% points compared to 2013), 18.3% saw it as “satisfactory” and 15.6% stated the data completeness was “poor” or “very poor” (+5.1% points). Media representatives were most satisfied with such statistical domains as “Industry, trade and services” (72.2%), “Transport” and “Agriculture and fisheries” (both with 69.2%).
- *Comparison with national statistical institutes and other institutions.* In general and as in previous years, participants saw the quality of European statistics being better or same as that of national statistical institutes or other providers of statistics. The percentage of journalists seeing Eurostat statistics better or same as that of NSIs was 87.7%, 92.7% when compared to OECD and 91.8% in the case of IMF.
- *Trust.* Journalists continue to be extremely positive about the trust in European statistics. 97.4% of press and media stated they trusted statistics greatly or tended to trust them.

Dissemination

- Journalists were very positive about the Euro-indicator Releases calendar, as in the past. 84.5% of participants stated the calendar was relevant and sufficient for their needs and none found the calendar irrelevant and/or insufficiently informative. Similarly, press and media were generally satisfied with the content of information on the Eurostat’s website, more than in 2014. 75.7% of journalists replied that the content was “very good” or “good” (+12.3% points), 21.6% thought it was “satisfactory”, while only 2.7% saw it as “poor” or “very poor” (-7.3% points).
- The new Eurostat’s website did not really influence the judgement of the media on the easiness of access to European Statistics on the website. Only 40.3% of press and media representatives said the access to statistics was easy, 44.4% claimed it was partly easy and 15.3% found it hard to access the information, percentages that are practically the same as in 2014.
- An additional question on dissemination was added this year about the Twitter account. Journalists were asked to judge the interest of Eurostat’s Twitter feed but only around 30% of the respondents could give an opinion, showing that the majority of journalists did not use this service. As a consequence the number of replies is too small to draw significant conclusions although the majority of the few who expressed their opinion seemed to be satisfied.

- With regard to the use of media support, 7.7% of journalists would turn to it on a weekly basis, 16.7%, would do so monthly and 23.1% quarterly. A striking rate of 92.0% of those who used it, even more than in past years, said that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the support service they received, while only a small 4% declared to be unsatisfied.

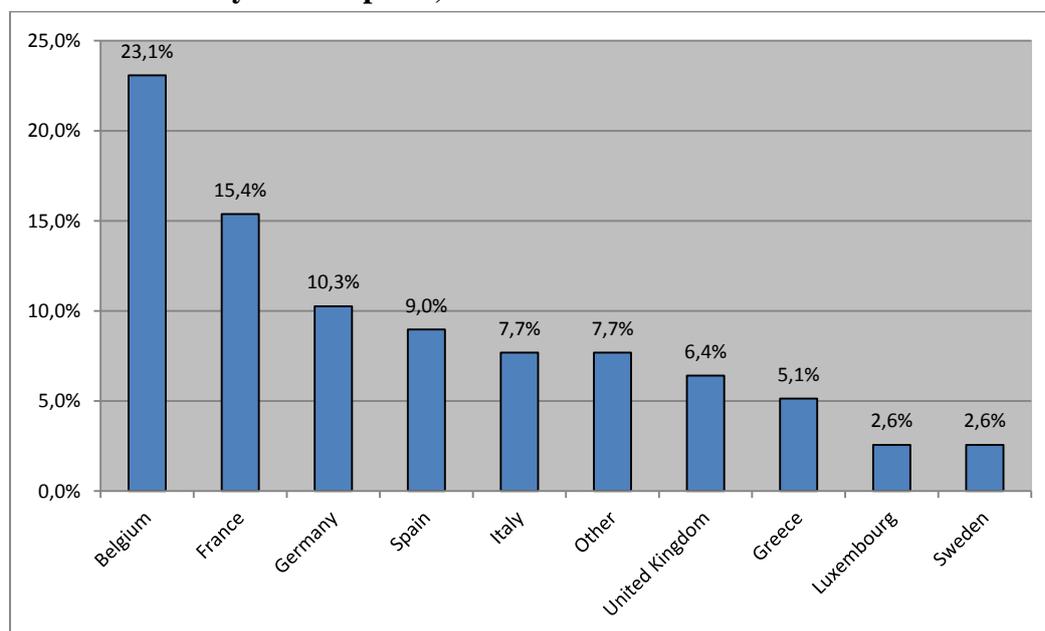
3. Results of the USS 2015 for Media

3.1 General information

3.1.1 Who uses Eurostat's European statistics?

The large majority of press and media representatives who took part in the survey came from the current EU member states (92.3%). The results are in line with the general user satisfaction survey, where EU respondents accounted for 86.1% of all participants in 2014. When looking at a country level distribution, the biggest group of journalists came from Belgium (23.1%), followed by France (15.4%) and Germany (10.3%), same as in 2014. A dominating number of Belgium based participants can be explained by the fact that many of them work with the European Commission or other European institutions and, therefore, are employed in Brussels.

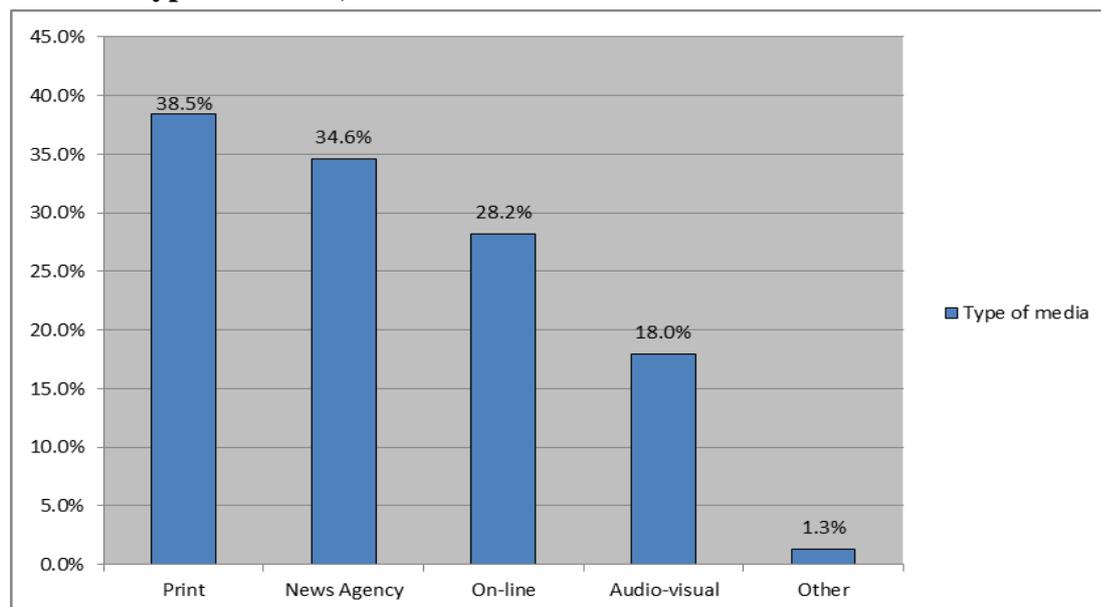
Chart 1. Country of workplace, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

When asked about the type of media the respondents work with, printed channels appeared to be the most frequent (38.5%). Compared to previous years, news agency channels continued to increase as the second most popular type, going from 30.7% of respondents using it in 2014 to 34.6% in 2015, followed by online media and audio-visual with 28.2% and 18.0%, respectively.

Chart 2. Types of media, in %

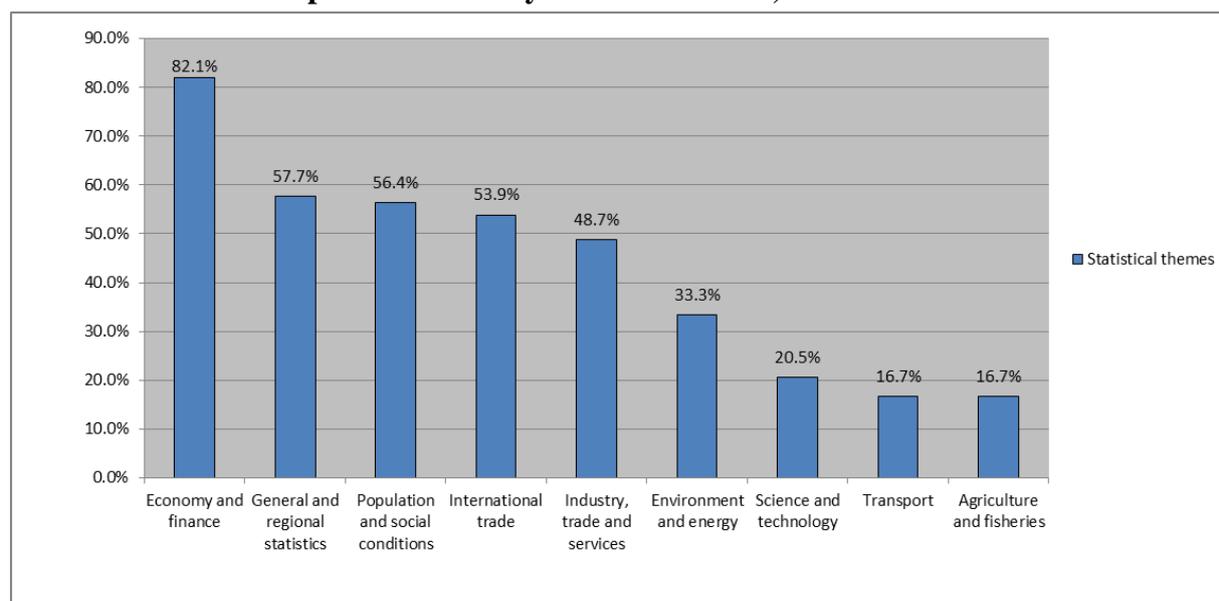


Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

3.1.2 Which statistics?

Journalists were asked to identify the type of European statistics that they use for their work. As can be seen from Chart 3, “Economy and finance” is the most widely used category with 82.1% of respondents using the theme. “General and regional statistics”, “Population and social conditions” as well as “International trade” are among the remaining popular domains, getting 57.7%, 56.4% and 53.9%, respectively. On average the respondents selected a bit less themes than in 2014, 3.86 compared to 4.35 and so the shares of all themes decreased.

Chart 3. Uses of European statistics by statistical theme, in %

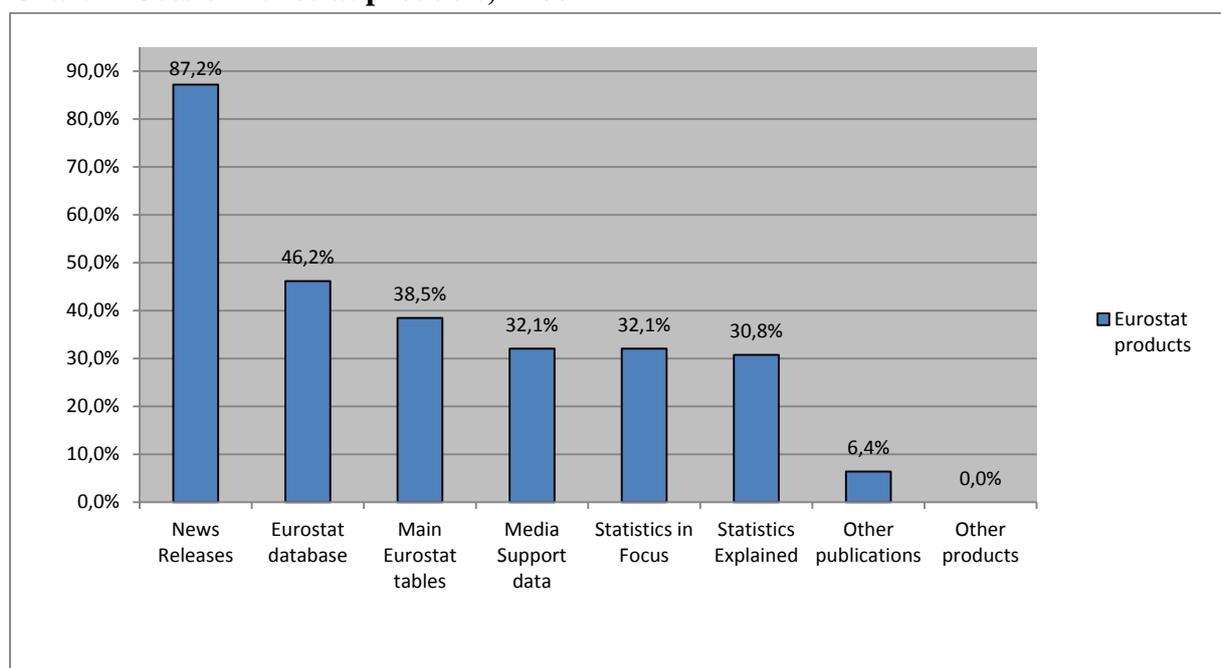


Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

Given that the nature of work performed by journalists differs from that undertaken by academics or business representatives, an attempt was made to identify which Eurostat products are of a particular interest to media. The results are presented in Chart 4.

As can be seen, “News Releases” remains as in previous years a clearly dominant product with 87.2% of journalists utilising it most frequently. Concerning the usage of the other products, a change could be observed for the “Main Tables” (-12.0 percentage points) and for “Statistics Explained” (+12.0% points), opposite to last year and which brings their respective shares very close to those of 2013. This confirms that with a small number of replies such kind of changes must be considered with caution.

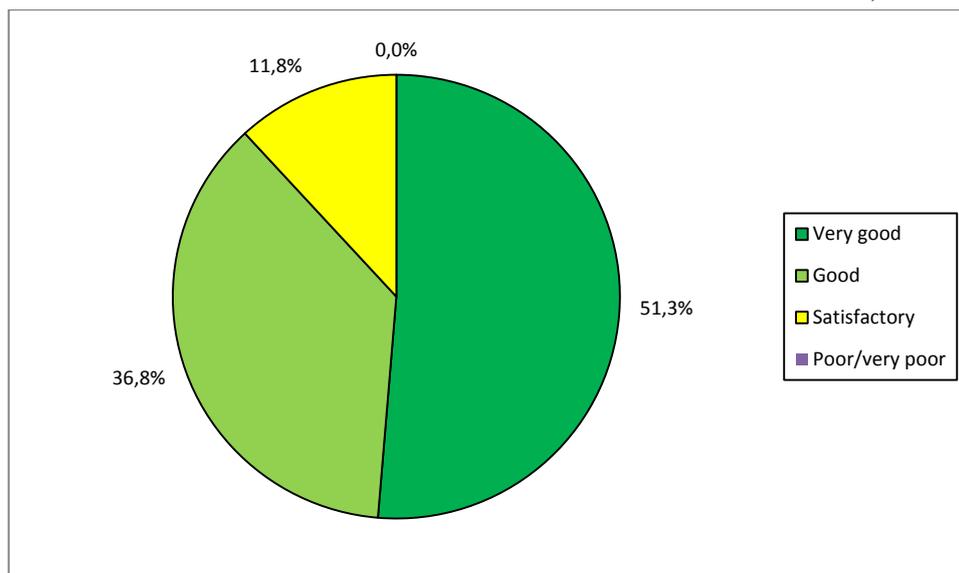
Chart 4. Uses of Eurostat products, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

Keeping in mind that almost 90% of European journalists rely on Eurostat’s “News Releases”, it is important to know how satisfied media are with the information and quality of these releases. This part of the questionnaire was further expanded compared to 2014. This year, on top of asking users to give an opinion on the interest and clarity of the news releases and on the range of topics they cover, we were also interested to learn if they were satisfied with the format in which they receive the news releases. Users were also given the option to provide suggestions for improving the news releases.

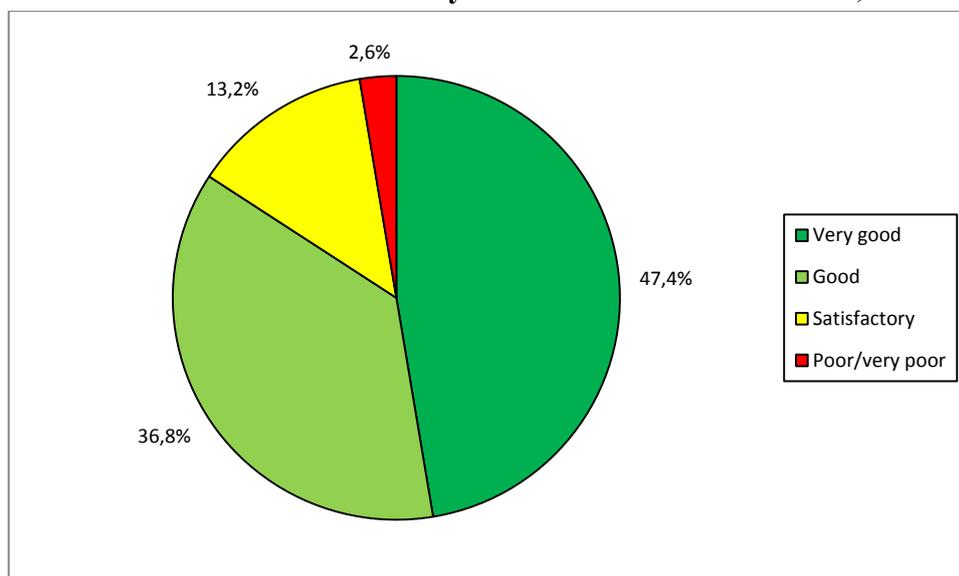
Chart 5. Assessment of the interest of Eurostat’s News Releases, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

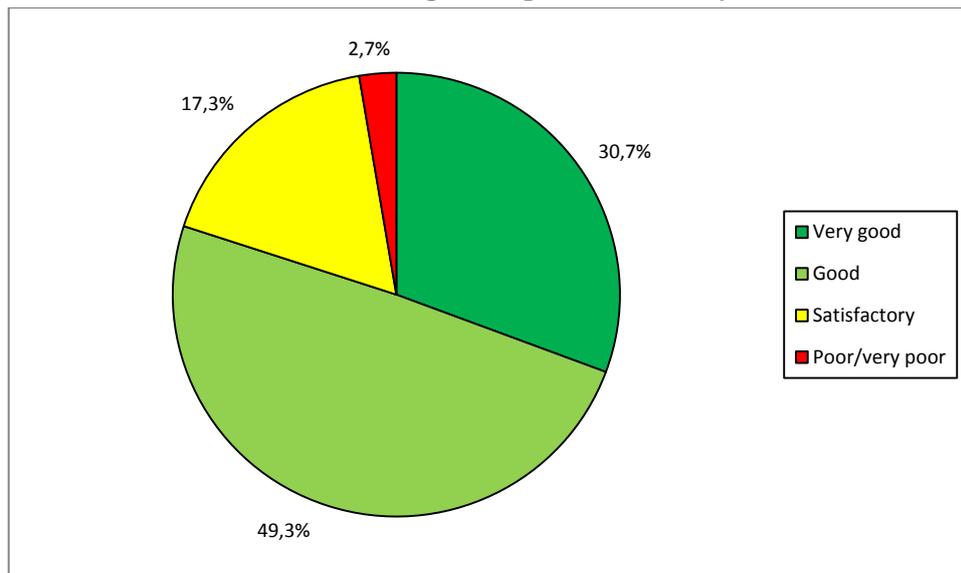
Users expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the “News Releases” produced by Eurostat. 88.2% specified that the interest of the releases was “very good” or “good”, as 84.2% did concerning their clarity and 80.0% for the range of topics covered. No respondent gave a negative opinion on the interest of the news releases, only two respondents were not satisfied with their clarity and another two with the range of topics. Out of the original 78 responses only a couple of participants stated they had no opinion on such topics.

Chart 6. Assessment of the clarity of Eurostat’s News Releases, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

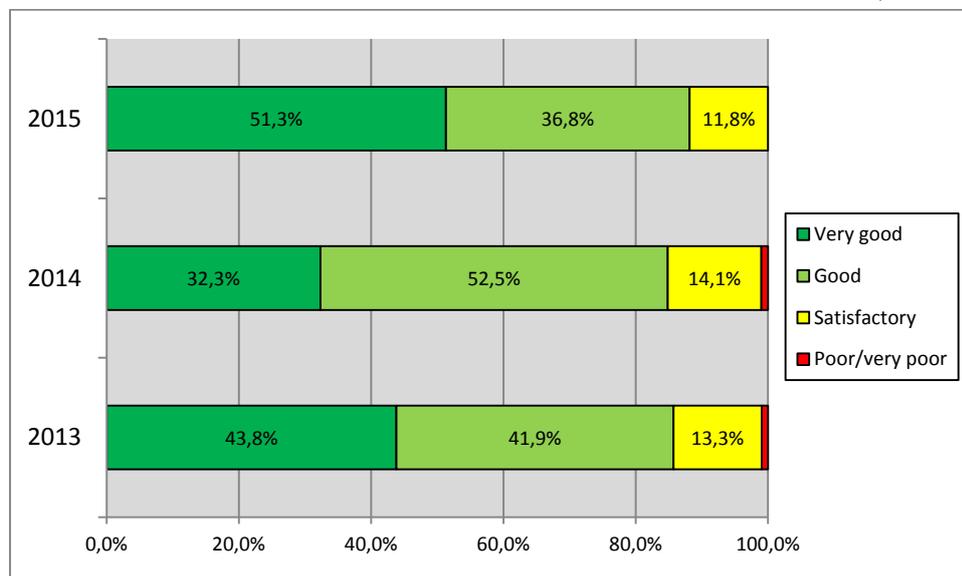
Chart 7. Assessment of the range of topics covered by Eurostat’s News Releases, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

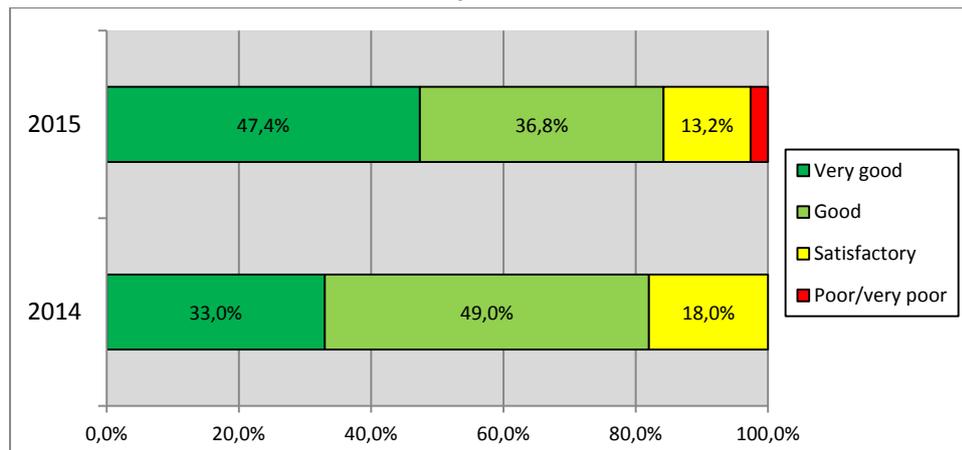
For all the aspects of the news releases the share of respondents who were very satisfied grew significantly compared to 2014, with an increase of the “very good” answers of 19.0% points for the interest of the news releases, of 14.4% points for their clarity and of 9.1% points for their topics.

Chart 8. Assessment of the interest of Eurostat’s News Releases, 2013-2015, in %



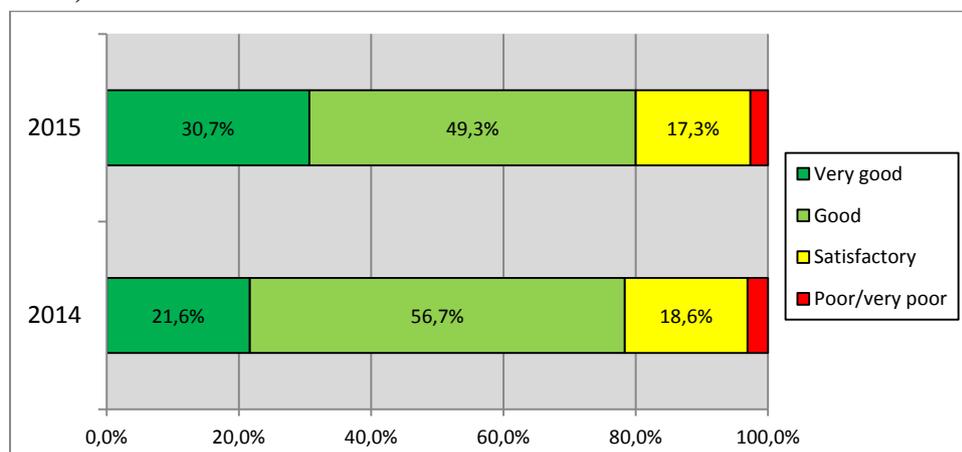
Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014 and 2015 user satisfaction surveys for media

Chart 9. Assessment of the clarity of Eurostat’s News Releases, 2014-2015, in %



Source: Eurostat 2014 and 2015 user satisfaction surveys for media

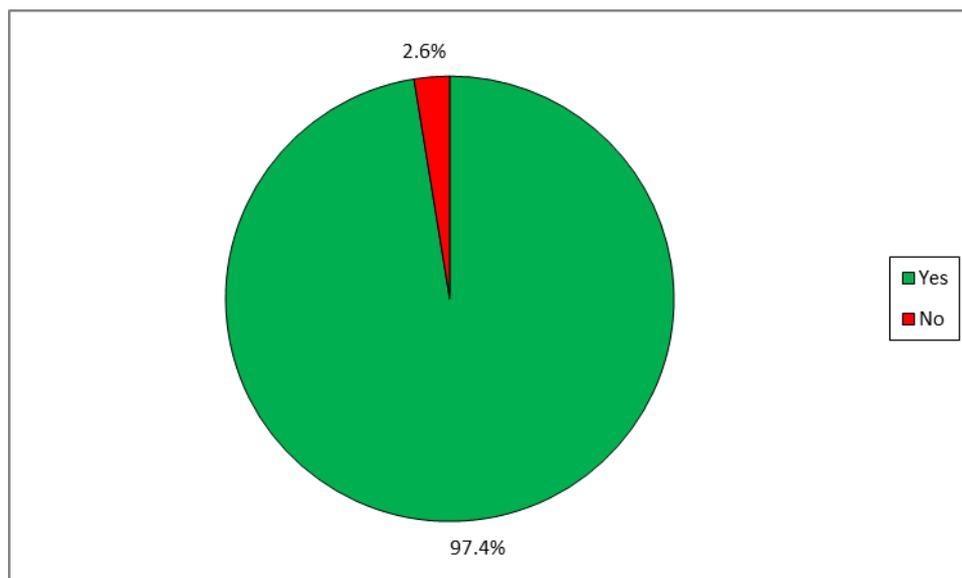
Chart 10. Assessment of the range of topics covered by Eurostat’s News Releases, 2014-2015, in %



Source: Eurostat 2014 and 2015 user satisfaction surveys for media

Almost all respondents, 97.4%, were also satisfied with the format in which the news releases were sent to them. Comma Separated Values (CSV) and Excel formats were mentioned as other options for the data.

Chart 11. Assessment of the satisfaction with the format of the news releases, in %



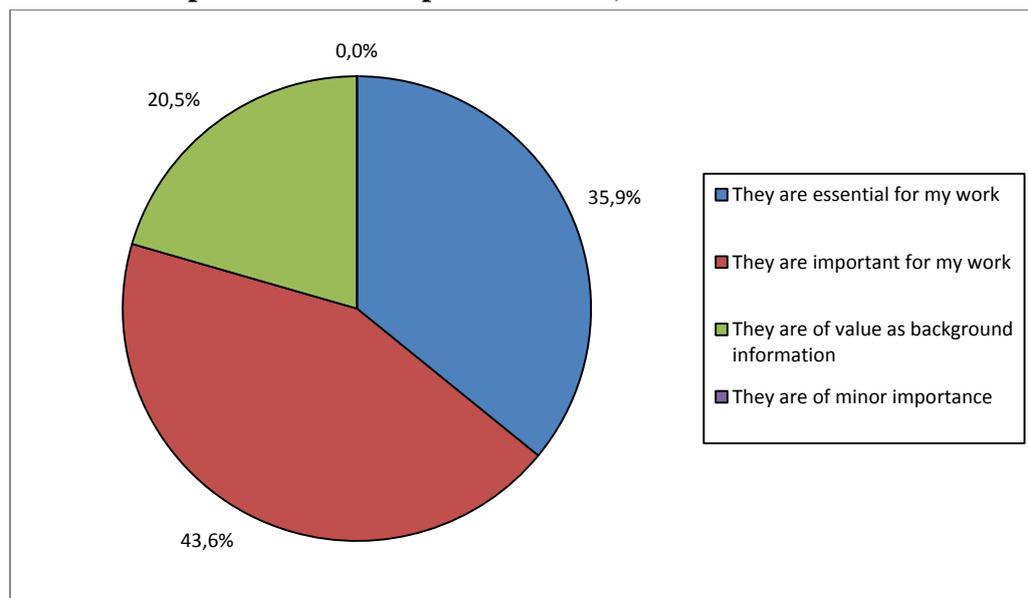
Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

A qualitative analysis of the comments supports these results. The feedback indicated that news releases were clear and easy to understand. The respondents made anyway some suggestions to further improve them. The most commons were to have links to time series and to additional or background information, and to have more data directly available in the news releases as tables or graphs that journalist could reuse. The possibility of broadening access to the data in advance under embargo was also mentioned. A couple of comments also mentioned problems in dealing with news releases in English but news releases are all published and available in three languages (English, French and German).

3.1.3 How important are European statistics?

When asked about the importance of European statistics to their work, 79.5% of journalists stated statistics were either “essential” or “important” for their work, a share similar to that of previous years. For the remaining 20.5% of participants statistics served as a background information.

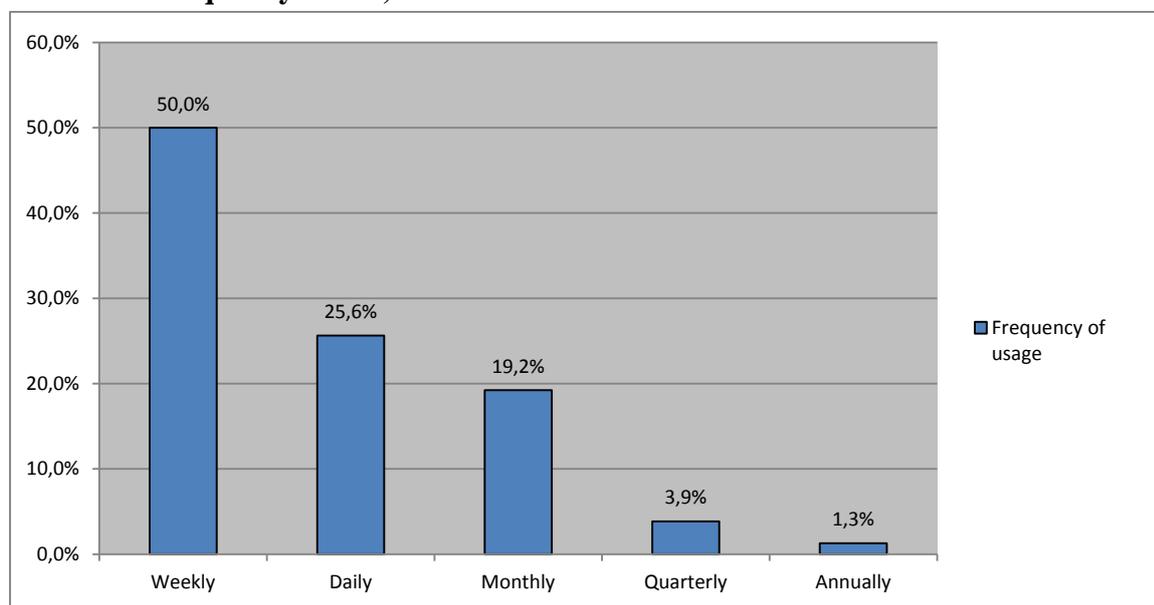
Chart 12. Importance of European statistics, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

Knowing how important statistical information is for a number of respondents, its frequent use comes as no surprise. Half of those who completed the survey stated that they used European statistics on a weekly basis and a quarter utilised statistics in their day-to-day activities. The group with an annual use of statistics accounted for only 1.3% of responses.

Chart 13. Frequency of use, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

3.2 Information on quality aspects

In accordance with Eurostat’s mission statement, quality considerations play a central role in both its corporate management and its day-to-day statistical operations. Thus, it is important

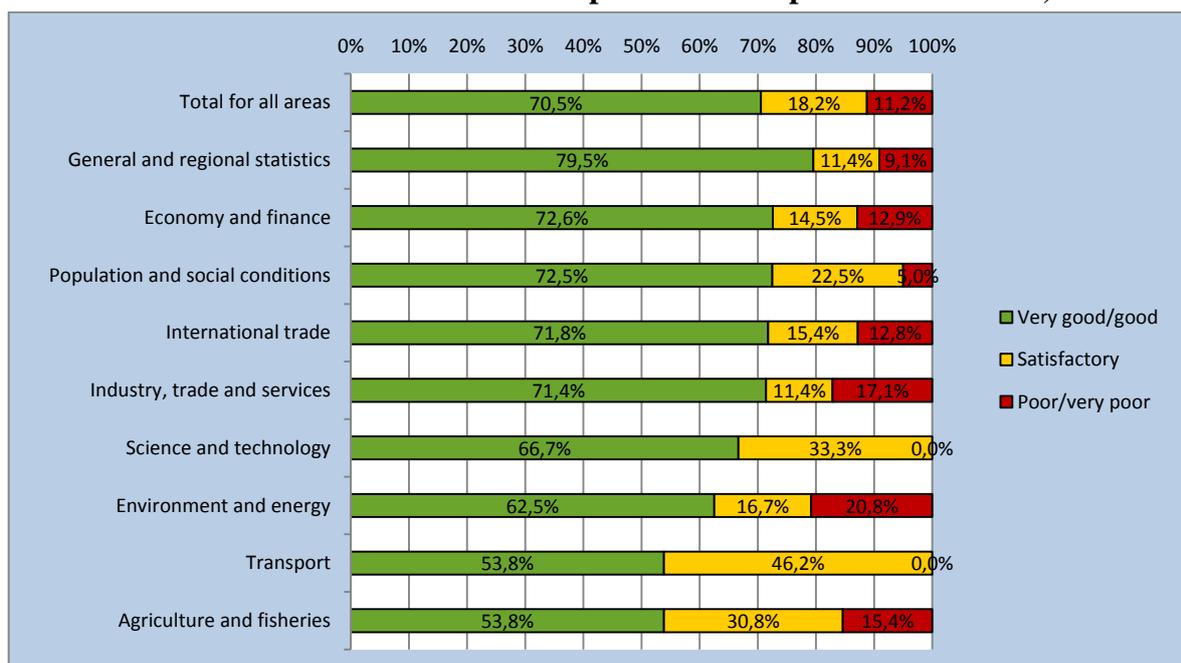
to know how media users assess the quality of the European statistics produced and disseminated by Eurostat. This survey looked at two different aspects of quality – timeliness and overall completeness. The analysis was complemented by the question on trust and a comparison of European statistics in relation to national statistical institutes as well as other organisations.

3.2.1 Timeliness

Timeliness of information reflects the length of time between its availability and the event or phenomenon it describes. Chart 14 presents the views of media representatives on the timeliness of data by statistical area produced by Eurostat.

The level of satisfaction with data timeliness remained stable compared with 2014. 70.5% of journalists on average found timeliness of Eurostat data to be “good” or “very good”, while around one ninth (11.2%) described timeliness as “poor” or “very poor”. The highest positive evaluations were received by the domains of “General and regional statistics” (79.5%), “Economy and finance” (72.6%) and “Population and social conditions” (72.5%).

Chart 14. Assessment of timeliness of European statistics per statistical area, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

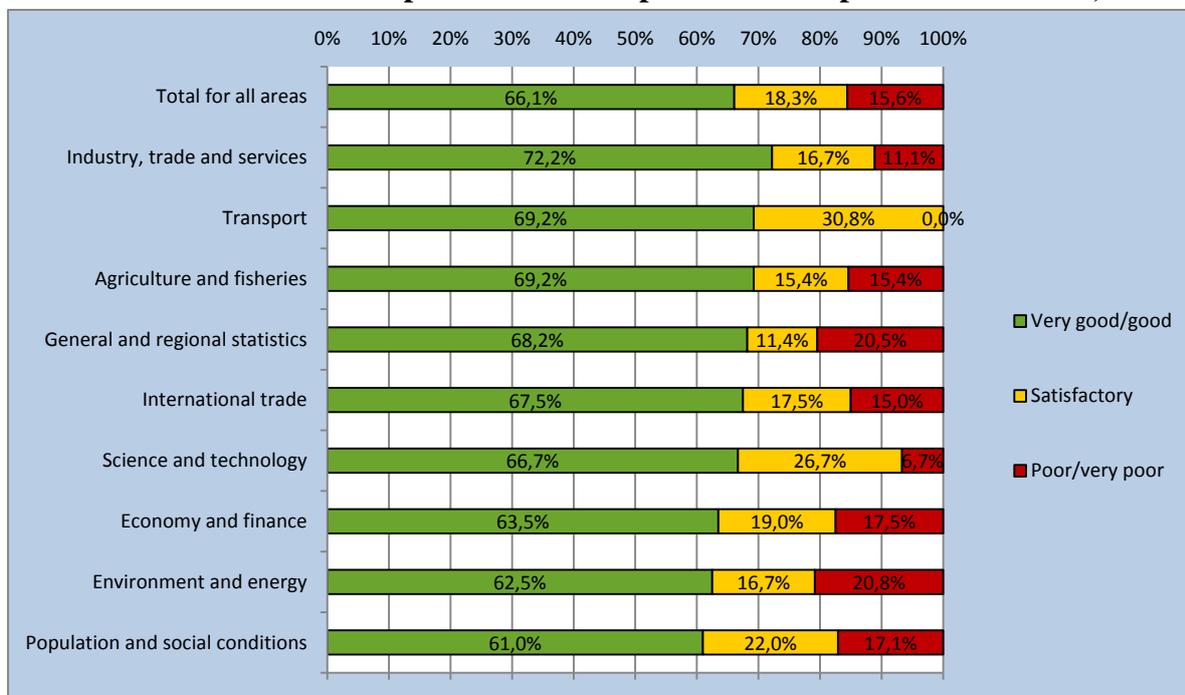
3.2.2 Completeness

Completeness is the extent to which all statistics that are needed are available. It is usually described as a measure of the amount of available data from a statistical system compared to the amount that was expected to be obtained.

Journalists were a bit less satisfied with the overall completeness of Eurostat data than in 2014, coming back more or less to what was expressed in 2013. On average, 66.2% of

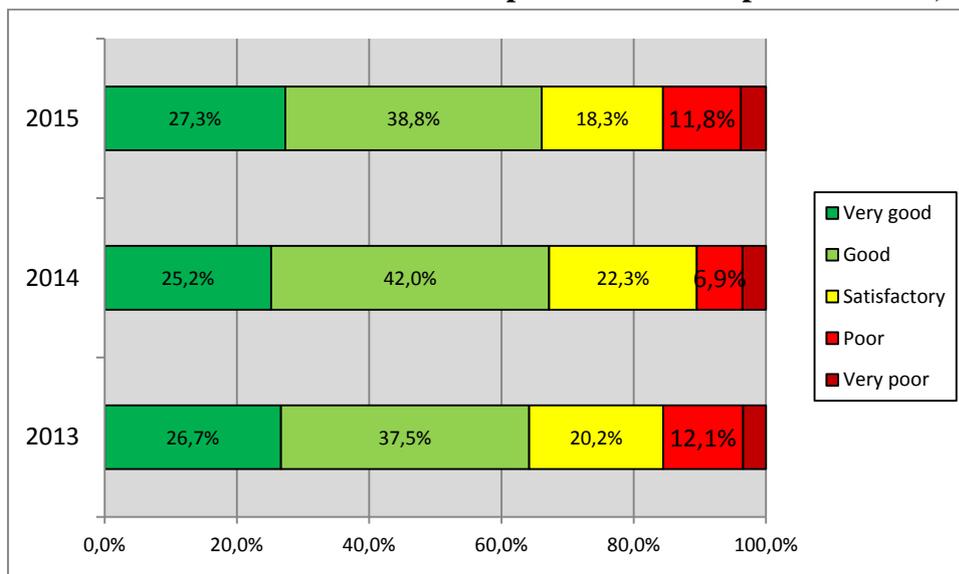
journalists were satisfied (-1.1% points compared to 2013), 18.3% saw it as “satisfactory” and 15.6% stated the data completeness was “poor” or “very poor” (+5.1% points). Media representatives were most satisfied with such statistical domains as “Industry, trade and services” (72.2%), “Transport” and “Agriculture and fisheries” (both with 69.2%).

Chart 15. Assessment of completeness of European statistics per statistical area, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

Chart 16. Assessment of overall completeness of European statistics, 2013-2015, in %



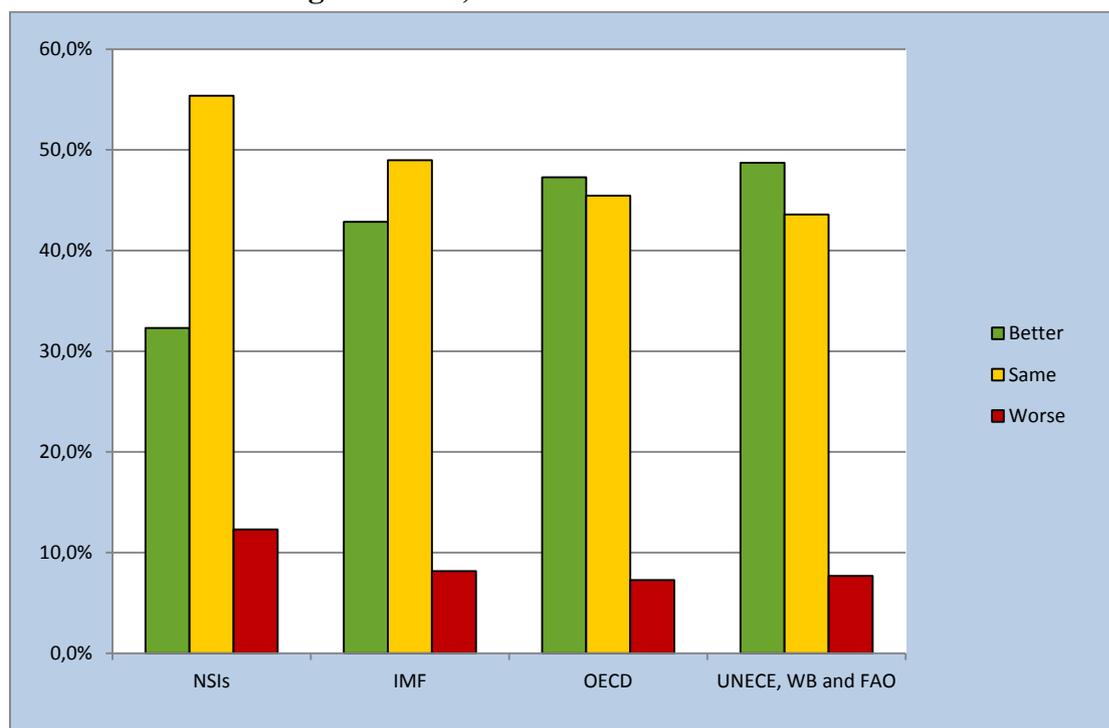
Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014 and 2015 user satisfaction surveys for media

Given that approximately 11-15% of media respondents still rated data timeliness or completeness as “poor” or “very poor”, some attention should continue to be paid to further improve the quality of these aspects.

3.2.3 Comparison

As part of the quality evaluation, journalists could also assess the quality of Eurostat data versus other statistical producers. In particular, comparison was made with national statistical institutes (NSIs), IMF, OECD, UNECE, World Bank and FAO.

Chart 17. Quality of European statistics compared with those published by NSIs or other international organisations, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

In general and as in previous years participants saw the quality of European statistics being better or same as that of national statistical institutes or other providers of statistics. The percentage of journalists seeing Eurostat statistics better or same as that of NSIs was 87.7%, 92.3% when compared to UNECE, WB and FAO, 92.7% compared to OECD and 91.8% in the case of IMF.

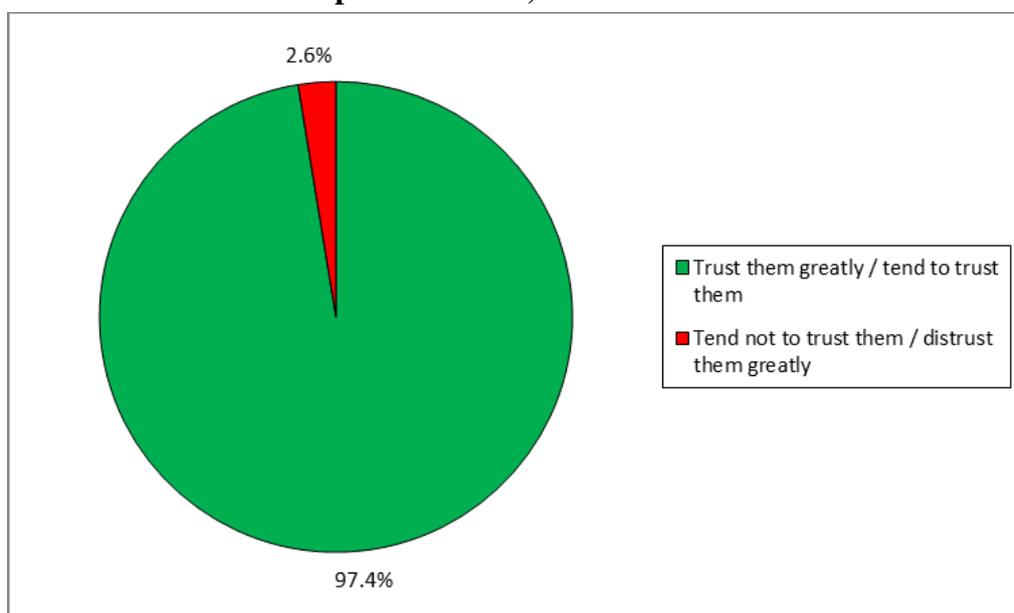
Among Eurostat’s strong points, respondents mentioned completeness, timeliness and clarity of data and metadata. A minor percentage, around 9% on average, perceived the quality as being worse. The few explanations given pointed to the difficulties to find data on the website or lack of examples and details in the news releases. When comparing with NSIs, users seemed to be aware that the quality of Eurostat’s data depends on those of EU Member States.

3.2.4 Trust

In a period when the role and functioning of the EU institutions is sometimes being questioned, Eurostat was interested to know if journalists continued to trust European data. It is indeed the case as the results were again extremely positive, with 97.4% of media stating they “trust statistics greatly” or “tend to trust them”. Even on the assumption that users trust statistics that they work with, which could give some bias to their responses, the extremely high rate of positive answers that retains over time shows a very good and encouraging sign about the confidence of users in the statistics disseminated by Eurostat.

Here again respondents pointed out that the quality of Eurostat’s statistics depends on the quality of national data.

Chart 18. Trust in European statistics, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

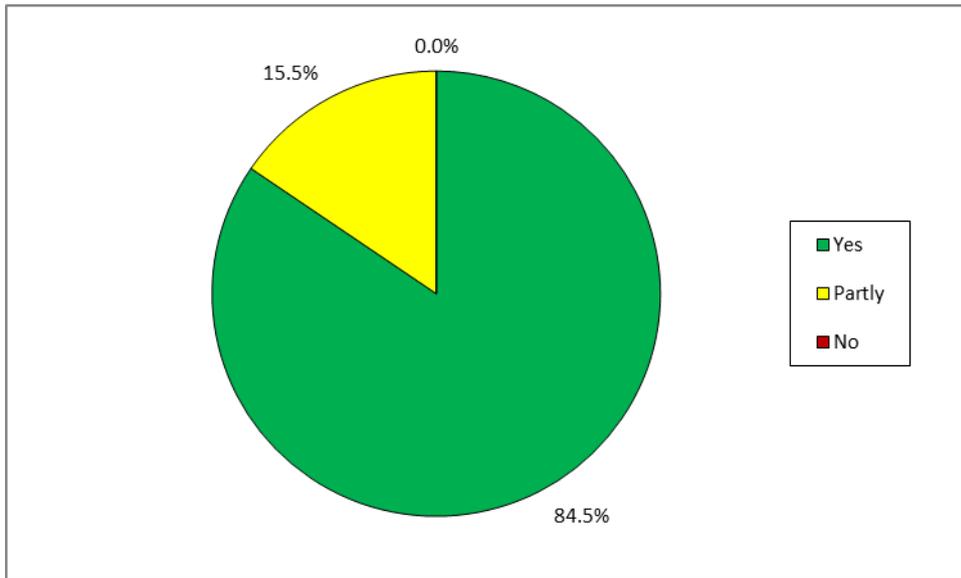
3.3 Information on dissemination aspects

This section covers dissemination aspects of European statistics (Euro-indicator Releases calendar, website design and access, Twitter account, media support services).

3.3.1 Euro-indicator Releases calendar

Journalists were also asked to evaluate the relevancy and sufficiency of information contained in the Euro-indicator Releases calendar. Again, the responses continue to be very positive, with 84.5% stating that the calendar is relevant and sufficient for their needs. Those who found the calendar “partly” relevant accounted for 15.5% of respondents, while none found it irrelevant and/or insufficiently informative.

Chart 19. Assessment of the sufficiency and relevancy of information in the Euro-indicator Releases calendar, in %



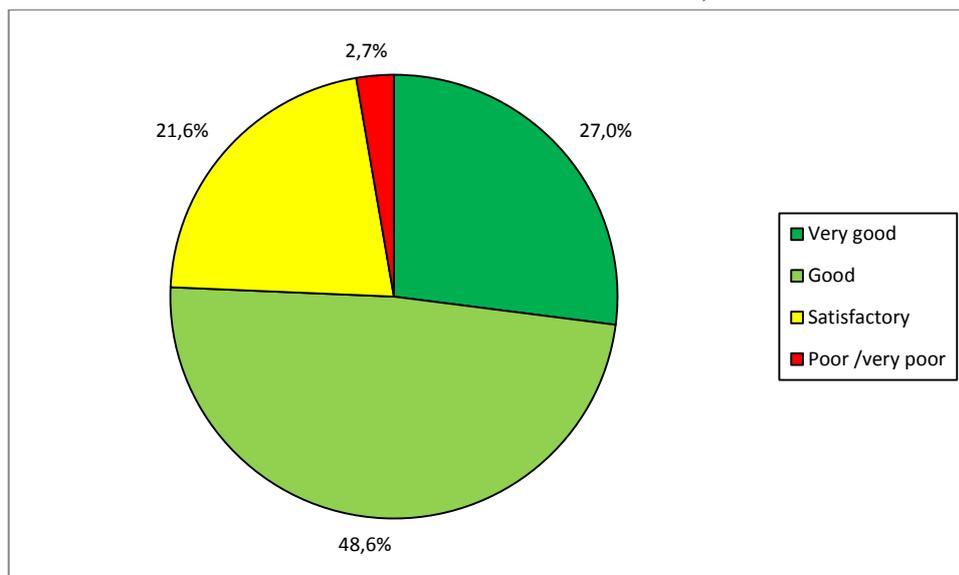
Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

3.3.2 Website design and access

Eurostat launched a totally renewed website in December 2014 and so it was really important and interesting to know if media users appreciate the new website more than the old one. It must be taken into account that users may need some time to get used to the new website, even if it was conceived to be more modern and user friendly. The results showed a difference between the satisfaction with the content of the website, which clearly increased, and that with the easiness of access to the European statistics on the website, which remained practically unchanged compared to 2014.

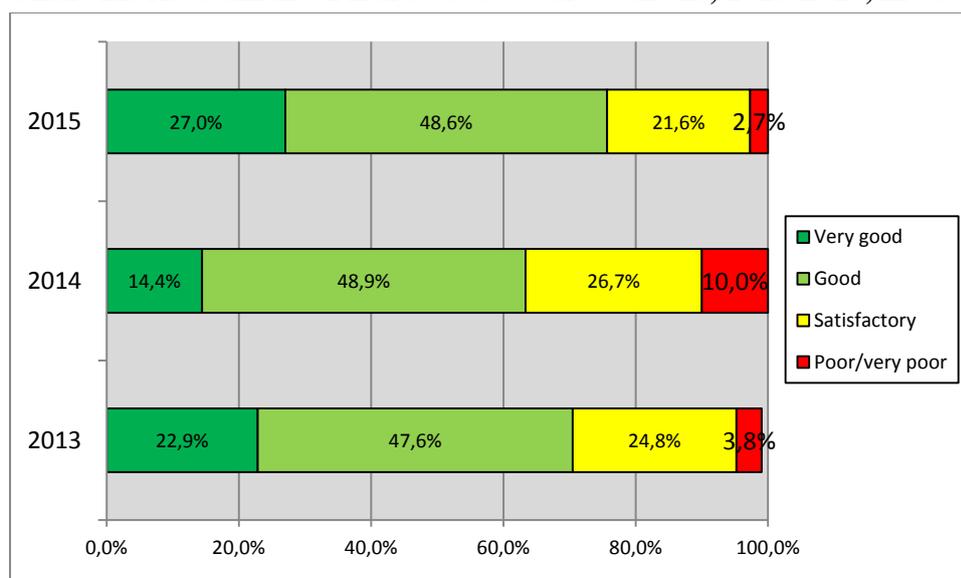
When asked to assess the content of information on the Eurostat’s website in relation to their needs, journalists were generally satisfied, even more than in 2014. 75.7% of journalists replied that the content was “very good” or “good” (+12.3% points), 21.6% thought it was “satisfactory”, while only 2.7% saw it as “poor” or “very poor” (-7.3% points).

Chart 20. Assessment of Eurostat's website content, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

Chart 21. Assessment of Eurostat's website content, 2013-2015, in %



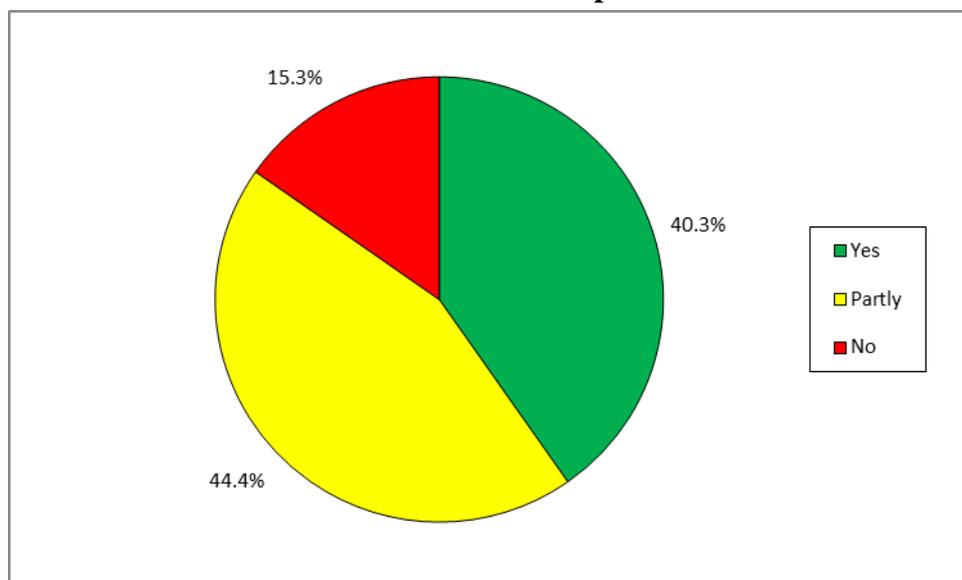
Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014 and 2015 user satisfaction surveys for media

The replies were less positive with regard to the access to European Statistics on the website, for which the results seemed not to be affected by the new website. Only 40.3% of press and media representatives said the access to statistics was easy, 44.4% claimed it was partly easy and 15.3% found it hard to access the information, percentages that are practically the same as in 2014.

Few respondents in particular claimed that it was still difficult to navigate and find the right data in Eurostat's website and that the related search function needs to be further improved. Linking the press releases with the data on the website would help. A couple of respondents

added that it takes some time to get used to the new website and that they can ask the persons mentioned in the news releases when they need help.

Chart 22. Assessment of the access to European statistics on the website, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

3.3.3 Twitter account

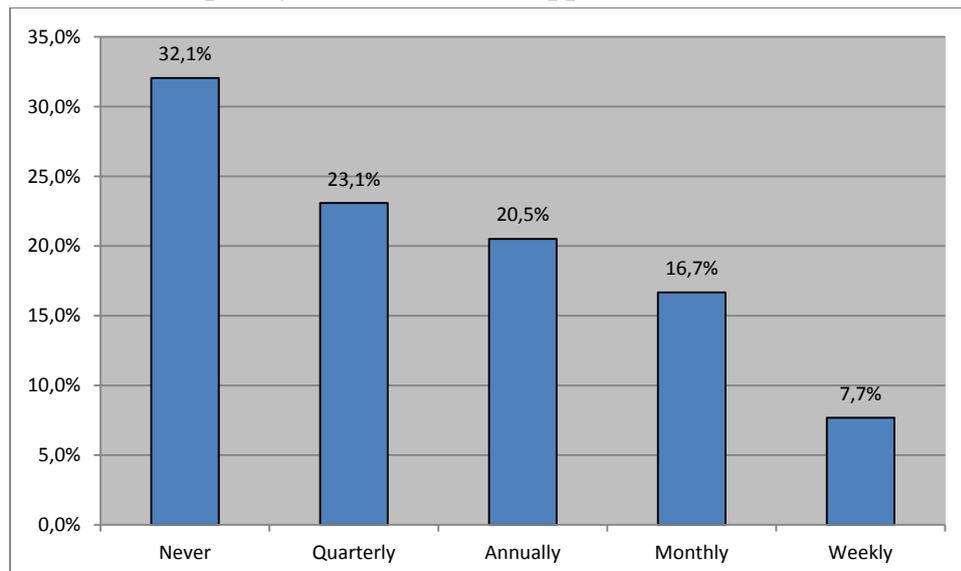
An additional question on dissemination was added this year about the Twitter account. Journalists were asked to judge the interest of Eurostat's Twitter feed but only around 30% of the respondents could give an opinion, showing that the majority of journalists did not use this service. As a consequence the number of replies is too small to draw significant conclusions although the majority of the few who expressed their opinion seemed to be satisfied.

3.3.4 Media support services

In the survey, users also had the opportunity to express their opinion on the support services offered by Eurostat.

32.1% of the respondents said they never used media support services. The most frequent users, that utilised media support on a weekly basis, accounted for 7.7%. Less frequent users, who approached the support team monthly, quarterly or annually, fell into 16.7%, 23.1% and 20.5%, respectively.

Chart 23. Frequency of use of media support services, in %

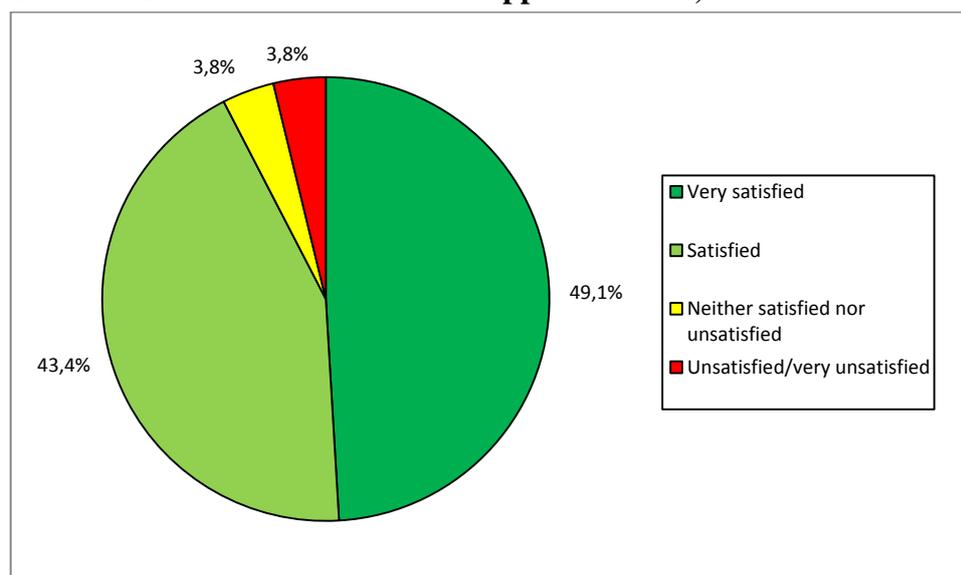


Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

Journalists were also asked to evaluate how satisfied they were with the service provided by the media support. Leaving out those with no opinion or not aware of it, a striking rate of 92.0% of respondents, even more than in past years, said that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the support service they received, while only a small 4% declared to be unsatisfied.

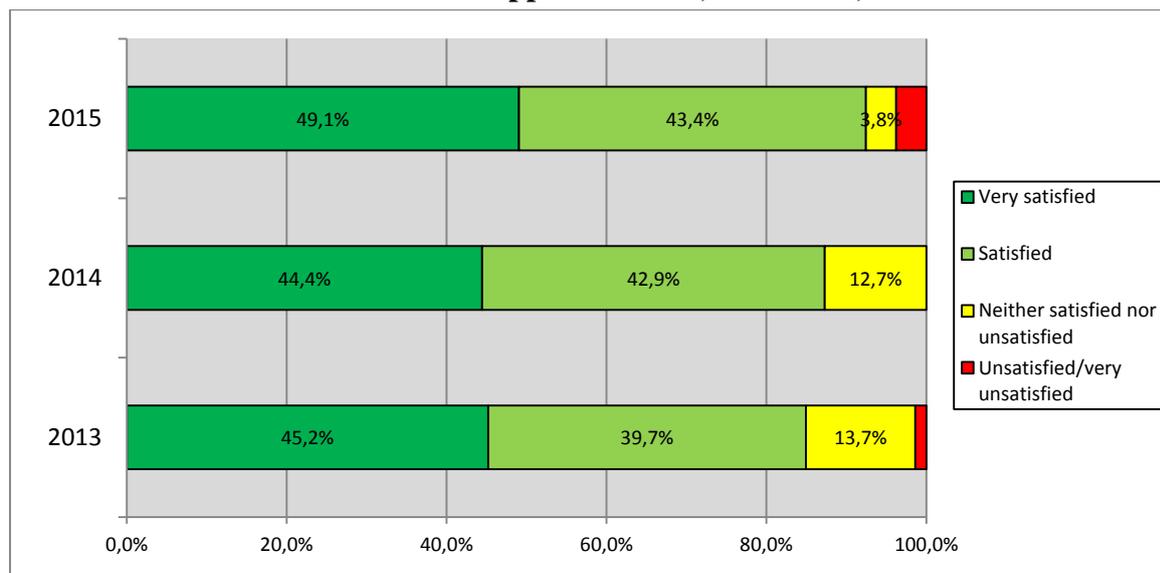
One user felt hesitant to bother the media support with his requests, so we should profit to reaffirm that the support is fully available and users should not hesitate to contact it.

Chart 24. Satisfaction with media support services, in %



Source: Eurostat 2015 user satisfaction survey for media

Chart 25. Satisfaction with media support services, 2013-2015, in %



Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014 and 2015 user satisfaction surveys for media

4. Messages from the users

Suggestions for improvement of News Releases:

- To provide links to additional or background, relative information.
- To give more data directly available in the new releases as tables or graphs that could be reused.
- To add more detailed explanations and examples to the data, for tables in particular.
- To maintain and even increase the possibility for journalists of having access to the data in advance under embargo.

Suggestions for improvement of the website:

- To improve search tools.