



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
EUROSTAT  
Directorate A: Resources  
Legal affairs; Document management

## **REPORT ON THE EUROSTAT 2019 USER SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR MEDIA**

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## **1. Background – about the survey**

Eurostat's mission is to provide high quality statistics on Europe. In order to measure the degree to which it meets its obligations towards its users, namely media representatives, Eurostat carried out a media user satisfaction survey over the period May – June 2019. 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 fifth 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, 2014, 2015 and 2016. The changes in the questionnaire this time aimed at covering more news products and release calendars, which have become available after the previous survey took place.

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 on the Eurostat website. It was launched on 15 May and remained open until 16 June. Email invitations were sent to more than 1000 journalists registered on Eurostat Press Office's mailing list. 72 replies were received, a few more than the 67 in 2016, but still less than in the previous years (109 replies in 2013, 101 in 2014 and 78 in 2015). The fact that less and less users are participating was one of the main reasons for Eurostat to stop organising the survey each year, but diminishing the frequency of the survey only had a limited success. As the number of replies remained low, it is not possible to draw meaningful detailed conclusions but only very general conclusions.

Another reason to organise the survey less frequently was that the results were very similar from one year to the next. This time some limited changes could be observed, mainly in the satisfaction with the news releases.

The results presented in this report constitute a summary of the findings, supported by graphs.

## **2. Main outcomes**

### General aspects

- The large majority of press and media representatives who took part in the survey are based, as in the past, in the current EU member states (93.1%). When looking at their distribution at country level, the biggest group of journalists came from Belgium (27.8%), followed by Germany (18.1%) and France (both at 13.9%). However, the prevalence of Belgium reflects not the nationality, but the fact that most journalists are accredited to the Commission or other European institutions in Brussels to follow EU affairs. Overall, the respondents were based in 17 countries, almost the same number as the 18 in 2016.

- About the type of media the respondents work with, online media were for the first time the most frequent (38.9%), surpassing printed channels (33.3%) and news agencies (30.6%). This can be considered a signal of the growing importance of online media.
- Respondents indicated that they almost all used “Economic and financial” data (93.1%). “Population and social conditions”, “International trade”, "Industry trade and services " and “General and regional statistics”, are among the remaining popular domains, all used by more than half of the respondents, with respective shares of 63.9%, 62.5%, 56.9% and 54.2%.
- In relation to Eurostat product usage among journalists, “News Releases” is again, even if a bit less than in previous years, a clearly dominant product with 84.7% of journalists using it most frequently. Concerning two new products: 18.1% of the respondents declared to use the “What’s New” articles and 11.1% the Eurostat social media channels.
- Similarly as in previous years, 79.2% of journalists considered European statistics to be either “essential” or “important” for their work. For another 18.1% of participants statistics served as background information. Given the high level of importance attributed to European statistics, it comes as no surprise that statistics is used very frequently. Almost half of those who completed the survey stated that they used European statistics on a weekly basis and another fourth used statistics in their day-to-day activities. This time again no one declared to use the statistics only annually.

### Quality aspects

- In general, users seem quite satisfied with Eurostat news products, more with their clarity than with their range of topics, but less than in the past, and more with the “News Releases” than with the other two products. The share of the respondents judging the clarity of the products as very good or good is 68.1% for the “News Releases”, 61.1% for the “What’s New” articles and 44.5% for the Twitter/Facebook posts. It has to be considered that the results for the products other than “News Releases” concern a quite limited number of respondents (only 18 for the Twitter/Facebook posts) and therefore they are not completely reliable.
- Concerning the range of topics covered by the news products, the same decline as with the satisfaction of the clarity of the “News Releases” can be observed and it is even more pronounced. In this case 62.1% of the respondents giving an opinion rate very good or good the range of topics of the “News Releases” (-21.3 percentage points compared to 2016), versus 63.6% for the “What’s New” articles and 44.5% for the Twitter/Facebook posts.
- In general, and as in previous years, participants considered the quality of European statistics higher or of the same level as that of the statistics provided by the National

Statistical Institutes (NSIs) or by other providers of statistics. The percentage of journalists considering European statistics better or of the same level as those provided by NSIs was 89.7%, 95.8% when compared to other international organisations.

- *Trust.* Journalists continue to be extremely positive about the trust in European statistics with all of them stating they “trust statistics greatly” or “tend to trust them”, except for one respondent who declared to tend not to trust them and another one who did not give an opinion.

### Dissemination

- Journalists were very positive about the Euro-indicator release calendar and about the release calendar for the other news, which they were asked to judge for the first time. 77.6% of the respondents who gave an opinion stated that the Euro-indicator release calendar was relevant and sufficient for their needs and 75% thought the same of the other calendar. Another 19.0% and 25.0%, respectively, stated that their needs are partly covered.
- For the second time Eurostat asked users to give an opinion on its Press Office mailing list. 83.3% of the respondents affirmed to have registered to the mailing list and they were then questioned about the importance for them of the weekly calendar that is sent on Fridays. Respondents confirmed to appreciate the calendar, which a majority of them (58.3%) consider essential or important for their work. Only 13.3% report that the calendar is of minor importance.
- When the previous survey was launched, the satisfaction with the easiness of access of the website had reached the highest level ever registered, as an effect of the new website of Eurostat. That effect seems to have faded with time and the level of satisfaction is now closer to that of the previous years of the survey. It will be interesting to see if a similar phenomenon will occur when the Eurostat website will be renovated again. This time a bit less than half of the respondents stated that it was easy to access the statistics on the Eurostat website, while another third found it partly easy.
- The opinions on the content of the website are more positive and more stable. 74.6% of respondents replied that the content was “very good” or “good”, 19.4% thought it was “satisfactory”, while only 6.0% saw it as “poor” or “very poor”.
- With regard to the use of media support, 5.6% of journalists turn to it on a weekly basis, 13.9%, do so monthly, 15.3% quarterly and 25.0% annually. A large majority (78.5%) of those who used it said that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the support service they received. No one declared to be unsatisfied.

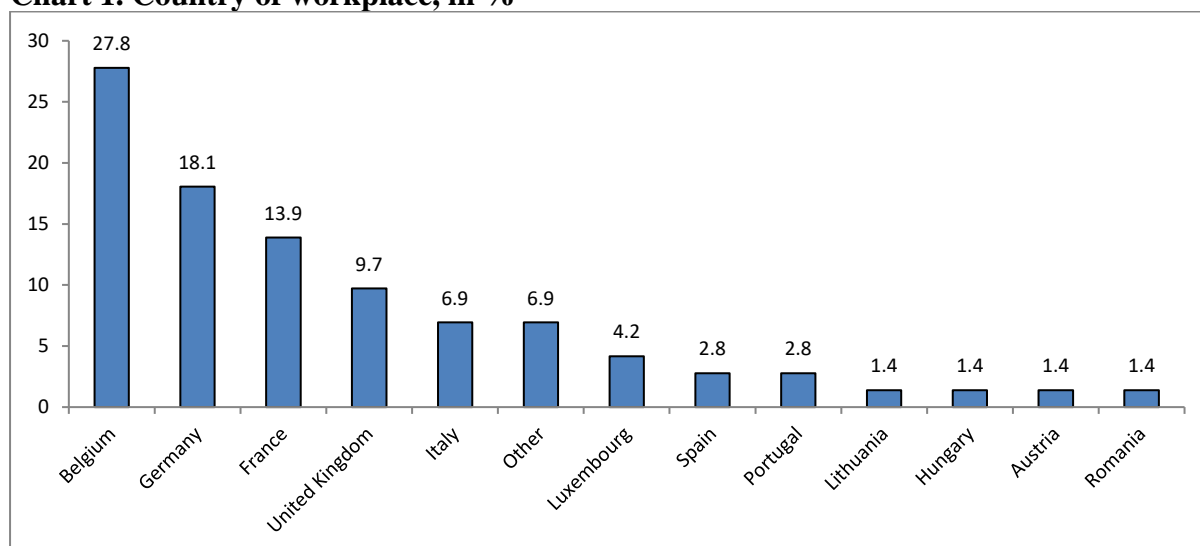
### 3. Results of the USS 2019 for Media

#### 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 are based, as in the past, in the current EU member states (93.1%). When looking at their distribution at country level, the biggest group of journalists came from Belgium (27.8%), followed by Germany (18.1%) and France (both at 13.9%). 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. Overall, the respondents were based in 17 countries, almost the same number as the 18 in 2016.

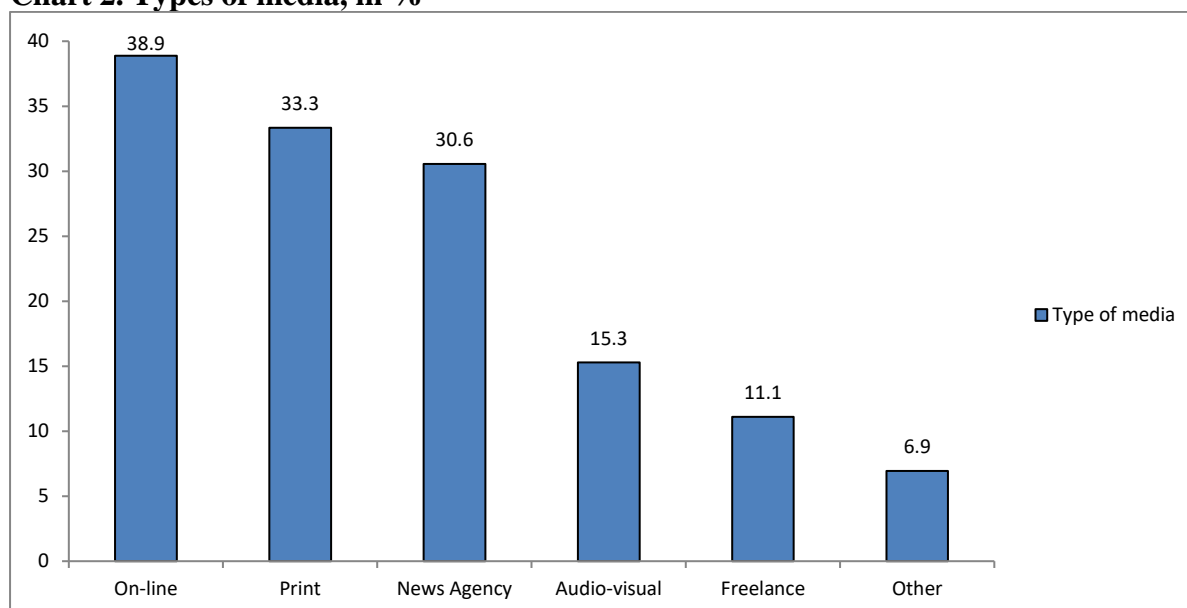
**Chart 1. Country of workplace, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media*

When asked about the type of media the respondents work with, online media were for the first time the most frequent (38.9%), surpassing printed channels (33.3%) and news agencies (30.6%). This can be considered a signal of the growing importance of online media.

**Chart 2. Types of media, in %**

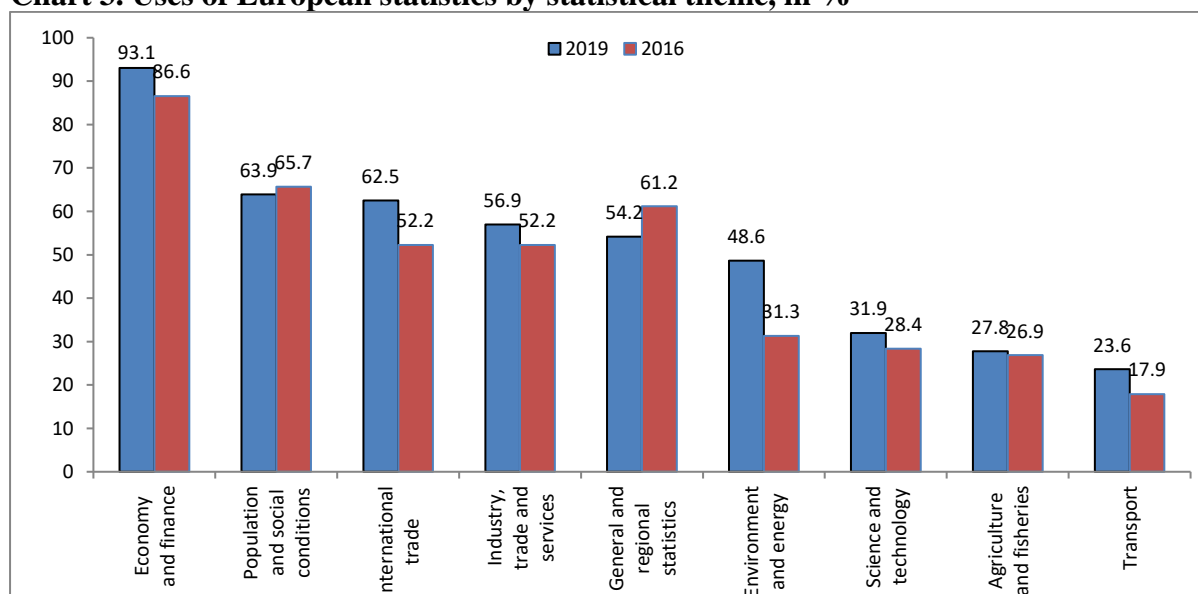


Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media

### 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, the theme “Economy and finance” is used by almost all respondents (93.1%). “Population and social conditions”, “International trade”, “Industry trade and services ” and “General and regional statistics” are among the remaining popular themes, all used by more than half of the respondents, with shares of respectively 63.9%, 62.5%, 56.9% and 54.2%. On average, the respondents selected slightly more themes than in 2016, 4.63 compared to 4.22 and so the shares of the themes generally increased.

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



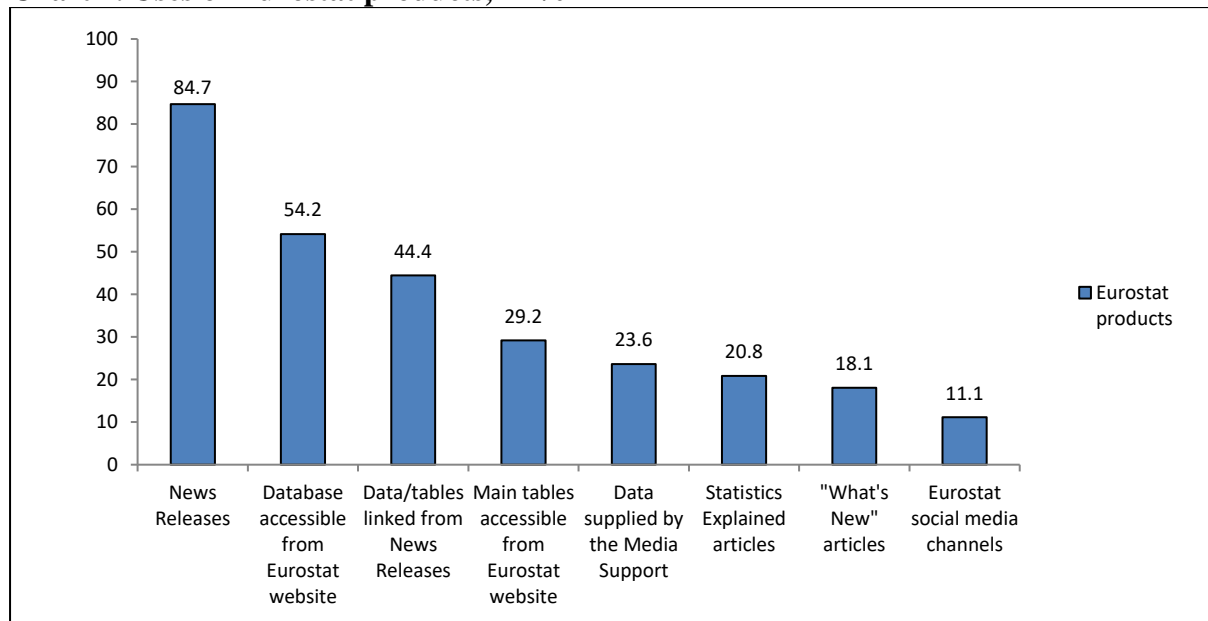
Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media



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” is again, even if a bit less than in previous years, a clearly dominant product with 84.7% of journalists using it most frequently. Concerning the new products: 18.1% of the respondents declared to use the “What’s New” articles and 11.1% the Eurostat social media channels.

**Chart 4. Uses of Eurostat products, in %**

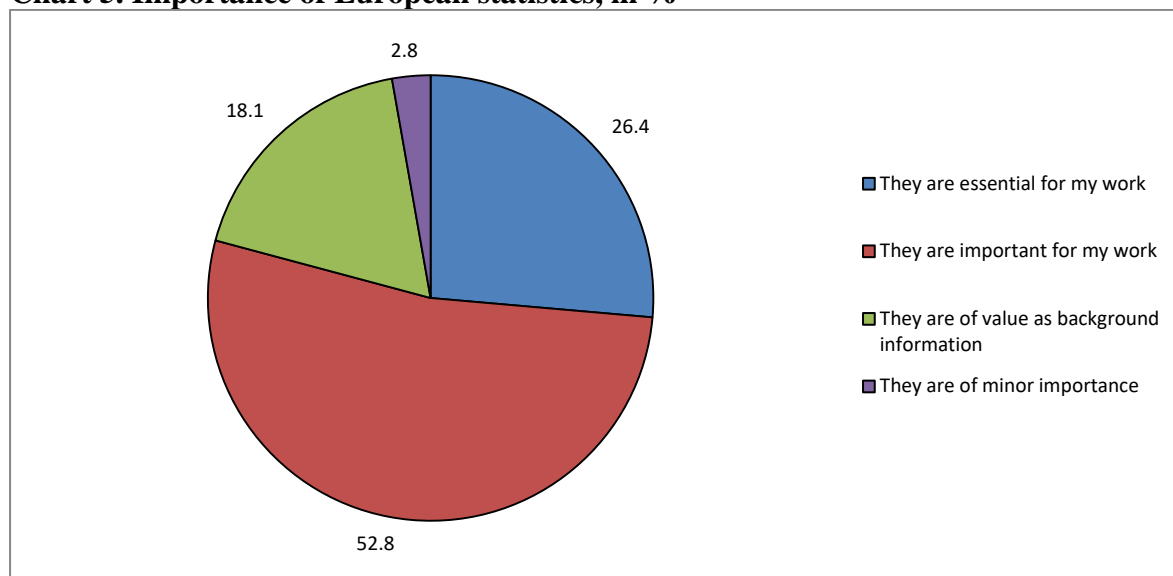


*Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media*

### 3.1.3 How important are European statistics?

When asked about the importance of European statistics to their work, 79.2% of journalists stated statistics were either “essential” or “important” for their work, a share similar to that of previous years. For another 18.1% of participants statistics serve as background information.

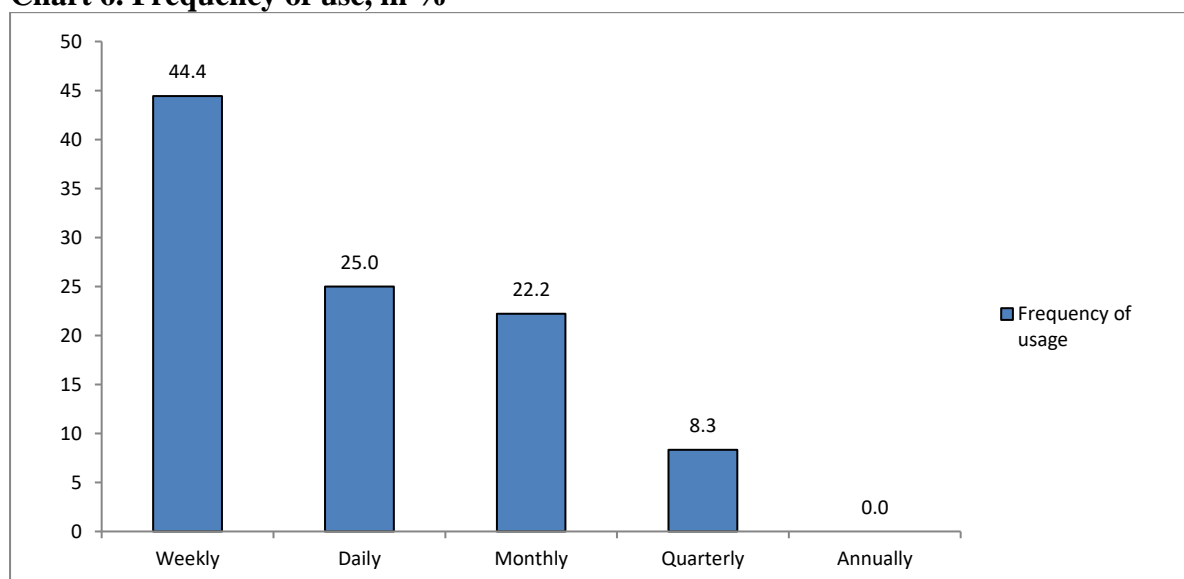
**Chart 5. Importance of European statistics, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media*

Knowing how important statistical information is for a number of respondents, its frequent use comes as no surprise. Almost half of those who completed the survey stated that they used European statistics on a weekly basis and another fourth used statistics in their day-to-day activities. This time again no one declared to use the statistics only annually.

**Chart 6. Frequency of use, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2019 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

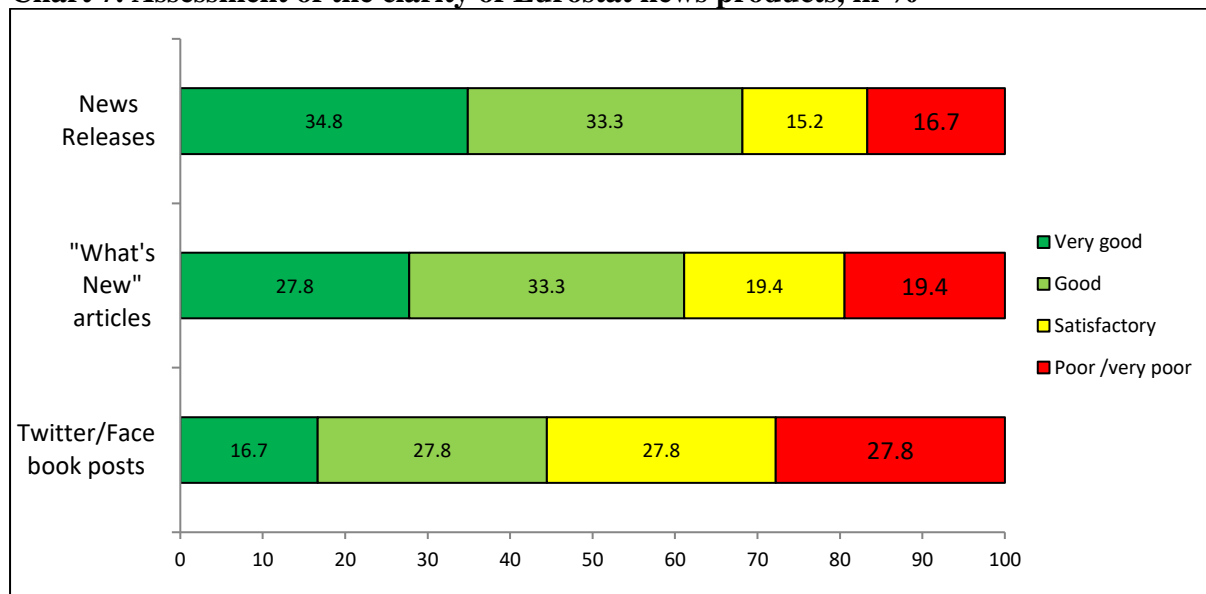
disseminated by Eurostat. This survey looked in particular to the quality of the "News Releases", as they are the product that is by far more used by media and press, and of the new products, "What's New" articles and Twitter/Facebook post. The analysis was complemented by a question on trust and a comparison of European statistics in relation to statistics produced by NSIs as well as other international organisations.

### 3.2.1 News Releases

Considering that a large majority of respondents rely on Eurostat "News Releases", it is important to know how satisfied they are with the information and quality of these releases. This year Eurostat wanted to know also if they were satisfied with two new products at their disposal, the "What's New" articles and the posts on Twitter and Facebook. Two aspects of the products were investigated, i.e. the clarity and the range of topics covered.

In general, users seem quite satisfied, more with the clarity than with the range of topics, but less than in the past, and more with the "News Releases" than with the other two products. The share of the respondents judging the clarity of the products as very good or good is 68.1% for the "News Releases", 61.1% for the "What's New" articles and 44.5% for the Twitter/Facebook posts.

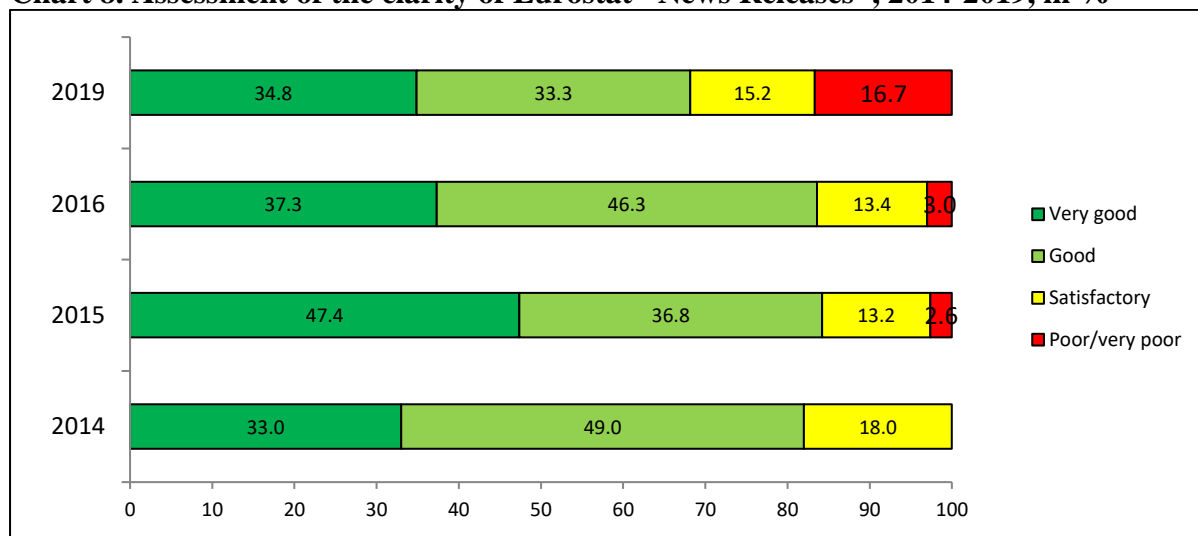
**Chart 7. Assessment of the clarity of Eurostat news products, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media*

It might be that asking media users not just about the "News Releases" but also about other products, with which they are less happy, has pulled down a bit the results for the "News Releases".

**Chart 8. Assessment of the clarity of Eurostat "News Releases", 2014-2019, in %**

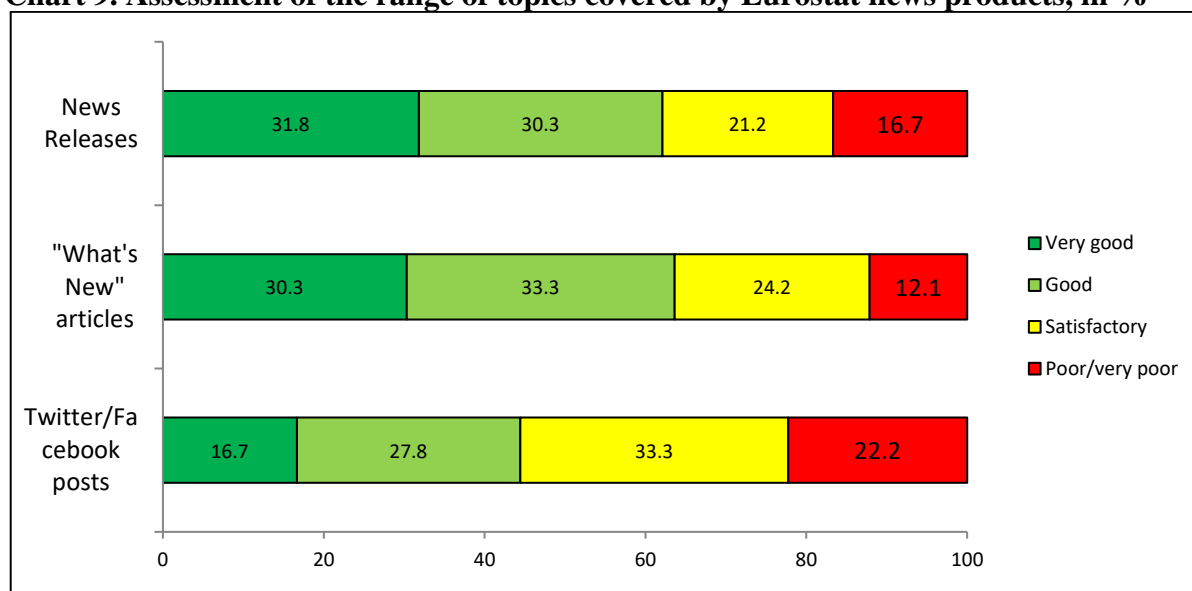


Source: Eurostat 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019 user satisfaction surveys for media

It has to be considered also that the results for the other products concern a quite limited number of respondents (only 18 for the Twitter/Facebook posts) and therefore they are not completely reliable and it would be interesting to check them again in future surveys.

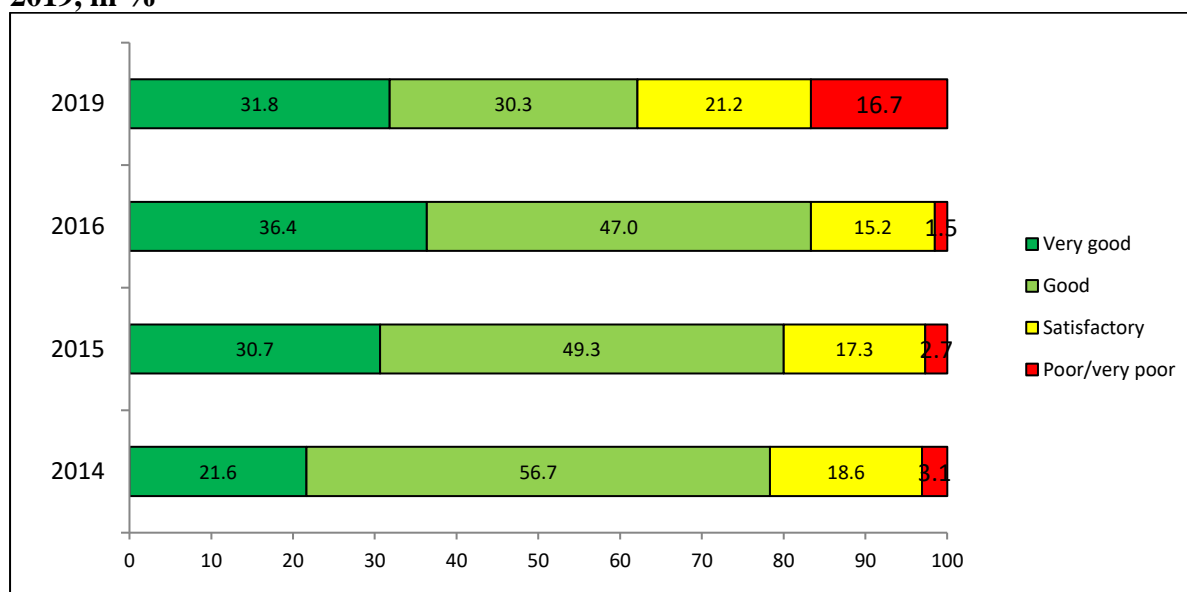
Concerning the range of topics covered by the news products, the same decline with the satisfaction of the News Releases can be observed, even more than with its clarity. In this case 62.1% of the respondents giving an opinion consider the range of topics of the “News Releases” very good or good (-21.3 percentage points compared to 2016), versus 63.6% for the “What’s New” articles and 44.5% for the Twitter/Facebook posts.

**Chart 9. Assessment of the range of topics covered by Eurostat news products, in %**



Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media

**Chart 10. Assessment of the range of topics covered by Eurostat news products, 2014-2019, in %**



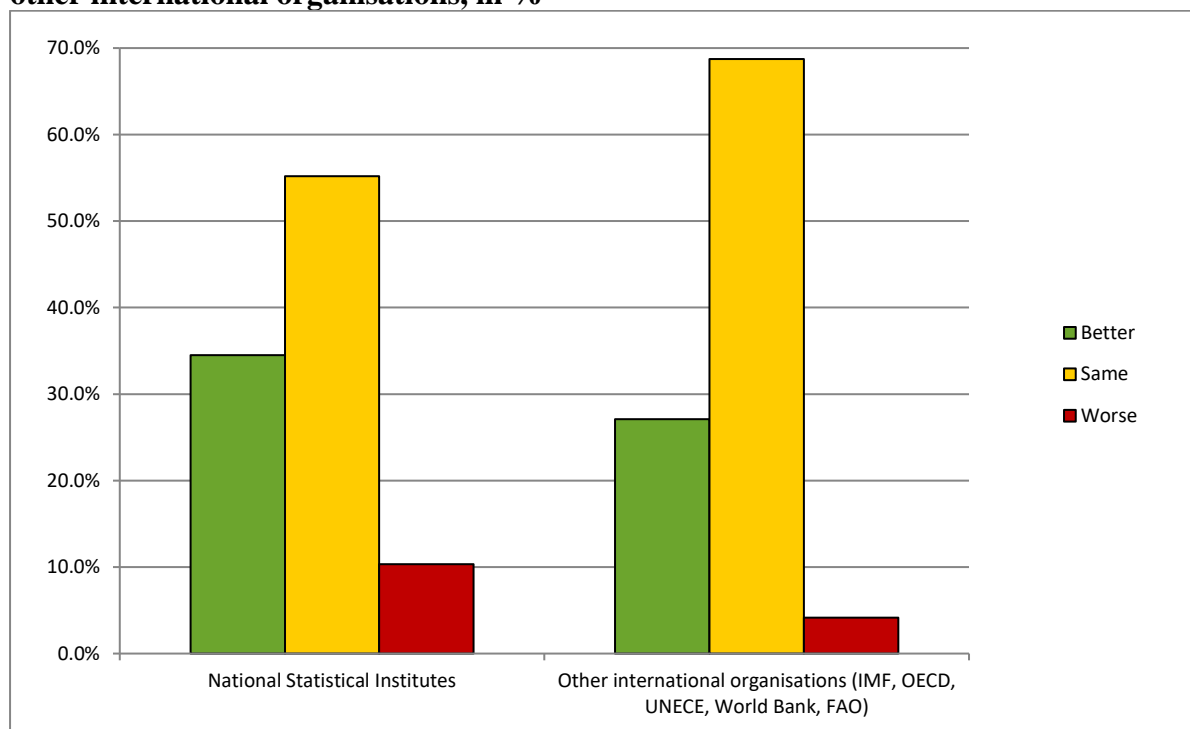
*Source: Eurostat 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019 user satisfaction surveys for media*

Only a few respondents gave comments to support their judgement and they refer practically exclusively to the “News Releases”. Some of them would like to have more content (e.g. more countries, more graphs, more years, more related statistics, more explanations). Few others suggest having an easier access to data and links to the data in the articles.

### **3.2.2 Comparison with other organisations**

As part of the quality evaluation, journalists were also asked to assess the quality of data disseminated by Eurostat versus those produced by other producers of statistics. In particular, respondents were asked a comparison with those provided by NSIs and by other international organisations (IMF, OECD, UNECE, World Bank and FAO).

**Chart 11. Quality of European statistics compared with those published by NSIs or other international organisations, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media*

In general and as in previous years, participants considered the quality of European statistics being higher or of the same level as those provided by NSIs or other international providers of statistics. The percentage of journalists seeing Eurostat statistics better or same as that of NSIs was 89.7%, 95.8% when compared to other international organisations.

Among Eurostat’s strong points, respondents mentioned clarity, comparability among countries and the choice of languages. A small percentage, around 4% for other international organisations and 10% for NSIs, perceived the quality of Eurostat products as being worse. The few explanations given on this topic point to the difficulties to find data on the website, to its speed deemed not satisfactory, and to the lack of commentaries. When comparing with data provided by NSIs, someone noticed that NSIs release national data earlier than Eurostat, which is inevitable as Eurostat data are provided by the NSIs. Others would like even a greater choice of languages.

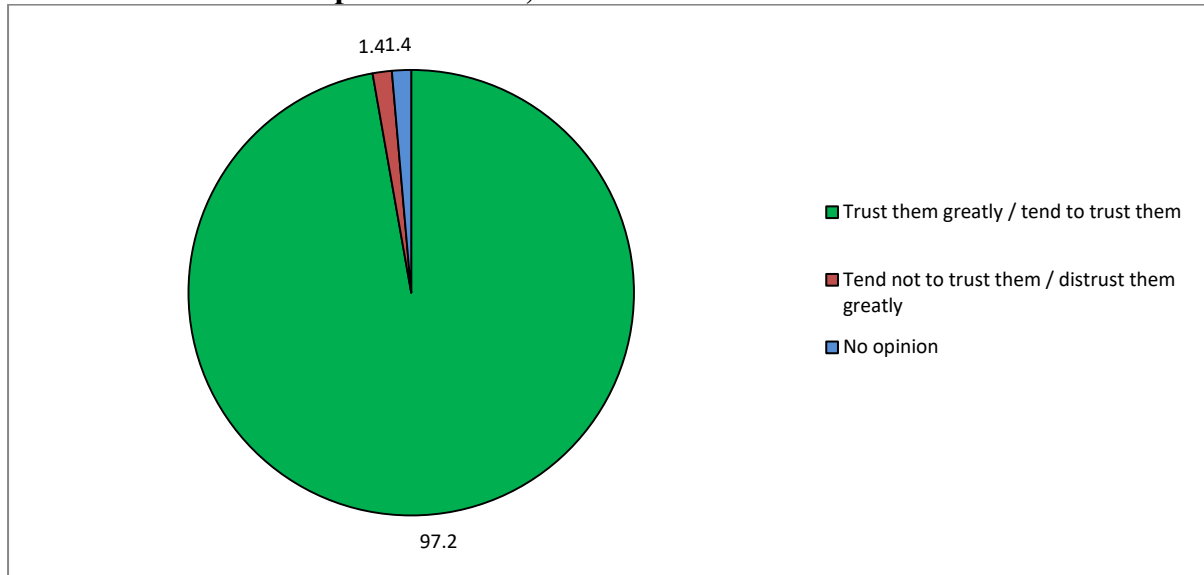
### **3.2.3 Trust**

In a period when the role and functioning of the EU institutions persist being questioned, Eurostat was interested to know if journalists continued to trust European statistics. It is indeed the case as the results were again extremely positive, with all respondents stating they “trust statistics greatly” or “tend to trust them”, except for one who declared to tend not to trust them and another one who did not give an opinion. 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 over time shows a very good and encouraging sign about the confidence of users in the statistics disseminated by Eurostat.

Here respondents pointed out that the quality of Eurostat's statistics depends on the quality of national data and they that had not found major errors.

**Chart 12. Trust in European statistics, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media*

### 3.3 Information on dissemination aspects

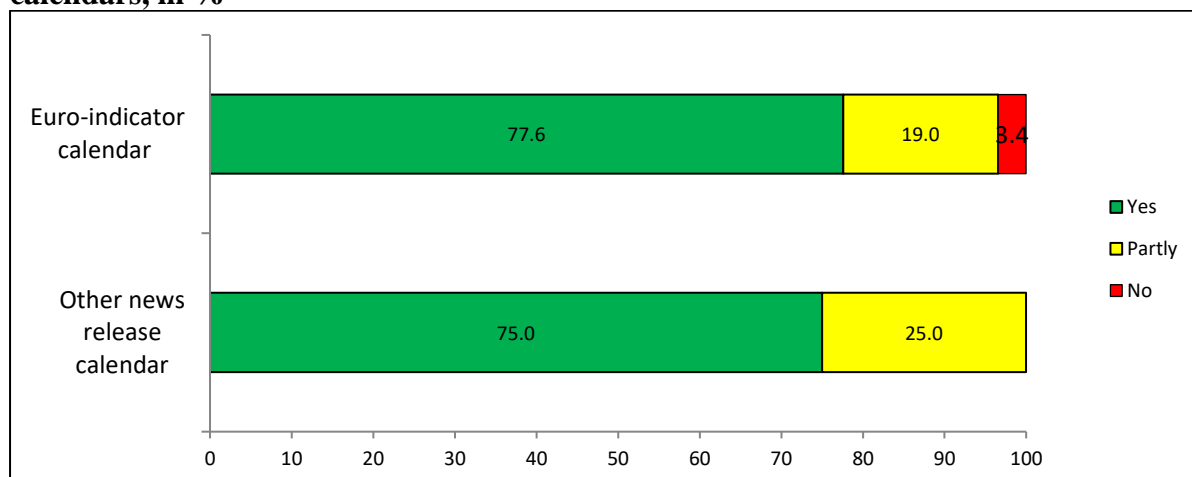
This section covers dissemination aspects of European statistics (Release calendars, Press Office mailing list, website design and access, media support services).

#### 3.3.1 Release calendars

Journalists were also asked to evaluate the relevancy and sufficiency of information contained in the Euro-indicator release calendar and for the first time on the release calendar for the other news. The responses on the Euro-indicator release calendar continue to be very positive, but a bit less than in the past and in line with the judgement of the release calendar for the other news. 77.6% of the respondents who gave an opinion were satisfied with the Euro-indicator calendar and 75.0% with the other calendar, and another 19.0% and 25.0%, respectively, stated that their needs were partly covered. For comparison, 88.7% had stated that the Euro-indicator calendar was relevant and sufficient for their needs in 2016.

A few respondents provided also suggestions, like including the calendar directly in the body of the messages instead of as an attachment or linking the calendar entries to the statistics, possibly with a date when they will be updated.

**Chart 13. Assessment of the sufficiency and relevancy of information in the Release calendars, in %**

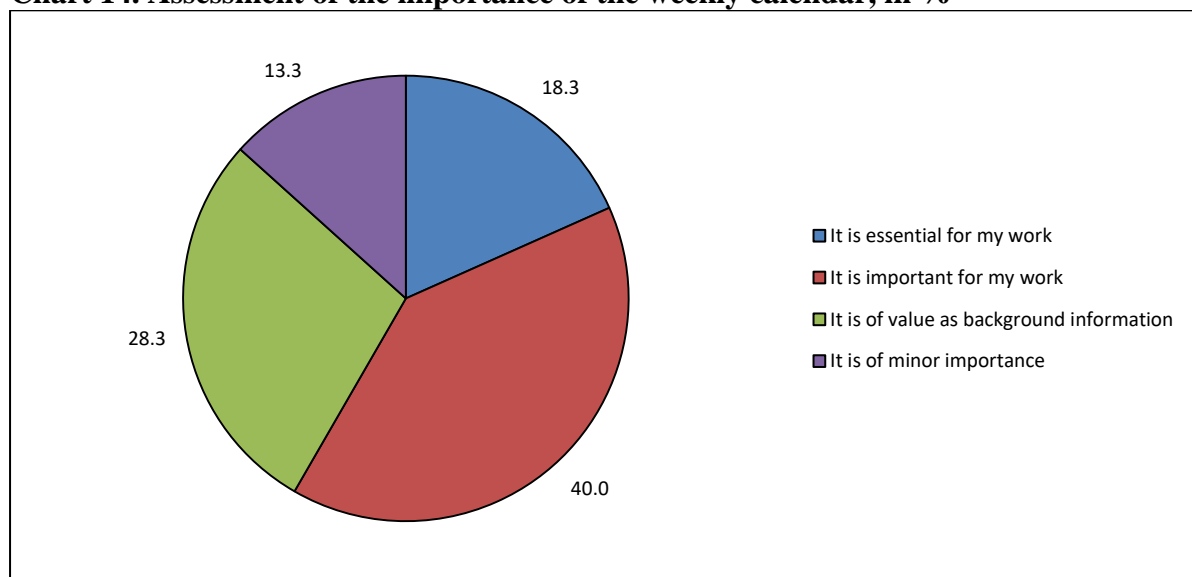


Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media

### 3.3.2 Press Office mailing list

For the second time Eurostat asked users to give an opinion on its Press Office mailing list. 83.3% of the respondents affirmed to be registered to the mailing list and were then asked about the importance for them of the weekly calendar that is sent on Fridays. Respondents confirmed to appreciate the calendar, which a majority of them (58.3%) consider essential or important for their work. Only 13.3% stated that the calendar is of minor importance.

**Chart 14. Assessment of the importance of the weekly calendar, in %**



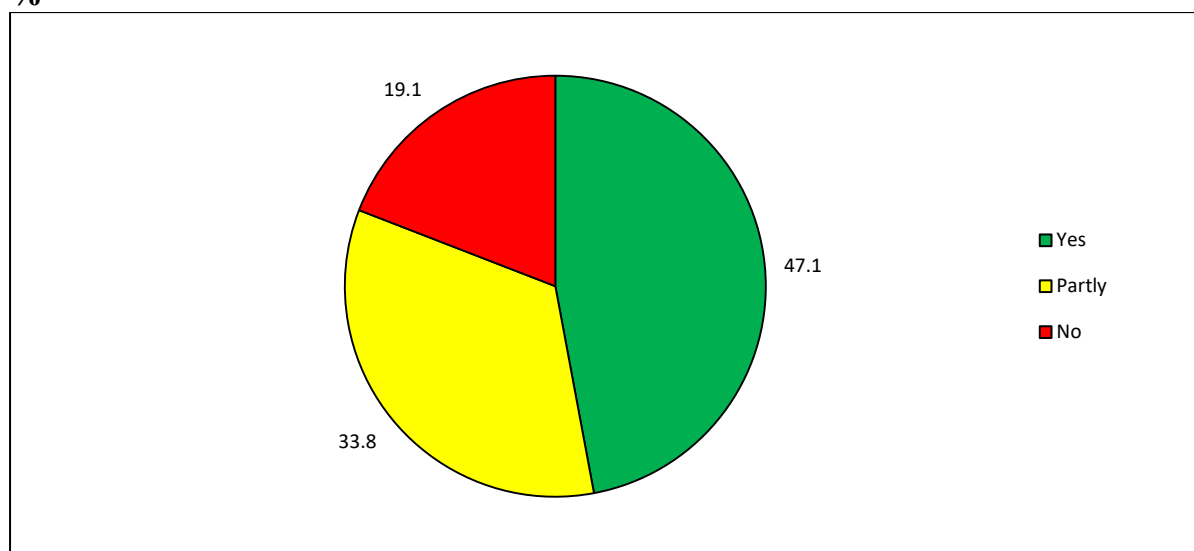
Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media



### 3.3.3 Website design and access

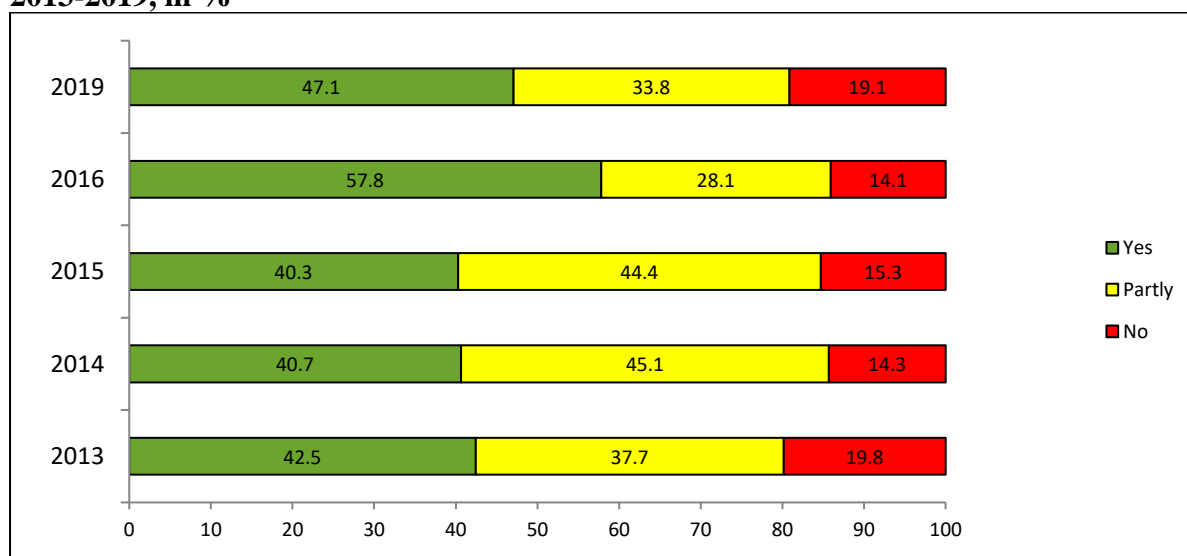
When the previous survey was launched, the satisfaction with the easiness of access of the website had reached the highest level ever registered as an effect of the new website of Eurostat. That effect seems to have faded with time and the level of satisfaction is now closer to that of the previous years of the survey. It will be interesting to see if a similar phenomenon will occur next time the Eurostat website will be renovated. This time a bit less than half of the respondents stated that it was easy to access the statistics on the Eurostat website, while another third found it partly easy.

**Chart 15. Assessment of the easiness of access to European statistics on the website, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media*

**Chart 16. Assessment of the easiness of access to European statistics on the website, 2013-2019, in %**

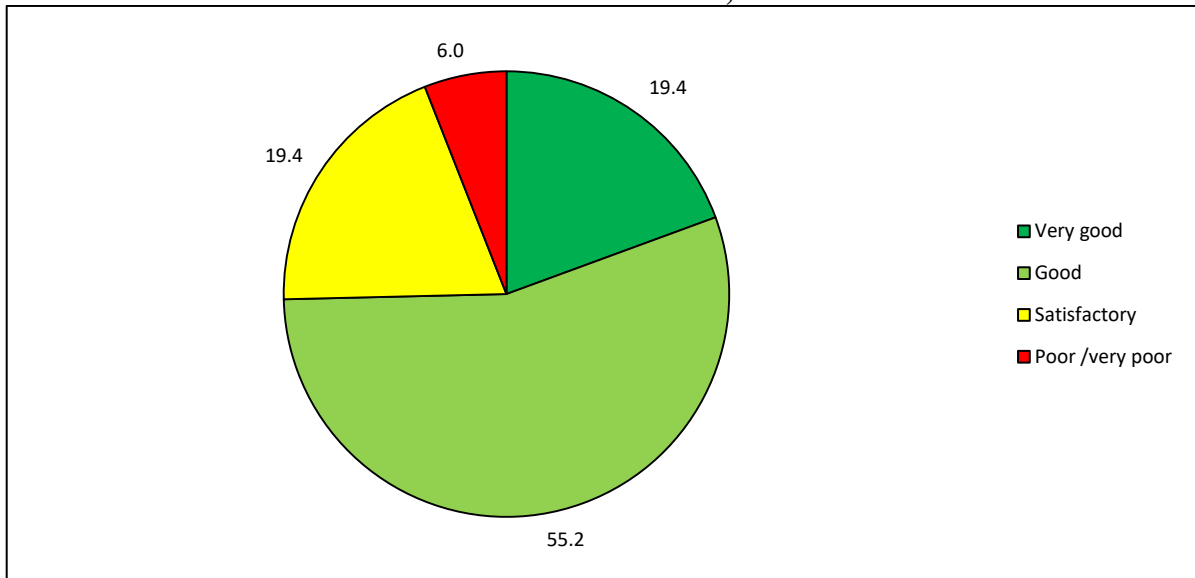


*Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019 user satisfaction surveys for media*

Among those who were less happy with the access to the statistics, several pointed out that data are difficult to find. The data tree is complex and the search function should be improved.

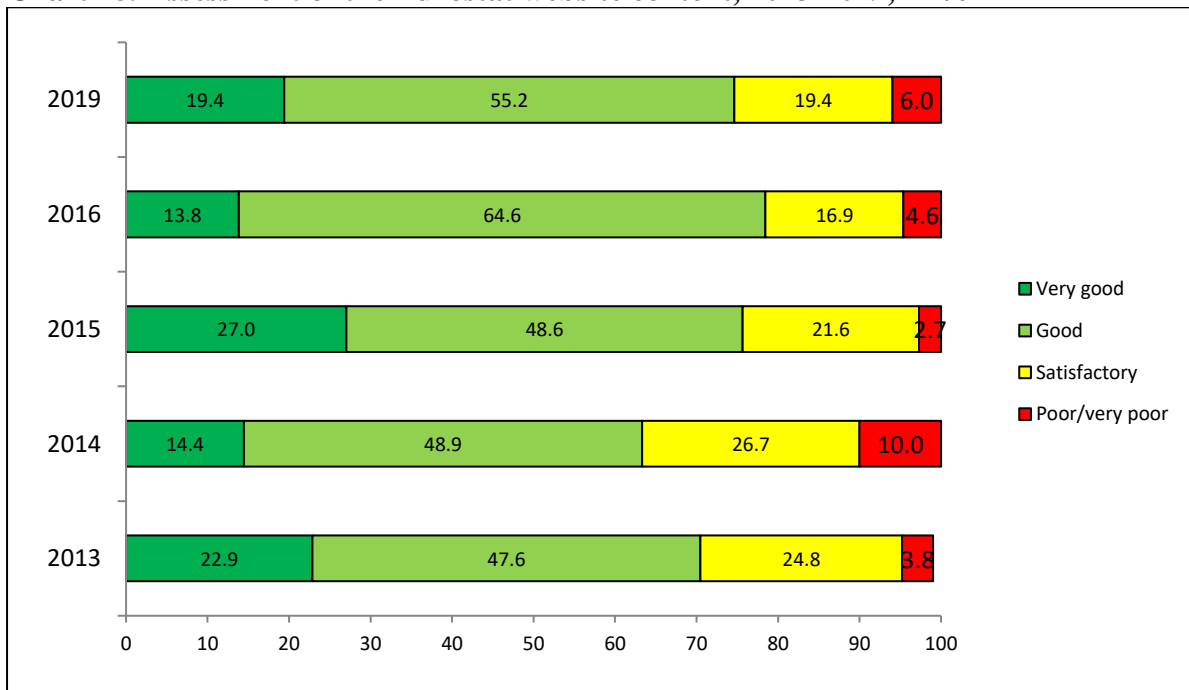
The opinions on the content of the website are more positive and more stable. 74.6% of respondents replied that the content was “very good” or “good”, 19.4% stated it was “satisfactory”, while only 6.0% rated it as “poor” or “very poor”.

**Chart 17. Assessment of the Eurostat website content, in %**



Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media

**Chart 18. Assessment of the Eurostat website content, 2013-2019, in %**



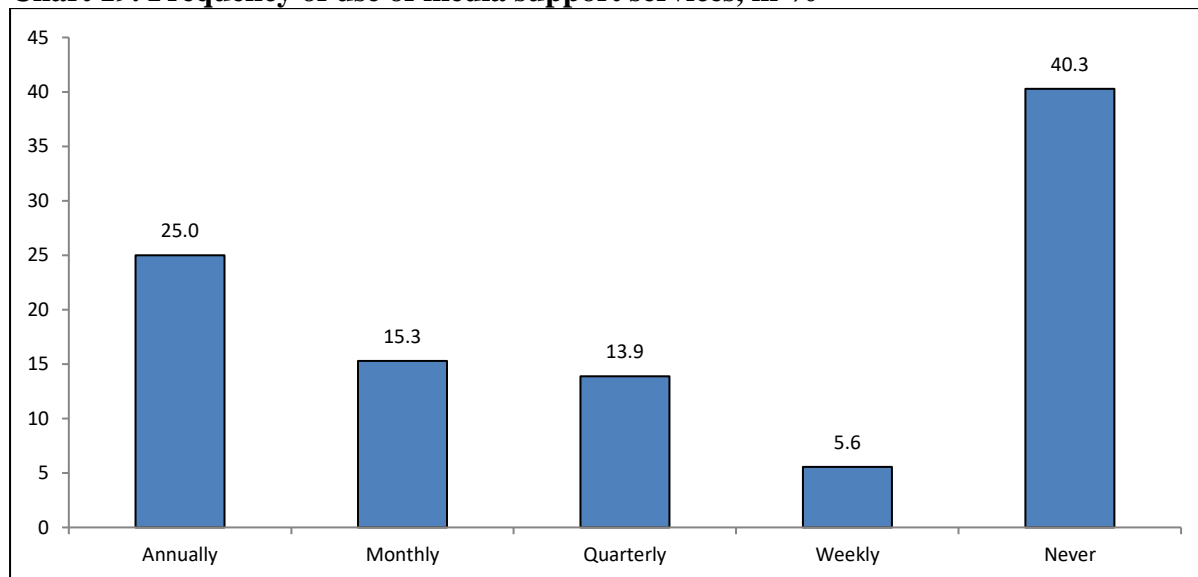
Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019 user satisfaction surveys for media

### 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.

40.3% of the respondents said they never used media support services. The most frequent users, that used media support on a weekly basis, accounted for 5.6%. Less frequent users, who approached the support team monthly, quarterly or annually, fell into 15.3%, 13.9% and 25.0%, respectively.

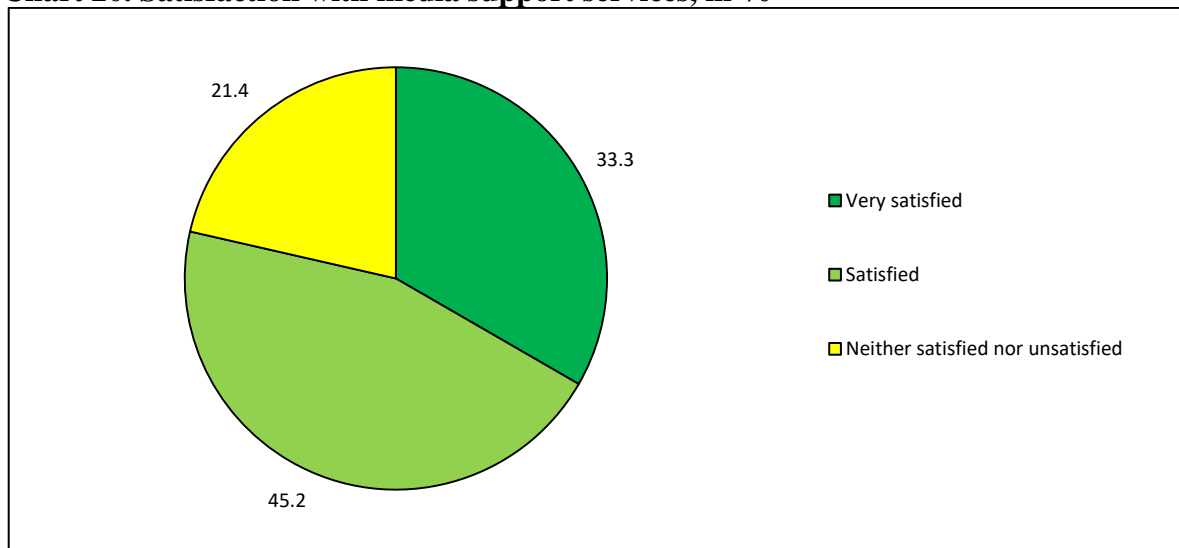
**Chart 19. Frequency of use of media support services, in %**



*Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media*

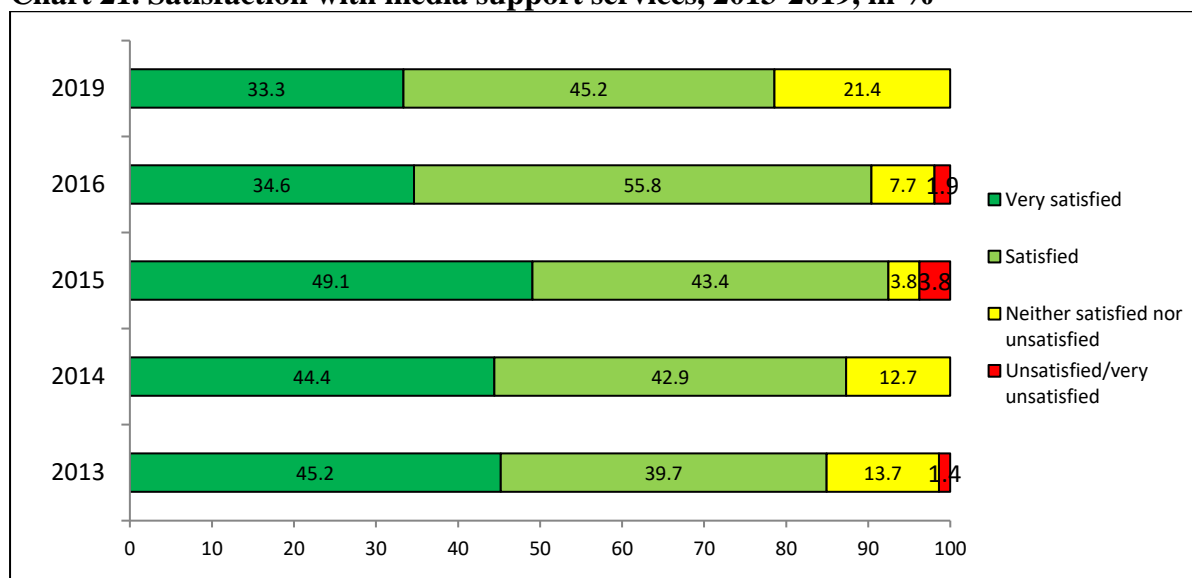
Journalists were also asked to evaluate how satisfied they were with the service provided by the media support. Leaving out those with no opinion or not aware of this service, a large majority of respondents (78.5%) said that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the support they received and no one declared to be unsatisfied. Although the share of those satisfied is somewhat smaller than in the past, it is still very high and the tiny number of those giving an opinion, 42, does not allow meaningful conclusions.

**Chart 20. Satisfaction with media support services, in %**



Source: Eurostat 2019 user satisfaction survey for media

**Chart 21. Satisfaction with media support services, 2013-2019, in %**



Source: Eurostat 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019 user satisfaction surveys for media

#### 4. Messages from the users

##### Suggestions for improvement of "News Releases":

- To have more content (more countries, more graphs, more years, more related statistics, more explanations).
- To have an easier access to data and links to the data in the articles.

##### Suggestions for improvement of the website:

- To make data easier to find, to improve search tools.