

## Rethinking Official Statistics: lessons learned and new perspectives

**Instructions:** Click on the link to access each author's presentation.

**Chair:** Rugile Andrejevskyte

### Participants:

**Luca Di Gennaro:** Democracy Dies in Darkness without Official Statistics

**Olga Swierkot-Struzewska:** Leitmotifs of the international debate- how do official statistics can leverage global topics to define and provide trusted evidence?

**Arman Bidarbakhtnia:\*** Rethinking official statistics: a sociological perspective

**Geoffrey Kariuki:** Quality reports for statistical products - towards relevant and trustworthy official statistics in Kenya

**Edgardo Greising:\*** LMIS: Better data, better jobs

\* Work presentation not available or non-existent

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*IAOS-ISI 2024, Mexico City - Improving Decision-Making for All - May 15, 2024 - May 17, 2024*



# **Democracy Dies in Darkness without Official Statistics**

**LUCA DI GENNARO SPLENDORE**

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA - MARIE CURIE FELLOW**

**FUNDING HORIZON EUROPE BY MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS**

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# Agenda - Questions?

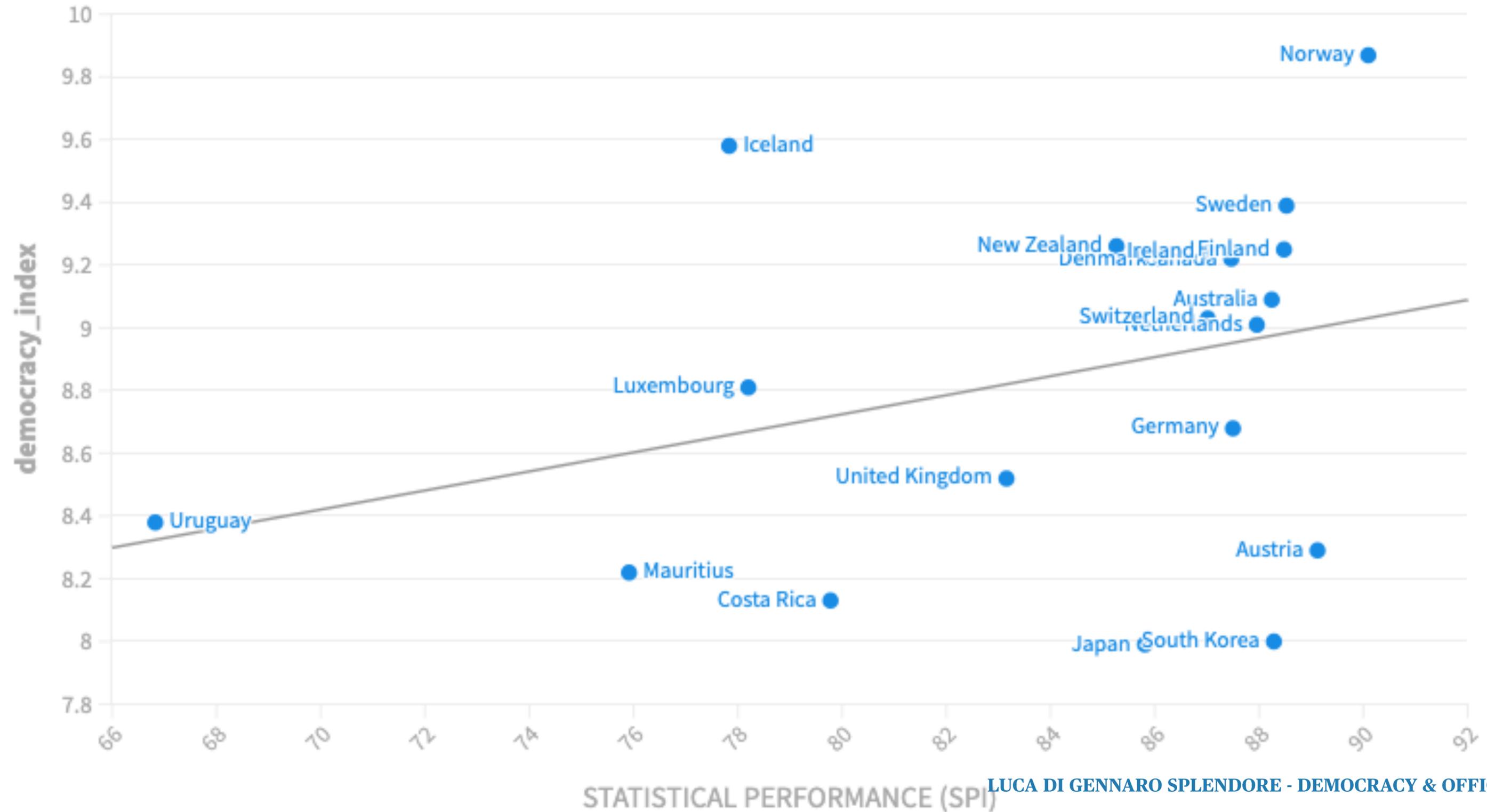
- Is there a **quantitative** relationship between democracy and official statistics?
- How can a democratic country organize an election without official statistics?



# Democracy Index - Statistical Performance Indicator

All ▼

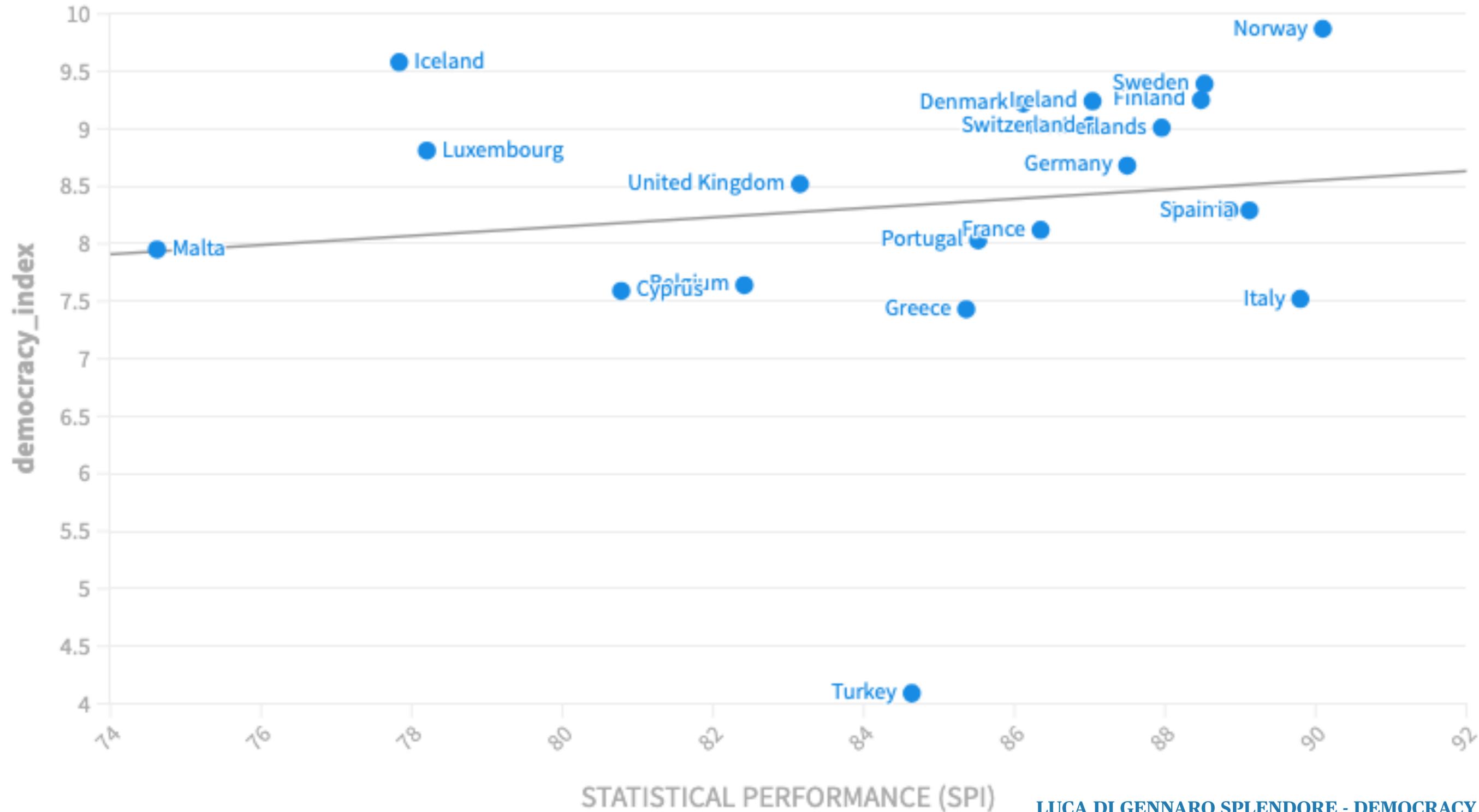
**Only Full Democracy**



# Democracy Index - Statistical Performance Indicator

All ▼

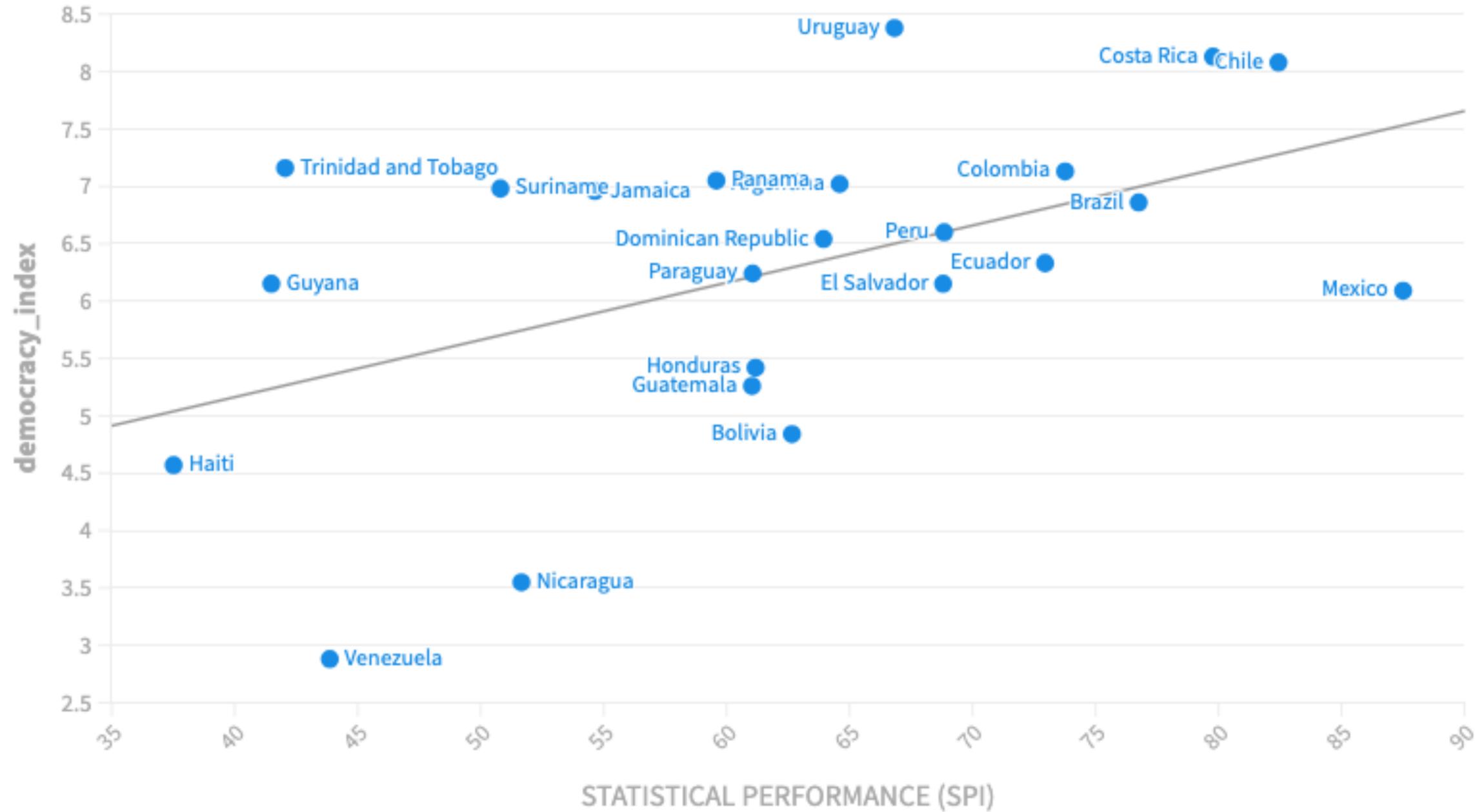
**Only Europe**



# Full Democracy

## Democracy Index - Statistical Performance Indicator

All ▼



**Latin America  
and the  
Caribbean**

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69% 41% 56%

The correlation between the **Democracy Index** and the **Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI)** for 2022 for 167

The correlation between the **Democracy Index** and **Gender Data Compass** for 2022/2023

The correlation between the **Democracy Index** and **Open Data Inventory (ODIN)** for 2022

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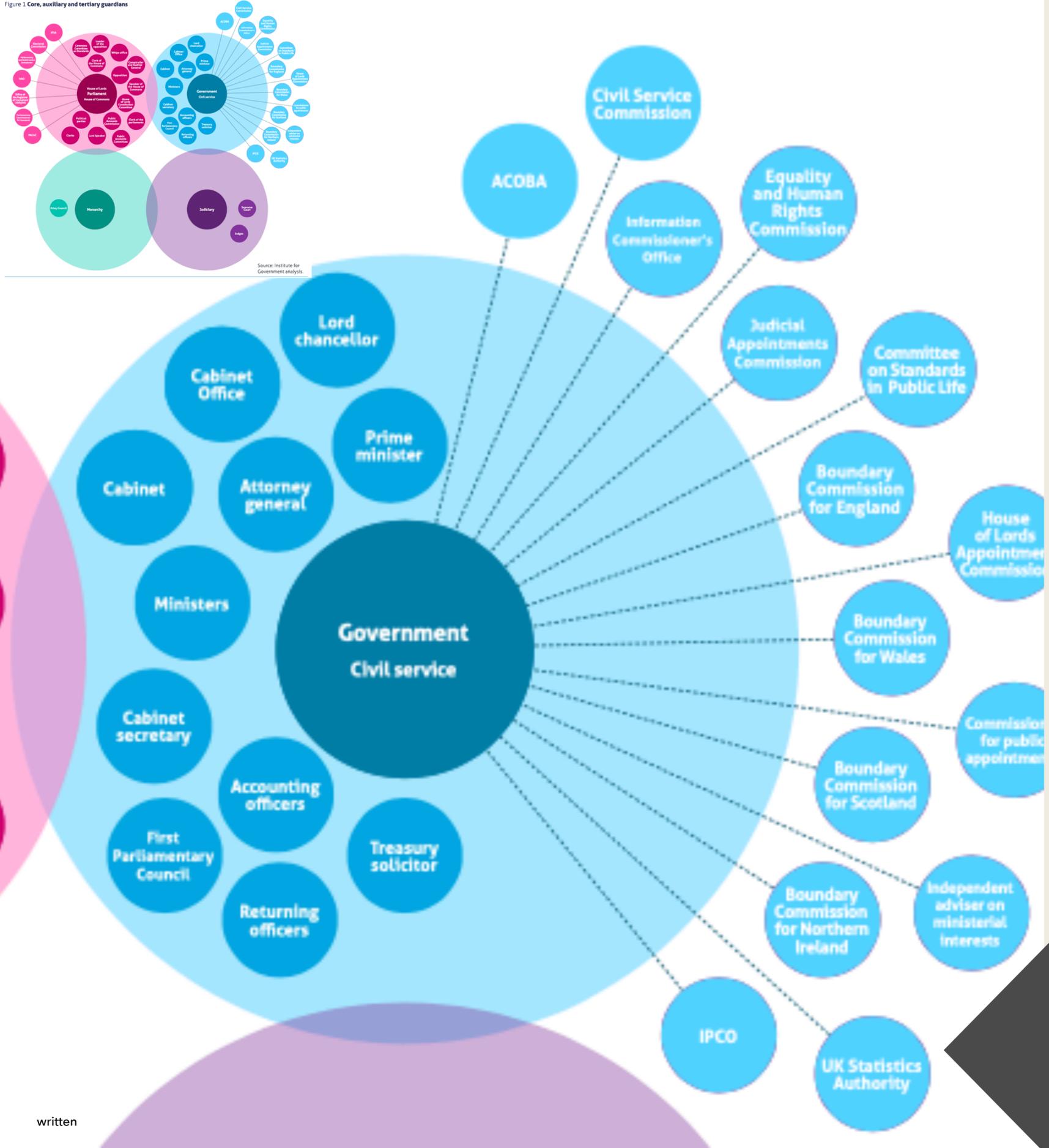
‘In a democratic society, the independence of official statistics has the same status as the freedom of speech for the citizens.’

Jeskanen-Sundström, 2007

awareness

understanding

‘Independence of Official Statistics, a Finnish Experience’. Seminar on Evolution of National Statistical Systems.



# Constitutional guardians (UK)

**‘For example, if the government is seen to have undue influence over the Electoral Commission, or the UK Statistics Authority, then trust in fair elections or accurate statistics will be undermined.’**



**UK Statistics Authority**

# NSOs are in Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 17.18 and 17.19

The SDG 17 promote the official statistics: Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (Indicator 17.18.2)

**Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding**  
**Indicator 17.18.3**

**Build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries (Target 17.19)**

- **Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**
- UN (2014)

**‘Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government...’**

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

NSOs are crucial to archive the SDG data



## KEYNES

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**‘The statistics from which to build up these estimates are very inadequate. Every government since the last war has been unscientific and obscurantist, and has regarded the collection of essential facts as a waste of money’**

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Popper, Shumpter, Sociology

- Keynes (p13, Ch 3)
- Keynes, John Maynard (1940). How to Pay for the War: A Radical Plan for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Macmillan.

# The Official Statistics under Attack (small list)

The official statistics can be a threatening for the political system

- The NSO of El Salvador was incorporated in the Central Bank
- In Ecuador in 2021 an unforeseen resignation by the NSO's (INEC in Ecuador) Director, took place just one week before the election day. Every NSO has a statistical calendar, normally pre-established and disseminated a few years in advance.
- The National Bureau of Statistics of China suspended disseminating data on youth unemployment.
- The Greek government prosecuted the former director of NSO Greece (ELSTAT)
- INDEC (NSO Argentina) suffered a lot of political interference especially on the inflation rate

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# Moving Forward

- ***Official Statistics Awareness***
- ***No scientific literature? Democracy does cause a good statistical system?***
- ***Who produces the data?***
- ***Governance?***

**Democracy Dies in  
Darkness  
without Official  
Statistics**

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# Thank you!

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**Democracy Dies in  
Darkness  
without Official  
Statistics**

***Thank you!***

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# DATA

- **Democracy** Index and Freedom House
- **Statistical** Performance Indicators
- Open data and subcategories
- **Statistical Capacity Index** (only Developing countries)
- **Who produces the data?** Central bank, NSO, Gov
- Gender data, minority and representation of minority group

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# *Reference Image*

- <https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2024>
- [https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy\\_Index](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_Index)
- <https://the-media-leader.com/are-future-freedoms-of-expression-under-threat/>
- <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- <https://www.dawn.com/news/1118784/when-maradona-sought-his-mothers-help-against-germany>
- <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/blog/blog-constitutional-guardians/>
- <https://www.phdadmission.in/blog/phd-in-sociology/>
- <https://www.stfspa.it/en/>



***Leitmotivs of the international debate –***

**How do official statistics can leverage global topics to define and provide trusted evidence?**



# What is it going to be about?

Buzz words,  
**leitmotifs,**  
**tendencies**

**International**  
debate  
(strategic and  
expert level)

Policies & Data,  
Policies **vs.**  
Data?

Data &  
Statistics, Data  
vs. Statistics?

Trust

Communication

Sense of what  
we do

Asking (right)  
questions

Examples of  
concrete  
international  
initiatives and  
activities

# Buzz words

**Ethics** are there to leverage our values and principles

Official statistics are a **public good**

**Digital Revolution**

**AI**

Sustainable AI

Confidentialit

**Trust** is at the core of our activity

**new data sources**

impacting our work methods and products

“In a **post-truth** world **data** can make a difference”

Resilience

We must strive to redefine our roles in a **changing data ecosystem**

**SDGs** are there to leave no one behind

Data **management**

Data **governance**

Data **stewardship**

Innovations

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# Leitmotivs

## „DIGITAL REVOLUTION” →

- Big data →
- Admin data →
- Non-traditional data →
- New data →
- Privately held data →
- Experimental/ frontier statistics →
- INNOVATIONS →
- AI

## „DATA & STATISTICS” →

- Data ecosystem →
- Data management →
- Data governance →
- Data stewardship →
- Stakeholders →
- Leadership

## PUBLIC GOOD →

- TRUST →
- Values, principles →
- Ethics →
- Social acceptability

## AGENDA 2030/ SDGs →

- Leave no one behind →
- Inclusiveness →
- Partnerships →
- Granularity/disaggregation →
- Citizen Generated Data



# Do we make use of the buzzing?

Do we leverage the recurrent topics to make people understand what we stand for?

Why are we there?

Why cannot we be replaced?

What makes us different?

Where does our value lies?





2030 Agenda – why is it so powerful in terms of communication?

Role of statistics and data

Are we aware of our power?

Do we communicate effectively? → do we see :

- A raise in public understanding
- A greater impact into policy



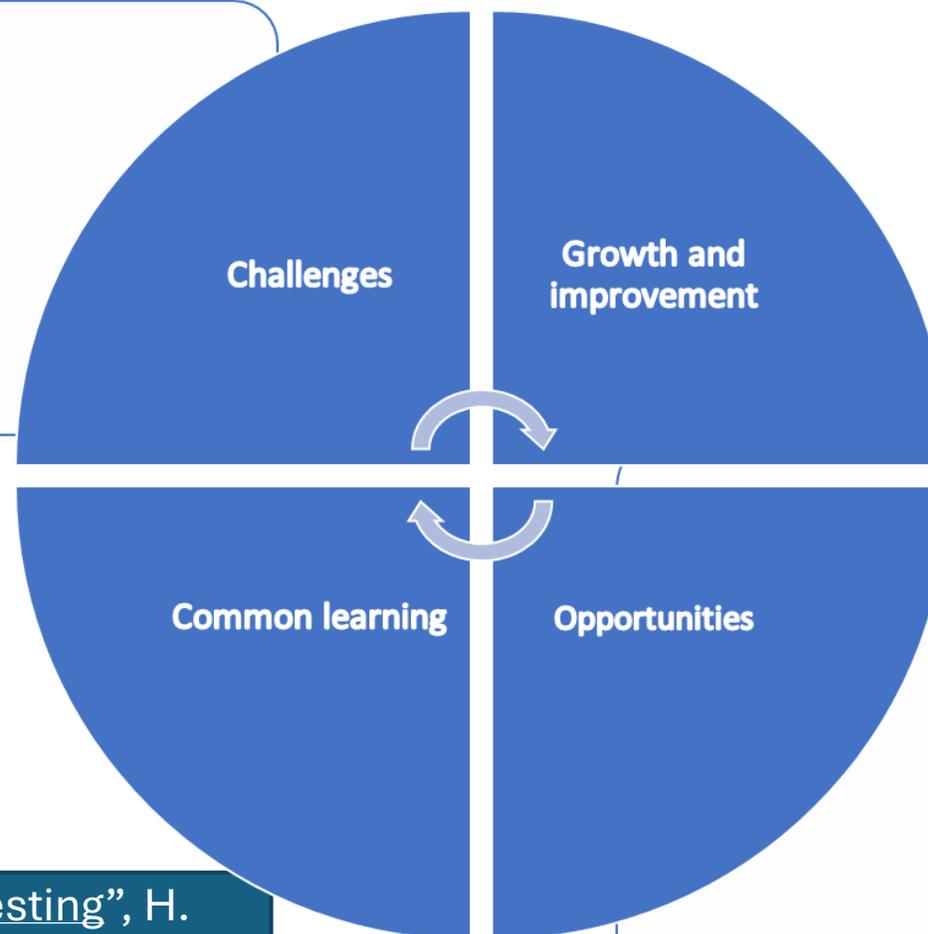
*"The SDG indicators do not simply measure the 2030 Agenda. They define it."* Steve MacFeely

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# UNECE SDGs Communication Fortnights and their meaning



- **Complex and overlapping frameworks**
- Data dispersion
- Preparation of the VNR
- Internal and external advocacy
- Transpose efforts/achievements in collection and treatment to communication



- **Creative approaches to dealing with common challenges**
- **Simplifying complex information**
- Tailoring products to target groups
- Literacy in schools and universities
- Data visualisation
- Story-telling practices
- Open-source reporting platforms
- Social networks
- Leverage VNR to rethink communication products

„Numbers are boring, people are interesting”, H. Rosling

# UNECE SDGs Communication Fortnights and their meaning



Statistics for SDGs

## STRUKTURA STRON

- GUIDELINES AND TOOLS
- › COUNTRY RESOURCES
- › MEETINGS
- ▼ **COMMUNICATION**
  - Communication Kit - Road Map 2.
- REGIONAL INITIATIVES
- › TEAMS OF EXPERTS

[Strony](#) / [Statistics for SDGs Home](#)

## COMMUNICATION

### Communication Fortnights

The Communication Fortnights are regular informal gatherings of the re-established [Task Team on Communication](#), about specific topics in SDG Data Communication (e.g. annual publications, VNRs, data visualisation, social media, etc). Fortnights start with a short presentation from a Task Team Member followed by informal discussion. The summaries of these sessions are prepared by the Task Team co-chairs and published below.

#### 1st Fortnight - 11 May 2023 - SDG series of publications (Ireland)

[Summary](#), [Presentation](#)

#### 2nd Fortnight - 25 May 2023 - Voluntary National Review, Statistical Annexes (Switzerland)

[Summary](#)

#### 3rd Fortnight - 9 June 2023 - Data Visualization and Data Stories (South Africa)

[Summary](#), [Presentation](#)

#### 4th Fortnight - 22 June 2023 - Data Visualization for Environmental Indicators (South Africa)

[Summary](#), [Presentation](#)

#### 5th Fortnight - 4 October 2023 - SDG Events

[Summary](#)

#### 6th Fortnight - 16 October 2023 - SDG Training

[Summary](#)



# UNECE SDGs Communication Fortnights and their meaning

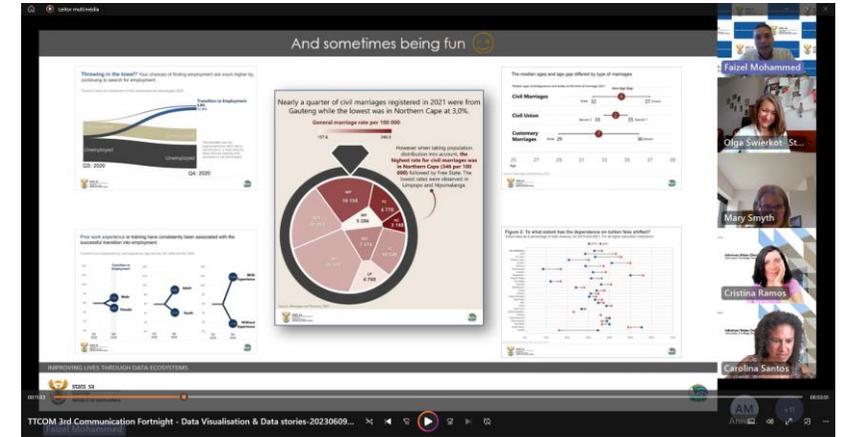


## “Data viz” (STASSA - South Africa) – summary

- Building improvements in transformative moments (e.g. Censuses)
- "Story-telling" of specific products increases visibility of ALL official stats
- Technically sound texts, even if simplified (partnership with subject areas)
- Good communication of data contributes to its effective use
- Simplifying overlapping monitoring frameworks
- Importance of partnerships with the media and academia

## Visualisation of Headline Environmental Indicators (South African Department Forests, Fisheries and Environment) - summary

- Data clarity facilitates dialogue between decision-makers and the scientific community
- Keeping data politically relevant, not prescriptive in nature
- Prioritize communication of the most relevant data (listen to civil society)
- Present the message and not "the truth" (build trust through reliable data)



# Successes and (fantastic) failures

Fortnight on „Climate data how to reach the public”

„Informing the public” → stressed in the Paris Agreement

Relevant role played by the NSOs → stressed in Chapter 7 of the *Draft Guidance on the Role of National Statistical Offices in achieving national climate objectives.*

Since is not possible to interview the broader public to assess their level of awareness, **journalists were identified as a useful proxy.**

Community of **official statistics does not have enough visibility in the climate change domain**

NSOs hardly mentioned or remembered **as entrusted sources and data providers**

It is **hard to show** that there are **statisticians behind climate data** and that the official statistics can be a partner in disseminating trusted information to citizens





# Communicating innovations in statistics and data – does it add value to communicating the role of the latter?

Accessing privately held data for policymaking: What you need to know

## What are 'privately held data'?

The term 'privately held data' refers to the vast amount of data held by businesses, which could be used to inform policymaking at European, national and regional levels. Such data include, for example, figures on energy consumption, mobile network operator traffic, retail sales, movement of transport and financial transactions.

This type of detailed information has the potential to be used by policy makers for the benefit of society as a whole.

## How does access to privately held data help policy makers?

The digital nature of privately held data sources means that important information can be quickly captured and analysed to support evidence-based policymaking. The amount of detail available can go far beyond what traditional surveys and administrative registers can provide, and can give the policy makers timely insights into the way society, the economy and the environment are changing.

For example, roadside sensors, constantly measuring traffic and pollution levels in different locations, help to identify dangers to public health and the environment. Data on mobile network operator traffic can be used to indicate daily population flows, and figures from major retail outlets can show the latest prices and stock levels of key household items.

## Current practice

A number of European National Statistics Institutes have already signed special agreements with companies to access their privately held data for statistical purposes. In 2021, under a special agreement, Eurostat published the first statistics on short-term holiday rentals derived from four online booking platforms: Airbnb, Booking, Expedia Group and Tripadvisor.

However, there is no general mechanism in place to enable private companies to share their data with National Statistical Institutes in this way.

Graphic

## The need for a legal framework

The lack of a legal framework to enable data sharing between businesses and statistical authorities means that the regular supply of privately held data, comparable over time, cannot be guaranteed.

A legal framework would put in place a secure technical infrastructure to share privately held data and to establish robust procedures for the protection of the data.

Eurostat and National Statistical Institutes would then be able to access the shared information and to produce official statistics in accordance with the high quality standards established in the European Statistics Code of Practice.

## Innovation and the ESS

Innovation is not an option for the European Statistical System (ESS). It is a necessity. Today's business environment — defined by competition from a large number of private data providers, an ever faster changing data ecosystem, and a rapid rise in increasingly urgent demands for new, timelier and more detailed statistics — makes innovation an even higher priority for all ESS partners.

In fact, innovation is nothing new for the ESS. Eurostat and the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) have for decades worked innovatively, by successfully implementing new solutions and business ideas and creating genuine value for their partners and users.

The current situation calls for ESS members to expand their use of **digital technologies**, widen the use of data sources like **new digital sources**, and apply new technologies, such as artificial intelligence. The ESS members should also pursue more **innovative practices** and create **conditions for successful innovation** so that they can more quickly anticipate and respond to the challenges ahead. The ESS Innovation Agenda tackles these issues, with the ESS Directors' Groups helping to implement it and the ESS Innovation Network (EIN) working to coordinate it.

The ESS Committee has emphasised the importance of ensuring **adequate communication** in the implementation of the ESS Innovation Agenda in order to make the agenda better known within the ESS.

The successful implementation of the ESS Innovation Agenda will bring tangible results and strengthen the position of official statistics at both the national and European levels, through incremental and transformational innovation.



## Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data

Prepared by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

## Strategic Area 2: Innovation and modernization of national statistical systems

Objective 2.1 : Modernize governance and institutional frameworks to allow national statistical systems to meet the demands and opportunities of constantly evolving data ecosystems

[Organisation logo] eurostat

Graphic

## What are the goals and why?





# Is ethics a new concept of the international debate? Certainly not.

- UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
  - New Advisory Board to be created
- The European Statistics Code of Practice (quality lens)
- OECD Recommendation on Good Statistical Practice
- ISI Declaration on Professional Ethics
- IAOS Krakow Group



**Empowering Official Statistics:  
Upholding the FPOS to Stay Relevant**

**2024 Celebration of the FPOS**

30th Anniversary of Adoption by the UN Statistical Commission

10th Anniversary of Adoption by the UN General Assembly



# Growing importance of ethics in the international context

- **Trust debate**

„Our value/worth conversation is more about *'why'* do we do what we do.

*What does it add to our society?*

*Whereas the trust conversation is about 'how' we do what we do”* Giles Sullivan

- **Value debate**

- **User-centric approach**

UNECE

Measuring the Value of Official Statistics:  
testing and developing a measurement framework



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# Ethics – derivatives and dimensions

- „Data ethics - a key enabler of the social acceptability”
- Social acceptability – a strategic communication topic
- ESS Strategic Communication Expert Group
  - *„Social acceptability: roadmap for communicating the ethical approach taken to data collection, processing, storage, dissemination and retention”*
- **Why do we need to keep providing evidence of our trustworthiness?**



# Ethics – underlying official statistics, some food for thoughts

FPOS and Big Data - [\*Mapping the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics against new and big data sources\*](#)

Europe's Ethical Guidelines [7] related to the use of Big Data in European statistics.

A reference point in considering the 6 challenges of an ethical use of new and big data sources

The guidelines draw the attention of NSOs to possible issues of professional ethics that can appear in the use of big data in the production of official statistics at three main stages of the statistical production process: data acquisition, processing and dissemination. The ethical nature concerning the cornerstone of official statistics.

**Data stewardship – from the [\*UNECE TF Report „Data Stewardship and the Role of National Statistical Offices in the New Data Ecosystem”\*](#)**

is ensuring the ethical and responsible creation, collection, management, use, and reuse of data. It is expressed through long-term, inter-generational curation of data assets so that they benefit the full community of data users and are used for public good.

“[...] The timelessness and relevance of the FPOS make them fit to the new data-driven reality. However, the proliferation of new data sources, new stakeholders and new concepts, such as data stewardship is a good opportunity to reinterpret the Principles, to set directions of their new possible explanations, which seem to be unavoidable in spite of their pertinence and universal character.”

[\*Back to the basics: The concept of data stewardship in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics \(FPOS\), COL/PL\*](#)



# Instead of conclusion – invitation to discussion

Do we leverage the recurrent big international topics to make people understand what we stand for?

Do we ask the right questions?

Are we known (and understood)?

Where does our value lies?





# Statistics Poland

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**Thank you for  
listening 😊**



# Quality Reports- Building Trust in Official Statistics in Kenya

Gichunji Kariuki , Statistician  
Sampling Methods and Standards  
Kenya National Bureau of Statistics



# Outline

- Introduction
- Background
- Kenyan Experience
- Quality Reports
- Recommendations



# What is a great product?

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# Introduction

Reliable and timely data is more crucial than ever:

- ✓ Understand complex issue;
- ✓ Make informed decisions and
- ✓ Track progress towards achieving sustainable development goals.

To increase trust in Official Statistics produced, National Statistical Offices like KNBS, plays a vital role in this process.

# Background-1

The data landscape is rapidly changing and becoming more diverse.

- ✓ There is a notable increase in producers and users of statistics
- ✓ Demand and consumption of data and statistics has grown at unprecedented rates

Adoption of global standards and best practices on quality assurance, to enhance trust and relevance of official statistics.

## Is this adequate?

Users should also be provided with comprehensive information on official statistical processes and descriptions of statistical products in relation to all quality dimensions.

# Background-2

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics(KNBS) started producing quality reports for statistical products classified as official statistics



# Kenyan Experience

## Challenges

- ❑ Lack of a Code of Practice or a quality assurance framework
- ❑ New organization structure -Methods and standards, responsible for championing statistical quality was still under early stages of implementation
- ❑ Implementation of the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census (2019 KPHC)

**2018/19**

**2022  
and  
Beyond**

## Achievements

- ❑ Appointment of a quality working group (QWG) to champion statistical quality in all technical areas
- ❑ Development and launch of the Kenya Statistical Quality Assurance Framework (KeSQAF)
- ❑ Development of quality report anchored to the quality dimensions in the KeSQAF
- ❑ The methods and standards section is more structured to execute its role

# Quality Reports-1

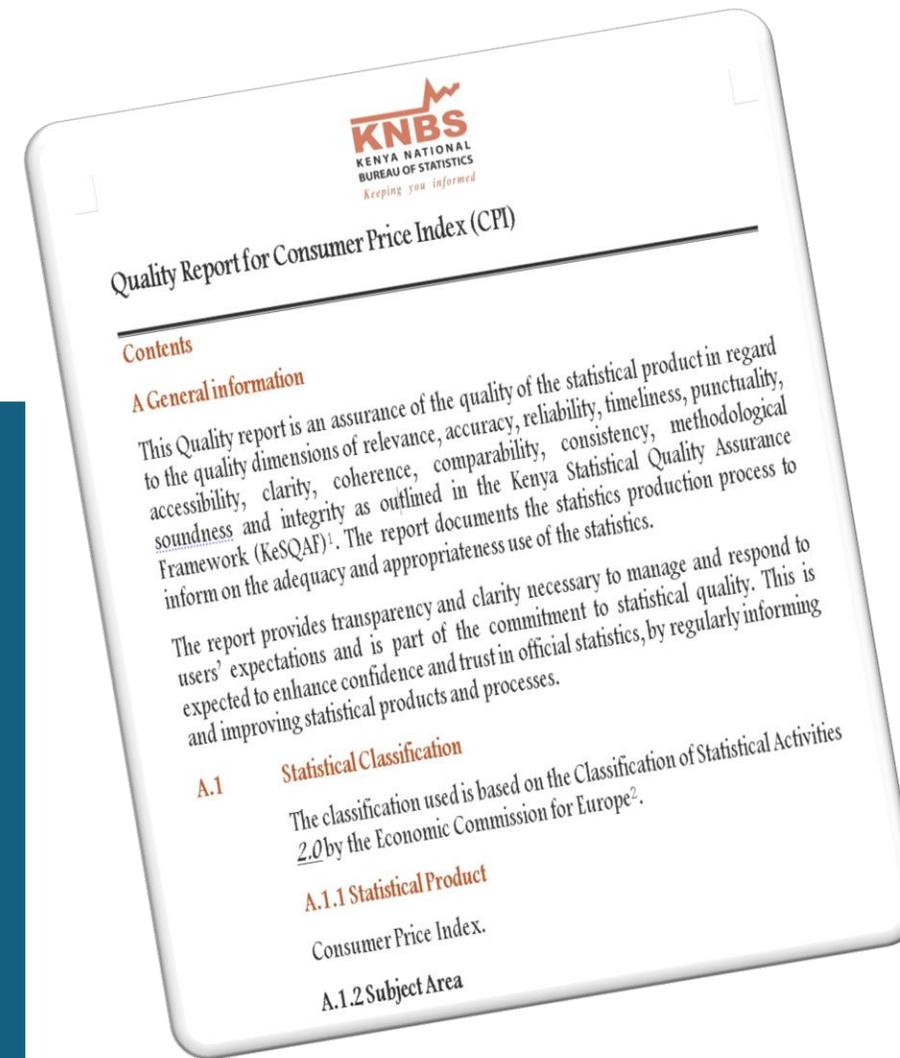
What is a quality report (QR) ?

A document describing the quality of a product in relation to all relevant quality dimensions/components

## A. General Information

## B. Quality Dimensions

- i. Relevance
- ii. Methodological soundness
- iii. Accuracy & Reliability
- iv. Timeliness & Punctuality
- v. Accessibility and Clarity
- vi. Coherence and Comparability/consistency



# Quality Reports-2

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## Why should we produce QR?

Highlights strengths and limitations of statistics

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Aids users in determining suitability of statistics to their needs (Fit for purpose)

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Basis for continuous Improvement through Quality assessments

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Enhance the credibility and trust in the statistics

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Requirement as part of Code of Practice (CoP) and Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)

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Outlines the expected quality benchmarks for statistics producers

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It's a channel of communication with users and a platform for knowledge sharing with other producers of statistics

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# Milestones



Ongoing implementation of the Kenya Statistical Quality Assurance Framework (KeSQAF)



Development of standard quality report template for official statistics



Development of quality reports for:

- ✓ Poverty and inequality Statistics
- ✓ Consumer Price Index (CPI)

# Goals

**Short Term  
2023/24**

Develop at least 3  
quality reports for each  
directorates (total of 9)

**Midterm  
2027**

Develop Quality  
Reports for all KNBS  
products

**Long term**

Develop quality  
reports for all  
official statistics in  
Kenya



# Recommendations



Quality Report should be anchored on the National Statistics Office's Code of Practice or Quality Assurance Framework



Quality Report should be a key requirement for designating statistics as official



Adopt a country-Specific approach in the development of quality reports

-Have a standard template for the country



Flexibility and evolution of quality reports to meet current user needs



# Thank you



[www.knbs.or.ke](http://www.knbs.or.ke)



Kenya Stats



KNBStats

