



# Coordination and quality assurance in the Danish statistical system

– an integrated approach to coordinating national and European statistics

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# Outline of the presentation



- 1. Coordination vs co-operation - coordination as a concept**
- 2. New EU demands**
- 3. Characteristics of the Danish Statistical System**
- 4. Preconditions for successful coordination**
  - i. a delimitation of publicly produced statistics as well as official statistics**
  - ii. a set of commonly recognized quality standards for official statistics**
  - iii. a procedure for the monitoring and enforcement of the quality standards**
- 5. Lessons learned**

# 1. Coordination vs co-operation

## - coordination as a concept

- What is coordination?



co-operation

'soft coordination'



governance

'coordination'

- Formally, Statistics Denmark (SD) is empowered to coordinate statistical production in Denmark according to 'the Act on SD'
- However, in practice SD only exercises 'soft coordination'
- Even the EU coordination committee set up in 2009 - composed of ONAs and chaired by SD is working on the basis of soft coordination – focus on exchange of views and of information

## 2. New EU demands

The revised EU-regulation 223 puts increased demands on publicly produced statistics

- **Increased demands for professional and organizational independence**
- **Higher degree of compliance with the Code of Practice (CoP)**
- **Extended access to administrative data**
- **Extension of the coordinating role of NSIs:**
  - Program development and reporting,
  - Quality assurance and monitoring,
  - Methodology,
  - Data transmission and communication

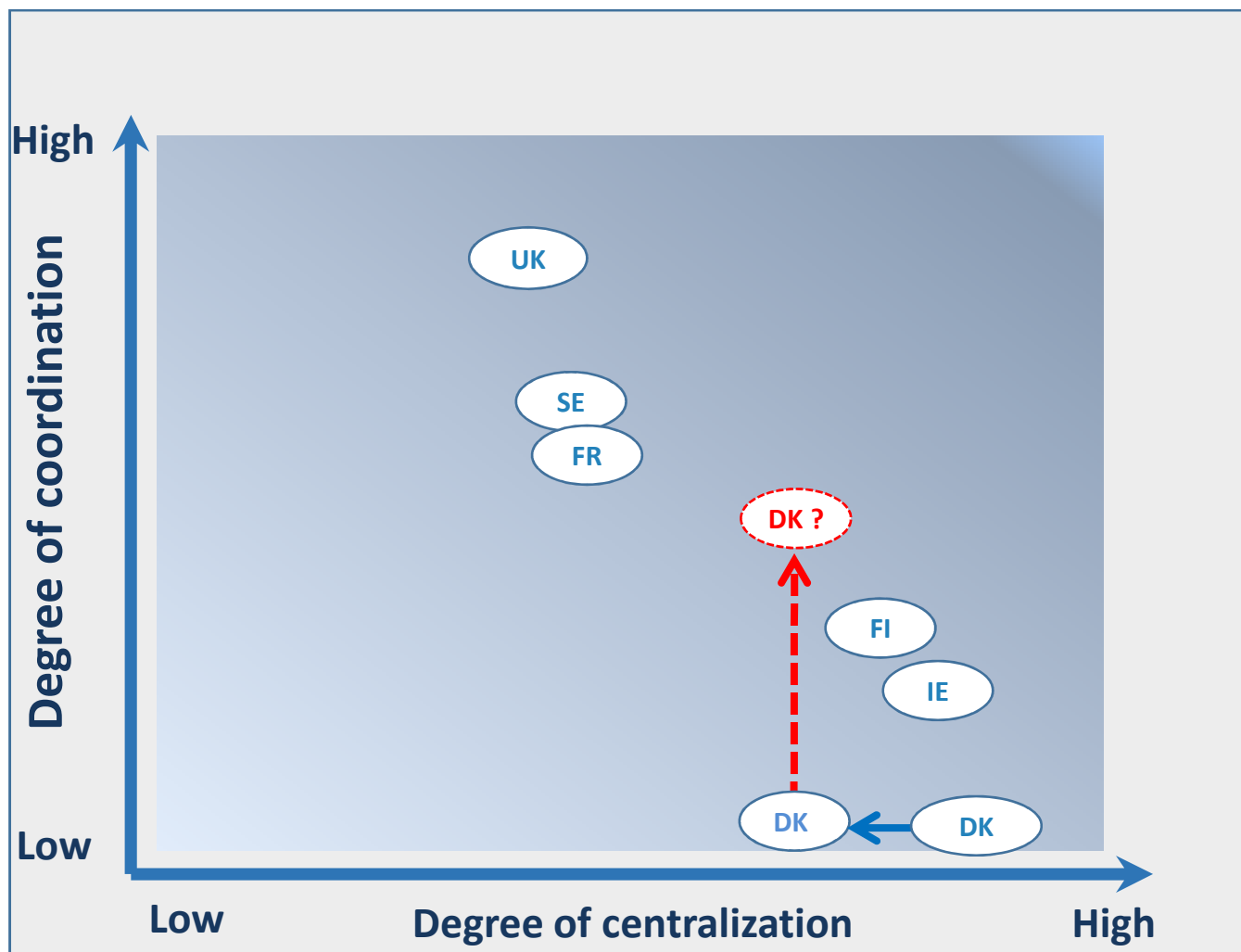


# 3. Characteristics of the Danish Statistical System

- A relatively high degree of centralization – with a tendency of increased decentralization in the last few years



# Degree of centralization and coordination in selected countries



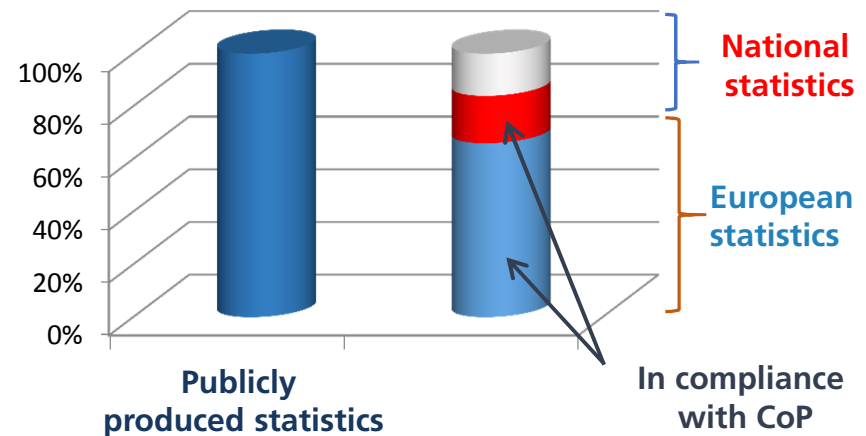
### 3. Characteristics of the Danish Statistical System

- A relatively high degree of centralization – with a tendency of increased decentralization in the last few years
- The concept “official statistics” does not exist
- There are no commonly accepted quality standards for national Danish statistics
- No institutions or agencies have the mandate to create such national standards – nor to monitor or enforce such standards
- The 2015 Peer Review recommends that the term “official statistics” is defined in the upcoming, revised law on Danish statistics



# European and Danish statistics

- The scope, content and quality of publicly produced statistics is unknown
- European statistics make up a majority of the total amount of statistics produced in Denmark
- SD uses the same quality standards for Danish and European statistics – CoP
- A key question is whether the same guidelines and quality standards shall apply for European statistics and Danish statistics produced outside of SD
  - Can we accept that Danish statistics do not adhere to the same quality standards as European statistics?
  - Does it make sense to have two different quality assurance frameworks?



## 4. Preconditions for successful coordination

- i. a delimitation of **'publicly produced statistics'** as well as **'official statistics'**,
- ii. a set of commonly recognized **quality standards** for official statistics,
- iii. a procedure for the **monitoring and enforcement** of the quality standards for official statistics.



## 4.i. Definition of ‘publicly produced statistics’

### Statistics that:

- 1) are published by a public institution,
- 2) add to our understanding of society, i.e. enlighten key areas of society, which broadly includes the population and its living conditions, labor market, the environment, businesses, and the public sector as well as general economic developments,
- 3) are published at a fixed frequency,
- 4) cover the entire country,
- 5) are publicly available in print or online.

### Operationalization:

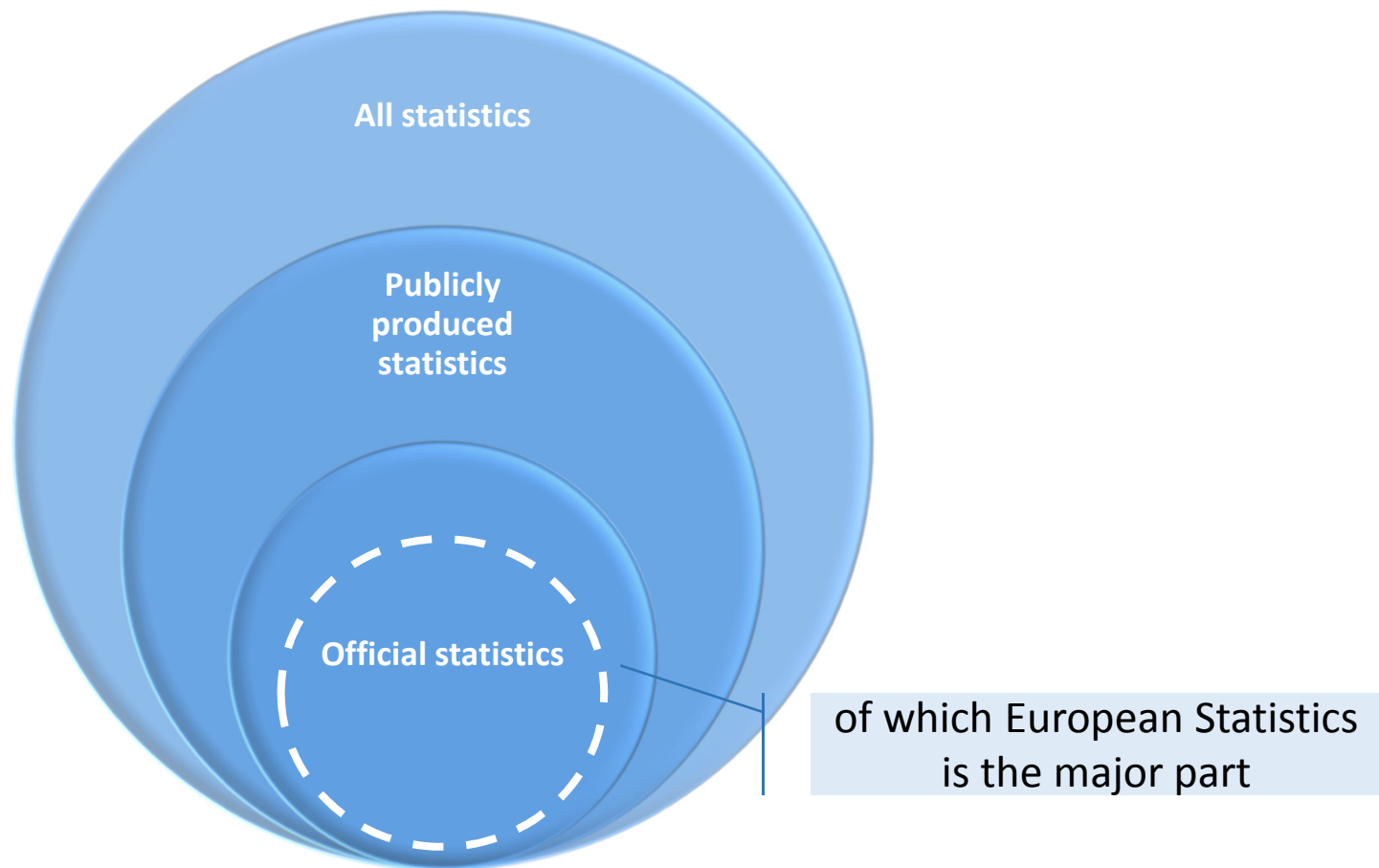
- An annually updated list of statistics based on reporting from ministries and their affiliated institutions

## 4.i. 'Official statistics'

- Official statistics is publicly produced statistics that comply with a set of quality standards
- In the new statistics law coming into force on 1 July 2018 such standards become the same as for European Statistics – i.e. CoP
- Accordingly, **official statistics** is composed of:
  - European statistics in compliance with the CoP
  - National statistics in compliance with the CoP

The Official  
Statistics System 

# Statistics vs. official statistics



## 4. Preconditions for successful coordination

- i. a delimitation of '**publicly produced statistics**' as well as '**official statistics**',
- ii. a set of commonly recognized quality standards for official statistics,
- iii. a procedure for the monitoring and enforcement of the quality standards for official statistics.



## 4.ii. New quality assurance framework as from 1 July 2018

- CoP provides the most thorough set of quality standards
- Up till now only valid for European statistics and national statistics produces by SD
- As part of the implementation of the revised 223, the Director General of SD has developed a set of guidelines for European statistics based on the CoP
  - A revision of the Danish statistics law lays down that the guidelines for European statistics shall be used as a quality framework for identifying which national statistics qualify as official statistics



## Guidelines laid down by the Director General of SD

The Danish guidelines:

- is a 'Pixi version' of the CoP and the European Quality Assurance Framework, and
- is adjusted to a Danish context



### Quick facts:

- 16 guidelines
- 45 criteria
- Developed in consultation with ONAs

# Structure of the guidelines

**Institutional environment**

Institutional and organizational factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of a statistical authority developing, producing and disseminating European Statistics. The relevant issues are professional independence, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity.

**Professional independence.** Professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European Statistics.

**Mandate for data collection.** Statistical authorities have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.

**Adequacy of resources.** The resources available to statistical authorities are sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.

**Commitment to quality.** Statistical authorities are committed to quality. They systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality.

**Statistical confidentiality.** The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes are absolutely guaranteed.

**Impartiality and objectivity.** Statistical authorities develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.

Principals from the CoP

Operationalization of the guideline - criteria

Examples of good practice

The guideline



Guidelines	Criteria	Examples of good practice
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Explanation

**1. The production of European statistics is professionally independent.**

*Users should be able to count on the statistics being produced using objective methods and without concern for political and economic interests.*

**1a. It is ensured that the statistics producing unit can work independently, e.g. through a law, mandate, terms of reference, organizational set-up etc.**

The professional independence of Statistics Denmark is secured in the Act on Statistics Denmark. The Act states that Statistics Denmark is professionally and politically independent, and that the institution has the legal mandate to collect data.

## 4. Preconditions for successful coordination

- i. a delimitation of **'publicly produced'** statistics as well as **'official statistics'**,
- ii. a set of commonly recognized quality standards for official statistics,
- iii. a procedure for the monitoring and enforcement of the quality standards for official statistics
  - a. Official European statistics
  - b. Official national statistics



## Re iii.a) Official European statistics is subject to a legally binding monitoring and enforcement procedure



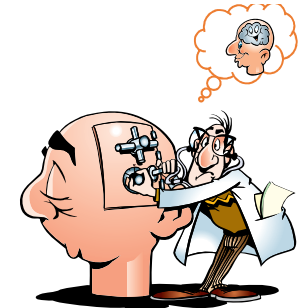
- **Delimitation:**
  - European Statistics as defined in EU 2009/223
- **Standards:**
  - CoP
  - Guidelines laid down by the Director General of SD, based on the CoP
- **Monitoring:**
  - Annually monitoring of the ONAs' compliance with the guidelines conducted by SD:
    - Self-assessment questionnaire based on guidelines to be filled in by each ONA every year
    - "Mini" peer-reviews (audits) in ONAs every 3-5 year (2-3 ONAs to be reviewed every year)
  - Annually monitoring of SD's compliance with the CoP conducted by Eurostat and ESGAB
- **Enforcement:**
  - Obligatory - the ONAs' compliance with the guidelines is reported annually to the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Interior (the Government) and is subject to a Government decision.

## Re iii.b) Official national statistics is subject to a voluntary monitoring and enforcement procedure - voluntary labelling



- **Delimitation:**
  - List of publicly produced statistics updated annually
  - Each public producer identifies the statistics they wish to have evaluated for the "label" official statistics.
- **Standards:**
  - Guidelines for official national statistics are the same as guidelines for European statistics, based on the CoP
- **Monitoring:**
  - Undertaken for all statistics identified by public producers for official statistics labelling:
    - Self-assessment questionnaire based on guidelines to be filled in by each ONA every year
    - "Mini" peer-reviews (audits) in ONAs every 3-5 year (2-3 ONAs to be reviewed every year)
- **Enforcement:**
  - Compliance with the quality standards for an identified statistics will grant the label official statistics
  - A list of official national statistics is published every year and a common dissemination portal for official statistics is set up

## 5. Lessons learned



- European quality standards served as a lever for introducing a national quality framework – however of a voluntary nature
- Introducing European quality standards have to be transformed in country specific national settings
- The statistical community has to be aware that the ESS comprises a very heterogeneous set of actors – accordingly, a flexible interpretation of common standards is needed
- The CoP is targeted at NSIs more than ONAs that do not have statistical production as their main/primary task – statistical ‘ethnocentrism’ becomes an issue
- When introducing common quality standards you have to involve the stakeholders (ONAs) in order to make them buy-in and take ownership
  - The right balance between a ‘stick’ or ‘carrot’-driven approach seems an important precondition for introducing a successful coordination mechanism
- When opening your national statistical law you become ‘vulnerable’ for the ‘political fashion of the day’:
  - A new minister might introduce a new agenda
  - Other statistical stakeholders might have their own agenda

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Thank you for your attention!

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