

# AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ISI FAMILY AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF STATISTICIANS

## Response to the open letter of the ISI

<http://www.isi-web.org/images/newsletters/OpenletterELSTAT.pdf>

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Dear Colleagues:

It is a welcoming surprise that the ISI leadership (henceforth ISI) was finally persuaded, or rather pressed by events, to refer openly to a view different than theirs on the issue of criminal violation of the European Regulations ESA95 in calculating Greece's public debt and deficit figures for the year 2009. It is well known that this violation resulted in wrongly swollen public debt and deficit numbers on the basis of which IMF and our European partners decided to bail Greece out several times. It is also well known that IMF has apologized for their wrong estimates of Greece's multipliers on which they based their ineffective Austerity Program which has lead Greece to an explosive spiral of indebtedness and stubborn deficits with astonishing social consequences. However, this mess was to be expected exactly because of the wrong numbers: wrongly swollen debt and deficit figures and significant underestimation of GDP. The problem is that behind this mess sit powerful European Bureaucrats who seem to have found shelter in the arms of the ISI in order to give a scientific aroma to both their accidental and intentional mistakes.

It wouldn't be necessary to post this letter if ISI's reference was not another effort to vindicate those responsible for Greece's woes by mere assertions and at the same time by concealing evidence, twisting reality and in effect making a lot of noise through their inappropriate political interventions to whitewash the statistical alchemies carried out by Eurostat and Mr. Georgiou (ex IMF employee in the Financial Institutions Division, Department of Statistics – now IMF pensioner and chairperson or president of Greece's Statistical Office, ELSTAT).

Our intervention in the Hong Kong congress by an email-letter to more than 1,500 congress delegates in order to make our own view of the facts known has lead ISI to post an "*open letter to members of the ISI family and the international statistical community*" in which they use a number of regrettable expressions and make untrue statements. Three of these unfortunate cases are presented below:

- (1) In the second and third paragraph of their *open letter*, the ISI refers to us as some "*two individuals*" and not by our names and titles. This is repeated in the last paragraph. ISI have blackwashed our names and titles for obvious reasons. We are sorry but we are not some two individuals. We are University Professors, Economic Statisticians and Experts on National Accounting. We were approved by the Parliament of Greece through a public call to fill the positions of Member and Vice-President of Greece's Statistics Authority on the condition that Greece's Statistical Office, ELSTAT, would function according to the new statistical law, i.e. independently of external interventions and according to the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice in order to produce credible data. We are known to have given this statement of intention when we accepted our appointment. Unfortunately, it seems that Eurostat had a different agenda and it is more unfortunate that ISI have fallen into a eurocratic trap.

In fact, as ISI leadership know, as also do know more than 1,500 delegates, we sent **one and only one** email-letter with a footnote which has been whitewashed by the ISI and instead, ISI have attached a second letter which we never sent. We are really disappointed that ISI would take an announcement in the Greek Press, see [Letter to Greek Press \(in Greek\)](#), translate it into bad English and claim that we have sent it to them. We are wondering whether this was an unfortunate or an intentional error. It seems though that the ISI leadership has rather acquired a truth-bending mindset which they are trying to hide by clever ways. The footnote in our email-letter was added as a response to comments we received. Our true letter can be read in [true email-letter](#) by those colleagues who have not received it and are interested in reading it.

- (2) In the fourth paragraph of their open letter, the ISI admit that they have submitted only statements to “*be used in legal proceedings*” in Greece. One does not have to be a Statistician to see that those statement submissions by ISI are mere assertions and political interventions, and in no way do they “*enable more informed decisions to be made by the judiciary*”. On the contrary, we and other witnesses have provided the judiciary with statistical evidence on oath. If those two presidents of the ISI who sign the aforementioned *open letter* are having evidence of Mr. Georgiou’s innocence, they are welcome to publicize and present it in the democratic Court of Law, as we have done, instead of submitting mere fanciful assertions within pressurizing letters which call the Greek politicians to intervene and whitewash a criminal prosecution.

Another step ISI has taken in order to unjustifiably support Mr. Georgiou, but essentially support Mr. Radermacher who is behind him, is ISI’s effort to try to collect meaningless signatures, essentially against Greek and European law, by misleading innocent and irrelevant people to put their signature under the slogan “*support Greece*”, while they mean “*support Radermacher and Georgiou*”. It’s really hilarious to see this done by a Statistical Institute which is supposedly scientific.

- (3) In the last paragraph of their *open letter*, the ISI says that we should not complain that we were not invited to the congress because Mr. Georgiou was not invited either, but he did go to Hong Kong conference. By making this claim, the ISI or those two ISI presidents who sign that claim, only show their pretense since they must have known that Mr. Georgiou’s 8 days trip to Hong Kong was a privileged gift to himself at the expense of Greece’s public budget. Since he has not contributed to the congress, he has again acted illegally.

Finally, we would like to correct the ISI footnote which appears in the last page of what they erroneously claim is our second letter to them. It is about the *statistical confidentiality statement* that Mr. Georgiou asked to be signed by the ELSTAT staff. The truth is that this pseudo-*statistical confidentiality statement* obliged the ELSTAT staff to a non-response to Court of Law about practically anything that has to do with statistical data and procedures. When he was asked to withdraw this particular clause, Mr. Georgiou refused to do so and he also had a circular published threatening the ELSTAT Personnel of dismissal and huge fines if they refuse to sign. It is noted that the ELSTAT staff have all given an oath of confidentiality when they were appointed according to the Greek Law and according to principle 5 of the European Statistics Code of Practice, CoP. It is thus apparent that the purpose of Mr. Georgiou’s confidentiality statement was to obstruct the course of justice against him by trying to silence the witnesses who belong to the ELSTAT staff. As a result he has currently been asked to testify in court of law for misleading the ELSTAT staff to act perjury and for attempting to use violence against them. Any democratic Court of Law has the moral and legal obligation to investigate such an abuse of power.

In support of the above arguments, it is also noted that we statisticians know that confidentiality is not a simple word void of methodological content; so, the world’s statistical community must get informed that the ELSTAT staff have never been trained in the methodologies of confidentiality, nor has the leadership of ELSTAT bought the required software.

Taking account of the above facts, we are wondering whether the ISI family has to replace its leadership.

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