

Up-Dated Message to ISI Delegates

about the ‘Ethical’ Discussion at the Open Meeting ‘*Intrusion of the judiciary in the course of the statistical production of official statistics*’

Hong Kong, Monday 26 August, 11:15 – 13:00 hours

59th World Statistics Congress of the ISI (International Statistical Institute)

FROM:

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WHAT A LONG WAY TO GO TO DO A LITTLE BIT OF WHITEWASH!

Whitewashing is scheduled for delegates to the ISI Congress in its ‘open meeting’ of 26 August. It will deplore the judicial process in train in Greece against Mr. Georgiou, protesting, as ISI’s pre-conference notes imply, an unwarranted challenge to the integrity of statistical process.

Georgiou was head of the Greek statistical unit, ELSTAT, at the height of the economic crisis. ELSTAT was newly constituted to remove national statistics from political influence. Its Board was collectively charged with the scrutiny and approval of its published official statistics. We, Zoe Georganta and Nicolaos Logothetis, were member and Vice-president, respectively, of that Board. Monthly meetings were chaired in a way which denied us and the rest of the members of the ELSTAT Board appraisal of the data, for this reason our legally required assent was withheld. Subsequent research has revealed that many items were included which are not within the parameters of public debt and deficit of national accounting according to International Standards and the European Regulations ESA95.

The pre-conference announcement outlines a debate on whether statisticians should be subject to legal scrutiny. It cites the case of Mr. Georgiou soon to be brought to court in Greece.

Contrary to past statements by ISI, who have tried in the past to pressurize the Greek government to intervene in the judicial process to stop the investigation proceduresⁱ, and the pre-conference document, the Greek government did not initiate this legal process. It was set in train by the Judiciary requiring a great number of statisticians and National Accounts experts to give testimonies on oath; on the basis of which testimonies a court has decided that Mr. Georgiou has a case to answer. We note that the world would consider outrageous a possible attempt of the ISI or any Eurostat bureaucrats to devalue the integrity of the Judiciary in Greece, an EU advanced democracy.

Professional status does not exempt statisticians from the rule of law. It is in Mr. Georgiou’s own interest to vindicate himself in a court of law, otherwise his reputation remains in question as does that of all those in the pyramid of Euro statistics who seek to vindicate him by mere assertion.

All statisticians accept that figures we put in the public domain are subject to the rigors of testing by our peers. We sought, as Mr. Georgiou’s Parliamentary appointed peers, to apply the discipline of scrutiny to the products of ELSTAT. It was our desire to see that these products were credible now that ELSTAT was legally established as an Authority independent of the government. We are on record as stating our objective was this: only by credible statistics can Greece gain credit.

After years when Eurostat had turned a blind eye to minimalizing returns from all the member states, it switched in the panic of a financial crisis urging president Georgiou to maximize those of a scapegoat Greece rendering it today prostrate and helpless in near bankruptcy.

The ISI have not invited us to contribute to their deliberations, and by this omission they display a lack of impartiality and objectivity which can only damage the ISI's reputation. Its credibility in this matter is already in question when its leading figures are themselves prominent in Eurostat bureaucracy; a bureaucracy which in effect is accountable to no-one. At this point we would note that the pre-conference document on the 'open meeting' of 26 August includes an indirect threat against statisticians who democratically express their scientific concerns about statistics approved by those unaccountable bureaucrats.

If Mr. Georgiou is proved innocent, neither he nor they have anything to fear.

But if he does not defend his innocence, his integrity and that of those above him in Eurostat will be irretrievably tarnished.

Delegates should give serious consideration to whether they can risk having their reputation sullied with splashes of whitewash.

Instead, in the interest of impartiality we would urge you boycott this session.

Zoe Georganta
Ex-Member of ELSTAT

Nicolaos Logothetis
Ex-Vice President of ELSTAT

This message has been supported by the majority of Greek and other European Statisticians, professionals and citizens who have carefully read our Press and Media reports. Those who have signed in "support of Georgiou" may have soon to be called by Greece's Judiciary to justify their signature on statistical evidence.

ⁱ See the 2012 Kiev-Ethics Issues Overview (<http://isi.cbs.nl/iaos/Conferences/2012Kiev-EthicsIssuesOverview.htm>) where, in the sections "Greece" and "Recommendations", the ISI ABE (Advisory Board on Ethics) and Mr. Hallgrímur Snorrason, Vice-President of ISI and at the same time Permanent Resident Representative of Eurostat in the Greek Statistics Office (ELSTAT), admit their outrageous intervention in the Greek Government and Greece's Judicial system in order to protect the Eurostat bureaucrats and Mr. Georgiou (president of ELSTAT and at the same time clerk at the IMF from which later he got a pension) from the criminal charges he is facing for violating International Standards and the European Regulations ESA95 consequently falsifying the public debt and deficit data for the year 2009 as well as major items of Greece's National Accounts. These illegal actions of Mr. Georgiou who was on evidence helped by Eurostat to unlawfully eliminate the 6 members of the 7-member Board of ELSTAT (the 7th member being Georgiou himself) so that he does not have to worry about awkward questions, resulted to the opening of the European Gate to the IMF and Troika involvement, which has resulted to a hundredfold augmentation of Greece's debt between 2009 and 2013. This was to be expected since the economic "assistance" of IMF and ECB (European Central Bank) was based on wrong data, provided by Georgiou. The hypocritical attitude of ISI and its ABE Committee, being absolutely politically motivated, is corroborated by the following facts:

a) As mentioned in the above reference, ISI has neither answered nor publicized the Greek experts' view sent to them about Georgiou's intentionally unlawful inflation of the public debt and deficit figures.

b) For a long time now ISI have been internationally collecting signatures (338 until today) in "support of Georgiou", by the misleading invitation "support Greece" and on **mere assertion**, not by statistical evidence, thus making us wonder whether they are statistical scientists or charlatans putting crooked politics above statistics.

c) Among the plethora of a "support Georgiou" framework based on mere assertion, the Director General of Eurostat gave an interview to the Belgian newspaper **Le Soir** (15 July 2013 insert, soon to be posted for your information on <http://zoe-georganta.co.uk>) in which he tries to cover up Eurostat's responsibilities regarding the unlawfully augmented Greek figures for 2009, as well as its past involvement in the "statistical massage" in order to get Greece into the Eurozone.

d) The "advisory committee" of the aforementioned reference supposedly having replaced the ELSTAT Board is majority controlled by Eurostat's yesmen and has by law no advisory or any role regarding the credible calculation of official statistics. It is just there to create a façade of statistical independence. Which other EU country has one boss, without a Board, as head of both its Statistics Authority and its NSI (National Statistical Institute)? The UK, the Netherlands, Germany, or which? The answer is simple: Because "independence" means accountability, no other EU statistical system is instituted as One-Person-Authority.