

**TSI Press Release No 4:****A Statistical Revolution in Data on the Third Sector in Europe**

*Brussels, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. During a conference themed “Putting the Third Sector on the Statistical Map of Europe” convened by the EU-funded research project Third Sector Impact (TSI) and the European Commission’s Directorate General on Research & Innovation (DG RTD) TSI’s Lester M. Salamon noted: “A quiet revolution is underway in European statistical agencies with regard to the portrayal of the organizations and individual activity that comprise the third sector in Europe.”*

Participants in this conference included representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee, the International Labour Organization, four Directorates General of the European Commission, statistical institutes of seven EU countries, experts on third-sector statistical development from three additional European countries, TSI researchers from seven universities or research institutes and representatives of three European civil society networks. “This was a genuinely multi-stakeholder gathering, a pilot experiment in integrating cutting-edge research into policy making while the research is under way, rather than waiting until years after it is completed,” noted the hosting DG RTD officer, Monica Menapace.

The general sense of this conference was summarized succinctly by Ariane Rodert, Vice president of the EESC Group III Various Interests, representing citizen groups: “The third sector has been invisible in European statistics for too long. It is now time to bring this citizen sector into view so that we can better understand its important contributions and make better use of its talents and resources.”

As Prof. Salamon, coordinator of TSI’s work on measurement noted, the statistical machinery for accomplishing this task is now at hand. Building on the Johns Hopkins University major cross-country Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, two major international statistical agencies have taken steps to integrate the measurement of key components of the “third sector” into official international statistical systems. In 2003, the UN Statistics Division issued a [Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts \(SNA\)](#), recommending that national statistical agencies produce regular “satellite accounts” to highlight the role of nonprofit institutions, and a revision of the SNA in 2008 further strengthened this recommendation. In 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) issued a [Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work](#), which for the first time called on statistical offices to begin measuring and putting a value on volunteer work in a comparative, systematic fashion.

To date, however, only three European countries have officially implemented the UN *NPI Handbook* -- Portugal, the Czech Republic, and Norway. But from the evidence of the June 1st conference, a far larger number have significant implementation work under way. Indeed, a subterranean earthquake appears to be gathering force in European statistical agencies that seems poised to burst into view, confirming the Johns Hopkins Project findings and exposing officially the surprising truth that the third sector is one of the largest “industries” in Europe (refer to attached fact sheet). Against the backdrop of this significant movement, TSI has now opened a third front in the battle to improve the visibility of the third sector by formulating a [consensus definition of the third sector](#) that systematically and objectively identifies the truly public-serving components of the cooperative, mutual, and social enterprise sectors and spells out how they can be incorporated along with nonprofit institutions (NPIs) and volunteer work into a more comprehensive statistical picture of the third sector. This broadened definition will now be incorporated as a suggestion into a revision of the UN’s *NPI Handbook* due out in 2015.

Eurostat, a DG providing statistical information to EU institutions, could not attend the meeting but expressed willingness to continue the dialogue - a necessary next step, until Eurostat is willing to mandate the identification of NPIs and other third sector institutions and activities in European national accounts data, these will remain invisible and their contributions to European life left unclear.





## TSI Fact Sheet:

### A Statistical Revolution in Data on the Third Sector in Europe

- GUS, **Poland's** statistical agency, has been building an elaborate body of statistical data on nonprofit institutions over the past decade and recently became the first country to implement the *ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*.
- **Portugal's** Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) is now committed to producing a satellite account on nonprofit institutions every two years and recently issued a major report based on its initial implementation of the *ILO Manual*.
- ISTAT in **Italy** just completed its third major census of nonprofit institutions and social cooperatives and a parallel citizen survey on volunteer work and is about to issue an NPI satellite account.
- In **France**, a new law has mandated a satellite account on the "social economy," embracing cooperatives and mutuals as well as nonprofits.
- The National Bank of **Belgium**, with support from the King Baudouin Foundation, has been producing regular NPI satellite accounts for a decade and now the Belgian statistics agency has agreed to integrate questions on volunteer work into its labour force surveys.
- The **ILO** has issued a new regulation on work that explicitly embraces volunteer work as an important component deserving regular, systematic measurement.
- In **Austria**, work is going forward to clarify the coverage of one portion of the entire NPI sector, with pressures from civil society groups to broaden this coverage to NPIs buried in other economic sectors.
- **Germany's** federal statistical agency has entered a partnership with several foundations and a leading research body to generate statistical data on its vast nonprofit sector;
- In **the Netherlands**, labour force statisticians have agreed to incorporate a limited range of questions on volunteer work into the huge Dutch labour force survey.
- In **Serbia** a nongovernmental organization has created a massive data base on registered organizations that covers associations and foundations and provides evidence of how civil society organizations can help statistical agencies identify third sector organizations in their business registers and thereby facilitate the work called for in the *UN NPI Handbook*.

TSI is financed under the European Union's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7). For more details about the project refer to [www.thirdsectorimpact.eu](http://www.thirdsectorimpact.eu). If you wish to interview a TSI consortium member on measuring third sector impact please contact Ksenija Fonovic at [kfonovic@spes.lazio.it](mailto:kfonovic@spes.lazio.it).

#### TSI consortium

Institute for Social Research (Norway), The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (Italy), Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, Austria, University of Kent and University of Birmingham (United Kingdom), University of Münster (Germany), Radboud University Nijmegen (The Netherlands), Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France), Universitat de Valencia (Spain), Faculty of Law Zagreb (Croatia), and the University of Warsaw (Poland), SPES (Italy); EMES Network (Belgium)

