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Mr. Jae C. Lee
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The International Statistical Institute
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Notification: **ISI Executive Committee Members** (President- Elect: Vijay Nair, University of Michigan, USA; Vice-President: Hallgrímur Snorrason, Resident Representative of Eurostat in ELSTAT, Greece; Vice-President: Pali Lehohla, South Africa; Helen MacGillivray, QUT, Australia); **Walter Radermacher**, Director General of EUROSTAT; **A. Georgiou**, President of ELSTAT, Greece; **Panhellenic Syllogos Ypallilon ELSTAT**

Athens, 5 February, 2012

Dear Mr. President,

On the 21st of January 2012 Professor Zoe Georganta sent you a letter in which she complained about your letter (attached) sent on the 5th of January 2012 to the Prime Minister of Greece, the President of the Hellenic Parliament and ELSTAT, in support of Mr. A. Georgiou, presenting the ELSTAT state of affairs in favor of its chairman without having acquired the full information, as you should have done as President of ISI and as an objective and unbiased scientist. We emphasize that one would have expected the President of ISI to have investigated the *real* facts before he sends a letter such as the attached. We are also very sorry that you failed to respond to Prof. Georganta.

We hope you understand that we could not conceal the fact that your Vice-President at ISI and the EUROSTAT **Permanent Resident Representative at ELSTAT** for at least the last 18 months are one and the same person, Mr. **Hallgrímur Snorrason**. Thus, one does not need more indications to realize who gave you misleading information about the events that took place in ELSTAT during the past 18 months.

As Prof. Georganta already mentioned, you might be called here to fully justify your support to Mr. A. Georgiou and, in such a case, you should have to prove that Mr. Georgiou has indeed followed the ESA95 Manual on Government Deficit and Debt, and also adhered to all responsibilities of a *President* of ELSTAT arising from the original Founding Law of ELSTAT and the required professional ethics.

Please let us assure you that Mr. Georgiou never adhered to any of his above responsibilities and obligations. In fact, the only thing he managed to do was to change the founding

statistical law by removing all responsibilities of the other members of the Board, particularly those of the Vice-President, and thus acting from there on as an One-Man Board. In case you don't know, we are informing you about the following:

- (1) The Government Deficit and Debt figures, especially those for the critical year 2009, are a slipshod piece of work based on guesses and regression projections far from any objective measurements and without the required careful examination of the quality of the available data as the ESA95 regulations demand. And these rough and ready methods, completed within a few days in Autumn 2010, contrary to what happens in the rest of the EU countries, had the well known heavy negative effects on our economy and society.
- (2) All our statistical surveys (employment, family-budget, all sectoral economic activity, population and agricultural censuses, and so on) are in a chaotic state as they were never before in the history of our statistical system.
- (3) There is written evidence which shows, beyond any doubt, severe political intervention obviously aiming at impairing the legally established independence of ELSTAT.
- (4) There is written evidence which shows, beyond any doubt, that the main "advisor" to Mr. Georgiou, especially on how to change the founding statistical law, was **Mr. Snorrason himself in cooperation with EUROSTAT**. We wonder in this case, how you would explain the following: Who gave the right to EUROSTAT and Mr. Hallgrímur Snorrason, (who was *supposed* to act as an advisor to the whole Board of ELSTAT on technical matters only), to actually act as a personal advisor to Mr. Georgiou and INTERVENE IN THE LAW OF AN INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY!
- (5) The President of ELSTAT is still acting as a one-man-Board against the Hellenic statistical law and against the European Statistics Code of Practice, in spite of official announcements to the contrary.

We are suggesting you recall the attached letter of yours until you are fully certain about the true facts and the true role of certain Eurostat people, like Mr. Snorrason's, in the Hellenic Statistical affairs. We believe that 'airing' the problems, as well as recognizing and admitting our mistakes is a virtue, not a vice. We would appreciate a response from you this time.

Yours sincerely

Dr N. Logothetis

Prof. Z. Georganta

Attached
letter of Mr. Lee (President of ISI) to Mr. Georgiou (Chairman of ELSTAT)



Mr. A. Georgiou
President of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT)
Peiraïos & Eponiton str 46m,
185 10 PIREAS,
ELLADA/GREECE

The Hague, 5 January 2012

Dear Mr Georgiou,

I am writing you in my capacity as President of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). The ISI is an autonomous international association with individual and institutional members worldwide.

It is with great concern that we have followed the attacks on the Hellenic Statistical Authority and the threats that you as President of ELSTAT, your deputy and the head of National Accounts are facing.

The ISI supports you in your endeavour to comply with the international standards for compilation and dissemination of statistical data. I am very concerned about the pressure that is put on you and your staff to deviate from these standards and good practices.

I would like to point at the ISI Declaration on Professional Ethics, adopted in July 2010, which unambiguously describes as the first and leading principle 'Pursuing Objectivity':

Pursuing Objectivity

Statisticians should pursue objectivity without fear or favor, only selecting and using methods designed to produce the most accurate results. They should present all findings openly, completely, and in a transparent manner regardless of the outcomes. Statisticians should be particularly sensitive to the need to present findings when they challenge a preferred outcome. The statistician should guard against predictable misinterpretation or misuse. If such misinterpretation or misuse occurs, steps should be taken to inform potential users. Findings should be communicated for the benefit of the widest possible community, yet attempt to ensure no harm to any population group

On behalf of the ISI I would like to express our strongest possible support and to encourage you in your mission to comply with the international standards for sound and objective statistical information.

The ISI calls on the Greek Government to fully support the endeavours of ELSTAT to render impartial and reliable statistics and to respect international good practices and standards.

It should be emphasized that objective and good quality statistics are indispensable for the running of a democratic society and the wellbeing of its citizens.

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A copy of this letter is sent to the Prime Minister of Greece and the Chairman of the Greek Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jae C. Lee".

Jae C Lee,
President ISI

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