

In recent years, important steps have been taken to improve the harmonisation of the statistical units applied in the European Statistical System, which is based on a regulation adopted in 1993. However, despite considerable progress, the situation is still far from ideal, for several reasons. The definition and choice of statistical unit types of Business Statistics has never really been harmonised with those of National Accounts; the 1993 regulation did not take the international dimension into account; economic structures have changed; and the definition of the enterprise allows for various interpretations.

The paper looks at the harmonisation of statistical units from the perspective of globalisation. It starts with describing the situation of statistics covering the international dimension of the economy anno 2016 in respect of statistical units, in particular concerning the state of harmonisation. The situation is currently very much in flux, since it is clear that economic structure is changing and demand for statistical information is not met. The paper describes the consequences of the notion of global value chains for statistical units, in particular in respect of the measurement of business functions. At the same time, efforts are on-going in the European Statistical System to organise international profiling, thereby depicting the international structure of enterprise groups. The paper discusses the consequences of the demand for statistics on aspects of globalisation for the system of statistical units.