
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Sean Whellams
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HM Revenue and Customs
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20 June 2014

Dear Sean

HMRC UK OVERSEAS TRADE WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION STATISTICS: APRIL 2014

Following my letter to Glen Watson, Director General of ONS, dated 18 June, regarding UK Trade Statistics April 2014 and the Authority's decision to temporarily suspend the designation of these statistics as National Statistics in light of HMRC data processing errors¹, I was pleased to learn that you have asked the Authority to re-consider the designation of HMRC's UK Overseas Trade with the European Union Statistics for that same month.² As you will be aware, the Authority has sole statutory responsibility for decisions relating to designation of National Statistics.

Having reviewed the matter carefully, we agree with you that it would not be appropriate for HMRC's UK Overseas Trade with the European Union Statistics April 2014 to be designated as National Statistics. I gather that you are also exploring the possibility of re-issuing the April 2014 Bulletin, with corrected data, rather than waiting to do so as part of the scheduled publication of the May 2014 Bulletin, due for publication in July. The Authority would anticipate that the re-issued Bulletin could have the National Statistics designation reinstated. We also expect that subsequent releases of these statistics, starting with the May data, can first regain then retain the National Statistics designation (as long as data errors do not recur), and I will write to you again when we have re-assessed the position in light of future developments.

More generally, we would encourage all Heads of Profession for Statistics in departments to inform us where they have concerns at the appropriateness of a particular set of statistics for which they are responsible continuing to carry the National Statistics designation.

I am copying this to Lin Homer, HMRC's Chief Executive, to John Pullinger, the National Statistician-designate, and to Ed Humpherson, the Authority's Head of Assessment.

Yours sincerely



Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-andrew-dilnot-to-glen-watson-18062014.pdf>

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/318527/OTS_EU_Apr14.pdf