Eurostat podcast: Stats in a Wrap

What does quality mean for statistics?

Release date: 20 September 2023

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Jonathan Elliott
Stats in a Wrap - the podcast series from Eurostat

Jonathan Elliott
Welcome to another episode of Stats in a Wrap, the podcast all about statistics from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. If you've been listening to our podcasts, you will know that we think data are delicious and we like nothing better than to slice and dice and wrap them into bite sized morsels whilst enjoying the intriguing stories, the fascinating conversations and startling truths, about the everyday and not so everyday stats that surround us.

Today in the Wrap Café we're going to be talking about a mysterious and elusive concept we all think we know about, but few of us can define accurately. And that's quality. And we'll be talking about pop music, not just any old pop music - the Eurovision Song Contest watched by over 160 million people worldwide, a quality brand that's been going strong for 67 years.

It also gave us the statistical phrase "nul points", which has entered the mainstream in English conversation and is used frequently to denote something of low quality. The Eurovision Song Contest is produced by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), an alliance of public service media organizations, and behind the glitz and glamour it's a data collection and dissemination machine, which is used by public service broadcasters in 56 countries to understand their audiences.

Both Eurostat and the EBU guard carefully their reputations as providers of high-quality information. But how do they sort the good quality from the bad? We'll be finding out in this podcast. So, let me introduce our guests who will be telling us about quality stats in all their forms: from Eurostat - Claudia Junker, who heads up the Task Force on Peer Reviews and Quality. Thanks for joining us in the Wrap Café today, Claudia.

Claudia Junker
Thank you very much for inviting me.

Jonathan Elliott
Well, very good to have you here. And we also have two contributors who combined probably know more about the Eurovision Song Contest than any duo in the world. And you'd almost certainly want them on your team in a pub quiz. They are Francesca Cimino, a media analyst from the European Broadcasting Union, which produces the contest. Francesca, welcome.

Francesca Cimino
Thanks very much for having me. I'm happy to be here today.

Jonathan Elliott
Lovely, and coming to our third guest - well, let me give you a bit of backstory. Here, at Stats in a Wrap we sometimes like to give our researchers impossible tasks just to keep them on their toes. And this time, we came up with a real challenge: we tasked them with finding an expert on European statistics, who had also to be an author on the history of the Eurovision Song Contest.

We told them that this expert has to be working at Eurostat and needs to be an academic as well. Ha-ha, we thought, no such person can possibly exist. But we were wrong! So welcome, Dean Vuletic, who is not only an academic expert on the contest, and author of the highly readable and popular 300 page "Postwar Europe and the Eurovision Song Contest", but also works at Eurostat - an incredible combination of talents.

Dean has also watched every single Eurovision Song Contest since the first was broadcast in 1956. That alone deserves some kind of medal. I have to ask you, Dean, do you have a favourite year or a favourite winner?

Dean Vuletic
My favourite year is 1974 because it really reflects so many of the political and social developments that were happening in Europe at the time, and I would say for a favourite winner: Toto Cutugno "Insieme: 1992". He won in Zagreb in 1990 and it's the only Eurovision winner that really epitomizes European integration.

Jonathan Elliott
Great, love it. Okay, well, if you read Dean's book, you can find out more about those two favourites. Dean, I need you to settle an argument: is it true that the survival of the Eurovision Song Contest is partly down to audience data? As far as I understand it, they only started measuring the numbers of people watching it in the 1960s when it was something relatively new to do. And when they did, they realized how popular it was. Is that true?

Dean Vuletic
Exactly. I think a lot of people don't realize that Eurovision was started in 1956, but it wasn't always meant to continue - in the late 1960s there was a crisis. The organizers of Eurovision were really not convinced that this was a television format that should continue. There was a lot of criticism coming from different quarters - criticism of the cost of the show, of the quality of the songs (and of course, of dubious voting results).

And they realized that they needed to conduct a survey to see how popular Eurovision actually was in Europe. So for the first time in 1971, they produced from the data submitted from the different national broadcasting organizations that were participating in Eurovision, they produced some results, and they decided that Eurovision was a format that should continue - they made some reforms, some changes to the rules of the contest, which led to ABBA winning in 1974 with the greatest Eurovision hit ever - "Waterloo" - and the rest is history.

Jonathan Elliott
Yeah, my seven-year-old loves dancing around to Waterloo on Alexa in the kitchen. It's just one of those songs that make you want to get on your feet, isn't it? And we know that people love it because of the numbers. Waterloo topped the charts in the UK, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, West Germany, Ireland, Norway, South Africa, and Switzerland. And it was also voted Eurovision's best ever song.

Well, we'll talk more about stats and the Eurovision Song Contest later in the podcast. But before we move on, I'm pleased and proud to announce the launch right here, right now of the world's first Eurostat Song Contest. And I'm going to ask each of our contributors to suggest a suitable title. Previous winners might have been "I'm Your Number One" by S Club or "2-4-6-8 Motorway" by Tom Robinson, or "Gotta Get Mean" by Blues Traveler.

And then there's "Average Guy" by Lou Reed. And "What's the Frequency, Kenneth" by R.E.M. And who could forget the storming floor filler: "Friedman's two-way analysis of variance". Okay, okay, I made that one up. But I'm sure our guests will come up with something better.

All will be revealed at the end of the show. Now we come to the part of the podcast where we get to know a bit more about our guests - their personal career journeys, what brought them here, and why they're interested in numbers and number crunching and everything to do with data science and statistics.

Claudia, perhaps you could just introduce yourself and tell us a bit about how you've come to be the head of the unit and what led you to this particular career. Were you a teenage stats nerd or did you come from some completely other background? Tell us more!

Claudia Junker
Yeah, you almost got it, Jonathan, because I loved math at school, that's true. And I always wanted to study mathematics, but then it didn't work out in the universities as I wanted. So I went to economics, econometrics, informatics, a mixture of everything. But I never dreamed about ending up in statistics.

I wanted to go to research, institute, do some modelling of the economy. But I got a good offer from the statistical office in Germany to work in national accounts - that's the unit producing the GDP, the gross domestic product. That was in '87 and I thought: okay, I stay there for three years, and then I go somewhere else - and I'm still there.

Jonathan Elliott
Wonderful. Francesca, tell us a bit about your role at the European Broadcasting Union and how you got there.

Francesca Cimino
I am an audience researcher; I would say my passion is understanding how people consume and use media. I've been at the EBU for 10 years now. And my journey to arrive here is not a typical one. I am not a statistician. I'm someone who cares very much about the data, and I very much enjoy taking big datasets and turning those into meaningful stories and meaningful arguments that we can use.

I have a Bachelor of Arts in textile design, of all things. But when I left university, I entered a graduate programme with a children's broadcaster. So, I worked for Disney at the beginning and then I moved to Channel Five, and then I ended up here in Geneva.

Jonathan Elliott
Okay, and Dean, what is a historian doing at Eurostat? Are you a statistician, a historian or maybe you're a cultural analyst. Tell us about your career journey.

Dean Vuletic
Before coming to Eurostat, I was working at the University of Vienna as an academic, a historian of contemporary Europe, teaching and leading research projects. The biggest research project that I led was one on the history of the Eurovision Song Contest and what it tells us about the history of Europe, and this was a project financed by the European Commission's Marie Skłodowska Curie research grants.

I ended up writing the first scholarly book on the history of Eurovision and I've also become a prominent media commentator on Eurovision. I got an offer from Claudia to join Eurostat and I was very happy to take up that offer, because another dream of mine has been to work for the European Union.

Jonathan Elliott
Now, we'll be coming later to the connections between the contest and Eurostat. But at the heart of this podcast is the tricky question of quality. And it is that which is the central preoccupation of Claudia's unit at Eurostat. Claudia, can you tell us about your unit and what it does?

Claudia Junker
First, I would like to start with what quality is because we have used it so many times, the word. And for us, quality in statistics means that the data, the statistics we produce is "fit for the purpose". And that is on purpose a very broad definition. Because "fit for purpose" may mean something completely different for a researcher who is looking for long time series, you know data back for 20-30 years.

And the researcher doesn't mind if the data comes maybe two years later, while a journalist when there is heated debate in the public and the society, he or she wants to have the data right now - what was the inflation of the last months. And the same also for politicians, when they want to design new policies, they have specific requirements of what kind of data they need.

Quality for us means serving different users, different stakeholders, in a different way. For all of them, of course, there is one common element and that's they want to have high-quality statistics. So, in order to do that, we have to set standards, so that everybody knows what good or high-quality data is. And that's the first strand of our work - we set standards for the entire European Statistical System or the Member States and also the countries of the EFTA.

Believers have a Bible with 10 commandments, we in the European Statistical System, we have our European Statistics Code of Practice with 16 principles. Then of course, once you have standards, you should implement them. And you should also monitor how they're implemented.

Jonathan Elliott
Ok, so you have a number of quality control tools in your toolbox and one of these is called "peer reviews" - I always thought this was a term where academics are terrorized by experts in their fields, but it's not quite that, is it?

Claudia Junker
One element to implement or to monitor how we implement the code is what we call "peer reviews". These are assessments of the statistical systems in our Member States and the EFTA countries. And we are reviewing how the Member States follow all our principles in the code. And then there is a third strand and that goes now a bit broader.

Of course, we have a lot of cooperation, discussions, meetings with our Member States on quality, on developments and what we could do to ensure high quality but we also go beyond the European Union, we work with candidate countries, so around the EU, we even work with the UN together, they are very much looking towards our experience and to learn from us.

And we also organize training and organizing a Quality Conference every second year. And the next one will be in Lisbon in June next year where you have 400-500 statisticians mainly from Europe, but not only, coming together and discussing on how they can improve quality in the statistical systems of our countries.

Jonathan Elliott
Now, Francesca, I just want to come to you here talking about the quality of data and how important that is for a public service media organization like the European Broadcasting Union. In some ways, you carry out some of the kinds of functions of a national statistical institute within a country because you use a lot of this data from Eurostat, and you also publish a lot.

And so, quality is vital - not only what you source, but also what you put out for your members who themselves are closely scrutinized on quality. Just tell us a little bit about why the quality of data is important to you and your colleagues at the EBU.

Francesca Cimino
Yeah, absolutely, everything you said is spot on. I mean, public service media organizations are held accountable for everything they do, they are publicly funded.

So, it's incredibly important that what we put out there as information, about them, whether it's a benchmarking report, or whether they're reporting themselves, they have to maintain an incredibly high standard of quality in their data, and transparency. I work in the Media Intelligence Service. That's the research unit of the EBU.

Our reason to exist is to provide our members with reliable data and trustworthy analysis so that we can have key arguments to support their activities and to support them in all areas - whether that's understanding the media markets that they're in, or the media trends as consumption behaviour changes with new technologies and new services arriving to the markets, benchmarking their performance, whether that's TV, radio, or online, and of course, the funding model.

Jonathan Elliott
And tell us particularly about what you do within the Eurovision Song Contest. That's one of your, your lead responsibilities, isn't it? You're the expert at the EBU on the Song Contest, is that right?

Francesca Cimino
I am the expert on the audience data, particularly the TV audience data, I've been writing the TV audience report for the Song Contest since I started here at the EBU. It's a huge task, but it's only a

small task for me, it's only one of my activities, it takes up a week of my life every year. And it's incredibly important.

Jonathan Elliott
We're talking about a big audience here. It's a global audience. It's I think, somewhere between 160 and 200 million people. And the media being what it is, it's got the contest on so many different channels and platforms, and the numbers are growing, aren't they?

Francesca Cimino
So, the Song Contest, it's normally around 40 participating countries, sometimes a bit less. But the Song Contest is available globally. This year, we had for the very first time official global voting, and it was really nice to see that we have votes from really everywhere in the world. And you can see those stats in our reporting.

Jonathan Elliott
Claudia, perhaps you could just tell us how you evaluate the quality of the data that you're handling? I mean, how you ensure that it reaches the standard that you require. Tell us what your tools are.

Claudia Junker
We have different stages of checking the quality, because we at Eurostat of course we are hardly collecting any data ourselves. We are getting the data from our Member States and the EFTA countries. As a first level of quality assurance, as I call it, is that our colleagues in the production units working on business statistics, on the macro-economic statistics, they do certain validation, they check, well, what was the data of the same phenomena last year?

How does it look in comparison with other countries of similar size and economic structure, so they do some logical or not logical but thorough check of the data they get. They do all the necessary to aggregate. We have what we call a second level of quality assurance, we review the entire process really from A to Z every 5,6,7 years.

And check whether all the procedures in place really assure the quality or whether there are areas where people can improve, for example, to consult more of the users out there, not only Commission Directorates-General in Brussels, or whether the IT system maybe is not the right one.

And then we still have, of course, the third level, and that's when external auditors, like the European Court of Auditors or the Commission internal audit service is coming and evaluating or auditing the whole system of quality assurance in Eurostat. So, I think the system is quite sophisticated. And this way we ensure that high-quality statistics is on our website.

But it doesn't mean that there cannot be any errors, we're all human. But for that we also have a particular policy on how we treat errors in published statistics and make sure that they're very quickly corrected, and users are informed about it.

Jonathan Elliott
I just want to ask you, Francesca: you're a user of Eurostat statistics, could you just tell us what it is about them that gives you the confidence about their quality?

Francesca Cimino
First and foremost, the fact that they are a recognized source. Eurostat is very well known for us. But, in particular, it's the completeness of the data and the stability of the data. So, we know that we can get a really good overview for our benchmarking if we use Eurostat's data, we don't have to go and find individual country sources.

It saves us a lot of time, and we know that we can trust it. The metadata for me, transparency of methodology, is really important. We know that it's not always possible to have 100% comparability on the data - there can be changes from year to year when you're collecting data across countries. So, it's more important to understand the differences so that we know when we're making our analysis of what we need to keep in mind and that metadata is crucial for that.

Person 1 on the street
I would say the most important thing nowadays is to find out what the source of the data is. And a good source is everything that has a qualified group of people who decide what comes into.

Person 2 on the street
Uhm, yes, I do usually use data, but only in investigations for school or for uni. And I usually find them on the internet. But I usually have a contrast between sources, so that I don't only rely on one source that I believe, like, I rely on many other ones. In case it's not true, or in case it's false information.

Jonathan Elliott
Metadata acts almost like a kind of certificate of quality, I guess. It gives you, it's like reading the ingredients on a tin of some food product. You can see what's gone into it, it's all written out. But the way those ingredients are listed, the stamp of quality and the way it's done, is very precise, isn't it, Claudia? I mean, it depends on a code of practice with 16 principles and 84 indicators - all very carefully worded. Can you just tell us about those?

Claudia Junker
Yes. So, as we said, it's our "Bible", but with 16 principles, the code of practice. The first in the code is called the professional independence. And that's a crucial principle for building trust, as Francesca was just saying.

Because if we are not considered to be independent, and I would emphasize here professionally independent, not organizationally, because also statistical offices, they belong to a ministry or to the government or to the prime minister, or the president or parliament, there are different setups in the Member States.

But we are professionally independent, meaning that we can consult our users, what they need, we consult researchers on methodology, but at the end of the day the head of the statistical office decides solely on the methodology that is used to compile statistics. That principle also includes that the statistical office has an annual work plan, which is published at the beginning of the year.

And at the end of the year, there is a report, so users see - okay, they promised us this set of data, we got this set of data, or maybe not all the data, but then there's a reason why we, why they didn't produce it. So, we cannot say - you'll get an inflation rate every month and at the end of the year, suddenly, inflation was published only twice per year.

So that's also a kind of user control, that we are independent. And the third element in that principle is the appointment and recruitment procedure for the head of an office, that it should be transparent and based on professional criteria only. So, it shouldn't be a friend of the prime minister that gets the job there, but somebody who has the professional experience and also the standing, and the procedure itself is transparent, so people see what is going on in the procedure.

Jonathan Elliott
Ok, so these principles then help people know that they can trust your data, and they can rely on them, and you'll publish it for everyone to see.

Claudia Junker
For accountability and building trust, we have a release calendar. So, at the beginning of the year, every user can check on the website - these are the data that will be published on the 10th of the month at 11 o'clock.

And the data will come on the 10th of the month at 11 o'clock - to every user at the same time. So, no politician, whatever, friend, gets the data before and can maybe do business - if it is business data - or can try to influence the data or to change them. So, the principle is that all users have equal access.

Jonathan Elliott
You mentioned professional independence - what are the other most important principles of the European Statistics code of Practice?

Claudia Junker
Another important principle in my view is confidentiality. And in simple words, it means: every individual data from a household, from an enterprise, from a person, that goes into the statistical office and by surveys, for example, you are asked to answer some question, will stay there, and will never leave the office again.

Also not for tax purposes, courts asking, you know, I want to open a case against that enterprise, give me the data of that enterprise. No, the data are confidential. And the last one I would mention is accessibility and clarity, and that's that what data we have we disseminate. And we disseminate them in such a way that they're easy to find, maybe not so easy to understand.

But we give the metadata as Francesca said, we explain the data, we give descriptions of the data, so users know what the data mean, in fact. And maybe I can just give a… one simple example, which I think everybody thinks is a very simple thing - the number of people, the population of a country. Everybody's - oh, that's very easy to count, you just count the people that are there.

But then, what about - I mean, you do it at a certain point in time - what about the tourists that are in the country at that time? What about students, Erasmus students, that are there for six months? What about migrants? What about diplomatic staff from other countries? What about people that come there two, three months to work and then they go back? So, you see that it's not that simple.

The more you go into the details, the more difficult it becomes, and just to give you the solution: the population, as we define it in statistics to make sure everybody counts the same way, is…it's all the people that are in the country for more than a year.

And the reason is that if you are there for more than a year, you use infrastructure, and the population count or the population data is used to calculate how many hospitals you need, how many schools you need, kindergartens, roads, and so on. So, people that are living there for more than a year should be counted because they will definitely use this infrastructure, and we produce the data for policymaking, for people to know what's going on in the country.

Jonathan Elliott
Dean, we were talking earlier about how the roles of Eurostat and the European Broadcasting Union are similar in many ways, especially as they are very directly accountable to the public. And as such have high expectations of quality and reliability. Can you just tell us more about that?

Dean Vuletic
These two organizations are involved in providing, producing, and exchanging information. And this has been the key work of these organizations. So, for both Eurostat and the European Broadcasting Union, one of their main challenges is to address disinformation, fake news. And they do this by developing standards among their members, to ensure that the data, the information that they produce, are of the highest quality. And in this sense, both organizations are themselves a stamp of quality.

Jonathan Elliott
Francesca, what we're talking about here really is the interface of trust, public service broadcasting and quality in statistics. Your members depend on their reputation to put out robust information in all their programming but, I guess, particularly in news and current affairs, for example. And when it comes to audiences and audience data, those standards don't necessarily fall away, you've got to maintain them as well, haven't you?

Francesca Cimino
Yes, we really do. And we know that especially for our members, TV and radio are still the most trusted mediums, and our members have a duty to keep citizens informed. So, any information that goes out, whether it's on our members' channel or it's about our members, is held to the same level of accountability, and to the same level of quality.

So, we want to make sure that our citizens are well informed about the news in the world. But we also want to make sure that our citizens are informed about how their public broadcaster is funded and using the money that it receives. So yes, the data is equally important, whether it's for commercial purposes, whether it's sponsorship, or it's for our members in creating key arguments to support their work at policy level, or when they're in discussions with their governments for their next charter.

Person 3 on the street
I think I prefer fast data, because I'm a really impatient person. So, something that you can read really fast or it's in a short video, it's better.

Person 4 on the street
I use, I do use statistical data. But often I use Tik-Tok to inform myself, because it's more like, well, for youth people. So...

Jonathan Elliott
One of the things we talk a lot about on Stats in a Wrap is statistical literacy. You can have the best stats in the world, you can have the best dissemination in the world but in the end, you need to have an audience who can use what you're giving them. And when we were talking earlier, Francesca, you made a very interesting point about how automation is much trumpeted as a means of democratizing data. But that brings its own challenges, doesn't it? Can you just tell us a bit more about that?

Francesca Cimino
We're expected to use all these new data sources, but it's just not that simple. We have to find ways of making that data work well for us. And to be able to ensure the quality, we have to have different ways of assessing it, it requires a whole new way of working. And we see that from all of the different platforms and services that our members are on.

So, whether it's their own VOD, or audio on demand platforms, or it's the social media that they're on, or YouTube, all of these different platforms have different sets of data. We're using automation because it's just not feasible to have enough people to collate all that data and there are dashboards being built which automates the data, so on a daily basis, you can have the updates at a channel level or a genre level.

But there's just not enough people to keep on top of all those charts and explaining all of that data. It requires a lot of rationalization and a lot of support still from audience researchers to make sure that the right interpretations are being made of all this data. And it's a challenge, it will be an ongoing challenge because we will only ever face more and new datasets as time passes.

Jonathan Elliott
Yeah, that's fascinating. It's not just the quality, it's quantity. We've got to be dealing with the quantity of data that we're dealing with, not just the quality, and how we handle all of that.

Person 5 on the street
We had European music contest in Turin last year. So, I saw directly. And it was a great event. I love it. And I think that they use basic data about people that subscribe to their newsletter I know, you know, or people that buy tickets for the event.

Person 6 on the street
Well, I know the European Song Contest. But I don't know which kind of statistical data they use. What statistical data they use is maybe not so important because European Song Contest is not so important in life in Europe.

Jonathan Elliott
Now, let's talk a bit more about the Eurovision Song Contest. It's interesting that it's been going such a long time, nearly 70 years. But it's not the only big live TV event. And who better to ask about live TV events and the social impact they have in Europe over the past few decades than Dean. Dean, tell us a bit about your take on the Eurovision Song Contest and how it sits within live TV events in Europe.

I think we've had a European Commissioner, Margaritis Schinas, saying that what unites Europeans more than anything is sport and music. Just tell us a little bit about what you think the Eurovision Song Contest does as a tool for European integration.

Dean Vuletic
These days, the Vice-President of the European Commission, who is also in charge of the portfolio Promoting our European Way of Life, he likes to talk about Eurovision and the Champions League as the two big cultural events that continue to unite Europeans.
So, when we go back to the early 1950s, we see that not only were the European Broadcasting Union and Eurostat among the first European institutions to be established at that time, but we also see these cultural events then emerging as some of the glue bringing together Europeans.

Jonathan Elliott
Francesca, what I find fascinating about your work is that it's not just crunching numbers on people who are sitting watching the TV, important as that is. It spreads out into other facets of the contest like the economic impact on the host cities, for example. I mean, this is data about the Eurovision Song Contest as a cultural institution as much as a bit of TV entertainment, isn't it?

Francesca Cimino
Yes, indeed Jonathan, we talk about the Song Contest being about more than just the three live shows. So, it has its big moment in the year of course but the Song Contest is going on throughout the year. It's… we see that in the lots of different types of data that we have.

So, we have our TV audience report that focuses on what happens really around the events, so that lead up the week before, the week after. So, we see those people that are watching the show, listening to the songs on YouTube, engaging in social media. But after the event, there is all of the other impacts.

So yeah, we talk about the host cities and tourists that come during the event, but also with all of the promotion and all the media coverage that happens around it we see many more tourists visiting the host cities in the months and the years after, and this is data that we're trying to track now to really show that there is a bigger economic impact more than the huge amount of tourism that boosts the local economy in the ESC.

We also are looking at data around the streaming of the songs because the songs are there long after the event has finished, and they're there before the release of the songs starting early in the year.

Person 7 on the street
People base their opinions on statistics. So, if the…you know, if the statistics is more or less, it's not high-quality, then…you know, people's opinions may be based on this. So also, it might be actually false opinions.

Person 8 on the street
In Italy, we have very straight and good data coming from the government, but then the politicians tend to interpret the data in a very kind of sneaky way.

Jonathan Elliott
Claudia, it's interesting, to me at least, how quality and quality in statistics particularly, is becoming recognized as a cornerstone of a lot of what makes Europe work really and how important it is just simply in everyday life and in policymaking about the things that really affect us - from energy to transport and, well, a huge range of things. Can you just tell us a bit more about that? I mean, why, how

quality and stats are getting even more important than they used to be. They're out there now, with the judiciary and human rights and other things like that, aren't they?

Claudia Junker
Statistics or data are part of our everyday life. When we look at our income, and we calculate what we can buy, what we can afford, what kind of holiday we do, looking at hospitals or education, that kind of statistics, we should be able to hold our government accountable. And for that, we need statistics - data.

And we need good data. And the same for all the EU policies that are designed for EU citizen, it is important that they are also based on high-quality statistics, so they never negotiate on the data. Typical example is the contribution of each Member State into the EU budget, which is based on the gross national income.

And this is something we are producing. So of course, when they talk about: 'Should it be 1% or 1.01%, and…or 1.2%', or whatever, they have to be sure that the underlying figure is correct. And that's also why statistics is very often in the legislation. So, it's becoming more important on all fronts, I would say - as a private person, political level, us as a member of society, and that's also reflected in our legislation.

Jonathan Elliott
So, now we come to the part of the podcast, where we celebrate the launch of the Eurostat Song Contest. Our three contributors have been over the last 40 minutes or so been crafting titles or possibly reviving classic numbers for the contest, and I understand are now ready to share their work.

We of course will put the entries before our panel of distinguished international judges and report back at the next podcast. So, Dean, I'm going to jump in with you, what's your Eurostat Song Contest title? Please could you share that with our audience?

Dean Vuletic
If I had to submit a song myself, it would be called "Quality Time" and it would be a love song.

Jonathan Elliott
Very neat. Nice. Oh, very good. I think, yeah, mmmh, good. Okay, impressive, Francesca?

Francesca Cimino
Being a researcher I'm not able to complete this stat without doing some desk research. So, in the top song that comes up when you google songs with numbers in the titles is "10 000 Hours" – it's a Justin Bieber song. I don't know the song, but I would transform the song to "What Does 10 000 Hours of Excel Get You?"

Jonathan Elliott
Claudia?

Claudia Junker
The group is East German - "Karat" - and the song is "Cross seven bridges, seven dark nights and you will be ashes from the fire, but one day you will be light". And I thought: sometimes, you know, statistics is not seven dark nights and not seven bridges, but we have difficult paths in front of us and…but we all

know that we are serving something good and there will be light at the end, and we will bring the light to the society with our data.

Jonathan Elliott
I'm stunned and overwhelmed by the musical knowledge of Eurostat, and I can see the Eurostat Song Contest has real potential. I'm going to start putting towards a pitch document straight after this podcast. Guys, you've been amazing.

The judges need to go into conclave and will not be able to announce the winner on the podcast but might be able to announce it on the next show - it'll be on statistical literacy. We are out of time and I'm going to say goodbye to our guests, our lovely contributors today. Thank you very much to Claudia Junker at the Task Force for Peer Reviews and Quality at Eurostat. Claudia, thank you for joining us.

Claudia Junker
Thank you very much for inviting me and I think it was a very interesting talk.

Jonathan Elliott
Francesca Cimino for your enormously helpful and insightful and entertaining insights from the European Broadcasting Union in Switzerland. Thank you so much for joining us.

Francesca Cimino
Thanks very much for having me on the podcast. It was really interesting, and I'm glad I was able to join today.

Jonathan Elliott
And thank you also Dean Vuletic at Eurostat for joining us.

Dean Vuletic
Thank you, Jonathan. My 12 points go to our listeners. And I leave them with the title of the song "Think About Things", a Eurovision hit from 2020. The Icelandic group, Gagnamagnið — the name means "amount of data" or "data volume" literally — performed with the singer Daði Freyr, they sang the song "Think About Things".

Jonathan Elliott
Very good, we certainly will be. Thank you very much for joining us all today. If you've enjoyed the show, don't forget to share with friends and colleagues where Stats in a Wrap can be found on Spotify, Apple, Google, and all the usual places. And if you'd like to know more about the subjects discussed today, just search "Stats in a Wrap Eurostat".

And of course, join us for the next episode when the Wrap Café will be dishing up more flavoursome insights, this time about statistical literacy. We're not talking interpolation, standard deviation, or quantitative variables here, but just how we make sense of the numbers in the news. And we'll be finding out particularly how the EU's young people are learning to love and understand stats as never before. Join us then to find out more but for now, goodbye!