

EXPERIENCES IN PUBLISHING A STATISTICS JOURNAL IN ESTONIA

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Estonia is a small country with a population of about 1.5 millions with a long tradition of literacy in Estonian – a language quite different from most European languages.

Estonian has been the working language in universities and in scientific research for 80 years. Almost as long has been the tradition of statistical journals, too: the Monthly of the Estonian Statistical Office was first published in 1920.

Five years ago the Estonian Statistical Society was founded and since then has publish a journal twice a year. Different issues are devoted to different special topics: medical statistics, quality design, statistical education, statistics in life sciences, software, insurance, econometrics, official statistics etc. Almost all papers have been written in Estonian. One aim of this journal is to develop the Estonian statistical vocabulary.

In Estonia there has been a long tradition of publishing a variety of statistical materials and statistical analyses. The probable reason for this is the comparatively well developed statistical system that was initiated in the 16th century when Estonia was a part of the Swedish Kingdom. Also, in the University of Tartu (founded in 1632) 'Statistics' has been taught from the very beginning, although the content of the subject was different from the statistics of today. In particular, in the second half of the 19th century Wilhelm Lexis, a professor of the University of Tartu, published his method of demographic calculations by cohorts, the well-known Lexis' diagram.

The first censuses were carried out in Estonia in 1881 and 1897, but as at that time Estonia belonged to Tsarist Russia, the results of censuses and other statistical data were not published openly.

When, after the First World War, Estonia started to function as an independent European country, the statistical system was reorganised. The new Statistical Office was established as early as 1922 and organised the first census and started to publish statistical data regularly. In the same year, 1922, the first periodical in Statistics - *The Monthly of Statistics* - began to appear. The first issues contained mainly tables with data, but several analyses concerning economics and population statistics were published. The main text was in Estonian, but the titles and some comments were duplicated in French. The *Monthly* was published for 18 years, the last number from this set appearing June, 1940. Then the first occupation of Estonia by Communist Russia began.

Some issues of the *Monthly* appeared during the war under German occupation, in 1942 and 1943. This time the text was written in Estonian and German, and the issues were for restricted use only.

When independence was finally re-established, the Estonian Statistical Office started to publish the *Monthly* again, from January 1992. In the *Monthly* current statistical data (including the household budget, labour force and other studies) are published, and in each issue several papers containing the analyses are included. The *Monthly* is written in Estonian, but reviews are in English.

Another source of statistical data is the *Statistics Yearbook* surveying the most important statistical data of the year. The *Yearbook* has been published since 1990, and it continues in some sense the tradition of such surveys from Soviet time, when a yearbook, named *The National Economy of Soviet Estonia* was the only open publication about statistics relating to Estonia. That yearbook was published annually from 1959 to 1989 both in Estonian and Russian.

From the end of the 19th century the Proceedings of the University - *Acta et Communicationes Universitatis Tartuensis* - appeared. This provided a place where scientific papers in mathematical and applied statistics could be published. In these *Proceedings* there were published papers on astronomy (Tartu has traditionally been a famous centre for astronomy), meteorology (in Tartu the time series of weather observations has been continuous since the middle of the 19th century), medical and anthropological sciences, etc. Since 1980 seven issues of the *Acta* have been published containing papers in Mathematical and Applied Statistics written in English. The most popular topics treated were Multivariate Statistics, Approximation of Multivariate Distributions, Asymptotical problems.

In 1992 the Estonian Statistical Society (ESS) was founded and from 1993 the journal *Eesti Statistikeseltsi Teabevihik* (The Journal of the Estonian Statistical Society) has been published twice a year to coincide with local conferences of ESS held on different topics (social statistics, environmental statistics, econometrics, statistical education, etc.). The journal contains popular papers written in Estonian. About half of the printed copies have been distributed freely to the members of ESS. The journal is available in bookshops, too. As the population of Estonia is only about one million, the number of potential readers is quite small and the journal can manage only with help of sponsors.

Estonians are a people who like to read. The number of books published in Estonia has always been very high in relation to the size of the population. For us the possibility to speak about everything has been very important during the whole of our history; we identify ourselves by our language – in spite of the fact that for us it is natural that the educated person is able to use several foreign languages. That is why we publish books, text-books and journals in all fields – including statistics.