

## **Rules of professional ethics of personnel in the state statistical offices of the Republic of Belarus**

Volha Pazharytskaya (National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Belarus)

e-mail: [intcoop@belstat.gov.by](mailto:intcoop@belstat.gov.by)

### ***Abstract***

The challenges posed by today's developments in economic and political life require from the staff of statistical offices the observance of high ethical standards both in the performance of official duties and in off-duty activities, relations with respondents and users.

The general requirements of service ethics of civil servants are established in the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Civil Service", which were drafted in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, article 8 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption of 31 October 2003, the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials, the legislation on the civil service and the moral and ethical standards generally accepted in the Republic of Belarus. The purpose of the general requirements of service ethics is the formation of public behaviour of civil servants in the interests of the individual, society and the state.

The Rules of Professional Ethics for the Staff of State Statistics Bodies were adopted in the state statistics bodies of Belarus. This document is aimed at maintaining the prestige of state statistics bodies, public status, independence, and quality of professional activity.

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### ***Paper***

Business ethics in modern conditions of data evolution covers various aspects of national statistical offices: ethical assessment of internal and external policy of the organization as a whole, moral principles of the organization members, moral climate, patterns of behavior, norms of business etiquette.

I would like to note that the Law "On Public Service" was revised in our country in 2022. We are guided by it in carrying out our professional activities along with the Law "On State Statistics". One of the innovations that was adopted is the General Requirements of Service Ethics of State Civil Servants. They were developed in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, Article 8 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials, the legislation on state civil service and on corruption combating.

The fundamental principles of the General Requirements of Service Ethics of State Civil Servants are: strengthening the authority of the state civil service by their behavior, mutual respect and constructive professional interaction with colleagues and citizens, maintaining a favorable moral and psychological climate in the team, adherence to high moral principles and standards of conduct. Also, the General Requirements of Service Ethics enshrines the norm on the appearance of civil servants and culture of speech in the performance of official duties. During the performance of official duties, it is important to adhere to the business style of clothes, observe the culture of communication and official business style of speech.

At the same time the Rules of Professional Ethics of Employees of State Statistical Offices have been in force in the statistical offices of Belarus for more than 14 years. They have been elaborated taking into account the specifics of professional statistical activity.

The present rules constitute the set of norms defining the requirements for the behavior of state statistics employees in the performance of official duties and in off-duty activities, in relations with citizens, respondents, users, employees of other organizations, colleagues.

The Rules of professional ethics stipulate that citizens, respondents, users, employees of state bodies and organizations, who applied to the bodies of state statistics, have the right to expect that statisticians will use their knowledge and experience to the fullest extent in the exercise of professional activity, impartially and honestly perform the duties imposed on him/her.

All the staff employed in the state statistical offices of Belarus are familiarized with the Rules of professional ethics and further undertake to observe them.

The structure of the Rules of professional ethics consists of general provisions and 7 chapters, which include principles of professional activity of employees, relations with respondents, users of statistical information, employees of other organizations, mass media. The Rules also regulate relations with

colleagues and subordinates, requirements for behavior, provide responsibility in case of non-compliance.

It would be desirable to dwell in more detail on the principles, which are laid down in the basis of the Rules of professional ethics of employees of state statistical offices.

The basic principles of professional activity of state statisticians are directed to the fact that the activity and behavior of statisticians contribute to the maintenance of prestige of work in state statistical offices and to the increase of its public status as well as to the formation of positive image of state statistical offices.

The personal reputation of statisticians is the basis of the authority of state statistical offices. One of the principles stipulates that employees shall be obliged to defend the interests of state statistical offices. Also, they shall perform their official duties honestly and conscientiously, at a high level of professionalism, solve effectively the assigned tasks related to the performance of their official functions, without formalism and bureaucracy, at the same time showing permissible independence, high organization, be demanding and principled.

One of the most important principles is that while performing their official duties the employees shall observe the generally accepted rules of conduct, shall behave with dignity, adhere to the official address both to other colleagues and to citizens, respondents, users, employees of state bodies and organizations. While compiling, disseminating and (or) presenting official statistical information statisticians shall not allow the influence on their activities by anyone, including employees of state bodies and organizations, irrespective of their position and status, colleagues, relatives, friends or acquaintances. The official statistical information shall be limited by clear boundaries and shall not contain political assessments.

In organization of state statistical observations statisticians of Belarus should rationally approach the methods and ways of collecting primary statistical data taking into account the proportionality of the burden of respondents to the needs of users in official statistical information, actively using administrative data, sampling techniques for state statistical observations, methods of estimation and approximation, electronic means of transmitting primary statistical data to respondents, with particular emphasis on efficiency and care (economical) use of resources.

Statisticians shall take all necessary measures on suppression and prevention of facts of distortion of data of the state statistical reporting, untimely submission and (or) non-submission of such reporting, bringing to responsibility of persons, who have allowed violations of the order of data submission of the state statistical reporting.

Professional independence is a fundamental principle, which is enshrined in the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On State Statistics". This principle is also reflected in the Rules of professional ethics. In this respect, statisticians should not enter into relations with the management and employees of the audited respondent, which may compromise him/her or affect his/her ability to act independently. Also, the public opinion, possible criticism of the activity of statistical offices should not influence the legality and validity of actions of statisticians while performing their official duties.

One of the principles is that statisticians shall not allow any manifestations of corruption by their actions and decisions, shall be obliged to comply with the norms of the legislation on combating corruption, assisting in suppressing any manifestation of corruption in the state statistical offices and outside them.

The important principle is that the statistician in their professional activity shall not allow personal, family, social or other relations to negatively influence their behavior at work and the quality of professional activity.

The Rules of professional ethics of statisticians of Belarus regulate the relations of statisticians with citizens, respondents, users, employees of other organizations. These relations should be characterized by polite, correct treatment, patience, tactfulness, kindness and respect, striving to understand deeply the essence of the question, ability to listen to the interlocutor and to understand his position, balanced and reasoned decision making. The statistician shall be able to respect the rights of citizens, not to lose self-control and dignity when communicating with people.

When interacting with respondents, statisticians shall strive to create for them the most favorable regime, to trust in honest respondents and to be ready to build partnership relations with them, to inform respondents that primary statistical data provided are also useful for them, to guarantee their confidentiality, to give timely comprehensive answers to the questions of respondents related to the state statistical activities.

Statisticians shall ensure the timeliness, objectivity and accessibility of official statistical information for a wide range of users in a clear and understandable form, in a suitable and convenient way, accompanying official statistical information with metadata and explanations. Also, it is necessary to take active part in highlighting the issues of compiling and presenting the data of state statistical reporting by making speeches in organizations, to hold individual consultations, round tables and seminars with respondents. It is also important to give necessary explanations about the organization and maintenance of state statistics, use of official statistical methodology in the Republic of Belarus.

The Rules of professional ethics enshrines important points in the relationship with colleagues, which should be built on the principles of mutual respect, trust and professional cooperation. Thus, the employee of the state statistics of Belarus, endowed with greater powers in comparison with his colleagues, should treat with understanding the subordinates, who have their own professional judgement, should be for them a model of professionalism, impeccable reputation, be an example of kindness and attentiveness to people, contribute to the formation of a moral and psychological climate in the team favorable for effective work, take measures to prevent and regulate the conflict of interests.

It is necessary to work on improvement of the professional level during the whole labor career. That is why in the Rules of professional ethics it is established that the employee of state statistics shall constantly improve his professional knowledge and skills, expand his general outlook, maintain his qualification at a high level necessary for the proper performance of official duties, make proposals for the improvement of professional service activity. The statistical officer, having great professional and life experience, shall serve as an example of discipline for young specialists, shall transfer to them his knowledge and traditions of professional skills accumulated by many generations.

While adopting legislative acts on the protection of personal data, the important component of the Rules of professional ethics is that the statistical employees are not entitled to disclose or disseminate confidential information, which became known to them in connection with the performance of their official duties, including information about private life of citizens and their personal data, as well as are not entitled to use such information for purposes directly not related to the performance of their official duties. Employees shall be obliged to ensure confidentiality of primary statistical data and

individual administrative data and their use exclusively in the implementation of state statistical activities.

In conclusion it should be noted that the observance of the Rules of professional ethics by the employees of Belarus statistics is taken into account when making decisions on promotion, attestation, awarding the employee and applying other motivational measures.

Summing up, I would like to emphasize that ethics is an integral element of any organization's personnel management, its organizational culture, necessary for improving the organization's management system. And national statistical management is not an exception. One of the ways of such improvement can be the introduction of certain standards set on the basis of the analysis of the best practices of corporate behavior. And the dialogue between managers and employees about the values of official statistics, the importance of ethical behavior, motivation of statistical office staff to follow ethical standards will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the working environment.