



International Statistical Institute

September 2011

Statement in Response to Concerns about Consumer Price Statistics and the Statistical Profession in Argentina

- The ISI has been asked to respond to concerns expressed by a number of ISI members and Argentine statisticians about Government interference in the compilation of the Argentine consumer price index (CPI) and serious threats of punishment of the statisticians involved when publicly making alternative views of the CPI.
- The issues about which concern has been expressed are well publicised, both in the Argentine media and elsewhere.
- This statement has been guided by the Declaration on Professional Ethics for statisticians as adopted by the Council of the International Statistical Institute in 2010.
- The ISI has reviewed the published information about interference with the compilation of the CPI by statisticians working in the National Institute for Statistics and Censuses (INDEC). We believe that there are ethical issues of concern in that the impacted statisticians have been prevented from complying with professional ethical principles as set out in the ISI Declaration of Professional Ethics, namely Principle 1 (Pursuing Objectivity), Principle 8 (Maintaining Confidence in Statistics) and Principle 9 (Exposing and Reviewing Methods and Findings).
- The ISI makes a plea to the Argentine Government to allow the statisticians of INDEC to comply with their professional ethical principles in the compilation of official statistics according to international scientific standards.
- The ISI applauds the actions of the former professional statisticians of INDEC to resist making the changes to the CPI as requested by the Argentine Government as they would have been in breach of their professional ethical principles.
- Recently, steps have been taken by the Government of Argentina to deter individuals and organisations from publishing alternative views of official statistics. In addition, a number of individual statisticians (including some former staff of INDEC) and research organisations have received substantial administrative fines and threats of criminal prosecution for publishing alternative estimates of consumer prices.

- The ISI would like to convey its deep concern about these obstructions to the pursuit of professional statistical work in the publication of alternative statistical estimates and the impact on the users of statistics in Argentina and elsewhere.
- The ISI calls upon the Argentine Government to abstain from any actions against the individuals and organisations involved in these activities.
- The American Statistical Association has raised these concerns in a detailed letter, with annexes providing more details on the nature of these concerns, to the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The ISI Council supports this initiative and, on their behalf, the ISI President has written to the UN Special Rapporteur to confirm this.

The letter of the American Statistical Association is available at <http://www.amstat.org/outreach/pdfs/ASALettertoUNSpecialRapporteur8-12-11-1.pdf>.