

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEBT COMPILED ACCORDING TO THE METHODOLOGY OF THE EXCESSIVE DEFICIT PROCEDURE (EDP)

Introduction

The functions attributed to the Banco de España by Spanish legislation and, specifically, by the Law of Autonomy of the Banco de España and successive National Statistics Plans include notably, the compilation of a set of statistics, including government debt according to the EDP. Thus, the Banco de España regularly publishes information about government debt on the Internet, in its *Boletín Estadístico*, on a quarterly basis, and in the Economic Indicators, on a monthly basis.

This note describes the methodology used to compile EDP debt. The next section presents the various concepts of debt and indebtedness habitually used, depending on the context to which they refer. The second section then provides a description of the methodology applied. Lastly, the third section details the information published by the Banco de España.

Different concepts of indebtedness

In the framework of any agent's economic activity, expenses (including the net acquisition of financial assets) not financed with current revenue and capital, must be financed through the net contraction of liabilities. This generation of liabilities is usually called debt or indebtedness; however, it is necessary to differentiate between the contraction of liabilities over a period of time (flows) and the outstanding amount of these liabilities at a specific time (stocks). Consequently, flows (operations in the period) are formally called a net change in liabilities, while the stocks are formally called debt, indebtedness or outstanding liabilities. Several concepts are encompassed within this general definition of indebtedness, which are delimited by the instruments included and the methods used for their valuation, and which, consequently, must be considered together with the general definition itself. This section describes the varying coverage of the main concepts of indebtedness that are frequently used and Scheme 1 provides a comparison of them.

1. Total liabilities

This is the broadest possible concept of indebtedness and is reflected in the Financial Accounts of the Spanish Economy (FASE), a quarterly publication of the Banco de España with a high degree of detail (<http://www.bde.es/webbde/en/estadis/ccff/ccff.html>). Chapter 2 of this publication presents the financial transactions (flows) and financial assets and liabilities (stocks) for all the sectors and sub-sectors into which the economy is classified, including general government. Thus, in this specific case, the FASE provide information about the financial activity of government in a full and consistent fashion which is integrated with the other sectors and sub-sectors of the economy and with general government non-financial operations; therefore, they serve as a global framework of reference for analysing general government financial activity as a whole. This publication takes the broadest possible concept of indebtedness because it includes all the liabilities incurred by general government, irrespective of type (issuance of currency, debt securities, equity and investment fund shares or units, short and long-term loans in euro or in other currencies, trade credits and other outstanding payables). The liabilities included in this concept are valued using the methodology established by the 2010 European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA 2010) described in the methodological note of the FASE disseminated on the Banco de España's webpage (<http://www.bde.es/webbde/SES/Secciones/Publicaciones/PublicacionesSerias/NotasEstadisticas/07/nest05e.pdf>) and which uses market values in the valuation of stocks and flows of liabilities held in the form of debt securities.

The change in this indebtedness is explained by: a) net borrowing i.e. non-financial expenses less non-financial resources, according to the National Accounts criterion which, in turn, must follow the ESA 2010 rules; b) the net acquisitions in financial assets; and, c) adjustments for valuation (which arise, for example, in the case of debt securities and liabilities in currencies other than the euro).

2. Debt compiled according to the EDP

This concept of indebtedness is not as broad as the previous one. The Banco de España publishes a detailed breakdown of this debt concept for each of the sub-sectors comprising general government and it is disseminated with a shorter time lag than the FASE. Likewise, it provides a very complete breakdown by instrument since it distinguishes:

- Currency and deposits (coin issuance)
- Debt securities, in euro and currencies other than the euro, by original maturity.
 - short-term
 - medium and long-term
- Loans
 - a) Lending by resident credit institutions, in euro and currencies other than the euro, by original maturity.
 - short-term (12 months or less)
 - medium and long-term (more than 12 months)
 - b) Lending by non-residents, in euro and currencies other than the euro (rest of the world)
 - c) Imputed loans by public-private partnerships and other infrastructure financing methods.¹

¹ According to the decision of Eurostat of February 2004 on the treatment of public-private partnership contracts for the construction of infrastructure, depending on the characteristics of these contracts, some non-financial assets constructed by private contractors are reallocated to the balance sheet of general government, with consequences for the deficit and debt of this sector (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1015035/2041337/Treatment+of+PPPs.pdf/af9e90e2-bf50-4c77-a1a0-e042a617c04e>).

d) Non-recourse factoring operations.²

The concept of “Debt compiled according to the EDP” principally differs from the concept of “Total liabilities” in that it does not include general government liabilities held by other general government units, trade credit and other accounts payable. Furthermore, as regards the valuation methods, debt securities are included at their nominal value in debt compiled according to the EDP (see sub-section 3 of the following section).

Scheme 1
General government: different concepts of indebtedness
Percentage structure at 31.12.2014

Instrument		Total liabilities	Debt compiled according to the EDP
Currency and deposits		0.3%	0.3 %
Debt securities	Securities held by general government units	3.2%	
	Other securities (short, medium and long-term)	63.0%	63.0%
Long-term loans held by general government units		14.2%	
Other long-term loans		12.6%	12.5%
Short-term loans held by general government units		0.7%	0.7%
Trade credits and other liabilities		2.4%	
Trade credits and other liabilities held by general government units		3.6%	
Total		100%	76.5%

These two concepts of indebtedness are not the only ones possible. Other definitions also exist in order to value this aspect of public finances such as, for example, net government debt, which would be obtained by deducting from gross debt, as envisaged in the two concepts included in this section, the stock of financial assets (with the idea that a distinction must be made between when an economic agent increases its indebtedness in order to finance a deficit and when it does so to acquire financial assets). Any concept of indebtedness has its own meaning and is valid for economic analysis provided that the area to which it refers is specified in detail. Nevertheless, it is considered worth underlining that the concept of debt compiled according to the EDP has the virtue of being defined according to uniform binding rules for all EU countries and of being scrutinised in depth by the European Commission (Eurostat), so that it is comparable across the various EU Member States. This is not the case for any definition based on the criteria of a single country. Additionally, the concept of debt compiled according to the EDP is useful at a practical level since, on one hand, it is that for which data are published with the shortest time lag and, on the other, changes in it are a good approximation of total liabilities. Total liabilities is the concept of debt used in the financial accounts compiled by all EU Member States.

Methodology. Debt according to the EDP

The definition of this indebtedness is regulated by Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 of 25 May 2009 on the application of the Protocol on the excessive deficit procedure annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and by Commission Regulation (EU) No 220/2014 of 7 March 2014 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 as regards references to the European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union. These regulations, which have in turn amended Council Regulation (EC) No 3605/93 of 22 November 1993, refer to the ESA to delimit the main terms used.

² According to the Eurostat decision of July 2012, trade credits payable by government units that are discounted by financial institutions through non-recourse factoring operations must be included in EDP debt (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1015035/2041337/Statist-record-of-some-operations-rel-to-trade-credits-i.pdf/f2238d11-9257-4a0e-bd9a-39dcf1fb2cfd>)

Among other things, this legislation requires EU Member States to report to the European Commission and, specifically, to Eurostat, twice per year (at the end of March and at the end of September) the data corresponding to this definition of debt by sub-sector and with a detailed breakdown of certain items and transactions. The reporting of these data is called an EDP notification.³

For the purposes of this Note, Regulation No 479/2009, amended by Regulation No 220/2014, like its predecessor, Regulation No 3605/93, defines the concepts of general government and government debt as follows:

1. Institutional scope of general government

Regulation No 479/2009 specifies that the general government sector includes the sub-sectors central government, state government [regional (autonomous) government], local government and social security funds, to the exclusion of commercial operations, as defined in ESA 2010. The exclusion of commercial operations means that the general government sector comprises only institutional units producing non-market services as their main activity.

In the case of Spain, the general government sector comprises the following four sub-sectors:

- **Central government** comprises institutional units which have general powers throughout the country and which, in Spain, include the State, the central government agencies and enterprises classified as central government.
- **Regional (autonomous) government** which includes the governing bodies of the regional (autonomous) government and the regional administrative and similar agencies. The latter group includes the universities in each region and, also, the enterprises classified as regional (autonomous) government.
- **Local government** comprises local (municipal, provincial and island) authorities, associations and groupings of municipalities, autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla) and the independent administrative and similar bodies reporting to them.
- **Social security funds** which include the institutional units of a legal nature and with diverse territorial scope that undertake functions relating to the provision of social benefits. Since 2000 Q1, in accordance with the sectorisation of base year 2000 and base year 2008 of the Spanish National Accounts compiled by the INE, the units performing social security functions financed through general taxation (essentially healthcare services) are classified together with the units to which they report in the central government, regional (autonomous) government and local government sub-sectors, whereas the units performing social security functions financed through social security contributions are classified in the social security fund sub-sector.

All these sub-sectors have two basic characteristics: a) they comprise institutional units whose main function is to produce non-market goods and services and/or to undertake operations to redistribute national income and wealth and, b) their principal funds come from compulsory payments made by other institutional units and not from the sale of their output.

In other words, in order to decide whether or not an institutional unit should be included in the general government sector the economic criteria established in ESA 2010 must be taken into account. These criteria determine, first, whether a unit is taken into account: the institutional legal criterion (determining whether a unit is a public or private producer and, second, whether a unit is a market or non-market producer, according to the nature of its output. On the basis of the ESA 2010 the sector general government includes those institutional units controlled by general government that are non-market producers. Non-market producers are considered to be, principally, those institutional units that do not cover more than 50% of their production costs with revenue from the sale of their products. This methodology involves, in fact, subordinating the legal criterion to the economic one when including institutional units in, or excluding them from, the general government sector and its sub-sectors, since a unit may be of a commercial nature from a legal viewpoint but fail to comply with the 50% rule, in which case it will be sectorised under general government.

2 Concept of government debt

Under Regulation 479/2009 and Regulation 220/2014 government debt means the total gross debt at nominal value of the sector of "general government", with the exception of those liabilities the corresponding financial assets of which are held by the sector of "general government". Nominal value corresponds to face value. In the case of index-linked liabilities, the regulation specifies that their nominal value shall correspond to their face value adjusted by the index-related change in the value of the principal accrued to the end of the year.

As for the financial instruments which must be included, government debt shall be constituted by the liabilities of general government in the following categories according to the definitions of ESA 2010: currency and deposits, debt securities and loans.

³ It should be clarified that the version of the ESA in force up to and including the September 1999 EDP notification was the second edition, published in 1979 (ESA 79). As of the March 2000 EDP notification, the version of the ESA in force was the one corresponding to 1995 (ESA 95). Interestingly, this version of the ESA was the first system of national accounts introduced by means of legislation, namely Council Regulation (EC) No 2223/96 of 25 June 1996 (called the ESA 95 Regulation), and EU countries are therefore required to use it by law. The 1979 edition of the ESA was only a "recommendation" to countries for compiling national accounts which were as uniform as possible. The September 2014 EDP notification was the first to be made in accordance with the ESA 2010, established by Regulation (EU) No 549/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on the European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union.

Under the regulation, liabilities denominated in foreign currencies shall be converted into the national currency on the basis of the representative market exchange rate prevailing on the last working day of each year.

In the case of Spain, the instruments and statistical sources used to calculate government debt are included in Scheme 2 below:

Scheme 2
Instruments and sources

Instruments (liabilities)		Statistical source
Currency and deposits: coin issuance		Banco de España.
Debt securities	Short-term securities issued in euro	Banco de España. Information compiled by the Banco de España through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -General Secretariat of the Treasury and Financial Policy -Official gazettes of the State and of the regional (autonomous) governments -National Securities Market Commission. -IBERCLEAR and stock exchanges For issues in currencies other than the euro information from the balance of payments and data from specialist agencies, such as Reuters, are used
	Long-term securities issued in euro	
Loans granted by resident financial institutions		Information compiled through the Banco de España's Central Credit Register, obtained from the data reported by lending credit institutions. For the State the source is the General Secretariat of the Treasury and Financial Policy. The information on imputed loans by public-private partnerships and other infrastructure financing methods comes from the Spanish National Audit Office (IGAE). Since December 2012, non-recourse factoring is included, the source for which is the Central Credit Register.
Loans granted by non-residents		Statistics on credits and loans granted by non-residents based on the data, which for statistical purposes, must be sent by general government units to the Banco de España's Statistics Department on economic transactions and external financial assets and liabilities (Circular 4/2012 of 25 April 2012). For the State, the source is the General Secretariat of the Treasury and Financial Policy.

3. Valuation Rules

The valuation rules used are as follows: the short, medium and long-term debt securities are recorded at their nominal value, according to Regulation 479/2009, taking into account that the nominal value is equal to the face value; at the same time, credits only include the part drawn down. In both cases, where the currency in which the debt securities are issued or in which the credit is arranged is not the euro, they are converted into euro applying to the currency in which the debt securities were originally issued or in which the credit was arranged, the exchange rate of that currency at the end of the period to which the outstanding balance relates.

From the foregoing it can be deduced that the Banco de España's statistics show an estimate of the indebtedness represented by debt securities and loans based on sources which are mostly external to the governments and bodies whose debt is being calculated. This reason explains why the amounts obtained from each of these governments may not coincide exactly with the amounts in the latter's internal records, which obviously are the best source of information on the indebtedness of any government. For this reason, monthly tests are performed in the case of the State and quarterly tests are undertaken in the case of the regional (autonomous) governments and main local governments (local authorities with more than 500,000 inhabitants) with information from their own internal records.

Dissemination of information on government debt.

The Banco de España, in Chapters 11 to 14 of the *Boletín Estadístico* and in Chapters 6 and 8 of the Economic Indicators, disseminates information on its website about the debt of general government, i.e. of the institutional units classified in the general government sector and, separately, information on the debt of public enterprises, i.e. of the units reporting to general government (public producers) which are not classified as general government, whose debt is not included in the scope of the EDP and, consequently, not included in the EDP notifications to the European Commission.

The Banco de España statistics provide general government indebtedness both in absolute figures and in relative terms with respect to GDP. National GDP is used in respect of the total debt of the sector and its sub-sectors, and regional GDP is used to obtain the ratio corresponding to each regional (autonomous) government. In both cases the source of GDP is the INE's publications of Spanish National Accounts and Spanish Regional Accounts. However, since the regional GDP data are updated with a lag in respect of the national GDP data, for the years in which data on regional GDP were not available, the procedure used to calculate each regional (autonomous) government's debt/GDP ratio comprises distributing national GDP according to Spanish National Accounts according to the structure of regional GDP for the last available year.

The tables in the *Boletín Estadístico* which contain quarterly information on government debt are as follows:

Chapter 11. General government

General government

- 11.4. Liabilities outstanding and debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP). Amounts
- 11.5. Liabilities outstanding and debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP). As a percentage of GDP mp
- 11.6. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) and financial assets held by general government. Amounts
- 11.7. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) and financial assets held by general government. As a percentage of GDP mp
- 11.12. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by instrument
- 11.13. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by counterpart sector, currency and residual maturity

Public enterprises

- 11.14. Debt of public enterprises not included in the general government sector, by general government owner unit

Chapter 12. Central government and social security funds

Central government

- 12.6. Central government. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by instrument
- 12.7. Central government. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by unit
- 12.8. State. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by instrument
- 12.9. Other units classified as central government. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by instrument

Public enterprises controlled by central government

- 12.10. Debt of public enterprises not included in the general government sector

Social security funds

- 12.16. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by instrument

Chapter 13. Regional (autonomous) governments

Regional (autonomous) governments

- 13.6. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP). General summary
- 13.7. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by instrument
- 13.8. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by institutional grouping
- 13.9. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by regional (autonomous) government. Amounts
- 13.10. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by regional (autonomous) government. As a percentage of GDP mp

Public enterprises controlled by regional (autonomous) governments

- 13.11. Debt of public enterprises not included in the general government sector, by regional (autonomous) government owner. Amounts
- 13.12. Debt of public enterprises not included in the general government sector, by regional (autonomous) government owner. As a percentage of GDP mp

Chapter 14. Local governments

- 14.6. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP). General summary
- 14.7. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by instrument
- 14.8. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by type of local government

The tables of the Economic Indicators that offer monthly information on government debt are as follows:

Chapter 6. General government

- 6.2. General government. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP)
- 6.5. State. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP). Spain

Chapter 8. Financial variables

- 8.8. Gross financing of Spain's general government