

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 Banco de España Law of Autonomy and successive National Statistics Plans include notably, the compilation of a set of statistics, comprising government debt according to the EDP. Thus, the Banco de España regularly publishes on the Internet quarterly information about government debt in its *Boletín Estadístico*.

This note describes the methodology used to compile EDP debt. The next section presents the various concepts of debt or indebtedness which are habitually used, depending on the context to which they refer. Then section three provides a description of the methodology applied. Lastly, section four 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 balance of these liabilities at a specific time (stocks). Consequently, flows (operations in the period) are formally called a net change in liabilities and 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 frequently used main concepts of indebtedness 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 subsectors 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 subsectors 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, securities other than shares, equity, short and long-term non-commercial 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 1995 European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA 95) described in the methodological note of the FASE disseminated on the Banco de España webpage (<http://www.bde.es/webbde/SES/Secciones/Publicaciones/PublicacionesSerriadas/NotasEstadisticas/07/nest05e.pdf>) and which uses market values in the valuation of stocks and flows of liabilities held in the form of securities other than shares.

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 95 rules; b) the net acquisitions in financial assets; and, c) adjustments for valuation (which arise, for example, in the case of securities other than shares 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 subsectors 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)
- Securities other than shares, in euro and currencies other than the euro, by original maturity.
 - Short-term
 - Medium and long-term
- Loans and credits
 - a) Granted 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) Granted by non-residents, in euro and currencies other than the euro (rest of the world)

The concept of "Debt compiled according to the EDP" is different to 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, the valuation methods of the liabilities which are used in debt compiled according to the EDP are those described in Section 3.

Scheme 1

General government: different concepts of indebtedness

Percentage structure at 31.12.2012

Instrument		Total liabilities	Debt compiled according to the EDP
Currency and deposits		0.3%	0.3 %
Securities other than shares	Securities held by general government units	5.9%	
	Other securities (short, medium and long-term)	57.3%	56.9%
Long-term non-commercial loans held by general government units		9.9%	
Other long-term non-commercial loans		16.7%	16.7%
Short-term non-commercial loans		1.2%	1.2%
Trade credits and other liabilities		8.6%	
Percentage of total liabilities		100%	75.1%

These two concepts of indebtedness are not the only ones possible. Other definitions have been defended in order to value this aspect of public finances such as, for example, that it would be necessary to deduct from gross debt, as envisaged in the two concepts included in this section, the stock of financial assets, since 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 of interest to underline 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 it is scrutinised in depth by the European Commission (Eurostat), therefore, it is comparable between the various EU Member States. This is not the case for any definition set with the criteria of only one 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 proxy of total liabilities. Total liabilities is the concept of debt used in the financial accounts compiled by all EU Member States.

Debt according to the EDP

The definition of this indebtedness is regulated by Council Regulation EC No 479/2009 of 25 May 2009, which refers, in turn, to the ESA to delimit the main terms used. This regulation amended Regulation 3605/93 of 22 November 1993. Among other things, this regulation requires EU Member States to report to the European Commission and, specifically, to Eurostat, twice per year (at end-March and end-September) the data corresponding to this definition of debt by subsectors and with an ample breakdown of certain items and transactions. The reporting of these data are called EDP debt Notifications.¹

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

1. Institutional scope of general government

Regulation 479/2009 specifies that the general government sector includes the subsectors: central government, regional (autonomous) government, local government, and social security funds, excluding commercial operations as defined in ESA 95. The exclusion of commercial operations means that the general government sector comprises only institutional units producing non-market services as their main activity.

¹ It should be clarified that the second edition of the ESA published in 1979 (ESA 79) was in force until the EDP Notification of September 1999 inclusive. As of the EDP Notification of March 2000, the ESA corresponding to 1995 (ESA 95) has been in force. Interestingly, this new version of the ESA is the first system of national accounts which has been introduced via a legal text, namely Council Regulation (EC) No 2223/96 of 25 June 1996 (called the ESA 95 Regulation) and it therefore constitutes a legal obligation for EU countries. The previous edition of the ESA was only a "recommendation" to countries for compiling national accounts which were as uniform as possible.

In the case of Spain, the general government sector comprises the following four subsectors:

- **Central government** comprises institutional units which have general powers throughout the country and which, in Spain, include the State, the central government agencies and corporations 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 corporations 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 subsectors, whereas the units performing social security functions financed through social security contributions are classified in the social security fund subsector.

All these subsectors 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 production.

In other words, in order to decide whether or not an institutional unit must be included in the general government sector two criteria must be taken into account: the institutional legal criterion (determining whether a unit is a public or private producer) and the economic criterion, according to the nature of the production (determining whether a unit is a market or non-market producer). On the basis of the first criterion, those institutional units controlled by general government are included in public producers. On the basis of the second criterion, those institutional units which cover more than 50% of their production costs with revenue from the sale of their products are considered market producers. The second criterion 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 subsectors, since a unit may be of a commercial nature from a legal viewpoint but it does not comply with the 50% rule, in which case it will be sectorised under general government.

2 Concept of government debt

Under Regulation 479/2009 government debt means the total gross debt at nominal value outstanding at the end of the year 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 95: currency and deposits, securities other than shares, excluding financial derivatives, and loans.

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 are included in Scheme 2 below:

Scheme 2
Instruments and sources

Instruments (liabilities)		Statistical source
Currency and deposits: coin issuance		Banco de España.
Securities other than shares: marketable 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 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	
	Securities issued in currencies other than the euro	
Loans granted by resident financial institutions		Information compiled through the Banco de España's Central Credit Register, obtained from lending credit institutions reporting credit exposures of more than €6,000. For the State and General Secretariat of the Treasury and Financial Policy.
Loans granted by the rest of the world		Statistics on credits and loans granted by non-residents based on communications, which for statistical purposes, must be sent to the Banco de España's Statistics Department by the borrowers or resident credit institutions on behalf of the borrowers, when the collections and payments are made through these institutions over the life of the loan. For the State and General Secretariat of the Treasury and Financial Policy.

The valuation rules used are as follows: the short, medium and long-term securities other than shares are recorded at their nominal value; credits only include the part drawn down. In both cases, where the currency in which the securities other than shares 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 securities other than shares 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 refers.

From the foregoing it can be deduced that the Banco de España's statistics show an estimate of the indebtedness represented by securities other than shares and non-commercial 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 the indebtedness of any government. However, in order to compensate for this limitation, monthly tests are performed in the case of the State and quarterly tests are undertaken in the case of the regional (autonomous) communities 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 in the Banco de España's *Boletín Estadístico*.

In Chapters 11 to 14 of the *Boletín Estadístico* published on its website, the Banco de España disseminates information 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 the units reporting to general government (public producers) which are not classified as general government. This set of units is called generically public corporations and their debt is not subject to (i.e. it is not included in the scope of) EDP and, consequently, it is not included in the Notifications to the European Commission which refer to the EDP.

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 subsectors, 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. Although, this procedure may generate distortions in regional aggregates since not all regional (autonomous) governments grow at the same rate, it is not considered that this limitation will significantly alter the ratios in respect of the GDP of each regional (autonomous) government.

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

Chapter 11. General government

- 11.5. Liabilities outstanding and debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP). Amounts
- 11.6. Liabilities outstanding and debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP). As a percentage of GDP mp
- 11.7. Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) and financial assets held by general government. Amounts
- 11.8. 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 and currency
- 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*
- 12.10. *Debt by public enterprises not included in the general government sector*
- 12.16. *Debt according to the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) by instrument*

Chapter 13. 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
- 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