Traditionally, statistics are published as point estimates of a given variable. This may be due to the fact that publishing a single number simplifies the communication to users, avoiding possible confusions or misinterpretations. Only occasionally, statistical offices publish information about uncertainty, mainly in textual form or by showing simple graphics that only partially provide answers to key questions on the degree of uncertainty associated to a given variable in a given period of time, for example. More recently, the statistical production methods, integrating new data sources (e.g. administrative registers, Big Data) create additional sources for possible errors and uncertainties, which are not measured and communicated to the users.

COMUNIKOS project (COMmunicating UNcertainty In Key Official Statistics) is an Eurostat research initiative implemented with the support of the external contractor GOPA (GOPA Worldwide Consultants in joint venture with GOPA Luxembourg). The project aims to propose methods / metrics to present uncertainties in key official statistics, starting from a comprehensive review of the different sources, their impact on the disseminated data and their relevance for official statistics. A case study for measuring uncertainties using scanner will conclude the research.

For the implementation of the project GOPA combines expertise from researchers in the domain, statistical offices, evidence-based policy advisers, and consultants, under the close guidance and enhanced collaboration of Eurostat researchers. The project will be promoted and its results will be disseminated among the research community in official statistics along its implementation from January 2019 to June 2020.