Open public consultation of users of European Social Surveys

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

European social statistics cover a large range of data based on surveys, such as employment and unemployment, social situation, health, education, income, consumption and time use, among others. They also cover data based on the census and administrative sources such as social protection, migration and mobility, etc.

Data are jointly provided by Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Union) and the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs). Together, these bodies constitute the European Statistical System (ESS).

The production of European social statistics is subject to a changing environment in line with the overall process for the modernisation of European statistics more in general. This changing environment is characterised by:

- new data needs and expectations from the users
- increasing competition on information market
- availability of new data sources (such as administrative data)
- pressure on resources of national administrations (cost of statistical operations)
- increasing concern for response burden
- innovation in methodology and IT

A critical review of the current environment for European social statistics reveals a series of problems that represent real challenges for moving on in the process of modernisation of social statistics. Four main problems are considered and described below.

1. Loss of societal relevance of the European social statistics in view of changing users’ needs and expectations
2. Lack of coherence and comparability of European social statistics
3. Inefficiency of European social statistics (cost and response burden)
4. Insufficient progress on methods and procedures for the European social statistics

For each main problem, you will be asked a number of questions that relate to how important the problem is to you, and about actions that could help to overcome them.

Each section is introduced by the relevant key issues at a glance (written in italics). This information will enable you to reply to the questions. However, if you wish to get more/hide detailed background information, please tick/un-tick the box.
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For more information click here

Yes  No

57868523887-16

According to the Stakeholder Consultation Guidelines of the European Commission, all contributions received should be published on the dedicated webpage on the DGs EUROPA site, linking the contributions received to the consultation types along with a
summary report. In case you do not agree to your personal data being published, your contribution will be published as an anonymous reply.

- Yes  
- No

Would you like your contribution to be published?

- Yes  
- No

Who are you?

- EU Institutions
- Other International organisation
- Public authority in a Member State
- Academic/research institute
- Media (print or electronic)
- Business
- Non-governmental organisation
- Interest group
- Individual
- Other

For which of the following topics do you use information? (multiple answers possible)

- European policy making
- National policy making
- Research
- Communication to general public (e.g. newspapers, other mass media)
- Communication to specialised public (e.g. specialised economic or social)
- To inform myself about Europe
- Other

For which of the following areas did you use information? (multiple answers possible)

- Labour market
- Income and living conditions
- Health
- Education and training
- Information Society / Access and use of ICT by households and individuals
- Time use
- Consumption
- Tourism
### Dataset Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dataset Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-LFS (European Union Labour Force Survey, Eurostat)</td>
<td>Access to sport, leisure and cultural activities; political and public participation; access to general and, specific to disabilities, health care, as well as physical, psychological, social and vocational rehabilitation and habilitation services; and institutionalisation in segregating residential settings, accessibility of built environment and infrastructure, transport, standardisation.</td>
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<td>EU-SILC (European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, Eurostat)</td>
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<td>AES (Adult Education Survey, Eurostat)</td>
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<td>EHIS (European Health Interview Survey, Eurostat)</td>
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<td>HH ICT (Survey on ICT usage in households, Eurostat)</td>
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<td>HBS (Household Budget Survey, Eurostat)</td>
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<td>HETUS (Harmonised European Time Use Survey, Eurostat)</td>
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<td>ESocS (European Social Survey, European Science Foundation)</td>
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<td>EEQLS (European Quality of Life Survey, Eurofound)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EWCS (European Working Conditions Surveys, Eurofound)</td>
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### Source Information

- From Eurostat sources (on-line database or publications)
- From other European Commission services or EU agencies sources (on-line database or publications)
- From National Statistical Institutes sources (on-line database or publications)
- From commercial data provider sources
- From other sources

### Additional Sources

- OECD, United Nations' agencies

### Data Types

- Data in prepared releases (e.g. news releases, statistical books, statistics explained)
- Extraction of aggregated data (work tables)
- Anonymised microdata
During the last two years, I have used no extractions of aggregated data from any of the above surveys.

Broadly speaking, official statistics are statistics disseminated by the national statistical systems. They result from the collection and processing of data into statistical information by a government institution or international organisation. Please consider the list of surveys indicated in the question above. Note that ESocS (European Social Survey, European Science Foundation) and EEQLS (European Quality of Life Survey, Eurofound) are outside the scope of European official statistics.

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Once or twice a year

During the last two years, I have used no anonymised microdata from any of the above surveys.

- Yes
- No
European social statistics needs to:

- target existing user needs
- adapt to newly emerging user needs
- offer data that meet expectations of users in today’s ‘internet age’

Detailed background information

- Tick/un-tick to see/hide further information

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a large extent
- To a very large extent
- Don’t know/Don’t answer

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a large extent
- To a very large extent
- Don’t know/Don’t answer

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a large extent
- To a very large extent
- Don’t know/Don’t answer
HYPOTHESIS 1

There is a loss of societal relevance of data if legal fragmentation leads to fragmented output

The societal relevance of European social data is at risk if legal fragmentation leads to:

- difficulties to combine the data available from different sources, create coherent data pools, and integrate the data to better meet existing data needs
- problems to compare results for the same variable when data comes from different sources
- an unrelated production of separated datasets (‘stovepipes’)
- a lack of technical standardisation: data linking is difficult due to the different types of datasets, different coverage, deviating definitions of variables, different reference dates and formats, etc.

Detailed background information

Create coherent data pools (e.g. data warehouses) to better meet existing data needs
Increase the capacity to link data from different data collections

Develop an integrated quality reporting framework for different data collections

Increase the efficiency of statistical production by integrating business processes across different data collections

Reduce fragmentation of European legislation on social phenomena

**HYPOTHESIS 2**

There is a loss of societal relevance of data if rigid legislation leads to outdated contents

The societal relevance of European social data is at risk:

- if it takes too long to adapt the contents to new information needs that relate to new societal challenges and changes (e.g. on globalisation, migration or sustainability)
- if the legislative setup is a barrier for agile response to changing societal information needs and requires that (a) changes must be made for each domain separately and (b) due to lengthy legislative procedures
- because today’s information market can meet the demand for quick and inexpensive data, albeit at (sometimes) dubious quality
- because under the influence of the Internet, users are getting more and more used to being able to find in a timely way the exact information they were looking for

Detailed background information

- Tick/un-tick to see/hide further information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrich its data offer and react more quickly to needs for information on recent social developments</th>
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Avoid heavy legal procedures for the adaptation of the statistical programme

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Please explain

European Social Statistics fail to capture the whole relevant population. This is particularly true for persons with disabilities or people living in residential institutions. Moreover, lack of accessibility of the data collection exclude even a broader portion of the population. Hence, data provided are not complete and policy making based on them results ineffective. Our measurement system should shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people’s well-being. Well-being, including positive mental health, is an indispensable factor in achieving growth. For example the economic consequences of mental health problems are estimated at an average of 3-4% of EU’s gross national product.

Furthermore, the economic and financial crisis has shown that low-quality national statistics can have detrimental effects on their respective economies and that high-quality statistics are needed for policy-making purposes. Lack of disaggregated data made it difficult or impossible to monitor the effects of the crisis and of the recovery measures on various layers of the European societies, including those in the most vulnerable situations. Finally, results of social statistics and the data should be disseminated in a more accessible manner, allowing easy access, including intuitive comparative graphs in order to give more added value to citizens.

European social statistics needs to:

- ensure full coherence of the overall output of social statistics
- make it possible to integrate and compare data from different surveys
- address quality issues related to innovative production methods and IT, and alternative data sources

Detailed background information

- Very often
Often
Sometimes
Rarely
Never
Don't know/Don't answer

Very often
Often
Sometimes
Rarely
Never
Don't know/Don't answer

Very often
Often
Sometimes
Rarely
Never
Don't know/Don't answer

Very unlikely
Somewhat unlikely
Neither likely nor unlikely
Somewhat likely
Very likely
Don’t know/Don’t answer

Don’t know/Don’t answer

A lack of standardisation leads to less and/or uncertain data quality (coherence and comparability)

The coherence and comparability of the data is compromised if:

- the legal fragmentation causes a lack of standardisation of concepts, variables, breakdowns, classifications
- there are no standards to assess the quality of sampling frames
- adaptation of technical matter related to standardisation is time consuming because it is not internalised into the European Statistical System (and therefore requires heavy legal procedures)
- more and more National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) are incorporating new sources in their production process, but methodology, definitions and specifications differ from one data collection to another

Detailed background information

Tick/un-tick to see/hide further information
Standardise variables and classifications to achieve common definitions across different data collections

Standardise the definitions of statistical populations and observation units

Develop standards to assess the quality of sampling frames

Develop standards for the transmission and exchange of information

Avoid heavy legal procedures for the adaption of technical matter related to standardisation

HYPOTHESIS 4

There will be less and/or uncertain data quality in the future if the EU legal framework is not adapted to innovative data collection methods and IT

The quality of European social statistics will decrease and/or become difficult to assess if the EU legislative framework:

- does not promote the use of innovative data collection methods and IT tools
- makes the adaptation of technical matter time-consuming because it is not internalised into the European Statistical System (and therefore requires heavy legal procedures)
- develops no quality assessment that takes innovative data collection methods and IT tools appropriately into account
- becomes outdated given the fact that National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) are increasingly working on or with these methods

Detailed background information

Tick/un-tick to see/hide further information

Promote the use of innovative data collection methods and IT tools

Avoid heavy legal procedures for the adaption of technical matter related to
HYPOTHESIS 5

There will be less and/or uncertain quality (in terms of coherence and comparability) in the future if the EU legal framework is not adapted to a situation where new sources and multi-source integration are used to their full potential.

The quality of European social statistics will decrease and/or become difficult to assess if the legal framework:

- does not promote the use of alternative data sources and the integration of multiple data sources
- does not address the fact that the divergence of concepts used in administrative data sources can hamper the production of EU-wide comparable data
- makes the adaptation of technical matter time-consuming because it is not internalised into the European Statistical System (and therefore requires heavy legal procedures)
- develops no quality assessment that takes the use of alternative data sources and the integration of multiple data sources into account
- becomes outdated given the fact that National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) are increasingly working on or with multiple data sources and their integration

Detailed background information

- Promote the use of administrative data (and the integration of surveys and administrative data) in order to...
- Make sure that data from surveys and administrative data sources are better comparable (handle the divergence of...
definitions and other concepts

Adapt quality assessment and reporting to issues related to the use of administrative data

Avoid heavy legal procedures for the adaptation of technical matter related to the use of alternative data sources and their integration

Yes  No

Please explain

Very often the data from European Social Statistics are not comparable as the samples are different. E.g. different number of countries considered, different age groups, different definition of persons with disabilities. This makes not comparable even data from the same survey but from one year to another. For instance, Eurostat presents an indicator covering people aged 0-59 living in households where the adults work less than 20% of their total work potential during the past year. While the EU-SILC survey presents information on disability only for people aged 16 or more.

The European Disability Strategy states that the Commission will work to streamline information on disability collected through EU social surveys, develop a specific survey on barriers for social integration of persons with disabilities and present a set of indicators to monitor their situation with reference to key Europe 2020 targets. Little reliable data on overall disability prevalence is available at EU level and even less that is gender disaggregated. This makes having a precise assessment of the situation of persons with disabilities across Europe more difficult. The available data and studies at national level are very difficult to compare because different definitions are adopted across countries and in the same country by different sectors of the public administrations according to their scope.

The Labour Force Survey ad-hoc module (LFS AHM) collects data on people aged 15-64 reporting a longstanding health condition or a basic activity difficulty, by sex and age. Other age populations with disabilities, including children and older persons, as well as people living in segregating institutions are therefore excluded. In fact, as the likelihood of disability increases with age given the current EU demographic situation, the occurrence of disability is expected to increase. If disabled persons, including children, living in institutions are taken into account, the overall incidence is likely to be even higher.

The annual survey on Statistics on Income, Social Inclusion and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) data from 2006 to 2008 showed that on average over 30% of respondents aged over 75 say they are restricted to some extent, and over 20% describe themselves as severely restricted. Moreover, including all persons aged 15 and above, on average almost 8% of respondents across Europe s
tated that they were severely restricted in activities people usually do, while 16.5% of respondents stated that they were restricted to some extent, adding up to approximately 24.5% of the population. The data from SILC for persons of working ages 15-64 who say they are severely restricted or restricted to some extent show a total of 17.6% of the population, which is in line with the percentage found in the LFS AHM (15%). These findings confirm that if all age groups are considered the percentage of persons with disabilities is likely to be higher.

Current available data collections, such as the Labour Force Survey, only include the participation of persons with disabilities in employment; all other areas of daily life are excluded, such as violence, education, social protection; access to sport, leisure and cultural activities; political and public participation; access to general and, specific to disabilities, health care, as well as physical, psychological, social and vocational rehabilitation and habilitation services; and institutionalisation in segregating residential settings.

**European social statistics needs to be efficient in terms of:**

- taxpayers’ money used for their production
- the burden to those who reply to surveys

Detailed background information

- Tick/un-tick to see/hide further information

- Not very important
- Somewhat important
- Moderately important
- Important
- Extremely important
- Don’t know/Don’t answer

- To a very small extent
- To a small extent
HYPOTHESIS 6

There is inefficiency if EU legislation does not support survey integration and the usage of modern data collection tools

There is inefficiency in the production of European social statistics if the EU legislative framework:

- does not promote the use of innovative data collection methods and IT tools
- makes the adaptation of technical matter time-consuming because it is not internalised into the European Statistical System (and therefore requires heavy legal procedures)
- becomes outdated given the fact that National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) are increasingly working on or with these methods

Detailed background information

- Tick/un-tick to see/hide further information
Promote the use of innovative data collection methods and IT tools in order to reduce production.

Promote the integration of the different European social surveys in order to increase the synergies between different European social surveys.

HYPOTHESIS 7

There is inefficiency if EU legislation does not support the use of alternative sources and integration of multiple sources.

There is inefficiency in the production of European social statistics if the EU legislative framework:

- does not promote the use of alternative data sources and the integration of multiple data sources
- does not address the fact that the divergence of concepts used in administrative data sources can hamper the production of EU-wide comparable data
- makes the adaptation of technical matter time-consuming because it is not internalised into the European Statistical System (and therefore requires heavy legal procedures)
- becomes outdated given the fact National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) are increasingly working on or with multiple data sources and their integration

Detailed background information

- Tick/un-tick to see/hide further information

Promote the use of administrative data (and the integration of surveys and administrative data) in order to reduce production.
Avoid heavy legal procedures for the adaption of technical matter related to the use alternative data sources and their integration

Adapt quality assessment and reporting to issues related the use alternative data sources and their integration

Promote survey integration

Please explain

Lack of awareness and adequate training on human rights, including the specific perspective of persons with disabilities and the latest legal developments, and on social issues of the staff involved in the data collection, can lead to invalid data with evident inefficient use of human and financial resources.
To a very large extent
• Don’t know/Don’t answer

Very often
• Often
• Sometimes
• Rarely
• Never
• Don’t know/Don’t answer

Yes No

Please explain

Modernisation of the European social statistics, innovation and use of IT is welcome if it contributes overcoming accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities without creating new ones.

Information

Yes No

Please describe them

In the last few years Europe and many Member States have made considerable progress in collecting data and information relevant to what matter most to the lives of people with disabilities. However, several legal, institutional and scientific challenges continue to impede further progress in strengthening capacities of institutions and actors to monitors effectively the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD has been ratified by the EU in 2010 and it is legally binding. Article 31 of the CRPD regards statistics and data collection. The UN CRPD Com
Committee of experts in September 2015 released recommendations to the EU. The Committee is concerned at the lack of consistent and comparable data on persons with disabilities in the European Union and the lack of human rights indicators.

The Committee recommends that the European Union develop a human rights-based indicators system in cooperation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, as well as a comparable comprehensive data collection system, with data disaggregated by gender, age, rural/urban population and impairment type.

Resource limitations and the progressive nature of the obligation to collect data, exclusion of people with disabilities from decision making about data collection and scientific challenges associated with measuring environmental barriers to participation hinder the efforts to establish an effective and coherent accountability indicators based framework. What is now needed is a coordinated response to prioritize the types of data and information to be collected with the active participation of the civil society and expedite knowledge creation that will help us formulate more inclusive and responsive policies for all European citizens with disabilities.

Disaggregation is important for the inclusion of excluded populations. For example, an indicator that analyses the entire population cannot monitor the progress of sub-populations. Consequently, sub-populations, such as persons with disabilities, will be excluded from monitoring purposes and targets will not be realised for them. Disaggregation solves this problem and requires only a small additional reporting burden for Member States.