# LE DÉVELOPPEMENT FUTUR DE L'ENQUÊTE EU-SILC

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**Résumé.** La stratégie Europe 2020, le socle européen des droits sociaux et la crise économique et financière ont mis en évidence l'importance des statistiques sociales. Dans ce contexte, Eurostat révise l'enquête EU-SILC aussi dans le cadre de la modernisation des statistiques sociales européennes.

La révision d'EU-SILC vise à:
- Modulariser l'enquête et mieux l'adapter aux besoins des utilisateurs. Un «noyau» couvrant les données Europe 2020 et d'autres variables clés seront collectés chaque année. Des modules mobiles fixes complèteront tous les trois ans (par exemple, le travail et la santé) ou six ans (par exemple, la qualité de vie, l'accès aux services et à la richesse ainsi que les nouveaux besoins politiques futurs)
- Améliorer la ponctualité, avec une disponibilité des données EU-SILC au plus tard en décembre de l'année de référence.
- Eventuellement étendre le panel rotatif de 4 à 6 ans, pour mieux étudier les transitions et les récurrences.
- Permettre plus de ventilations des indicateurs par région.

Des parties de la révision, par exemple, la ponctualité ou la régionalisation, ainsi que la mesure améliorée de la privation matérielle, sont déjà mises en œuvre dans EU-SILC. Les autres éléments seront mis en œuvre dans le cadre d'un règlement-cadre sur les "statistiques sociales européennes intégrées" en cours de négociation par les instances politiques européennes.

**Mots-clés.** EU-SILC, pauvreté, révision

**Abstract.** The Europe 2020 Strategy, the "European Pillar of social rights" and the economic and financial crisis raised the importance of social statistics. In order to increase responsiveness, Eurostat revises EU-SILC in the context of the modernisation of European social statistics.

The EU-SILC revision aims at:
- Modularising and adapting the periodicity to the needs. A "nucleus" covering the Europe 2020 data and other key variables will be collected yearly. Fixed rolling modules will complement it every 3-year (e.g. labour and health) or 6-year (e.g. quality of life, access to services and wealth as well as future new policy needs)
- Improving timeliness, with a global availability of EU-SILC data at the latest in December of the reference year.
- Possibly extending the rotational panel from 4 to 6 years, for better studying long-term phenomenon, transitions and recurrences.
- Allowing for more regional breakdowns.

Parts of the revision, e.g., timeliness or regionalisation, as well as the improved measure of material deprivation, are already being implemented in EU-SILC. The other elements will be implemented in the context of the forthcoming Framework Regulation on "Integrated European Social Statistics".

# 1. EU-SILC revision context

In the current social and economic context, users require more and more comparable and as much as possible timely statistics to monitor the social situation. The demands for data on living conditions, income, inequalities, quality of life and for (better) integration of these data with macroeconomics are also increasing. Hence, the requests for improving EU-SILC delivery on the following:

- Data timeliness, in particular in the context of the crisis (when it is necessary to closely monitor the social situation and the impact of policies) and of the European Semester.

- Early estimates of relevant social indicators, as is already the case for national accounts and price statistics.

- Regional data in the context of the monitoring of EU regional policy and after 2020 for the allocation of funds, on the basis of indicators derived from EU-SILC, as well as the regional dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy.

- Poverty and social exclusion dynamics (including transitions, persistence…).

- Multidimensional aspects of living conditions, poverty and social exclusion. There are several requests that cannot any longer be accommodated in the current flexibility mechanism of the ad hoc modules (like more information on children, access to services, vulnerability, consumption and wealth, structure of the households, quality of life and well-being, health, more breakdowns of social benefits and transfers, social transfers in kind , etc.). More generally, the needs will continue to evolve, and increased flexibility is required.

- Development of social indicators in the context of EU macroeconomic assessment (for instance, – in the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure where so far the "at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion" [AROPE] indicator used for the Europe 2020 social inclusion target, and its components, are only included as auxiliary indicators) and more generally a better integration of social and macroeconomics data.

- Increased use of administrative data for EU-SILC income components and the often associated problems of delays. New data collection modes and sources will also be considered (web interviews, matching).

As a consequence, the objective of the planned EU-SILC revision is to re-design the EU-SILC so as to:

- increase its responsiveness to new policy needs, currently and for the future;

- deliver data faster and provide information useful for early estimates;

- maintain the stability of the main indicators, with adapted frequency and keeping a cross-cutting approach allowing to jointly analyse different social phenomena;

- allow analysis at regional level with sufficient precision;

- ensure adequate accuracy and quality of measurements;

- adapt to multi-modes and multi-sources data collections;

- allow better integration of its data with data coming from other ESS surveys;

- ensure a general consistency of the different elements of the instrument (e.g. frequency of non-annual modules and length of the longitudinal component).

While not increasing costs and respondents' burden.

## 1.1 Main elements of the revision

Here the main elements retained for EU-SILC revision are presented.

The modularisation of the content of EU-SILC and an adaptation of the periodicity of collection of the modules will allow to better satisfy increased analytical and monitoring needs. A "nucleus" of variables will cover income, key labour information, material deprivation – as part of the Europe 2020 framework - and key variables on health, childcare, education, housing costs and quality of life). The space left empty will be used for fixed rotating modules with a periodicity of three years for the variables dealing with labour, health, children and housing and a periodicity of six years for the others (social participation, quality of life, access to services, wealth, debt, consumption, intergenerational transmission of disadvantages and possibly past experience of homelessness). Some of the 6-year modules will be dedicated to new policy needs and will be changing. See table 1.

Timeliness has become extremely important. It is planned to improve timeliness, by shortening the overall availability of EU-SILC by several months (from December N+1 to January N+1 [with N being the survey year]), by making available most variables at the end of the survey year N, by introducing elements in the collection that would be useful to estimate the evolutions of income distribution, and by maximising the possibilities of micro-simulation for early estimates.

Users are more and more interested in analysing trajectories into and out of poverty. Consequently, it is planned to extend the rotational panel from four to six years, so as to have better estimates of longer phenomena (the persistent risk of poverty indicator will then be based on a sample size double than what is currently feasible) and study transitions and recurrences of poverty and social exclusion. However, some countries don't agree with this extension and final choice will depend on negotiations at EU level.

The regional dimension of EU-SILC is becoming increasingly important. To allow for more regional breakdowns, on a country-based approach, a combination of several solutions will be used by Member States, including re-design of the sample, modelling and calibration, and in some cases, increased sample size.

Precision requirements need to be expressed in a way that facilitates compliance assessment based on the standard error to be achieved. This would have as an effect a precision of ± 1 percentage point (pp) for the largest Member-States and ± 1.5 pp for the smallest ones for the main indicators (in particular for the AROPE indicator) at national level and ± 2.5 to ± 4 pp at regional level (for 95% confidence interval). A requirement will also be placed on the longitudinal component.

Other elements need to be improved, like the quality reports, the tracing rules, the metadata on sources of data, etc., also promoting best practices.

*Table1: Structure of the contents of the revised EU-SILC*

| Nucleus (variables asked every year) (Europe 2020, main indicators) | YEAR | Every 3-year modules Max. 20 var. each | Every 6-year modules Max. 20 var. each |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income (revised) Material deprivation Economic activity Demography Education Child care Housing costs Health Quality of life 1st wave Miscaleneous | 1 | Children | Quality of life, social & cultural participation |
| | 2 | Health | New policy needs 1 |
| | 3 | Labour & housing conditions | Over–indebtedness, wealth, consumption |
| | 4 | Children | New policy needs 2 |
| | 5 | Health | Access to services, social transfers in kind |
| | 6 | Labour & housing conditions | Intergenerational & homelessness?/New policy 3 |

## 2. Conclusion

The expectations on high quality and timely data to analyse the social situation across Europe have increased among policy makers and other users, as a consequence of the economic crisis. EU-SILC is the main data source for comparative analysis and indicators on income and living conditions in the EU and is therefore particularly solicited for answering new demands.

The modernisation of social statistics and in this context the revision of EU-SILC tries to respond to these demands and to address other aspects of EU-SILC needing improvements, while securing modern and viable foundations in the governance of the instrument in the European Statistical System. The full implementation of the revised EU-SILC will be achieved in the next 2-3 years as it requires long and difficult processes both at legal and technical level. However, both Eurostat and the national statistical institutes in the EU Member States and neighbour countries have started implementing a number of changes that are already possible in the context of the current EU-SILC. In particular, changes related to timeliness and regionalisation.

## Bibliographie

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