



European Statistical  
Advisory Committee

**OPINION**  
**on the proposed**  
**Framework Regulation for European Statistics**  
**on Persons and Households**

**Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS)**

**3 December 2015**

The European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC) welcomes the proposal for a framework regulation for European statistics on persons and households (IESS<sup>1</sup>). A framework regulation is essential for supporting the European Commission's current, more extensive, agenda on social policy. It is also expected to increase the integration and consistency of social data from across Europe, which is needed by researchers and other users from both public and private sector.

ESAC would like to emphasise that any new legislation introduced should be helpful to those working in the production of European statistics. It should recognise the need to limit the burden placed on them and to develop modern and innovative ways of working and cooperating in the field of European social statistics. ESAC welcomes the additional flexibility that IESS would create. It will allow those producing social statistics to adapt quickly when information requirements change as a result of developments and new challenges in society.

Robust and up-to-date statistics on individuals and households are essential for adequate monitoring of social change. The main aim of the proposed framework regulation is to integrate and harmonise survey data while also promoting the use of additional data, such as register data. Furthermore, the framework regulation should allow better monitoring and evaluation of policies designed to promote social cohesion and the integration of particular population groups (children, women, migrants and older people). Moreover, it is important to ensure that researchers and policymakers will, in the future, have access to core statistical information and indicators on individuals and households provided in a more integrated manner and at an improved level of disaggregation.

In view of this, examining the distributional aspects of households' welfare is a priority in the production of social statistics. ESAC would like to draw attention to the importance of linking microdata and macrodata for the purpose of developing joint analyses of income, consumption and wealth. Coordinating the surveys that cover each of these three domains (SILC, HBS and HFCS) should therefore be one of the main objectives in the area of social statistics. One important step towards achieving this target is to further investigate the use that could be made of modern techniques, new sources of data and new methods of data collection. A comprehensive methodological framework and greater coordination of surveys will provide higher quality and more easily comparable information. This can, in turn, help policymakers to address poverty and social exclusion more effectively.

ESAC would also like to see social statistics providing more information on time use and household budgets, as these are important areas aspects of welfare and well-being. ESAC welcomes the plan to develop an integrated and flexible legal framework for social statistics. The framework regulation should, in particular take into account the specific objectives of each survey.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/opportunities/consultations/iess>.

Macro-economic and social indicators need to start to be used systematically in EU governance and in measuring performance relative to social progress objectives. Having up-to-date values for these indicators is therefore of utmost importance.

Labour mobility, labour market flows and longitudinal data should be made priority areas within social statistics, not only as part of labour market statistics but also in connection with statistics on income and living conditions. Improving the functioning of labour markets is one of the priorities of EU employment policy. There is particular focus on reducing labour market segmentation, facilitating job creation and improving labour market mobility. A detailed knowledge of labour market flows is crucial for effective policymaking in these areas and data accessibility should therefore be improved — in particular, up-to-date data on trends in recruitment and laying-off of workers, with breakdowns by contractual arrangement and by socioeconomic group, should be made available for research purposes.

The current structure of statistics does not allow the integration of different social groups, including migrants, to be monitored adequately, especially in the context of recent developments. The draft IESS regulation should allow further progress to be made in this area. The new legislation also provides support for the development of a common EU methodology for measuring voluntary work, potentially through the Labour Force Survey. The aim of this would be to find an appropriate way of estimating the economic value of this type of work. It is also important to promote the exchange of information, data and research at EU level in order to be able to tackle undeclared work more effectively.