

Glossary: Structure of earnings survey (SES)

Statistics Explained

The **Structure of earnings survey**, abbreviated as **SES**, is conducted every four years in the Member States of the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and provides comparable information at EU level on relationships between the level of [earnings](#), individual characteristics of [employees](#) (sex, age, occupation, length of service, [educational level](#)) and their employer (economic activity, size of the enterprise, etc.) for reference years 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014 (next survey with reference year 2018).

The data collection is based on legislation and data become available approximately 2 years after the end of the reference period. In the SES [gross annual earnings](#) cover remuneration in cash and in kind paid during the reference year before any tax deductions and social-security contributions payable by wage earners and retained by the employer. The main difference between annual and monthly earnings in the SES is that annual earnings are not only the sum of the direct remuneration, bonuses and allowances paid to an employee in each pay period. Annual earnings hence usually exceed the figure produced by multiplying the 'standard monthly package' by 12. The 'standard monthly package' includes those bonuses and allowances which occur in every pay period, even if the amount for these 'regular' bonuses and allowances varies, but excludes bonuses and allowances not occurring in every pay period. Furthermore, monthly earnings leave payments in kind out of consideration. However, annual earnings also cover all 'non-standard payments', i.e. payments not occurring in each pay period, and payments in kind.

The SES covers businesses with at least 10 employees and all economic activities defined in sections B to N, and P to S, of the [Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Communities \(NACE Rev 2\)](#). The transmission of data covering [small enterprises](#) (below 10 employees) and enterprises belonging to NACE Rev. 2 section O is optional.

The SES represents a rich microdata source for European policy-making and research purposes. [Access to microdata](#) is granted to researchers according to specific conditions and respecting statistical confidentiality.

Further information

- [Structure of earnings survey 2014](#) (ESMS metadata file — earn_ses2014_esms)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 530/1999](#) of 9 March 1999 concerning structural statistics on earnings and on labour costs (legal text)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 1738/2005](#) of 21 October 2005 amending Regulation 1916/2000 as regards the definition and transmission of information on the structure of earnings (legal text)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 698/2006](#) of 5 May 2006 implementing Regulation (EC) No 530/1999 as regards quality evaluation of structural statistics on labour costs and earnings (legal text)

Related concepts

- [Labour cost survey \(LCS\)](#)

Statistical data

- [Earnings statistics](#)