Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning Community statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)

(2002/C 103 E/12)

(Text with EEA relevance)

COM(2001) 754 final — 2001/0293(COD)

(Submitted by the Commission on 13 December 2001)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 285(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty,

Whereas:

(1) In order to carry out the tasks assigned to it, particularly after the Lisbon and Nice European Council meetings held in March and December 2000 respectively, the Commission should be kept informed of income distribution and of the level and composition of poverty and social exclusion in the Member States.

(2) The development of the Community and the operation of the internal market increase the need for comparable and timely cross-sectional and longitudinal data on income distribution and on the level and composition of poverty and social exclusion for establishing reliable and relevant comparisons between the Member States, to be used mainly in the context of the 'Programme of Community action to encourage co-operation between Member States to combat social exclusion' and as one input to the Commission's Structural Indicators.

(3) The decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a programme of Community action to encourage co-operation between Member States to combat social exclusion has established, under Action 1.2 of Strand 1 'Analysis of social exclusion', the necessary conditions in relation to the funding of measures concerning the collection and dissemination of comparable statistics and in particular supporting the improvement of surveys and analysis of poverty and social exclusion.

(4) The best method of assessing the situation as regards income, poverty and social exclusion is to compile Community statistics using harmonised methods and definitions.

(5) To reflect changes taking place in the distribution of income and in the level and composition of social exclusion, the statistics need to be updated annually.

(6) To investigate major issues of social concern, especially new issues requiring specific research, the Commission needs cross-sectional and longitudinal micro-data at the household and personal level.

(7) Priority should be given to the production of timely and comparable annual cross-sectional data on income and social exclusion.

(8) Flexibility in terms of data sources, in particular the use of existing national data sources whether they be surveys or registers, and national sample designs should be encouraged and the integration of the new source(s) into established national statistical systems should be promoted.

(9) Commission Regulation (EC) No .../... of ... implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 of 17 February 1997 on Community statistics, concerning access to confidential data for scientific purposes has established, for the purpose of enabling statistical conclusions to be drawn for scientific purposes, the conditions pursuant to which access to confidential data transmitted to the Community authority may be granted.

(10) The production of specific Community statistics is governed by the rules set out in Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 of 17 February 1997 on Community Statistics [1].

(11) Since the measures necessary for the implementation of this Regulation are management measures within the meaning of Article 2 of Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission [2], they are to be adopted by use of the management procedure provided for in Article 4 of that Decision.

(12) The Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) has been consulted in accordance with Article 3 of Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom [3] the aforesaid Decision,

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(1) OJ L 52, 22.2.1997, p. 61.
(2) OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.
(3) OJ L 181, 28.6.1989, p. 47.

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Aim

The aim of this Regulation shall be to establish a common framework for the systematic production of Community Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (hereinafter referred to as 'EU-SILC'), encompassing comparable and timely cross-sectional and longitudinal data on income and on the level and composition of poverty and social exclusion at national and European levels.

Article 2

Definitions

For the purpose of this Regulation, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) 'Community statistics' shall have the meaning assigned to it in Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 322/97.

(b) 'Production of statistics' shall have the meaning assigned to it in Regulation (EC) No 322/97.

(c) 'Year of survey': means the year in which the collection, or most of the collection, is carried out.

(d) 'Fieldwork period': means the period of time in which the survey component is collected.

(e) 'Reference period': means the period of time to which a particular item of information relates.

(f) 'Private household': means a person living alone or a group of people who live together in the same private dwelling and share expenditures, including the joint provision of the essentials of living.

Small departures from this common definition, as long as they only marginally affect comparability, shall be allowed for Member States having a common household definition in their national statistical system.

The impact on comparability of any departure from the common definition shall be reported in the quality report specified in Article 16.

(g) 'Cross-sectional data': means the data pertaining to a given time or a certain time period. The cross-sectional data may be extracted either from a cross-sectional sample survey with or without a rotational sample or from a pure panel sample survey (on condition that cross-sectional representativeness is guaranteed); such data may be combined with register data (data on persons, households or dwellings compiled from a unit-level administrative or statistical register).

(h) 'Longitudinal data': means the data pertaining to individual-level changes over time, observed periodically over a certain duration. The longitudinal data may come either from a cross-sectional survey with a rotational sample where individuals once selected are followed-up or from a pure panel survey; it may be combined with register data.

(i) 'Sample persons': means the persons selected into the sample at the first wave of a longitudinal panel. They may comprise all members of an initial sample of households, or a representative sample of individuals in a survey of persons.

(j) 'Target primary areas': means the subject areas to be collected on an annual basis.

(k) 'Target secondary areas': means the subject areas to be collected every four years or less.

(l) 'Gross income': means the total income received by the household over a specified 'income reference period', before deduction of income tax, regular taxes on wealth, employees' compulsory social insurance contributions and employers' social insurance contributions, but after taking into account inter-household transfers.

(m) 'Disposable income': means gross income less income tax, regular taxes on wealth, employees' compulsory social insurance contributions and employers' social insurance contributions.

Article 3

Scope

EU-SILC shall cover comparable and timely cross-sectional data on income, poverty, social exclusion and other living conditions as well as longitudinal data restricted to income, labour and a limited number of non-monetary indicators of social exclusion.

Article 4

Time reference

1. The cross-sectional and longitudinal data shall be collected, or compiled in the case of registers, annually from the year 2003. In any given Member State, the timing of collection shall be kept the same from one year to the next as far as possible.

2. By way of exception to paragraph 1 of Article 4, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom may start the annual cross-sectional and longitudinal data collection in 2004, provided that they supply comparable data during the transition period for the indicators requested by the Commission in those fields where an open method of co-ordination has been agreed by the Council.

3. The income reference period shall be a twelve-month period. This may be a fixed twelve-month period (such as the previous calendar or tax year) or a moving twelve-month period (such as the twelve months preceding the interview).

Limited departures from this definition are allowed for Member States having a different tradition in their national statistics, as long as the impact on comparability is marginal.

The impact on comparability of any departure from the common definition shall be reported in the quality report specified in Article 16.

4. If a fixed income reference period is used, fieldwork for the survey component shall be carried out over a limited period as close as possible to the income reference period or to the tax declaration period so as to minimise time lag between income and current variables.

Article 5

Characteristics of the data

1. In order to permit multi-dimensional analysis at the level of households and persons and in particular investigation of major issues of social concern that are new and require specific research, all the household and individual data shall be linkable in the cross-sectional component.

Similarly, all household and personal data shall be linkable in the longitudinal component.

The longitudinal micro-data do not need to be linkable with the cross-sectional micro-data.

The longitudinal component shall cover at least four years.

2. In order to reduce response burdens, to help in income imputation procedures and to test data quality, the national authorities shall have access to relevant administrative data sources in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 322/97.

Article 6

Data required

1. The target primary areas and corresponding reference periods to be covered by the cross-sectional and the longitudinal components are laid down in Annex I.

2. Target secondary areas shall be included every year starting from 2004 only in the cross-sectional component. They shall be defined in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 14. One secondary area shall be covered each year.

Article 7

Collection unit

1. The reference population for EU-SILC shall be all private households and their current members residing in the territory of the Member State at the time of the data collection.

2. The main information collected shall pertain to

(a) private households, including data on household size, composition and basic characteristics of its current members; and

(b) persons aged sixteen and over.

3. The collection unit, together with the mode of collection for the household and personal information, shall be as laid down in Annex I.

Article 8

Sampling and tracing rules

1. The cross-sectional and longitudinal data shall be based on nationally representative probability samples.

2. In the longitudinal component, individuals included in the initial sample, that is to say, sample persons, shall be followed over the duration of the panel. Every sample person who has moved to a private household within the national boundaries shall be followed-up to the new location following tracing rules and procedures to be defined in accordance with the procedure specified in Article 14.

Article 9

Sample sizes

1. On the basis of diverse statistical and practical considerations and the precision requirements for the most critical variables, the minimum effective sample sizes to be achieved shall be as set out in the table in Annex II.

2. Sample size for the longitudinal component refers, for any pair of consecutive years, to the number of households successfully interviewed in the first year in which all or at least a majority of the household members aged 16 + are successfully interviewed in both the years.

3. Member States using registers for income and other data may use a sample of persons rather than a sample of complete households in the interview survey. The minimum effective sample size in terms of the number of detailed personal interviews shall be taken as 75 % of the figures shown in columns 3 and 4 of the table set out in Annex II, for the cross-sectional and longitudinal components respectively.

Information on income and other data shall also be collected for the household of each selected respondent and for all its members.

Article 10

Transmission of data

1. Member States shall transmit to the Commission (Eurostat) in the form of micro-data files weighted cross-sectional and longitudinal data which has been fully checked, edited and imputed in relation to income.

Member States shall transmit the data in electronic form, in conformity with an appropriate technical format to be proposed by the Commission.

2. Regarding the cross-sectional component, Member States shall transmit the micro-data files relating to year of survey N to the Commission (Eurostat), preferably within ten months after the end of the data collection. The extreme deadline for the transmission of micro-data to Eurostat shall be 31 October (N + 1) for Member States where data are collected at the end of year N or through a continuous survey or through registers and 1 September (N + 1) for other Member States.

By way of exception, cross-sectional micro-data files relating to year 2003 shall be transmitted to the Commission (Eurostat) by 31 December 2004.

Together with the micro-data files, Member States shall transmit social cohesion indicators based on the cross-sectional sample of year N that will be included in the annual Spring report of year (N + 2) to the European Council.

3. As for the longitudinal component, Member States shall transmit the micro-data files up to year N to the Commission (Eurostat) preferably within fifteen months after the end of the fieldwork. The mandatory deadline for the transmission of micro-data to Eurostat shall be the end of March (N + 2), each year starting from the second year of EU-SILC. The first transmission of data (covering longitudinally linked data for the survey years 2003 and 2004) shall take place by end March 2006. The next transmission shall cover the first three survey years 2003-2005; thereafter, each year longitudinal data covering the preceding four survey years (revised from previous releases as necessary) shall be provided.

Article 11

Publication

For the cross-sectional component, the Commission (Eurostat) shall publish an annual cross-sectional report at Community level by the end of June N + 2, based on the data collected during year N.

By way of exception for the first EU-SILC year (collection during 2003), cross-sectional report at Community level shall be produced, by Eurostat, by September 2005.

Article 12

Access for scientific purposes to EU-SILC confidential data

1. The Community authority (Eurostat) may grant access for scientific purposes to EU-SILC micro-data in compliance with Regulation (EC) No . . ./. . . [of . . . implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 of 17 February 1997 on Community statistics, concerning access to confidential data for scientific purposes].

2. For the cross-sectional component, micro-data files at Community level for data collected during year N shall be made available for scientific purposes by the end of February N + 2.

By way of exception, cross-sectional micro-data files at Community level relating to year 2003 shall be made available for scientific purposes by the end of April 2005.

3. For the longitudinal component, micro-data files at Community level for data collected up to year N shall be made available for scientific purposes by the end of July N + 2.

The first issue of longitudinal micro-data files at Community level shall cover 2003 and 2004 and shall take place at the end of July 2006. The second issue in July 2007 shall cover years 2003-2005; thereafter, each July release shall cover longitudinal data for the four most recent years available.

Article 13

Financing

1. For the first four years for which data provided for in this Regulation are collected, Member States shall receive a financial contribution from the Community towards the cost of the work involved.

2. The amount of the appropriations allocated annually for the financial contribution referred to in paragraph 1 shall be fixed as part of the annual budgetary procedures.

3. The budget authority shall determine the appropriations available for each year.

Article 14

Committee

1. The Commission shall be assisted by the Statistical Programme Committee, instituted by Decision 89/382 (EEC/Euratom), composed of representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission.

2. Where reference is made to this paragraph, the management procedure laid down in Article 4 of Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply, in compliance with Article 7 and Article 8 thereof.

3. The period provided for in Article 4(3) of Decision 1999/468/EC shall be three months.

Article 15

Implementing measures

1. The measures necessary for the implementation of this Regulation, including measures to take account of economic and technical changes, shall be laid down, at least nine months before the beginning of the year of the survey, in accordance with the procedure specified in Article 14. Such measures shall concern:

(a) the definition of the list of target primary variables to be included in each area for the cross-sectional component and the list of target variables included in the longitudinal component, including the specification of variable codes and the technical format of transmission to Eurostat;

(b) the detailed content of the quality report;

(c) the updating of the definitions, in particular the operationalisation of the income definitions given in points (l) and (m) of Article 2 (including the timetable for the inclusion of the different components);

(d) the sampling aspects, including tracing rules;

(e) the fieldwork aspects;

(f) the list of target secondary areas and variables.

2. By way of exception to the provisions of paragraph 1, for the data collection carried out in year 2003, the measures necessary for the implementation of this Regulation, including measures to take account of economic and technical changes, shall be laid down at least six months before the beginning of the year of the survey and shall only relate to points (a) to (e) of paragraph 1.

3. The total duration of the interview relating to the target primary and target secondary variables of the cross-sectional component, including household and individual interviews, shall not exceed one hour on average in each country.

Article 16

Reports

Member States shall produce by the end of year N + 2, as defined in the second subparagraph of Article 10(2), quality reports that cover both cross-sectional and longitudinal components in relation to the year of the survey N, focussing on the internal accuracy. By way of exception, the 2003 report shall only cover the cross-sectional component.

The Commission (Eurostat) shall produce by 30 June N + 3 a comparative quality report that covers both cross-sectional and longitudinal components in relation to the year of the survey N. By way of exception, the 2003 report shall only cover the cross-sectional component.

No later than 31 December 2007, the Commission will submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the work done under this Regulation.

Article 17

Entry into Force

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

ANNEX I

PRIMARY AREAS COVERED IN THE CROSS-SECTIONAL COMPONENT AND AREAS COVERED IN THE LONGITUDINAL COMPONENT

1. **Household information**

Unit (Persons or households)	Mode of collection	Domains	Areas	Reference period	Cross-sectional (X) and/or longitudinal (L) area
Household	Personal interview of a household member aged 16 and over or extraction from registers	Basic data	Basic household data	Current	X, L
		Income	Total household income (gross and disposable)	Income reference period	X, L
			Gross income components at household level	Income reference period	X, L
		Social exclusion	Arrears	Last 12 months	X, L
			Non-monetary household deprivation indicators	Current	X, L
			Physical and social environment	Current	X
		Housing	Basic housing conditions	Current	X, L
			Amenities in the dwelling	Current	X
			Housing costs	Current	X

2. **Personal information**

Unit (Persons or households)	Mode of collection	Domains	Areas	Reference period	Cross-sectional (X) and/or longitudinal (L) area
All persons aged under 16	Personal interview of a household member aged 16 and over or extraction from registers	Basic data	Demographic data	Current	X, L
Former household members			Demographic data	Income reference period	L
All persons aged 16 and over in the household	Personal interview of all household members aged 16 and over (proxy as an exception for persons temporarily away or in incapacity) or extraction from registers	Income	Gross personal income, total and components at personal level	Income reference period	X, L
	Preferably by personal interview but proxy accepted on a normal procedure or extraction from registers	Basic data	Basic personal data	Current	X, L
			Demographic data	Current	X, L
		Education	Education	Current	X, L
		Labour information	Basic labour information	Current/Income reference period	X, L
			Second job	Current	X

Unit (Persons or households)	Mode of collection	Domains	Areas	Reference period	Cross-sectional (X) and/or longitudinal (L) area
At least one household member aged 16 and over (the selected respondent)	Personal interview of the individual(s) (proxy as an exception) or extraction from registers	Health	Health	Current	X, L
			Access to health care	Past 12 months	X
		Labour information	Detailed labour information	Current	X, L
			Activity history	Working life	L
			Calendar of activities	Income reference period	L

ANNEX II

MINIMUM EFFECTIVE SAMPLE SIZES

	Households		Personal interviews	
	cross-sectional	longitudinal	cross-sectional	longitudinal
	1	2	3	4
Belgium	4 750	3 500	8 750	6 500
Denmark	4 250	3 250	7 250	5 500
Germany	8 250	6 000	14 500	10 500
Greece	4 750	3 500	10 000	7 250
Spain	6 500	5 000	16 000	12 250
France	7 250	5 500	13 500	10 250
Ireland	3 750	2 750	8 000	6 000
Italy	7 250	5 500	15 500	11 750
Luxembourg	3 250	2 500	6 500	5 000
Netherlands	5 000	3 750	8 750	6 500
Austria	4 500	3 250	8 750	6 250
Portugal	4 500	3 250	10 500	7 500
Finland	4 000	3 000	6 750	5 000
Sweden	4 500	3 500	7 500	5 750
United Kingdom	7 500	5 750	13 750	10 500
	80 000	60 000	156 000	116 500

Note:

The reference is to the effective sample size which is the size required if the survey were based on simple random sampling (design effect = 1,0). The actual sample sizes will have to be larger to the extent that the design effects exceed 1,0 to compensate for non-response of all kinds. Furthermore, the sample size refers to the number of valid households which are households for which, and for all members of which, all or nearly all the required information has been obtained.