EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DOC ESSPROS CONFERENCE -2014-A-Annex

ESSPROS CONFERENCE
50th Anniversary and priorities for future developments

Brussels, 19th November 2014

ESSPROS user questionnaire

Documentation for the Conference is available here:
https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/58f07c68-ee07-499c-85c3-6ce643ecdf2f

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ESSPROS DATA USERS

Introduction

In the context of future revision of the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS), we would like to involve users of ESSPROS data in deciding which improvements should be given priority. The following short questionnaire (15-20 minutes) will help us to better understand why and how you are using the ESSPROS data, how this data meets your needs, your assessment of the quality of the data and associated products (publications, database and website) and which part(s) of the system you would like to see improved.

What we collect

ESSPROS aims to provide a comprehensive and comparable dataset on the social benefits provided to households and their financing among European countries (the 28 EU Member States plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Serbia). Social benefits are transfers to households, in cash or in kind, intended to relieve them from the financial burden of a number of risks or needs, which are categorised in ESSPROS "functions": disability, sickness/health care, old age, survivors, family/children, unemployment, housing and social exclusion.

ESSPROS is composed of a core system, which collects data on gross expenditure and receipts, and two modules. These deal with the number of pension beneficiaries (seven categories of pension are covered) and net social protection benefits (i.e. the value of social benefits after deducting taxes and social contributions that may be payable on them). In addition to this quantitative data, ESSPROS collects qualitative information describing the social protection schemes in each country and quality reports on the data collected through the core system and each of the two modules.

ESSPROS data are collected according to Regulation (EC) No 458/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 April 2007 on the European system of integrated social protection statistics[1] and a series of other Commission regulations which cover:
- In relation to the ESSPROS core system and module on pension beneficiaries:
  o definitions, detailed classifications and dissemination rules[2].
  o the results to be transmitted, the transmission format, and criteria for measuring quality[3];
- In relation to the module on net social protection benefits:
  o definitions, and schedule for the launch of the full data collection[4];
  o the results to be transmitted, the transmission format, and criteria for measuring quality [5].

For further information concerning ESSPROS please refer to the following link: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/social_protection/introduction

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[1] http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:113:0003:0008:EN:PDF
[2] http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:005:0003:0012:EN:PDF
[3] http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:294:0005:0010:EN:PDF
[4] http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:071:0004:0008:EN:PDF
[5] http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:034:0029:0032:EN:PDF

Section 1: Basic information

This first section requests some basic information about the type of organisation and country you represent.

1. What type of organisation/institution do you represent? (Compulsory)
Please select one of the following options and provide the name of your organisation/institution below

☐ European Commission   ☐ Non-profit organisation

☐ European institution (other than the Commission)   ☐ Academic institution

☐ Intergovernmental organisation   ☐ Private company

☐ National Statistical Authority   ☐ Other

☐ Government institution

Name of organisation/institution

…

2. In which country do you work?
Please select one of the following options

☐ Austria	☐ Greece	☐ Norway
☐ Belgium	☐ Hungary	☐ Poland
☐ Bulgaria	☐ Ireland	☐ Portugal
☐ Croatia	☐ Italy	☐ Romania
☐ Cyprus	☐ Iceland	☐ Slovakia
☐ Czech Republic	☐ Latvia	☐ Slovenia
☐ Denmark	☐ Liechtenstein	☐ Spain
☐ Estonia	☐ Lithuania	☐ Sweden
☐ Finland	☐ Luxembourg	☐ Switzerland
☐ France	☐ Malta	☐ United Kingdom
☐ Germany	☐ Netherlands	☐ Other

If other is selected, please specify

…

Section 2: Role of ESSPROS data in your work

This section asks questions about how and why you use ESSPROS data, your data needs and your use of other sources of data on social protection.

3. How often (roughly) do you use ESSPROS data?
Please select one of the following options

☐ Never   ☐ Once a month

☐ Once a year   ☐ Once a week

☐ Once a quarter   ☐ Other - *Please specify*

If other is selected, please specify

…

4. Which ESSPROS data are you aware of?
Please indicate all the types of ESSPROS data that you were aware of before taking this survey

Quantitative data
- ☐ Social protection expenditure
- ☐ Social protection receipts
- ☐ Pension beneficiaries
- ☐ Net social protection expenditure

Qualitative data
- ☐ Qualitative information
- ☐ Quality reports

5. Which ESSPROS data have you used?
Please select all of the following options which apply

Quantitative data
- ☐ Social protection expenditure
- ☐ Social protection receipts
- ☐ Pension beneficiaries
- ☐ Net social protection expenditure

Qualitative data
- ☐ Qualitative information
- ☐ Quality reports

6. Which products have you used to access ESSPROS data and associated information?
Please select all of the following options which apply
- ☐ Eurostat's statistical database (available here)
- ☐ Eurostat's metadata system (ESMS available here)
- ☐ Eurostat publications, including statistics in focus (available here)
- ☐ Eurostat's statistics explained website (available here)
- ☐ Other

7. How important is ESSPROS data for your work?
Please select the one option that best reflects the importance of ESSPROS data for your work
- ☐ Not important
- ☐ Of little importance
- ☐ Moderately important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ No opinion

8. For what purposes do you use ESSPROS data?
Please select all of the following options which apply

Qualitative analysis
- ☐ Background information
- ☐ Policy analysis
- ☐ Legislative analysis

Quantitative analysis
- ☐ Forecasting
- ☐ Time-series analysis
- ☐ Cross-sectional analysis
- ☐ Production of indicators
- ☐ Comparison with other sources of data

Reporting
- ☐ Research/reports for public dissemination
- ☐ Research/reports for internal use only

Decision making
- ☐ Policy decision making
- ☐ Legislative decision making

Other
- ☐ Other (Please specify below)

If other is selected, please specify what these other purposes are

…

9. Are there any social protection statistics that you need for your job but which are not currently available from ESSPROS?
Please select one of the following options
☐Yes (*Please complete text box below with details*)
☐No

If Yes is selected, please specify what other social protection statistics you need

…

10. Do you use other sources of data to complement, or as an alternative to, ESSPROS data?
Please select one of the following options
☐Yes – please respond to sub questions a) and b)
☐No – please go to question 11

10. a) What other data sources do you use to complement, or as an alternative to, ESSPROS data?
Please select all of the following options which apply
☐ Mutual Information System on Social Protection – MISSOC (available here)
☐ Labour market policy database – LMP (available here)
☐ National Accounts (available here)
☐ OECD Social expenditure database – SOCX (available here)
☐ Government finance statistics – GFS (available here)
☐ National sources
☐ Other (Please complete text box below with details)

If other is selected, please specify what these other sources are

…

Please add additional comments (if necessary)

…

10. b) What aspects of these data are better than or complement the ESSPROS data?
Please select all of the following options which apply

Relevance
☐ Time-series coverage
☐ Geographical coverage
☐ Breakdowns available
☐ Level of detail (qualitative information)
☐ Scope of the data
Availability
☐ Timeliness
☐ Periodicity
☐ Accessibility

Complementary information
☐ Indicators
☐ Supporting metadata
Quality
☐ Coherence
☐ Comparability
☐ Accuracy
Other
☐ Other (Please specify below)

Please feel free to add more detailed comments or suggest how ESSPROS could improve by making links with other sources

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Section 3: Use of the different elements of ESSPROS data

At present data on social protection expenditure, receipts and numbers of pension beneficiaries and net social benefits are collected as part of ESSPROS data collection. This section requests more detailed information on the use of each of these sets of data.

Section 3.1: Social protection expenditure data

11. Do you use ESSPROS data on social protection expenditure?
Please select one of the following options
☐ Yes – please respond to sub questions a) to d)
☐ No – please continue to question 12.

11. a) Which of the following breakdowns of social protection expenditure data by economic type do you use?
Please select all of the following options which apply
☐ Social benefits   ☐ Other expenditure
☐ Administration costs   ☐ None - I do not use these breakdowns
☐ Transfers from other schemes

11. b) Which of the following breakdowns of social protection expenditure data on social benefits by type of expenditure do you use?
Please select all of the following options which apply
☐ By type (cash/in kind)
☐ By characteristic (means tested/non means-tested)
☐ By function (Sickness/healthcare, disability, old age, survivors, family/children, unemployment, housing and social exclusion not elsewhere classified)
☐ None - I do not use any breakdowns

11. c) What additional breakdowns of the social protection expenditure data would be useful to you?
Please provide details of any additional levels of detail that would be useful to you

…

Section 3.2: Social protection receipts data

12. Do you use ESSPROS data on social protection receipts?
Please select one of the following options
☐ Yes – please respond to sub questions a) to c)
☐ No – please continue to question 13.

12. a) Which of the following breakdowns of social protection receipts data by economic type do you use?
Please select all of the following options which apply
☐ Social contributions
☐ General government contributions
☐ Transfers from other schemes
☐ Other receipts
☐ None - I do not use these breakdowns

12. b) Which of the following breakdowns of social protection receipts data by sector of origin do you use?
Please select all of the following options which apply
☐ Corporations
☐ General Government
☐ Households
☐ Non-profit institutions
☐ Rest of the world
☐ None - I do not use these breakdowns

12. c) What additional breakdowns of the social protection receipts data would be useful to you?
Please provide details of any additional levels of detail that would be useful to you

> …

Section 3.3: Pension beneficiaries data

13. Do you use ESSPROS data on the number of pension beneficiaries?
Please select one of the following options
☐ Yes – please respond to sub questions a) to e)
☐ No – please continue to question 14.

13. a) Which of the following breakdowns of pension beneficiaries by category do you use?
Please select all of the following options which apply
☐ Disability pension
☐ Early retirement benefit due to reduced capacity to work
☐ Old-age pension
☐ Anticipated old-age pension
☐ Partial pension
☐ Survivors' pension
☐ Early retirement benefit due to labour market reasons
☐ None - I do not use these breakdowns

13. b) Do you use the breakdown of pension beneficiaries data by gender?
Please select one of the following options
☐ Yes
☐ No

13. c) Which of the following breakdowns of pension beneficiaries data would be useful to you?
Please select all of the following options which apply
☐ Breakdown by function (i.e. separate numbers of pension beneficiaries for the disability function, old-age function, survivors' function, unemployment function…etc.)
☐ Breakdown by characteristic (i.e. mean tested/non-means tested)

13. d) Information on the number of pension beneficiaries living outside the providing country is currently collected on a voluntary basis. Would such information be useful to you?
Please select <u>one</u> of the following options
☐ Yes
☐ No

13. e) For which other social benefits would statistics on the number of beneficiaries be useful to you?
Please list any social benefits for which data on numbers of beneficiaries would be useful to you

…

Section 3.4: Net benefits data (restricted approach)

Net social protection benefits refer to "the value of social protection benefits excluding taxes and social contributions paid by the benefits' recipients complemented by the value of fiscal benefits" where fiscal benefits are defined to be "social protection provided in the form of tax breaks that would be defined as social protection benefits if they were provided in cash, excluding tax breaks promoting the provision of social protection or promoting private insurance plans"[6].

There are two approaches to the measuring net social protection benefit expenditure. The first of these is referred to as the "restricted approach". This defines net social protection benefits as gross social protection benefits less taxes and social contributions, paid on those benefits by their recipients and implies no change to the scope compared to the Core system. Data following this approach are already being collected on a regular basis.

14. Do you use ESSPROS data on net social protection benefit expenditure following the "restricted approach" described above?
Please select <u>one</u> of the following options
☐ Yes (Please specify what you use if for below)
☐ No (Please specify the reasons for not using the data below)

If you replied "Yes" please specify what you use this data for
If you replied "No", please explain the reasons why you do not find the data useful

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[6] Article 2 of the ESSPROS Regulation (EC) No 458/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:113:0003:0008:EN:PDF

Section 4: Future development of ESSPROS

Section 4.1: Net benefits data (enlarged approach)
The second approach to measuring net social protection benefit expenditure is the "enlarged approach", which builds on the restricted approach by incorporating the effect of fiscal benefits. This potentially enlarges the scope of ESSPROS compared to the Core system because it includes the value of social benefits provided solely through the fiscal system. Fiscal benefits reduce the amount of taxes and/or social contributions paid on all forms of income (e.g. from employment) and therefore increases the disposable income of beneficiaries in addition to the social benefits recorded in the Core system. Moreover, fiscal benefits may accrue to persons who receive no social benefits paid in cash or in kind who are therefore not members of the population of recipients covered by the Core system.

15. Would data on net social protection benefit expenditure following the "enlarged approach" described above be useful for your work?
Please select <u>one</u> of the following options
☐ Yes (Please specify what you would use if for below)
☐ No (Please specify the reasons **why these data are not relevant for you** below)

If you replied "Yes", please specify what you would expect to use this data for
If you replied "No", please explain why these data would not be relevant for you
…

Section 4.2 Data by scheme
Social benefits are made through collectively organised schemes by government and/or collective agreements. The social protection scheme is defined as a distinct body of rules, supported by one or more institutional units, governing the provision of social protection benefits and their financing. As part of the ESSPROS system, data by scheme are collected but are not currently published on Eurostat web site.

16. Would data on social protection expenditure and receipts broken down by scheme be useful for your work?
Please select <u>one</u> of the following options
☐Yes (Please specify what you would use it for below)
☐No

If you replied "Yes", please specify what you would expect to use this data for
…

Section 4.3: Estimates
At present ESSPROS data for reference year N is disseminated in the year N+2. There is a possibility that provisional ESSPROS data could be made available with a smaller delay.

17. Would an earlier release of provisional estimates (at aggregated level) for the latest reference period be useful for you?
Please select one of the following options
☐Yes (Please specify **what you would use it for and what aggregates you would require** below)
☐No

If yes, please specify how you would expect to use this data and the benefits of having it earlier
…

If yes, please specify the aggregates that you would require
…

Section 5: Assessment of the quality of ESSPROS data

The European Statistical System (ESS) has defined the following quality criteria (to be applied to statistical data): Relevance, Accessibility and Clarity, Timeliness and Punctuality, Coherence, Comparability and Accuracy. This section of the questionnaire asks assess how ESSPROS fulfils these.

➤ **Relevance** refers to the extent to which the statistical data satisfy the needs of the users.

18. What is your assessment of the relevance of the ESSPROS data?
Please select one of the following options
☐ Very good
☐ Good
☐ Adequate
☐ Poor
☐ Very Poor
☐ No opinion

Please add additional comments/clarifications (if necessary)
…

➤ **Accessibility** refers to the physical conditions under which users can obtain the statistical data.
➤ **Clarity** refers to the availability of appropriate documentation linked to the statistical data and to the additional assistance which producers supply to users.

19. What is your assessment of the accessibility and clarity of the ESSPROS data?
Please select one of the following options
☐Very good
☐Good
☐Adequate
☐Poor
☐Very Poor
☐No opinion

Please add additional comments/clarifications (if necessary)
…

➤ **Timeliness** of statistical data is the length of time between their availability and the moment at which the phenomena they describe occurred.

➤ **Punctuality** refers to any time lag between the release and the target date by which the data should have been delivered.

20. What is your assessment of the timeliness and punctuality of the ESSPROS data?
Please select one of the following options
☐Very good
☐Good
☐Adequate
☐Poor
☐Very Poor
☐No opinion

Please add additional comments/clarifications (if necessary)
…

➤ **Coherence** aims to measure the reliability of the statistical data if combined with other statistics in different ways and for other uses.

21. What is your assessment of the coherence of the ESSPROS data?
Please select one of the following options
☐Very good
☐Good
☐Adequate
☐Poor
☐Very Poor
☐No opinion

Please add additional comments/clarifications (if necessary) …

➤ **Comparability** tries to measure the effect of the differences in the applied statistical concepts and measurement procedures when the statistical data are compared between geographic areas, over time or between different domains.

22. What is your assessment of the comparability of the ESSPROS data?
Please select one of the following options

☐Very good
☐Good
☐Adequate
☐Poor
☐Very Poor
☐No opinion

Please add additional comments/clarifications (if necessary)
…

➢ **Accuracy** refers to the closeness of the statistical data to the unknown true or exact value of the measured phenomena.

23. What is your assessment of the overall accuracy of the ESSPROS data?

Please select <u>one</u> of the following options
☐Very good
☐Good
☐Adequate
☐Poor
☐Very Poor
☐No opinion

Please add additional comments/clarifications (if necessary)

…

Section 6: Other comments

24. Do you have any other comments on ESSPROS that have not been addressed in previous questions?
If yes, please provide these comments

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Thank you for completing our survey. Your response is very important to us.