EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EUROSTAT

Directorate F: Social statistics
Unit F-3: Labour market and lifelong learning

Luxembourg, November 2019
ESTAT/F-3

Subject: Information note on the use of the 2019 release of anonymised EU LFS microdata – special release including the 2018 ad-hoc module

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed the 2019 release of the anonymised EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) datasets for the reference years 1983-2018.

Data cover all 28 EU Member States as well as Iceland, Norway and Switzerland subject to data availability with the exception of Malta (from 2009 onwards only). However, particular country datasets may be excluded as a result of the approval procedure for research project proposals. German data prior to 2002 are treated in a special way[1]. Besides core LFS data, the database also includes the corresponding ad-hoc modules for the reference years 1999 and 2002 to 2018. No ad-hoc module was conducted in 2015.

The encrypted and extractable core LFS data files are organised by country. The datasets for the ad hoc modules are combined with core LFS data and stored separately in one annual file per module including all countries. A set of specific household data files for Denmark (2002-2018), Finland (2003-2018), Sweden (2009-2018) and Luxembourg (2015-2018) is included as well.

The following supporting information is also provided:

– The EU LFS User Guide describing the 2019 release

– The EU LFS explanatory notes valid for 2017 (reporting guidelines for the Member States)

– A list of data revisions received since the last release

– Comma-Separated Value (CSV) metadata files listing all datasets included in this release, which consists of standard LFS data files – quarterly and yearly – plus special files with household data and ad hoc module files; these metadata files also include information on sample size and relevant reliability limits per data file.

– SAS import programs allowing the loading of the data into SAS datasets

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[1] German data prior to 2002 are absolutely anonymised: regional information is completely suppressed in addition to all other general aggregation criteria.

GENERAL NOTES ON THE DATA INCLUDED IN THE RELEASE

The structure of the LFS changed in 2006 to reduce the burden on respondents. Since then, all variables have been collected on a yearly basis, but only a selection of them on a quarterly basis. Those variables not collected on a quarterly but only on a yearly basis are referred to as structural variables. To comply with this structure, the LFS data are divided into 2 databases:

- Files ending in q1, q2, q3 and q4 contain only the quarterly variables (as defined in the regulations 430/2005 and 377/2008)

- Files ending in _y contain all variables of the core LFS survey, the quarterly and the structural ones (cp. the regulations mentioned above)

Data for years prior to 2006 are treated in the same way as data from 2006 onwards, i.e. a similar split into quarterly and yearly datasets is carried out. In consequence the quarterly files for reference years 1983 to 2005 also contain only the set of quarterly variables defined in regulations 430/2005 and 377/2008.

Data for all four quarters of a year are in principle progressively available starting between 1998 and 2004 for all countries, except for Germany for which quarterly data are available from 2005 and Croatia for which this is the case from 2007 (until then, Croatia transmitted two semi-annual files per year). For comparison reasons, the reference sample for yearly files hence corresponds to one reference quarter in spring until 2004, and to an annual sample covering all weeks of the year from 2005.

For the years from 2005 onwards this annual sample consists of the full set of the 4 quarterly samples in all countries with the following exceptions:

- a sub-sample representing the whole year is used for ES, FR, NL, NO from 2006, DE from 2006 to 2011, FI from 2007, BG, UK from 2008, CH from 2010, CZ from 2011, LU from 2015, BE and LV from 2017
- quarter 2 is used for IE and FI from 2005 to 2006, UK from 2005 to 2007, CH from 2005 to 2009

These special annual sub-samples are usually even smaller than the ones of a single quarter – the exact sample size depends on the rotation scheme in place in a given country.

The ad-hoc module datasets contain all variables of the core LFS survey, the quarterly and the structural ones, plus the ad-hoc module variables for the respective year.

Subject to availability of the respective information for a given country, derived household variables are added to the anonymised LFS microdata in the yearly datasets from 1998 and in the ad-hoc module datasets from 2005 onwards. Danish, Finnish, Swedish and from 2015 also Luxemburgish household data are delivered in separate files as they are based on a special sample using specific household weights.

All datasets contain just one set of weights, i.e. those to be used for quarterly, yearly, ad-hoc module and specific household analyses respectively, depending on the type of file.

Data for EU countries are usually available depending on their EU accession date, and from 2002 for all EU28 countries except Malta.

Furthermore, the release includes SAS import programs to load the data into SAS datasets. Import programs for loading data into other statistical software packages like SPSS and STATA are usually made available some time after Eurostat's release for instance on the GESIS Website[2].

More details on structure and content of the database and the anonymisation criteria applied can be found in the EU LFS User Guide. Additional useful information about the EU LFS is also available at

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/overview

and

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_labour_force_survey

We would like to draw your attention especially to the terms of use and guidelines for publication attached to this release.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)
Anne Clémenceau
Head of Unit

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[2] GESIS – Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, https://www.gesis.org/en/missy/materials/EU-LFS/setups