

# The EC Household Panel Newsletter (3/99)

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*Eric Marlier*

Statistics  
in focus

POPULATION AND  
SOCIAL CONDITIONS

THEME 3 – 16/1999

POPULATION AND LIVING  
CONDITIONS

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### EDITORIAL

The new, more comprehensive and substantially revised ECHP Users' Data Base (UDB), containing 1994-1996 micro-data, has just become available.

This gives us a good opportunity to look back and consider the major steps that have been made in ECHP data availability over the last two years; in particular, the actual impact for the scientific community, i.e. the new research projects that the UDB is already or will soon be fostering.

It also gives us a good occasion to look forward and announce a major change in our pricing policy, which has been made possible only because of the success met so far. The price of the UDB will be reduced significantly as of **1 January 2000**. We hope this will **boost further** the interest in and use of this unique source of comparable information on income and living conditions in the EU.

As you may remember, it is in the new legal framework provided by the so-called EU Statistical Law that Eurostat developed a strategy back in November 1997 to meet the growing interest for ECHP based statistics more satisfactorily. It decided then to construct the UDB, with a view to opening up access to ECHP micro-data without jeopardising both the necessary conditions of data confidentiality and the value of the data.

The UDB contains anonymised ECHP household and personal micro-data, in the sense that there should be no risk that an individual statistical unit could be identified in this data-set through "all the means that might reasonably be used by a third party to identify the said statistical unit" (Statistical Law). It is user-friendly and truly longitudinal in structure.

Thanks to the UDB, the first version of which was finalised mid-December 1998, ECHP data have become more widely available, although direct access to this anonymised dataset is restricted by means of ECHP research contracts that are signed with Eurostat and stipulate the strict conditions of data use and access.

It is worth pointing out that this direct access offered to researchers still remains exceptional at EU-level. This precursory role highlights the fact that users have always been a key focus of the project.

The first ECHP research contract was signed in January 1999, that is almost one year ago.



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## ECHP research contracts to date

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We are about to blow out the first candle of our new ECHP data dissemination policy, and it is now time for us to analyse the actual impact of this breakthrough in EU comparative socio-economic research.

The focus hereafter is thus on analyses carried out outside Eurostat and ECHP National Data Collection Units (NDUs), i.e. the direct use of ECHP micro-data that has been made possible through the dissemination of the UDB.

The emphasis is on stressing the diversity of projects carried out in the context of ECHP research contracts rather than on trying to present an exhaustive list of these.

To date, 24 ECHP research contracts have already been or are about to be signed:

- (a) Five of them involve exclusively the Commission, another EU institution or an NDU.
- (b) Two of them involve international organisations.
- (c) As to the remaining 17 contracts, they involve many more than 17 data users given that some of them were signed in the context of research projects funded by one of the European Commission research programs (TSER, TMR, BIOMED...). Under strict rules specified in the ECHP research contracts, some or all of the data analysts who are contractual members of a network in charge of one of these projects may be given access to the UDB. The consequence of this is that, excluding the few NDUs that participate in some of these projects, not less than 60 universities, research institutes or research departments in public administrations can now access directly the anonymised and user-friendly ECHP data-set. These bodies are disseminated in 14 EU Member States (the exception being Luxembourg, a country where the NDU is very much involved in international research networks) as well as Norway and Switzerland.

The research projects specified in these ECHP research contracts are numerous, extremely varied and ambitious. Their focus is on comparable and multi-dimensional data on income and living conditions in the broadest sense. Some of these projects include longitudinal analyses that are likely to require at least three waves of the ECHP.

Here are a few examples of the studies planned in the current research contracts:

- Low-wage employment and the working poor: proportion of low-wage workers, analysis of this population in terms of both individual and job's characteristics, extent of poverty among workers...
- Relationship between standard of living, social policy, labour market and the role of the family. For instance: transitions on the labour market and standard of living, individual income versus household standard of living...
- Construction of a tax-benefit micro-simulation model covering all 15 EU countries and based on household micro-data from ECHP and other data sources.
- Employment precarity, unemployment and social exclusion.
- Family structure, labour market participation and the dynamics of social exclusion.
- Transitions from education to work.
- Inequalities in health (self-reported health status), economic determinants of the distribution of health and health care...
- Gender earnings differentials: relative importance of gender-specific and wage structure factors in determining earnings differentials between men and women, relationship between gender earnings differentials and gender differences in the pattern of job mobility...

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## New pricing policy

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As can be seen from the above, we have been quite successful in the dissemination of our data. This has encouraged the different departments concerned at Eurostat to reconsider fundamentally the pricing policy applied to the UDB.

We will not come back on the details of the contractual aspect of the ECHP dissemination policy: ECHP research contracts themselves are not affected at all by the change in policy.

The decision is indeed only about the price of the UDB, which will be reduced significantly as of 1 January 2000,

with the hope that this will boost further the use of this unique research tool.

So, our focus here is on the various categories of ECHP data users defined by Eurostat and the respective pricing policy applied to these. Prices below are for 1994-1996 waves data.

As before, the specific pricing strategy and accessing/ utilisation rules applied to each category of ECHP users have been developed in order to try and achieve two major aims: encourage ECHP research and increase the visibility of the instrument.

In particular, the pricing strategy still makes it possible for those users interested to get a significant reduction in price in exchange for a Eurostat "by-product". As described in our January 99 Newsletter, these "products"...

- are a possibility, not a 'right', that Eurostat may offer to users interested in the case of a real common

interest of both the organisation(s) concerned and Eurostat;

- are negotiated in detail in terms of content, timing... and must be original, e.g. should not have been published anywhere else in the case of a publication;
- are the property of Eurostat.

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## Types of users and prices for 1994-1996 waves data

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### A STUDENTS, INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS...

There is normally no possibility for individual persons to acquire the CD-ROM directly. Such requests need to come from the organisation where the person interested is studying or working.

### B ALL ANALYSES ARE CARRIED OUT EXCLUSIVELY ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION

#### B.1 Analyses are conducted solely by Commission staff/personnel

PRICE: Free

#### B.2 Analyses are conducted by external experts in the context of a SINGLE contract signed with the Commission

##### B.2.1 All data analysts involved pertain to the same organisation

PRICE: 3.000 EUR  
(or 1.000 plus one by-product)

##### B.2.2 All data analysts involved are contractual members of a network that as such has a contract with the Commission (e.g. DGXII TSER, TMR or BIOMED research networks)

Access is given only to data analysts listed in this (TSER/...) contract signed with the Commission.

PRICE: 6.000 EUR  
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##### B.2.3 Data analysts involved pertain to two or more organisations that are not organised in a "Commission network"

Access is given only to data analysts listed in this contract signed with the Commission.

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#### B.3 Analyses are carried out by external experts in the context of SEVERAL contracts signed with the Commission

Data are used solely for the purpose of the projects specified in the contracts with the Commission. All data

analysts involved in this project pertain to the **SAME** organisation.

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### C ALL ANALYSES ARE CARRIED OUT EXCLUSIVELY EITHER ON BEHALF OF OTHER EU INSTITUTIONS OR ON BEHALF OF EU AGENCIES

All categories under "B" above strictly apply. "Commission" simply needs to be replaced with the name of the relevant EU body.

### D ANALYSES ARE CARRIED OUT BY THE STAFF/ PERSONNEL OF A GIVEN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC ORGANISATION (E.G. A SPECIFIC UN BODY...) - ALL ANALYSES ARE CONDUCTED EXCLUSIVELY ON BEHALF OF THIS ORGANISATION

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### E ANALYSES ARE CARRIED OUT BY THE STAFF/ PERSONNEL OF A GIVEN FEDERAL OR REGIONAL MINISTRY/ ADMINISTRATION - ALL ANALYSES ARE CONDUCTED EXCLUSIVELY ON BEHALF OF THIS BODY

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### F ANALYSES ARE CARRIED OUT BY THE STAFF/ PERSONNEL OF A SINGLE ORGANISATION. DATA ARE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ONE OR SEVERAL PROJECTS

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### G ANY USER OTHER THAN THOSE DESCRIBED ABOVE (INCLUDING NETWORKS/ASSOCIATIONS NOT COVERED IN "B.2.2" OR "B.2.3" ABOVE)

Possibilities of acquiring the UDB as well as the price and related data access/use issues, will need to be examined on an ad hoc basis by Eurostat.

# Further information:

## ➤ Reference publications

Title European Community Household Panel (ECHP): Selected indicators from the 1995 wave  
 Catalogue No CA-22-99-765-EN-C Price EUR 45

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