



Leibniz Institute  
for the Social Sciences

Report on GESIS-Workshop within CESSDA  
Data Discovery Training:

Working with European Union Labour Force  
Survey (EU-LFS)

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# Report on the GESIS-Workshop within CESSDA Data Discovery Training

## Working with European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)

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The EU-LFS workshop was part of the Data Discovery Training by CESSDA. It took place in Mannheim from November 27th – 29th, 2017 and was organized and hosted by GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences.

The course was aimed at postgraduates and senior scientists from all over Europe who want to work with EU-LFS data. In addition to highlighting the legal and administrative aspects of data access, the course demonstrated the EU-LFS capabilities in hands-on computer sessions, highlighting the potential for both cross-country and time-comparative analysis. Basic knowledge of multivariate statistical methods and techniques was assumed.

Due to legal restrictions, the participation was limited to researchers whose organization is recognized as a research entity by EUROSTAT. Since the workshop was funded by CESSDA under the Data Discovery Training, no workshop fees were charged. However, participants had to cover their expenses for travel and accommodation. Moreover, we asked all applicants to briefly indicate their scientific background and research interests regarding EU-LFS (max. 200 words), because places available were limited to 16 (practical sessions). The announcement of the workshop can be found in the appendix to this report.

The workshop was advertised roughly four months prior to the actual event. The main channels used to disseminate the call for applications were the GESIS EU-microdata list, the CESSDA mailing list and mailing lists of European social science organizations. In total, we got 32 applications (plus two additional rather spontaneous short-term applications), which is a considerable number given the restrictive participation conditions. For the first day (theoretical sessions only) 18 researchers were accepted. 16 participants were accepted for the practical sessions (day 2 and day 3), coming from 13 different countries (Portugal, Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Austria, Spain, Hungary, Portugal, Italy, and Romania).

During the three-day course, the researchers were given extensive background information on different aspects of the survey, as well as practical experience. Three guest speakers were invited to the event to share their expertise on the EU-LFS. Hartmut Schrör from Eurostat opened the workshop with a presentation on the legal framework of the EU-LFS. He also gave insights about the coordination and harmonisation of the survey. Over the course of the whole workshop, he was available for detailed questions and comments, which was well received by the participants. The second guest speaker, Prof. Dr. Michael Gebel from the University of Bamberg provided an overview of his earlier and current research with the EU-LFS. He demonstrated several ways to exploit the data set cross-nationally, but also

across time. From this long-term experience, Prof. Dr. Gebel also used the opportunity to communicate boundaries of the data and desired improvements. The third guest speaker, Dr. Bernhard Schimpl-Neimanns from GESIS, talked about the unbiased estimation of standard errors by fully taking into account the rotating panel structure across quarters. He presented a showcase example with data from the Austrian LFS.

The second day started with a brief introduction to data confidentiality. The Self-study material for the users of Eurostat microdata sets was handed out, and participants were encouraged – back at home - take up the self-assessment test offered by EUROSTAT.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards (second and third day), members of the German Microdata Lab (GESIS) instructed hands-on computer sessions where participants had the chance to practise essential data management and analysis with training data. These sessions aimed to demonstrate the specifics and possibilities of the survey. In eight thematic exercises, the participants learned how to handle the different data components, the country differences and the sample structure. Several sessions also covered advanced methods like multilevel analysis and longitudinal methods. After three labour intensive days, the workshop partakers extended their familiarity with the EU-Labour Force Survey and were able to apply principal Stata routines to research household composition, labour market behaviour, as well as time comparative and cross-national analyses. The detailed program can be found in the appendix.

## Evaluation

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In conclusion of the workshop, the participants were asked to fill in an online questionnaire, prepared by GESIS and CESSDA, with which different aspects of the training were evaluated. Also, participants were encouraged to provide comments on what they especially liked about this course but also how we could improve future workshops. Overall the course was evaluated rather favorably by participants with a mean score of 4.0 on a scale from 1 'very dissatisfied' to 5 'very satisfied'. The majority of the participants thought that the workshop was useful for their work and would recommend the workshop to others (each 92 percent).

Furthermore, results showed that participants thought that the course was well structured, the course materials were useful, and that they learned a lot in this course (see table 1).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/overview/self-study-material-for-microdata-users>; last access December, 15, 2017.

Table 1: How true do you think are the following statements?

Statements	Mean*)	N
The content of the course was well-structured	4.00	13
A link between theory and practice was made	4.15	13
The practical exercises enabled me to implement the thought procedures & methods on my own	3.69	13
The course materials were very useful	4.62	13
The lecturer was scientifically competent	4.69	13
The lecturer was didactically competent	4.23	13
My previous content-related knowledge was sufficient	3.77	13
My previous technical knowledge was sufficient	3.15	13
I learned a lot in this course	4.08	13
The course content matches the course announcement	4.25	12
*)Scale from 1 to 5; (1=Not true at all; 2=Rather not true; 3=Neither/Nor; 4=Rather true 5=Completely true)		

The participants also appreciated the amount of material covered, the level of difficulty and the time for practical exercises. However, it seems some participants would prefer more time for discussion (see table 2).

Table 2: How do you rate .....?

How do you rate ..... (scale from 1 to 5)	Mean	N
Amount of material covered *)	3.54	13
Level of difficulty **)	3.62	13
Opportunity for discussion*)	3.08	13
Time for practical exercises ***)	2.25	12
Duration of the course ***)	2.85	13
Course speed ****)	3.62	13
Overall satisfaction *****)	4.0	13
*) scale from 1 (too little) to 5 (too much)		
**) scale from 1 (too easy) to 5 (too difficult)		
***) scale from 1 (too short) to 5 (too long)		
****) scale from 1 (too slow) to 5 (too fast)		
*****) scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)		

Written comments indicate that the participants enjoyed the combination of theory and practice. It was pointed that the theoretical sessions were very useful for understanding the structure and cross-national variations of the EU-LFS. They appreciated to work with real data, to learn more about the EU-LFS methodology, to try new analysis methods. According to one participant, "the course was more difficult than the course description suggested and this is a good thing". Suggestions how to improve future courses mainly ask for (even) more training days and spending more time with data management (less experienced researchers). Others suggested spending more time on advanced econometric methods and the interpretation of results.

# Acknowledgements

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This course would have not been possible without the continued support from and open mindedness of Eurostat and National Statistical Institutes throughout Europe. In particular, our thanks go to Aleksandra Bujnowska, Wilhemus Kloek and Hartmut Schrör from Eurostat. While we are grateful to Hartmut Schrör for presenting and discussing all aspects of the EU-LFS and staying with us for three days, we would like to thank Aleksandra Bujnowska and Wilhemus Kloek for their support in the matter of 'generating training data'. We are also grateful that 29 NSIs grant us permission to use a well-defined sample and variable selection of their LFS data for this course. We thank the NSIs of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, and the United Kingdom.

We are also very grateful to CESSDA which funded the workshop. Thus the workshop was offered free of charge, and we also could invite Prof. Dr. Michael Gebel (University of Bamberg) as guest speaker.

Many thanks also go to IT GESIS Mannheim, which enabled us to set up a closed shop operation for the practical computer sessions.

# Appendix

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- a) Announcement of the training course
- b) Program of the training course
- c) Self-study material (cover sheet)

## GESIS-Workshop within CESSDA Data Discovery Training

### Working with European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)

GESIS, Mannheim, Germany, 27-29 November, 2017

GESIS – Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences is an infrastructure institution in Germany which offers services to the empirical social research. In addition, we are also engaged in own social research, focusing on the description and analysis of social change. Moreover, GESIS offers a wide range of events for, by and with the scientific community. In our training courses we impart knowledge and practice-oriented skills in the area of social research methods.

This workshop is part of the Data Discovery Training by CESSDA. CESSDA provides large scale, integrated and sustainable data services to the social sciences. It brings together social science data archives across Europe, with the aim of promoting the results of social science research and supporting national and international research and cooperation.

The course is aimed at post-graduate and senior researchers from throughout Europe, who are seeking to conduct research on the basis of the EU-LFS. Besides highlighting the legal and administrative aspects of data access, the course will demonstrate the possibilities of the EU-LFS in a hands-on computer session which will explore the potential for both international as well as longitudinal analysis. Basic understanding in multivariate statistical methods and Stata will be required.

The course will take place in Mannheim, Germany from 27 to 29 November 2017. The course will consist of the following parts:

Day 1: Introduction into EU-LFS

Day 2: Practical Training Session I – Basic Topics (e.g. data structure, data management, substantive and methodical issues)

Day 3: Practical Training Session II – Advanced Topics (e.g. cross-national comparison, retrospective data, time comparative analysis, longitudinal analysis)

Please note:

1. Participation is limited to researchers whose organization has been recognized as a research entity by EUROSTAT. Before registration [please check](#) whether your organization has been recognized. In case your organization is not recognized, you first have to [apply for recognition](#) via Eurostat.
2. The workshop is financially supported by CESSDA under the Data Discovery Training therefore there will be no workshop fee. However participants will have to cover their own expenses for travel and accommodation.
3. Registration for the EU-LFS Workshop can be made via our registration site. When enrolling, we ask you to briefly indicate your scientific background and your research interests regarding EU-LFS (max. 200 words). Available places are limited. Please wait for confirmation of your participation.

For further information please contact [heike.wirth@gesis.org](mailto:heike.wirth@gesis.org)

## GESIS-Workshop within CESSDA Data Discovery Training Working with European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)

November 27-29, 2017; Mannheim, Germany

The course is aimed at post-graduate and senior researchers from throughout Europe, who are seeking to conduct research on the basis of the EU-LFS. Besides highlighting the legal and administrative aspects of data access, the course will demonstrate the possibilities of the EU-LFS in a hands-on computer session which will explore the potential for both international as well as longitudinal analysis. Basic understanding of multivariate statistical methods and Stata will be required. The course instructors will be Hartmut Schrör (Eurostat), Prof. Dr. Michael Gebel (Universität Bamberg), Dr. Bernhard Schimpl-Neimanns (GESIS), Dr. Klaus Pfarr (GESIS), Dr. Valentina Ponomarenko (GESIS), Kathrin Stief (GESIS), and Dr. Heike Wirth (GESIS).

### Day 1, Monday, November 27, 2017

12:30 – 13:00 Registration

#### Part I: Introductory Session

13:00 – 14:30 Introduction to EU-LFS – Legal aspects – Hartmut Schrör, Eurostat

14:30 – 15:30 Introduction to EU-LFS – Research perspective – Michael Gebel, Universität Bamberg

15:30 – 16:00 Break

16:00 – 18:00 Introduction into specificities of EU-LFS data

18:00 Wine & Cheese

### Day 2, Tuesday, November 28, 2017

#### Part II: Computer Lab Session – Basic Topics

9:30 – 10:00 Introduction to the training dataset

10:00 – 12:00 Data structure and data management

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 14:15 Substantive issues: e.g. non-standard employment

14:15 – 14:30 Break

14:30 – 15:45 Methodical issues: Cross-national comparison (Multi-level analysis I)

15:45 – 16:00 Break

16:00 – 17:00 Estimation of standard error for estimators of net change with longitudinal LFS-data – by taking the example of Austria – Bernhard Schimpl-Neimanns, GESIS

### Day 3, Wednesday, November 29, 2017

#### Part III: Computer Lab Session – Advanced Topics – Longitudinal Analysis

9:30 – 10:30 Retrospective data

10:30 – 12:00 Panel analysis

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 14:30 Time comparative analysis

14:30 – 14:45 Break

14:45 – 16:15 Longitudinal analysis (Multi-level analysis II)

16:15 End of the workshop



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## **Self-study material for the users of Eurostat microdata sets**

Luxembourg, June 2016