

Eurobarometer for research and training

Background and figures on the archive data service in the last decade (2005–2015)

The Eurobarometer is continues strengthening its position among the international data collections most frequently used in social science research and training. This is still true after four decades of "open access" to the micro data granted by the *European Commission* and put into practice by the Social Science Data Archives. Over time the Eurobarometer have stimulated some 12.000 peer-reviewed articles in academic journals¹.

Chart 1: Number of analysis data files² downloaded at GESIS

International Data Collections	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Eurobarometer	9.847	9.959	8.339	9.279	11.965	15.209	19.229	20.113
ISSP	3.337	4.520	4.281	4.729	6.182	6.254	7.758	8.020
European Values Study	805	1.219	3.141	5.065	5.212	5.112	6.185	5.902

Long-term preservation and usability

The responsibility for long-term access to and usability of Eurobarometer primary data and related documentation was entrusted to the social science data archives, initially to the Belgium Archives for Social Sciences (BASS) and to the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Since the early nineties they are deposited at the "Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung" (ZA), now "GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences" and still in close cooperation with the ICPSR.

Currently the GESIS archive holdings of Eurobarometer comprise **almost 650 studies**³, including the initial European Communities Studies, the Standard & Special Eurobarometer, the Central & Eastern and Candidate (Applicant) Countries Eurobarometer, and the Flash Eurobarometer series as well as cumulative data products⁴. The systematically versioned and persistently identified⁵ datasets are all available online, together with the master and field questionnaires in all language versions and complemented by archive variable reports. In total some 16.500 data and documentation files are available online for Eurobarometer users.

¹ Retrieved through the EBSCO Discovery Service as subscribed by and customized for GESIS. Search in title, abstract and (if available) full text performed on April 13, 2016. Filter: Academic peer-reviewed journals.

² Eurobarometer figures include individual deliveries via ftp-server or on DVD-ROM. The total number of studies and the annual increment partly explains the dimensions of download figures compared to the ISSP or EVS.

³ Each study comprises the micro level dataset originating from a complete multi-country survey in different data formats (SPSS, STATA etc.) and all related documents such as questionnaires and codebooks.

⁴ Mannheim Eurobarometer Trendfile 1970–2002, Central and Eastern Eurobarometer Trendfile 1990–1997, Public Understanding of Science in Europe 1989–2005

⁵ Using the Digital Object Identifier system administered by the International DOI Foundation (IDF) and registered through the Registration Agency for Social and Economic Data DA|RA: <http://www.da-ra.de/en>

Free of charge online access

GESIS DBK-Download⁶ provides immediate and free of charge online access for registered users from Europe and the world. ICPSR DIRECT provides immediate download for users at ICPSR member institutions with focus on North America. In addition the GESIS ZACAT data portal⁷ offers advanced variable retrieval, data browsing and basic analysis functionalities. The partner archives in the Council of the European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) complement the Eurobarometer archive services "in-situ" for their respective national user communities, if needed. Usage of Eurobarometer in research and training is supported at GESIS by a comprehensive website, a mailing list and individual user consultancy.

Increasing data usage

The following charts summarize Eurobarometer data distribution through the social science data archives in terms of dataset downloads and number of downloaders since 2005. The figures for ICPSR refer to downloads at member institutions and member universities in North America and world-wide. The figures for CESSDA refer to downloads by authorized archive staff from a dedicated GESIS ftp-server⁸. At latest in 2012 CESSDA data archives re-directed users from local catalogues to the by now well established GESIS download facilities.

Chart 2: Eurobarometer analysis datasets supplied by the social science data archives⁹



The development of data usage over time clearly indicates the importance of the introduction of technically advanced distribution channels, from early main frame computer tapes and floppy disks (until the mid-1990s) to CD-ROM and finally online access through the internet. In 2007/2008 individual ftp-download was successively replaced by the ZACAT online data portal, complemented in 2012 by the data catalogue download feature (DBK-Download).

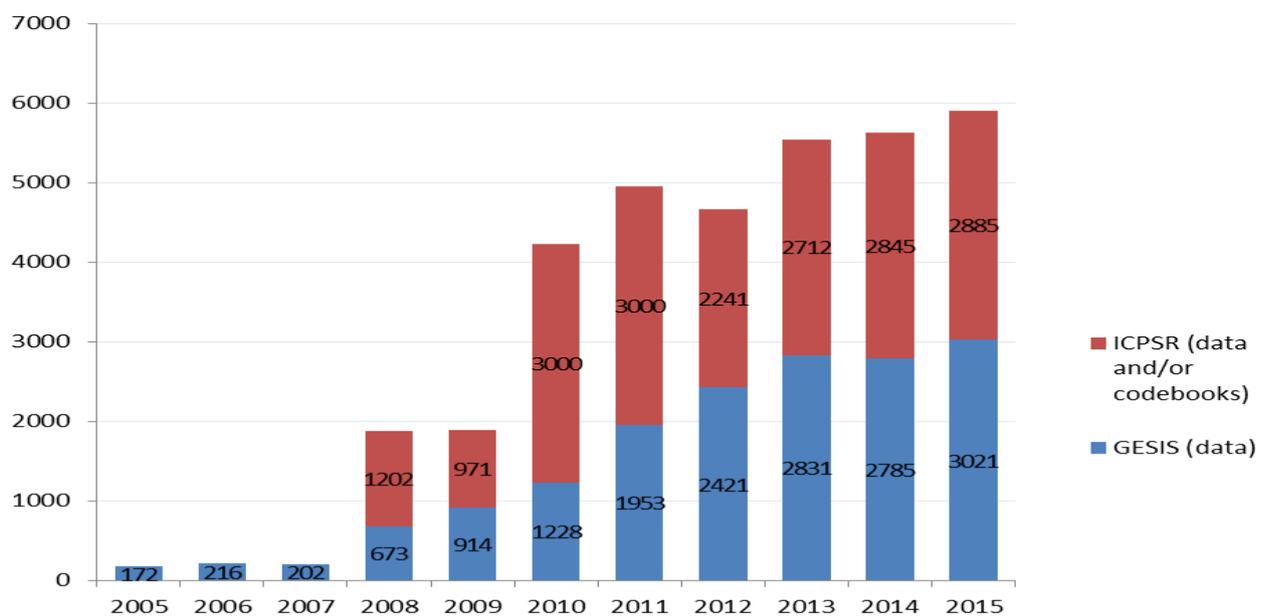
⁶ For details on access to Eurobarometer data see: <http://www.gesis.org/eurobarometer-data-service/data-access/>

⁷ ZACAT online data portal: <http://zacam.gesis.org>

⁸ Multiple on-site distributions by CESSDA data archives to local users are not reported separately.

⁹ Comparability of statistics across archives cannot always be assumed. In particular ICPSR figures until 2011 represent rough estimations based on the number of downloads of any kind of files or file formats, i.e. including questionnaires, codebooks etc. CESSDA figures represent downloads realized by the archive for one or more national users.

Chart 3: Registered and active Eurobarometer micro data users (downloader)¹⁰



The total number of recorded Eurobarometer users world-wide has since 2013 passed the mark of 5.000 downloaders who logged in with username and password at GESIS or ICPSR, downloading a total of almost 23.000 Eurobarometer datasets (micro data files) in 2015.

Considering the fact that datasets are frequently further circulated by the recipient on project or institutional levels, it can be assumed that the number of recorded users does still not completely reveal the actual use of the data. However, the easier and faster the access to archive data holdings, the more users will probably prefer the direct use of the archive services, basically available now at any time and any place.

User characteristics

Most users belong to the domain of research and training in empirically oriented Social Sciences. In 2015 most users of the Standard & Special Eurobarometer were political scientists (38 %), respectively economists (25 %) in the case of the Flash Eurobarometer. Only occasionally Eurobarometer micro data are requested by official institutions which maintain a research unit (e.g. the European Central Bank, regional governments) or by private consulting agencies or departments. Data downloads are taking place from all over the world, in 2015 from about 70 identifiable countries. Some 85 % of the registered users originated from European countries, mainly from Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain; for the Standard & Special Eurobarometer some 10 % originated from the United States, with almost 15 % of the data downloads.

¹⁰ Comparability of ICPSR and GESIS figures cannot be assumed. Until 2007 no information is on hand for ICPSR. ICPSR figures 2010/2011 are rough estimations based on archive downloads of any kind of Eurobarometer related files. Unlike GESIS statistics, ICPSR figures for 2012 to 2015 do also include "downloader" of codebooks only. Double entries for GESIS user statistics can't be ruled out if Flash Eurobarometer users (n=1353) likewise used data from other Eurobarometer series. Flash Eurobarometer are not distributed by ICPSR.