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Directorate F: Social statistics
Unit F-5: Education, health and social protection

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Item 5.2 – Implementation of ISCED 2011 in EU-LFS

**Meeting of the
Education and Training Statistics Working Group
Luxembourg, 16-17th June 2015
BECH Building – Room AMPERE**

Executive summary

Reference year 2014 was the first year of implementation of ISCED 2011 in all EU data collections based on household surveys.

As concerns statistics on educational attainment, the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) is the most important source of such data, including EU headline indicators (please see also item 9.3 of the ETS WG agenda).

Eurostat carried out an analysis of Q1 (quarter 1) 2014 EU-LFS data on educational attainment (variables HATLEVEL – educational attainment level and HATVOC – general/vocational orientation of the educational attainment level for ISCED levels 3-4), comparing them with data of Q1 2013 and against the ISCED mappings 2013.

The results of the analysis were sent to countries for comments.

This consultation allowed:

- confirmation of (the scale of) breaks in series on educational attainment level;
- detection of the need for revisions of data of some countries;
- general assessment of the impact of implementation of ISCED 2011;
- evaluation of the implementation of the new variable HATVOC;
- preparation of metadata on variables HATLEVEL and HATVOC – for external users and for internal Eurostat purposes.

Messages sent to the ISCED national coordinators included also a question about the implementation of ISCED 2011 in other EU surveys (e.g. EU-SILC, ICT-household survey, etc.). There were no specific difficulties reported by countries as concerns ISCED implementation in other surveys but for many of them it was too early to detect a posteriori problems.

The preliminary results of the analysis of the Q1 2014 EU-LFS data were presented to OECD INES Network on Labour Market, Economic and Social Outcomes of Learning (LSO) in February 2015.

Based on the analysis of Q1 2014 data, metadata concerning the variables on educational attainment level in the EU-LFS were prepared. Some of them will be published on the Eurostat website; more detailed information will stay in Eurostat for internal use.

Eurostat thanks all countries for their collaboration in the evaluation of the implementation of ISCED 2011 in the EU-LFS.

The ETS Working Group is invited to:

- *take note of the analysis done about implementation of ISCED 2011 in the EU-LFS;*
- *agree with the last version of metadata on educational attainment level in the EU-LFS.*

1 Implementation of ISCED 2011 in the EU-LFS 2014 – results of analysis and consultations with countries on Q1 2014 data

In general, the implementation of ISCED 2011 in the EU-LFS went smoothly in all countries and not many breaks in series of data on educational attainment level were noticed.

At aggregated level of educational attainment (low, medium, high¹) a significant break was observed only in Austria. It is due to the re-classification of a programme spanning ISCED levels 3 and 5 and as a result tertiary educational attainment for 30-34 year-olds has increased from 27 % in 2013 to 40 % in 2014.

In some countries minor breaks at ISCED 1-digit level are due to the re-classification of programmes (ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011) or/and improvement of the implementation of the variable HATLEVEL in the LFS questionnaires (resulting in better quality and comparability of data).

Even if not many breaks in series were noticed in the data by ISCED level, for all countries the flag ‘b’ (break in time series) is displayed in the Eurostat online tables on and by educational attainment level because of the change of ISCED classification, following the general rules for flags applied in the EU-LFS².

There are some more detailed observations coming from the analysis of implementation of ISCED 2011 in the EU-LFS and concerning the variables HATLEVEL and HATVOC in general (and in relation to the ISCED mappings):

- Non-responses to HATLEVEL: only in six countries they are higher than 1% (max. 5%); non-responses for HATVOC – very few (with the max. in one country – 5%).
- Re-classifications in ISCED (ISCED 1997 versus ISCED 2011) noticed in LFS codes: they concern mainly small programmes, in the majority of cases ISCED levels xx1 (insufficient for level completion). The most re-allocations were noticed from ISCED level 3 to level 2 but also between ISCED levels 3 and 4 and 4 and 5. Additionally, some new programmes (formal or non-formal) are considered for educational attainment from 2014.
- Qualifications outside UOE scope, considered for educational attainment: information on them is included in separate sheets of the ISCED mappings of 17 countries (from 2 to 26 programmes reported).
- Special use of some EU-LFS codes: the most frequent case is the inclusion of graduates from some (small) programmes in another code (very few graduates, no distinction possible in the survey).
- Reasons of the difference of codes used in the EU-LFS and those included in the ISCED mappings: consideration in the LFS of foreign qualifications, old qualifications, inclusion of graduates of some (small) programmes in other codes.
- Non-use of code 000 noticed in six countries. Few people concerned are mentioned as a reason for this.
- In 2014, in several countries some changes in the LFS questionnaires were done; the most frequent concerned more details on educational programmes completed, allowing also derivation of the variable HATVOC.

¹ Low = ISCED 2011 levels 0-2, medium = ISCED 2011 levels 3-4, high = ISCED 2011 levels 5-8

² For details see http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_labour_force_survey_%E2%80%93_data_and_publication#Breaks_due_to_revised_classifications_or_regulations.

Implementation of the variable HATVOC (for age group 15-34):

- In the majority of cases this variable is derived from the variable HATLEVEL.
- In nearly all countries data seem to capture rather well the orientation of programmes completed at ISCED levels 3 and 4. Problems are met sometimes in the case of foreign qualifications (Luxembourg, Cyprus). Luxembourg mentions poor quality of these data (improvement expected in 2015).

In addition to the more general review of Q1 2014 data for HATVOC, final annual results of the new data by orientation (general/vocational) were sent to the ETS WG for validation on 27 April 2015. While most countries confirmed the results, a couple of countries discovered some errors in the data and sent (or will send) revised data.

Once correct data for all countries are available, new tables with data by orientation (general/vocational) will be released in Eurostat's online database. The release is planned for August/September.

2 Metadata on educational attainment level for the EU-LFS

The analysis of 2014 EU-LFS results on educational attainment level allowed elaboration of metadata for each country, including:

- Information on the important 2014 breaks in series and on the specific use of some EU-LFS codes.
- Information on re-classifications of some qualifications (from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011, comparing also with the ISCED mappings), on the use of codes at ISCED levels 0, 3, 4 and 5, on non-responses for the variable HATLEVEL, on the use of the ISCED mapping sheet "Qualifications outside scope UOE", on changes in the LFS questionnaire in 2014 and on implementation of the new variable HATVOC.

These metadata were sent to countries for approval.

Information on important level shift breaks in 2014 as well as the notes about specific treatment of some HATLEVEL codes will be attached to the ESMS reference metadata file (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/edat_esms.htm). For details see annex – Excel file sheet 'ESMS'.

The complete overview on different aspects of implementation of variables HATLEVEL and HATVOC in the EU-LFS will be kept in Eurostat for internal use. For details see annex – Excel file sheet 'Internal'.

The ETS WG members are kindly asked to confirm the last version of the metadata as provided in the annex.

Annex (Excel file)

- EU-LFS metadata on educational attainment to be published on Eurostat website (Excel file sheet 'ESMS');
- EU-LFS metadata on educational attainment for internal use of Eurostat (Excel file sheet 'internal').