



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EUROSTAT

Directorate F: Social statistics

Doc. DSS/2017/Mar/4.2/ver 2

ITEM 4.2

STANDARDISATION OF SOCIAL VARIABLES – PROGRESS REPORT

MEETING OF EUROPEAN DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL STATISTICS

LUXEMBOURG, 2-3 MARCH 2017

BECH BUILDING - ROOM AMPERE

1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document informs about the latest progress achieved on the standardisation of variables in social micro-data collections. As a reminder, the list of variables to standardise was prioritised into two groups (P1 and P2). This paper summarizes the outcomes of the consultation with the Working Groups on the P2 variables. Then, the next steps to be taken are explained.

2. BACKGROUND

The project on social variables standardisation aims at developing standard descriptions for the variables which are present in at least two of the European social micro-data collections concerning households/persons¹. The list of standardised variables includes 28 variables, 18 are *core* variables (i.e. to be implemented in all the social-micro data collections) while the other 10 are *common* variables (i.e. included in some, but not all, social micro-data collections). Work on standardisation has been organized in two waves corresponding to the P1 and the P2 variables, respectively. A list of all the variables to standardise can be found below, together with an indication of which are core variables. The standard descriptions include the definition, the standard categories –describing the information to be transmitted to Eurostat from the Member States–, and the implementation guidelines for each variable.

In the DSS meeting in February 2016, the scope and the purpose of the project on standardised variables were defined. In addition, the DSS was requested to discuss and finally endorse the standard descriptions for 13 variables corresponding to the first stage in the process of standardisation (P1). The DSS generally supported the proposed standard descriptions for the P1 variables. However, some concerns were expressed in relation to some of the variable descriptions, and it was concluded that Eurostat would review the concerned variables and launch a written DSS consultation and present to the DSS the new proposal in order to reach a decision. The results of this consultation were presented at the DSS Board meeting in June 2016 and further discussed at the DSS meeting in October 2016, when the DSS endorsed the proposed standard descriptions of the P1 variables².

As regards the second block of 15 variables (P2), a consultation on the Eurostat consolidated proposals for these variables was launched by the end of November 2016. All the Working Groups for the seven European social micro-data collections concerning households/persons were reached in parallel and asked to revise and comment the proposals; the Working Groups for Population Statistics were also informed on the consultation and invited to provide their feedback. A total of 26 Member States replied to this consultation which lasted from the end of November 2016 –the exact date might vary slightly for each WG– until mid-January 2017. The outcome of the consultation is summarized in section 3 of the current document. And, the standard descriptions of 14 of the 15 P2 variables are attached as an Annex. It is to be noted that variable 'current household income' (28) was not part of the consultation, as the description for this variable is currently under development.

¹ Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS), Household Budget Survey (HBS), Adult Education Survey (AES), European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), Harmonised European Time Use Survey (HETUS), and Survey on Information and Communication Technology usage in households (ICT HH).

² The agreement was reached with the compromise that limited fine-tuning of some details would be introduced. In particular, the adaptation of the reference dates in variable 'age in completed years' to countries using an integrated system of household surveys, and the deletion of a redundant paragraph in the description of variable 'main activity status (self-defined)'.

	Variables	Core variable
P1 variables	(1) Sex	Yes
	(2) Age in completed years	Yes
	(3) Household grid	
	(4) Partners living in the same household	Yes
	(5) Household size	Yes
	(6) Household type	Yes
	(7) Tenure status of the household	
	(8) Main activity status (self-defined)	Yes
	(9) Full- or part-time main job (self-defined)	Yes
	(10) Permanency of main job	
	(11) Educational attainment level	Yes
	(12) Participation in formal education and training (student or apprentice) in <reference period>	
	(13) Level of the current/most recent formal education or training activity	

	Variables	Core variable
P2 variables	(14) Country of birth	Yes
	(15) Country of main citizenship	Yes
	(16) Country of birth of the father	Yes
	(17) Country of birth of the mother	Yes
	(18) Country of residence	Yes
	(19) Duration of stay in the country of residence in completed years	
	(20) Region of residence	Yes
	(21) Degree of urbanisation	Yes
	(22) Status in employment in the main job	Yes
	(23) Economic activity of the local unit for main job	Yes
	(24) Occupation in main job	Yes
	(25) Self-perceived general health	
	(26) Long-standing health problem	
	(27) Limitation in activities because of health problems	
(28) Current household income		

Once approved by the DSS, the final versions of the standardised variables will be assembled in a methodological manual. Furthermore, some elements of the descriptions for the standardised variables –mainly, the variable concept and the categories for the variable– will be included in act implementing the IESS Framework Regulation, as foreseen under the proposed article 6.2 concerning elements common to several data sets, which covers amongst other, the standardised variables.

3. OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS IN RELATION TO THE P2 VARIABLES

In this section, the outcomes of the consultation with the Working Groups are summarized, and the modifications made on the proposals for the P2 variables following the consultation are presented and discussed.

The first of the P2 variables, 'country of birth' (14), is defined on the basis of the country of usual residence of the person's mother at the time of birth, in line with the definitions used in demographic statistics³ and the census⁴. As indicated in the implementation guidelines, only if information on the place of usual residence of the mother at the time of the birth is not available the place where the birth took place may be reported. Information on 'country of birth' is to be provided at country level, and according to the current boundaries.

In relation to the 'country of main citizenship' (15), most comments refer to the order of preference for the cases of multiple citizenships. The proposed order is largely based on the Regulation on European demographic statistics, i.e. preference is given to the citizenship of the reporting country, and then to that from another Member State of the EU. Only in cases of "dual citizenship where both countries are within the EU but neither is the reporting country" there is difference in the text: the Regulation on European demographic statistics indicates that "*Member States* shall determine which country of citizenship is to be allocated" while in the standardised variable it is indicated that "the *person* may choose which country of citizenship is to be recorded", in trying to adapt to a context where a respondent provides the information, as opposed to a situation where the information is retrieved from administrative data/register. Following the consultation, a paragraph has been added to the implementation guidelines to clarify that the category 'recognised non-citizens' may be used for data transmission for this variable, together with the corresponding definition of the cases falling in this category. No further modifications have been made for this variable.

As regards variables 'country of birth of the father' (16) and 'country of birth of the mother' (17), the original definitions proposed have been modified so that it is now indicated that the information should be transmitted according to the current borders "if the information is available". In addition, the specific reference to the concept of 'social' father/mother, which was subject of certain controversy over the consultation, has been removed from the implementation guidelines. However, it is still indicated that, in the case of a person having not only a natural (biological) father/mother but also e.g. an adoptive or stepfather/mother, the information to be transmitted "should refer to who actually raised the person and acted as father/mother in an affective or legal sense, e.g. the male/female guardian". Finally, it is to be noted that these two variables –the same as the above mentioned variables 'country of birth' (14), and 'country of main citizenship' (15)– are *core* variables, i.e. to be implemented in all the social-micro data collections.

As for the 'country of residence' (18), it is reminded that the definition of 'resident population' is currently being reviewed and further investigated –and therefore the related concept of 'usual residence'–. However, its revision falls outside of the scope the present project on social variables standardisation. No further comments were received, and no modifications were made for this variable following the consultation.

³ See: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32014R0205&from=EN>

⁴ See: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5916677/KS-RA-11-006-EN.PDF/5bec0655-4a55-466d-9a00-fabe83d54649?version=1.0>

The variable 'duration of stay in the country of residence in completed years' (19) provides information on the duration of stay in the reporting country both for the foreign-born, and for the native-born who have been living abroad for a period of at least one year. Consequently, the information on the native-born who have *never* lived abroad for a period of at least one year is also necessary. In addition, a second version of reference question has been added to the original proposal. This version inquires on the date of arrival, instead of asking for the duration of stay, and it could be found as easier to answer from the respondent perspective. Thus, it may be used as an alternative to the first option, if considered more appropriate. Nevertheless, as stated in the variable description, the information on the duration of stay in the country of residence should be transmitted to Eurostat in completed years.

Regarding the 'region of residence' (20), a paragraph has been added to the implementation guidelines to clarify that the levels of detail for the NUTS indicated in the variable description only refer to data transmission to Eurostat, and that for most of the micro-data collections this information will only be used internally (e.g. for the compilation of policy-relevant aggregations, such as coastal regions, metropolitan regions, etc.). It is also indicated that data will be disseminated only at a more aggregated level, and taking account of the rules for confidentiality and reliability. As for the variable 'degree of urbanisation' (21), it is relevant to underline that the proposed category labels –'cities', 'towns and suburbs', and 'rural areas'– should be used for communication at European level. However, the labels 'densely populated areas', 'intermediate density areas', and 'thinly populated areas', respectively, are considered as synonyms –and as such it is indicated in the amendment of the Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 as regards the territorial typologies (Tercet), currently under preparation–. Consequently, the most appropriate labels for communication at national level may be used. No modifications were required for this variable.

As regards the three P2 variables on labour market (22, 23 and 24). Some suggestions for small adjustments to improve the standards were taken into account. In addition, for variable 'status in employment in main job' (22), a footnote was added to acknowledge the fact that the International Standard Classification on Status in Employment is currently being revised at ILO level, and to inform that once the revised classification is endorsed, the variable will be revised accordingly. And, for 'occupation in main job' (23) it was clarified how to proceed in the cases where a person "carries out two or more tasks for his/her employer which are so different from each other that they should have different ISCO codes"; with the recommendation of coding the most extensive task now indicated in the implementation guidelines.

Variables 25, 26, and 27 together comprise the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM). The full MEHM is to be included at least in EU-SILC and EHIS, while EU-LFS could include variables 25 and 27. The implementation guidelines in the original proposals for these variables included a reference to the possibility of using proxy interviews. A number of comments from different WGs expressed diverging views regarding this possibility, and on whether or not the use proxy interviews (if allowed) should be documented. The paragraph including this reference has been deleted for the three health-related variables; the possibility of using proxy interviews, and related implementation rules, is specific to each social micro-data collection and this information is not to be included in the standardised variables. This is the only modification made in the descriptions of the health-related variables following the consultation. Regarding the category label 'fair', as one of the response categories for variable 'self-perceived general health' (25), countries are reminded that, as indicated in the implementation guidelines, the English term 'fair' in this context represents a neutral position (i.e. neither good nor bad); taking this into account, the best translation into each language should be sought. In relation to the variable 'limitation in activities because of health problems' (27), also known as GALI (Global Activity Limitation Indicator), a two-question version is

proposed, in contrast with the single question used in the previous versions. This variable is considered as a good proxy for measuring disability, but its operationalization has often been considered as too complex. A dedicated Task Force (TF GALI) and an additional qualitative study were conducted to analyse possible ways to improve the understanding of the concept from a respondent perspective. Based on the outcome of the TF and the study, and taking also into account the discussions in the WG on Public Health Statistics and the Technical Group HIS, the two-question version is currently proposed. This version would be used for the implementation of the variable in the LFS, and it is recommended that the implementation of the variables is used harmonized across surveys.

4. STEPS TO FOLLOW

In relation to the 'current household income', a total of 11 Member States already collecting this information have sent to Eurostat information on this concept, as already in use. The information provided showed important degree on heterogeneity e.g. in terms of the income components considered or the scales of measure behind used. Nevertheless, the data received is being analysed, and the conclusions from this analysis will determine the further development of a standard version for this variable.

In addition, Eurostat would like to introduce to the DSS the possibility of extending work on standardisation to variables that are common to more than one social micro-data collections, but which are not including in the list of P1 and P2. Some examples of such variables might include 'job satisfaction', or 'size of the local unit', among others. Together with 'current household income', these variables could constitute a third block of variables to be standardised. In case this proposal is welcomed by the DSS, a comprehensive list of common variables (in addition to the P1 and P2) could be developed by Eurostat and presented to the DSS Board in its next meeting in June 2017.

The members of the DSS are asked to take note of the outcomes of the consultation with the Working Groups, and to comment/endorse the proposed standard descriptions of the P2 variables 14 to 27. The DSS is also invited to take note and comment on the next steps.

Annex

Draft standard descriptions of the P2 variables

(14) COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Name of the variable

Country of birth

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Specific filters (e.g. aged 15+) may apply depending on the survey target population concerning the variable.

Concept The country of birth of an individual is defined as the country of *usual residence*⁵ (in its current boundaries) of the individual's mother at the time of delivery.

Information on the country of birth is used to distinguish between native-born (born in the reporting country) and foreign-born (born in a country other than the reporting country) residents.

Category concept

The list of countries is defined according to the Eurostat Standard Code list (SCL) GEO which is largely based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 3166 country codes (3166-1 alpha-2). The SCL GEO is available here:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_NOM_DTL&StrNom=CL_GEO&StrLanguageCode=EN&IntPcKey=&StrLayoutCode=HIERARCHIC

The category 'not applicable' is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

Country of birth
Country of birth (SCL GEO code)
Not stated
Not applicable

⁵ See Appendix.

Implementation guidelines

Information on the country of birth should be obtained according to the current national boundaries and not according to the boundaries in place at the time of birth.

More detailed information on the locality could be required if the boundaries of a country have changed. When data are collected by interview, the respondent can be asked additional questions. When data are derived from administrative registers, it is more difficult to ensure that the definition is followed. If detailed information on the mother's place of usual residence exists in the register, the country of birth should be re-coded so that it is coded according to the current national borders.

Particular care is needed in cases where national boundaries have changed and/or where previously existing countries have split to form two or more new countries. As noted in the UNECE 2020 census recommendations⁶ (par. 651), a person should not be regarded as foreign-born (i.e. recorded as born in a country other than the reporting country) simply because the national boundaries of the country of birth have changed. The following important exception to the general rule of considering the current borders might exist: a person whose mother's place of usual residence was, at the time of his/her birth, part of the person's *actual* country of origin (e.g. as indicated by his/her citizenship or current place of usual residence) but is not any more due to changed borders. In this case the country of birth can exceptionally be enumerated at the boundaries at the time of birth.

The country of birth of a person, who was born during the mother's short-term visit to a country other than her country of usual residence, should be the country where the mother had her place of usual residence. Only if information on the place of usual residence of the mother at the time of the birth is not available, the place where the birth took place should be reported.

Reference question

In case the information is available from administrative sources it might not be necessary to ask the respondents directly. When this information needs to be asked to the respondents the recommended question is: "In which country were you born?"

In situations (e.g. specific countries or regions) where this question may not capture appropriately the information on the place of *usual residence* of the individual's mother at the time of delivery, the following question should be asked: "Which was the country of usual residence of your mother at the time when you were born?"

⁶ <http://www.unecce.org/stats/census.html>

(15) COUNTRY OF MAIN CITIZENSHIP

Name of the variable

Country of main citizenship

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Specific filters (e.g. aged 15+) may apply depending on the survey target population concerning the variable.

Concept The variable reports on the country of the person's main citizenship. 'Citizenship' is defined as the particular legal bond between an individual and his/her State, acquired by birth or naturalisation, whether by declaration, choice, marriage or other means according to national legislation.

A person with two or more citizenships shall be allocated to only one country of citizenship, to be determined in the following order of precedence:

- reporting country, or
- if the person does not have the citizenship of the reporting country: other Member State of the European Union (EU), or
- if the person does not have the citizenship of another Member State: other country outside the EU.

In other cases (e.g. dual citizenship where both countries are within the EU but neither is the reporting country) the person may choose which country of citizenship is to be recorded.

Information on the country of main citizenship is used to distinguish between national citizens (individuals having the citizenship of the reporting country), non-national citizens (individuals having the citizenship of a country other than the reporting country) and stateless persons.

Category concept

The list of countries is defined according to the Eurostat Standard Code list (SCL) GEO which is largely based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 3166 country codes (3166-1 alpha-2). The SCL GEO is available here:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_NOM_DTL&StrNom=CL_GEO&StrLanguageCode=EN&IntPcKey=&StrLayoutCode=HIERARCHIC

The category 'stateless' corresponds to a person without recognized citizenship of a state.

The category 'not applicable' is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

Country of main citizenship
Country of main citizenship (SCL GEO code)
Stateless
Not stated
Not applicable

Implementation guidelines

Information on the country of main citizenship should be obtained in accordance with the current administrative status/legal situation of the individual.

The category 'country of main citizenship (SCL GEO code)' may also be used for the transmission of information on 'recognised non-citizens'. A recognized-non citizen is a person who is not a citizen of the reporting country nor of any other country, but who has established links to that country which include some but not all rights and obligations of full citizenship. A majority of these persons were citizens of the former Soviet Union living in the Baltic States who are permanently resident in these countries but have not acquired any other citizenship. Recognised non-citizens are not included in the number of European Union (EU) citizens.

Reference question

In case the information is available from administrative sources it might not be necessary to ask the respondents directly. When this information needs to be asked to the respondents the recommended question is: "What is your citizenship?"

(16) COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF THE FATHER

Name of the variable

Country of birth of the father

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Specific filters (e.g. aged 15+) may apply depending on the survey target population concerning the variable.

Concept The variable reports on the country of birth of the person's father, i.e. the country of *usual residence*⁷ (in its current borders, if the information is available) of the mother of the person's father at the time of the delivery, or, failing this, the country (in its current borders, if the information is available) in which the birth of the person's father took place. 'Father' is a male parent of a 'son/daughter', either natural (biological), adoptive or stepfather.

Information on the country of birth of the father allows to determine whether the person's father is native-born (born in the reporting country) or foreign-born (born in a country other than the reporting country).

Category concept

The list of countries is defined according to the Eurostat Standard Code list (SCL) GEO which is largely based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 3166 country codes (3166-1 alpha-2). The SCL GEO is available here:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_NOM_DTL&StrNom=CL_GEO&StrLanguageCode=EN&IntPcKey=&StrLayoutCode=HIERARCHIC

The category 'not applicable' is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

Country of birth of the father
Country of birth of the father (SCL GEO code)
Not stated
Not applicable

⁷ See Appendix.

Implementation guidelines

Information on the country of birth of the father should be obtained according to the same rules as provided for the variable 'country of birth'.

In case of a person having not only a natural (biological) father but also e.g. an adoptive or stepfather, the country of birth should refer to who actually raised the person and acted as father in an affective or legal sense, e.g. the male guardian.

In case of a person with same-sex parents, both being female, this variable could be used to report the country of birth of one of the mothers.

Reference question

The proposed reference question is: "In which country was your father born?"

In situations (e.g. specific countries or regions) where this question may not capture appropriately the information on the place of *usual residence* of the mother of the person's father at the time of delivery, the following question should be asked: "Which was the country of usual residence of your father's mother at the time when he was born?"

(17) COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF THE MOTHER

Name of the variable

Country of birth of the mother

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Specific filters (e.g. aged 15+) may apply depending on the survey target population concerning the variable.

Concept The variable reports on the country of birth of the person's mother, i.e. the country of *usual residence*⁸ (in its current borders, if the information is available) of the mother of the person's mother at the time of the delivery, or, failing this, the country (in its current borders, if the information is available) in which the birth of the person's mother took place. 'Mother' is a female parent of a 'son/daughter', either natural (biological), adoptive or stepmother.

Information on the country of birth of the mother allows to determine whether the person's mother is native-born (born in the reporting country) or foreign-born (born in a country other than the reporting country).

Category concept

The list of countries is defined according to the Eurostat Standard Code list (SCL) GEO which is largely based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 3166 country codes (3166-1 alpha-2). The SCL GEO is available here:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_NOM_DTL&StrNom=CL_GEO&StrLanguageCode=EN&IntPcKey=&StrLayoutCode=HIERARCHIC

The category 'not applicable' is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

Country of birth of the mother
Country of birth of the mother (SCL GEO code)
Not stated
Not applicable

⁸ See Appendix.

Implementation guidelines

Information on the country of birth of the mother should be obtained according to the same rules as provided for the variable 'country of birth'.

In case of a person having not only a natural (biological) mother but also e.g. an adoptive or stepmother, the country of birth should refer to who actually raised the person and acted as mother in an affective or legal sense, e.g. the female guardian.

In case of a person with same-sex parents, both being male, this variable could be used to report the country of birth of one of the fathers.

Reference question

The proposed reference question is: "In which country was your mother born?"

In situations (e.g. specific countries or regions) where this question may not capture appropriately the information on the place of *usual residence* of the mother of the person's mother at the time of delivery, the following question should be asked: "Which was the country of usual residence of your mother's mother at the time when she was born?"

(18) COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE

Name of the variable

Country of residence

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals or households

Filter None

Concept The country of residence is the country in which the person/household has his/her usual residence⁹.

Category concept

The list of countries is defined according to the Eurostat Standard Code list (SCL) GEO which is largely based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 3166 country codes (3166-1 alpha-2). The SCL GEO is available here:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_NOM_DTL&StrNom=CL_GEO&StrLanguageCode=EN&IntPcKey=&StrLayoutCode=HIERARCHIC

Categories for the variable

Country of residence
Country of residence (SCL GEO code)

Implementation guidelines

Information on the country of residence should be obtained in accordance with the current national boundaries.

To the extent to which all possible participants in a specific social micro data-collection need to be *usual residents*, the country of residence of all the reporting units corresponds to the reporting country. Consequently, a reference question is not needed for this variable.

⁹ See Appendix.

(19) DURATION OF STAY IN THE COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE IN COMPLETED YEARS

Name of the variable

Duration of stay in the country of residence in completed years

Scope

The social micro-data collections EU-SILC, EU-LFS and AES

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Specific filters (e.g. aged 15+) may apply depending on the survey target population concerning the variable.

Concept The variable describes the interval of time since the point in time when a person most recently established his/her *usual residence*¹⁰ in the reporting country, expressed in completed years.

Category concept

The category 'number of years in this country (since last establishing the place of usual residence in this country)' are integer numbers describing the time span between the point in time when a person most recently established his/her *usual residence* and the reference date¹¹, in completed years.

The time span includes the lower limit and excludes the upper limit. For example, a person who has arrived on 1st of March 2011 shall be classified in the category '3 years' if interviewed in February 2015 but in the category '4 years' if interviewed in March 2015.

The category 'born in this country and never lived abroad for a period of at least 1 year' covers those persons who are native-born, i.e. born in the reporting country (see variable 'country of birth'), and have never had their usual residence in a country other than the reporting country for at least 1 year.

The category 'not applicable' is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

¹⁰ See Appendix.

¹¹ The reference date is specific to each social micro-data collection (see variable 'age in completed years').

Categories for the variable

Duration of stay in the country of residence in completed years
Born in this country and never lived abroad for a period of at least 1 year
Number of years in this country (since last establishing the place of usual residence in this country) (2-digits)
Not stated
Not applicable

Implementation guidelines

The duration of stay refers to the current situation for the individual, i.e. the situation existing on the reference date. The reference date is specific to each social micro-data collection (see the implementation guidelines for variable 'age in completed years').

Information on the person's 'country of birth' (i.e. whether the person is native- or foreign-born) needs to be known prior to the collection of information for the variable 'duration of stay in the country of residence in completed years', as different questions need to be asked for the native-born and for the foreign-born. If the information on the 'country of birth' is not available (i.e. 'not stated'), the same questions as for the 'native-born' should be asked.

The 'duration of stay in the country of residence in completed years' refers to the most recent arrival in the country of residence, that is, when the person last established his or her usual residence in the country, and not the year of first arrival in this country (i.e. the 'duration of stay in the country of residence in completed years' does not provide information on interrupted stays). In case of an interruption in the period of residence, the starting point should be the end of this interruption only if the length of this interruption was at least one year.

Reference question

Different questions need to be asked depending on whether a person was born in the country or not.

For native-born persons the following questions are recommended:

Did you ever live [have your usual residence] abroad for a period of at least 1 year? y/n

If yes: Considering the date you last arrived in this country (established your usual residence in this country) – for how many years have you lived in this country since then? [*please consider whole/completed years only*]

For foreign-born persons the following question is recommended:

Considering the date you last arrived in this country (established your usual residence in this country) – for how many years have you lived in this country since then? [*please consider whole/completed years only*]

Alternatively, the following question may be used:

In which date [year and month] did you last arrived in this country (established your usual residence in this country)? [*It is recommended to ask also for the month so that the calculation of the duration of stay can be more precise*]

It is to be noted that, regardless of the question used, information on the duration of stay in the country of residence should be transmitted to Eurostat in completed years.

(20) REGION OF RESIDENCE

Name of the variable

Region of residence

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals or households

Filter None

Concept The region of residence is the region within the country of residence in which the person/household has his/her *usual residence*¹².

For Member States of the EU, regions are defined on the basis of the Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS, in its French acronym) as described in Article 3 and listed in Annex I of Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) (as amended)¹³.

For EFTA and Candidate countries, region refers to the classification of Statistical Regions¹⁴, which applies principles similar to those used in the NUTS regulation.

Category concept

The region of residence is classified according to the categories set out by the Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) up to NUTS 3 level, see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/overview>.

Categories for the variable

The level of detail needed is context-specific for each micro-data collection.

Region of residence	Level of detail		
	Low	Medium	High
NUTS 1 region	✓		
NUTS 2 region		✓	
NUTS 3 region			✓

¹² See Appendix.

¹³ See: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32003R1059>

¹⁴ See: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/statistical-regions-outside-eu>

Coding for data transmission should use the exact codes/labels as specified in Annex I of the NUTS regulation.

Implementation guidelines

Information on the region corresponding to the place of usual residence of a person or household is to be extracted from the list of NUTS regions in Annex I of the NUTS regulation. This list is amended not more frequently than every three years to reflect changes in the administrative units of the Member States¹⁵. Different versions of the NUTS classification are referred to as NUTS 2010, NUTS 2013 for example, reflecting the year in which the amendments were adopted.

Amendments to the NUTS come into effect as from the 1st of January of the second year after their adoption. For example, data with the reference date/period in 2015 is the first data to be transmitted in NUTS 2013.

The requirements for the transmission of historical series are set in the NUTS legislation.

Further information about the NUTS is available here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/overview>.

Information for the different micro-data collections will be transmitted to Eurostat as follows:

Micro-data collection	Level of detail		
	Low	Medium	High
EU-SILC		X	
EU-LFS			X
HBS		X	
AES		X	
EHIS		X	
HETUS		X	
ICT HH	X		

It is to be noted that the level of detail mentioned in this table only refers to data transmission to Eurostat. For most of the micro-data collections, this level of detail will only be used internally, mainly for the compilation of policy-relevant aggregations (coastal regions, metropolitan regions, etc.); data will be disseminated only at a more aggregated level (taking account of the rules for confidentiality and reliability).

¹⁵ It is to be noted that extraordinary amendments of the NUTS can happen "in the case of a substantial reorganisation of the relevant administrative structure of a Member State" (Art. 5 (4) NUTS Regulation).

(21) DEGREE OF URBANISATION

Name of the variable

Degree of urbanisation

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals or households

Filter None

Concept The variable reports on the degree of urbanisation of the area where the person/household has his/her *usual residence*¹⁶. The degree of urbanisation classifies local administrative units at level 2 (LAU2 or communes) as cities, towns and suburbs, or rural areas based on the share of local population living in urban clusters and in urban centres.

Category concept

The variable classifies LAU2 (in some specific cases, LAU1 classification is available as well) into three types of area:

1. 'Cities' (alternative name: densely-populated areas): at least 50 % of the population lives in an urban centre.
2. 'Towns and suburbs' (alternative name: intermediate density areas): LAU level territorial units where at least 50% of the population live in urban clusters, but are not 'cities'.
3. 'Rural areas' (alternative name: thinly populated areas): more than 50 % of the population lives in rural grid cells.

This classification is based on a combination of criteria of geographical contiguity and minimum population threshold applied to 1 km² population grid cells.

The LAU2 list including the degree of urbanisation is published by Eurostat on the RAMON server: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/miscellaneous/index.cfm?TargetUrl=DSP_DEGURBA

For further methodological details on the classification of LAU2s by degree of urbanisation, see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/degree-of-urbanisation/methodology>.

¹⁶ See Appendix.

Categories for the variable

Degree of urbanisation
Cities
Towns and suburbs
Rural areas

Implementation guidelines

Information on the degree of urbanisation corresponding to the area where the person or household has his/her *usual residence* is to be extracted from the LAU2 list including the degree of urbanisation. The list is published by Eurostat on the RAMON server. This classification takes into account the latest population grid and the LAU boundaries available, and it is subject to be maintained by Eurostat as new population grids or LAU boundaries are established.

Information on the degree of urbanisation should be obtained in accordance with the latest official version of the LAU list available on the 1st of January of the year of the reference date/period which applies to all quarters of that year.

For further information, see:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/work/2014_01_new_urban.pdf

(22) STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT IN MAIN JOB

Name of the variable

Status in employment in main job

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Persons in employment¹⁷ (and who are in the survey target population). The definition of employment and corresponding filters for follow-up variables can vary between data sources.

Concept The variable is based on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93)¹⁸. The ICSE classifies jobs with respect to the type of (explicit or implicit) labour contract. Basic criteria underlying the classification and defining its groups are the type of economic risk including the strength of the attachment between the person and the job, and the type of authority over the establishments and other workers the incumbent has.

The variable refers to the main job of a person in employment.

The term job is used in reference to employment. One job is a set of tasks and duties performed for a single economic unit. Persons may have one or several jobs. For employees, each contract can be considered as a separate set of tasks and duties, and consequently as a separate job. Those in self-employment will have as many jobs as the economic units they own or co-own, irrespective of the number of clients served. In cases of multiple job-holding, the main job is that with the longest hours usually worked, as defined in the international statistical standards on working time.

Category concept

According to the basic criteria of economic risk and authority underlying ICSE and focussing on forms of employment relevant in the European context the following statuses are defined:

- *Self-employed persons with employees* are defined as persons who work in their own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit derived from the goods or services produced, and who employ at least one other person.

¹⁷ Information on whether a person is in employment is determined by the ILO definition in the case of EU-LFS, and by the self-defined main activity status for the rest of micro-data collections.

¹⁸ The International Standard Classification on Status in Employment is currently being revised at ILO level. The variable will be revised once the revised classification is endorsed.

- *Self-employed persons without employees* are defined as persons who work in their own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit derived from the goods or services produced, and who do not employ any other person.
- *Employees* are defined as persons who work for a public or private employer based on a written or oral contract and who receive a payment in cash or in kind. This payment in cash or in kind is not directly dependent upon the revenue of the unit for which they work. Members of the armed forces are also included. Employees normally work under direct supervision of, or according to guidelines set by the employing organisation or enterprise.
- *Family workers (unpaid)* are persons who help another member of the family to run a farm or other business, provided they are not considered as employees. Thus, they may not receive a kind of payment for their work in the family business because then they would be considered as employees.

The category 'not applicable' covers persons not in employment. The category 'not applicable' is also to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

Status in employment in the main job
Self-employed person with employees
Self-employed person without employees
Employee
Family worker (unpaid)
Not stated
Not applicable

Implementation guidelines

There might be cases when the assignment to a status category is not always straightforward. Below are some examples to facilitate the assignment for particular cases.

Self-employed person

- A person who looks after one or more children who are not his/her own on a private basis and receives a payment for this service should be considered as self-employed, except when he/she works for a single employer and receives employment rights from that employer; in that case he/she should be considered as an employee.
- A freelancer should in general be classified as self-employed. However, in situations where a freelancer works for a single employer and receives employment rights from that employer (e.g. holiday pay) he/she should be classified as an employee.
- A person who gives private lessons should be considered as self-employed if he/she is directly paid by his/her students.
- Members of producers' co-operatives should be considered as self-employed. These members take part on an equal footing with other members in determining the organisation of production, work, sales and/or investments of the establishment.

Self-employed person without employees

- People who only engage members of his/her own family or trainees without payment should be classified in this category. This includes farmers just using the assistance of members of family.
- If a co-operative has employees (e.g. an accountant) the members of the co-operative should be considered as 'self-employed person without employees' because the co-operative, as an institution (and not any of its members) is the employer.

Employee

- A family member (son or daughter, for example), who is working in the family's farm and receives a regular monetary wage, is classified as an employee.
- A person looking after children of others in his/her own home is classified as an employee if he/she is paid to do this by the local authority (or any other public administration) and if he/she does not take any decision affecting the enterprise (e.g. schedules or number of children) but should be classified as self-employed if he/she does it privately.
- In case a co-operative has hired workers and these workers have an employment contract that gives them a basic remuneration (which is not directly dependent upon the revenue of the co-operative), these workers are identified as employees of the co-operative.
- Apprentices or trainees receiving remuneration should be considered as employees.
- Priests (of any kind of religion) are considered employees.
- On-call or casual workers are classified as employee or self-employed depending on the specific characteristic of their employment relationship. A prerequisite for being considered as a self-employed offering his/her work or services, respectively, is an own business or professional practice.

Family worker (unpaid)

- Relatives working in a family business or on a family farm without pay. This includes e.g. a son or daughter working in the parents' business or on the parents' farm without pay or a wife who assists her husband, or vice versa, in his/her business without receiving any pay.
- Helping family members do not have to live directly in the same household or on the same site. Also included are relatives living elsewhere but coming to help with the business, e.g. during the harvesting season, without pay in money or kind if the reference period lies within that season.
- If a relative receives any remuneration (including benefits in kind) the status in employment should be coded as 'employee'.

(23) ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF THE LOCAL UNIT FOR MAIN JOB

Name of the variable

Economic activity of the local unit for main job

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Persons in employment¹⁹ (and who are in the survey target population). The definition of employment and corresponding filters for follow-up variables can vary between data sources.

Concept The variable is defined according to the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities (Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne, NACE) Rev. 2. It determines the economic sector or kind of economic activity of the local unit in which the job of a person in employment is located.

The local unit is an enterprise or part thereof (e. g. a workshop, factory, warehouse, office, mine or depot) situated in a geographically identified place. At or from this place economic activity is carried out for which one or more persons work (even if only part-time) for one and the same enterprise (Council Regulation n°696/93).

The variable refers to the main job of a person in employment.

The term job is used in reference to employment. One job is a set of tasks and duties performed for a single economic unit. Persons may have one or several jobs. For employees, each contract can be considered as a separate set of tasks and duties, and consequently as a separate job. Those in self-employment will have as many jobs as the economic units they own or co-own, irrespective of the number of clients served. In cases of multiple job-holding, the main job is that with the longest hours usually worked, as defined in the international statistical standards on working time.

Category concept

The economic activity of the local unit is classified according to the categories set out by the NACE Rev. 2 up to a 3-digit level: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1978984/6037342/Nace-Rev-2-3-digits-from-2008-onwards.pdf>

The category 'not applicable' covers persons not in employment. The category 'not applicable' is also to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for

¹⁹ Information on whether a person is in employment is determined by the ILO definition in the case of EU-LFS, and by the self-defined main activity status for the rest of micro-data collections.

which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

The level of detail needed is context-specific for each micro-data collection.

Economic activity of the local unit for main job	Level of detail		
	Low	Medium	High
NACE Rev. 2 at 1-digit level	✓		
NACE Rev. 2 at 2-digit level		✓	
NACE Rev. 2 at 3-digit level			✓
Not stated	✓	✓	✓
Not applicable	✓	✓	✓

Implementation guidelines

There are mainly two possible approaches (questions) to identify the economic activity of the local unit. First, the respondent can be asked for the name and address of the firm where he/she has his/her main job, if this can be linked to a database of all firms in a country like a Statistical Business Register (SBR). In a second approach the respondent is asked to describe the economic activity and the kind of products or services supplied by the firm where he/she works.

Where the local unit has more than one economic activity, the dominant one should be recorded. The ideal measure for determining the dominant activity would be the number of employees for the different activities, rather than more economic concepts like added value or turnover.

If a person works in more than one place (transport, construction, maintenance, surveillance, itinerant work, etc.) or at home, or in the customer's place (e.g. for surveillance, security, cleaning), the local unit is taken to be the place from where instructions emanate or from where the work is organised.

The economic activity of the local unit for persons with a contract with a temporary employment agency should be coded as the activity of the local unit where they actually work and not in the industry of the agency which employs them.

Information for the different micro-data collections will be transmitted to Eurostat as follows:

Micro-data collection	Level of detail		
	Low	Medium	High
EU-SILC		X	
EU-LFS			X
HBS	X		
AES		X	
EHIS	X		
HETUS		X	
ICT HH	X		

(24) OCCUPATION IN MAIN JOB

Name of the variable

Occupation in main job

Scope

All social micro-data collections concerning households/persons (EU-SILC, EU-LFS, HBS, AES, EHIS, HETUS and ICT HH)

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Persons in employment²⁰ (and who are in the survey target population). The definition of employment and corresponding filters for follow-up variables can vary between data sources.

Concept The variable is defined according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations, version 2008 (ISCO-08). It groups or classifies jobs according to the similarities of the tasks and duties undertaken in the job. In the International Labour Organization (ILO) resolution adopting the ISCO-08, occupation is defined as a set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity.

The variable refers to the main job of a person in employment.

The term job is used in reference to employment. One job is a set of tasks and duties performed for a single economic unit. Persons may have one or several jobs. For employees, each contract can be considered as a separate set of tasks and duties, and consequently as a separate job. Those in self-employment will have as many jobs as the economic units they own or co-own, irrespective of the number of clients served. In cases of multiple job-holding, the main job is that with the longest hours usually worked, as defined in the international statistical standards on working time.

Category concept

The occupation in main job is classified according to the categories set out by the ISCO-08 classification up to a 4-digit level: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1978984/6037342/ISCO-08.pdf>

The category 'not applicable' covers persons not in employment. The category 'not applicable' also is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

²⁰ Information on whether a person is in employment is determined by the ILO definition in the case of EU-LFS, and by the self-defined main activity status for the rest of micro-data collections.

Categories for the variable

The level of detail needed is context-specific for each micro-data collection.

Occupation in main job	Level of detail	
	Low	High
ISCO-08 at 2-digit level	✓	
ISCO-08 at 4-digit level		✓
Not stated	✓	✓
Not applicable	✓	✓

Implementation guidelines

The essential information for determining the occupation is usually the job title of the person in employment and a description of the main tasks undertaken in the course of his/her duties.

If a person carries out two or more tasks for his/her employer which are so different from each other that they should have different ISCO codes, it is recommended to code it on the most extensive task.

Persons who carry out a period of training or apprenticeship based on an employment contract should be classified in the occupation corresponding to their employment contract.

Information for the different micro-data collections will be transmitted to Eurostat as follows:

Micro-data collection	Level of detail	
	Low	High
EU-SILC	X	
EU-LFS		X
HBS	X	
AES	X	
EHIS	X	
HETUS	X	
ICT HH	X	

(25) SELF-PERCEIVED GENERAL HEALTH

Name of the variable

Self-perceived general health

Scope

The social micro-data collections EU-SILC, EU-LFS, EHIS and HETUS

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Specific filters (e.g. aged 15+) may apply depending on the survey target population concerning the variable.

Concept The concept of self-perceived health is, by its very nature, subjective. The notion is restricted to an assessment coming from the individual and as far as possible not from anyone else, whether an interviewer, healthcare professional or relative.

Self-perceived health might be influenced by impressions or opinions from others, but is the result after these impressions have been processed by the individual relative to his/her own beliefs and attitudes.

The reference is to health in general rather than the present state of health, as the question is not intended to measure temporary health problems. It is expected to include the different dimensions of health, i.e. physical and emotional functioning, mental health (covering psychological well-being and mental disorders) and biomedical signs and symptoms. It omits any reference to age as respondents are not specifically asked to compare their health with others of the same age or with their own previous or future health state.

Category concept

Five answer categories are proposed. Two of them ('very good' and 'good') are at the upper end of the scale and other two ('bad' and 'very bad') are at the lower, while the intermediate category 'fair' represents a neutral position (i.e. neither good nor bad).

The category 'not applicable' is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

Self-perceived general health
Very good
Good
Fair (neither good nor bad)
Bad
Very bad
Not stated
Not applicable

Implementation guidelines

The model question for the variable should not be filtered by any preceding question.

The intermediate category 'fair' should be translated into an appropriately neutral term as far as possible keeping in mind cultural interpretations in the various languages.

This variable is part of the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM), which was designed for a population aged 15 years old and over. The MEHM consists of two more variables on health status: long-standing health problem and limitation in activities because of health problems (also known as Global Activity Limitation Indicator - GALI). If the MEHM is implemented, all the questions should be asked in the recommended order (i.e. self-perceived general health, long-standing health problem, and limitation in activities because of health problems) and with no inclusion of any other health status related questions before or between the MEHM questions as it could have an impact on the results. The MEHM could be introduced to respondents using a short introduction: "I would now like to talk to you about your health".

In an interview mode, all possible answer categories should systematically be read to respondents.

Reference question

The reference question is recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the wording is as follows: "How is your health in general? Is it... very good, good, fair, bad, very bad".

(26) LONG-STANDING HEALTH PROBLEM

Name of the variable

Long-standing health problem

Scope

The social micro-data collections EU-SILC, EHIS and HETUS

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Specific filters (e.g. aged 15+) may apply depending on the survey target population concerning the variable.

Concept The concept of long-standing illnesses and long-standing health problems is subjective. The notion is restricted to an assessment coming from the individual and as far as possible not from anyone else, whether an interviewer, healthcare professional or relative.

Health problems cover different physical, emotional, behavioural and mental dimensions of health and besides diseases and disorders contain also for example pain, ill-health caused by accidents and injuries, congenital conditions.

The main characteristics of a **long-standing/chronic** condition are that it is permanent and may be expected to require a long period of supervision, observation or care. Longstanding illnesses or health problems should have lasted (or recurred) or are expected to last (recur) for 6 months or more; therefore temporary problems are not of interest.

Category concept

Two answer categories are proposed: 'yes' referring to the occurrence of one or more long-standing/chronic health problems and 'no' referring to the absence of any long-standing/chronic health problem as perceived by the respondent.

The category 'not applicable' is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

Long-standing health problem
Yes
No
Not stated
Not applicable

Implementation guidelines

The model question for the variable should not be filtered by any preceding question.

This variable is part of the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM), which was designed for a population aged 15 years old and over. The MEHM consists of two more variables on health status: self-perceived general health and limitation in activities because of health problems (also known as Global Activity Limitation Indicator - GALI). If the MEHM is implemented, all the questions should be asked in the recommended order (i.e. self-perceived general health, long-standing health problem, and limitation in activities because of health problems) and with no inclusion of any other health status related questions before or between the MEHM questions as it could have an impact on the results. The MEHM could be introduced to respondents using a short introduction: “I would now like to talk to you about your health”.

As regards the implementation of the reference question (see section 'reference question'), it is necessary to keep in mind that the recommended wording allows for possible adaptations. For instance:

- ‘chronic’ or ‘long-standing’ should be chosen according to what is ‘best understood’ in a country/language.
- it is intended to ask if people ‘have’ a chronic condition, not if they really 'suffer' from it. However, the verb 'suffer' can be used in countries/languages where it is considered more suitable for the question formulation and still retains the same meaning as the verb 'have' in English.
- ‘health problem’ seems not to be understood in some countries/languages and therefore ‘illness or condition’ is the alternative.

The terms “disability, handicap, impairment” should not be included in the question as synonyms for “illness or health problem”.

Rather than adding further details to the question wording, interviewees should be instructed to be as inclusive as possible when considering the actual prevalence of a long-standing health problem. This means that the following could be considered as long-standing health problems (i.e. the corresponding answer category would be 'yes'):

- problems that are seasonal or intermittent, even where they ‘flare up’ for less than six months at a time (for instance allergies);
- chronic problems not considered by the respondent as very serious; severity doesn't play a role in this variable;
- problems that have not been diagnosed by a doctor (to exclude these would mean permitting those with better access to medical services to declare more problems);
- a long-standing disease that doesn't bother the respondent and/or is kept under control with medication (for instance people with a high blood pressure);
- not only problems of ill-health or diseases but also pain as well as ill-health caused by accidents and injuries, congenital conditions, birth defects, etc.

Specification of the concepts presented above or stating concrete examples of diseases or chronic conditions in the question should be avoided.

Reference question

The reference question was proposed by Euro-REVES²¹ project and further possible adaptations agreed based on its pretesting in EHIS.

The wording of the reference question, including possible adaptations (see 'implementation guidelines'), is as follows: “Do you have any long-standing illness or [long-standing] health problem? Long-standing means illnesses or health problems which have lasted, or are expected to last, for 6 months or more. Yes / No”.

The original question proposed by Euro-REVES project did not use the second reference to long-standing (the expression in square brackets) neither used the second sentence clarifying the meaning of long-standing. However, pretesting in EHIS showed that they may be necessary to include in some languages. As most countries implementing EHIS used the second sentence either as a part of the question or as a part of the additional explanations, the sentence is proposed to be used as the standard in order to ensure more harmonisation. The second reference to long-standing is optional.

²¹ More information can be found at: http://reves.site.ined.fr/en/home/regional_networks/euro_reves/

(27) LIMITATION IN ACTIVITIES BECAUSE OF HEALTH PROBLEMS

Name of the variable

Limitation in activities because of health problems (Global Activity Limitation Indicator - GALI)

Scope

The social micro-data collections EU-SILC, EU-LFS, EHIS and HETUS

Variable definition

Reporting unit Individuals

Filter Specific filters (e.g. aged 15+) may apply depending on the survey target population concerning the variable.

Concept The variable reports on participation restriction through long-standing limitation (6 months or more) in activities that people usually do because of health problems, and its severity.

It measures the respondent's self-assessment of whether he/she is limited (in "activities people usually do") by any on-going physical, mental or emotional health problem, including disease or impairment, and old age. Consequences of injuries/accidents, congenital conditions, etc., are all included. Only the limitations directly caused by or related to one or more **health problems** are considered. Limitations due to financial, cultural or other none health-related causes should not be taken into account.

An **activity** is defined as: 'the performance of a task or action by an individual' and thus activity limitations are defined as 'the difficulties the individual experiences in performing an activity'. People with long-standing limitations due to health problems have passed through a process of adaptation which may have resulted in a reduction of their activities. To be able to identify existing limitations a reference is necessary and therefore the activity limitations are assessed against a generally accepted population standard, relative to cultural and social expectations by referring only to '**activities people usually do**'. Usual activities cover all spectrums of activities: work or school, home and leisure activities.

The purpose of the variable is to measure the presence of **long-standing** limitations, as the consequences of such long-standing limitations (e.g. care, dependency) are more serious. Temporary or short-term limitations are excluded.

The **period of at least the past 6 months** is strictly related to the duration of the activity limitation and not to the duration of the health problem. The limitations must have started at least six months earlier and still exist at the moment of the interview. This means that a positive answer ('severely limited' or 'limited but not severely') should be recorded only if the person is currently limited and has been limited in activities for at least the past 6 months.

New limitations which have not yet lasted 6 months but are expected to continue for more than 6 months shall not be taken into consideration, even if usual medical knowledge would suggest that the health problem behind a new limitation is very likely to continue for a long time or for the rest of the life of the respondent (such as

for diabetes type 1). One reason is that in terms of activity limitation it may be possible to counteract at some point negative consequences for activity limitations by using assisting devices or personal assistance. The activity limitations of the same health problem may also depend on the individual person and circumstances, and only past experience can provide a safe answer.

Category concept

The response categories include three levels to better differentiate the severity of activity limitations: severely limited (severe limitations), limited but not severely (moderate limitations), not limited at all (no limitations).

‘Severely limited’ means that performing or accomplishing an activity cannot be done or only done with extreme difficulty, and that this situation has been ongoing for at least the past 6 months. Persons in this category usually cannot do the activity alone and would need further help from other people.

‘Limited but not severely’ means that performing or accomplishing a usual activity can be done but only with some difficulties, and that this situation has been ongoing for at least the past 6 months. Persons in this category usually do not need help from other persons. When help is provided it is usually less often than daily.

Persons with recurring or fluctuating health conditions should refer to the most common (most frequent) situation impacting their usual activities. People with conditions where several activity domains are affected but to different extent (less impact in some domains but more impact in some other domains) should make an overall evaluation of their situation and prioritize more common activities.

‘Not limited at all’ means that performing or accomplishing usual activities can be done without any difficulties, or that any possible activity limitation has NOT been going on for at least the past 6 months (i.e. it is not a long-standing limitation).

The category ‘not applicable’ is to be used to count statistical units which are part of the population of the data source but for which it systematically does not report any information on that variable (e.g. persons below a certain age).

Categories for the variable

Limitation in activities because of health problems
Severely limited
Limited but not severely
Not limited at all
Not stated
Not applicable

Implementation guidelines

The questions corresponding to the variable should not be filtered by any preceding question.

This variable is part of the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM), which was designed for a population aged 15 years old and over. The MEHM consists of two more variables on health status: self-perceived general health and long-standing health problem. If the MEHM is implemented, all the questions should be asked in the recommended order (i.e. self-perceived general health, long-standing health problem, and limitation in activities because of health problems) and with no inclusion of any other health status related questions before or between the MEHM questions as it could have impact on results. The MEHM, or a part of it, could be introduced to respondents using a short introduction: “I would now like to talk to you about your health”.

The question should clearly show that the reference is to the activities people usually do and not to respondent’s ‘own activities’. Neither a list with examples of activities (for example work or school, home or leisure activities) nor a reference to the age group of the subject is included in the question. As such it gives no restrictions by culture, age, gender or the subjects own ambition. Specification of health concepts (e.g. physical and mental health) should be avoided.

In an interview mode, all possible answer categories should systematically be read to respondents. Information on 'limitation in activities because of health problems' is to be collected through two questions (see section 'reference question'). However, the data should always be transmitted to Eurostat as one single variable. The final variable for data transmission is constructed as follows:

- TRANSMITTED_VARIABLE_CATEGORY = ‘severely limited’ if QUESTION_1 = ‘severely limited’ and QUESTION_2 = ‘Yes’
- TRANSMITTED_VARIABLE_CATEGORY = ‘limited but not severely’ if QUESTION_1 = ‘limited but not severely’ and QUESTION_2 = ‘Yes’
- TRANSMITTED_VARIABLE_CATEGORY = ‘not limited at all’ if QUESTION_1 = ‘not limited at all’ or QUESTION_2 = ‘No’
- TRANSMITTED_VARIABLE_CATEGORY = ‘not stated’ if QUESTION_1 is missing or [(QUESTION_1 = ‘severely limited’ or ‘limited but not severely’) and (QUESTION_2 is missing)]

Reference question

The reference question was originally developed as a single-question instrument by the Euro-REVES²² project. This single-question version was implemented in EU-SILC and EHIS. However, following concerns about the length and complexity of the single-question version (four concepts in one question) and experience with its implementation, several studies aiming at simplifying and improving GALI were carried out. This led to the development of a routed, two-question version. This routed version aims at making GALI better and easier to understand for respondents, in particular in telephone interviews and self-administered questionnaires. The routed version is to be implemented in all EU social micro-data collections concerned.

The recommended two-question instrument is as follows:

²² More information can be found at: http://reves.site.ined.fr/en/home/regional_networks/euro_reves/

QUESTION_1: "Are you limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do? Would you say you are... severely limited, limited but not severely, or not limited at all?"
If answer to QUESTION_1 is 'severely limited' or 'limited but not severely' ask QUESTION_2:
QUESTION_2: "Have you been limited for at least the past 6 months? Yes, No".

(28) Current household income

To be included at a later stage

Appendix: Reference definitions of a private household and of the usually resident population

Please note: the actual definitions of 'private household' and 'resident population' used in countries in different micro-data collections are being further investigated with all Working Groups concerned. The reference definitions might be changed later on in view of the outcomes of this work which will be validated by the Directors of Social Statistics (DSS).