Switzerland 2000: Survey Information

Summary table

Generic information	
Name of survey	Income and Expenditure Survey *(Enquête sur les Revenus et la Consommation – ERC / Einkommens- und Verbraucherserhebung – EVE)*
Institution responsible	Federal Statistical Office (BFS / OFS)
Frequency	Annual since 2000
Survey year / Wave	Year 2000
Collection period	January – December 2000
Survey structure	Cross-sectional
Coverage	Permanently resident population in the whole territory
Geographic information	7 grand regions
Files delivered	26 files at several levels (household individual, incomes and expenditures, activities, etc.)
Sample size	
Households	3,642 completed interviews (out of the 12,930 initially sampled)
Individuals	9,220
Sampling	
Sampling design	12 random monthly samples, stratified according to the seven grand regions of Switzerland
Sampling frame	Electronic phone directory of SWISSCOM
Questionnaires	Computer assisted phone interviews, with an initial recruitment interview, followed by a period where household fills a daily diary, a household diary and a personal diary , to finish with final interview
Standard classifications	
Education	13 categories of national educational levels
Occupation	Data were collected at the 8-digit level of the Swiss national classification *(Schweizer Berufsnomenklatur 1990, BN1990),* with existing conversion to 3-digit accuracy ISCO88
Industry	Data were collected at the 8-digit level of the Swiss national classification *(Schweizer Betriebs- und Unternehmennsregister - BUR)*, but no labels were delivered
Income	
Reference period	In theory the calendar year 2000. In practice, most income sources were collected over the period covered by their last payment, i.e. the last month in most of the cases, while some payments refer to the year 1999 or even earlier (notably income taxes, rental income, irregular transfers, interest and dividends)
Unit of collection	Each payment is collected separately (a record for each salaried work, for each pension received, for each transfer, etc.) and the questionnaire asks to which household member each payment refers to (unless it refers to the whole household), but then the link to the individual household members is not available in the dataset, so that incomes only exist at the household level.
Period of collection	Mostly the period covered by the last payment received, i.e. the last month in most of the cases
Gross/net	Gross incomes, plus detailed information on taxes and social contributions
Data editing / processing	
Consistency checks	Consolidated variables underwent substantial checks and treatments to ensure correctness
Weighting	Inflating household weight that corrects for sample probability and certain characteristics that influence household participation.
Imputation	Income and expenditure variables were fully imputed.

This document draws extensively from «Enquête sur les revenus et la consommation (ERC) - Revenus et dépenses des ménages en 2000: resultants détaillés », Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Neuchâtel, 2003.

Table of contents:

A. General characteristics

Official name of the survey/data source:
Income and Expenditure Survey / *Enquête sur les Revenus et la Consommation – ERC / Einkommens- und Verbraucherserhebung – EVE*

Administrative Unit responsible for the survey:

Swiss Federal Statistical Office
Incomes, expenditures and social conditions division
Web: www.bfs.admin.ch

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office carried out in 2000, for the third time after 1998 and 1990, a survey on incomes and expenditures (ERC) of Swiss households; since 2000, the survey periodicity is yearly. The objectives of the ERC are the following:
-   adjust every year the typical basket of the Swiss consumption prices index (IPC), in order to correctly determine the evolution of prices;
-   carry out regular reports on the consumption and incomes habits of Swiss households;
-   establish every year a statistic of incomes; this will be fed by several data sources and will take the form of a synthetic indicator.

Besides its main modules (incomes and expenditures), ERS data allow the execution of analyses in fields as diverse as housing conditions, frequency of media use, frequency of purchases, consumption of biological products and household equipment in durables. ERC data serve as a basis for the establishment of any kind of study, for example on the use of Internet.

B. Population, sampling size and sampling methods

Population coverage

The population whose consumption is used as a reference is the population permanently residing within the Swiss borders. Seasonal workers, trans-border commuters, and foreign tourist do not belong to the permanently resident population and are thus not considered in ERC.

Sample size

In total, 3,642 households (out of the 12,930 initially sampled) have voluntarily taken part to the survey in 2000, which represents an average of 12 monthly samples of 304 households.

Sampling design

The income and expenditure survey was carried out in 2000 on the basis of 12 random monthly samples, stratified according to the seven grand regions of Switzerland. In order to obtain a sufficient number of households in each region, an oversampling of the Tessin region has been carried out.

The sampling frame, that is by definition the list of the units where the sampling takes place, was, in the case of ERC 2000 the electronic phone directory of SWISSCOM. Thus, only the households registered in that directory are represented in the sample.

C. Data collection and acquisition

The ERC was carried out in collaboration with a private surveying institute, which was responsible of the fieldwork. After the households were selected in the phone directory, they were followed through a system of computer assisted phone interviews.

The data collection among the households was carried out in three stages:
- a *recruitment interview*, which has served in a first instance to collect general information concerning the size and structure of the household, the main characteristics of the reference person and the other household members (sex, age, nationality, civic status, professional situation and education), the housing conditions and the tenure of the dwelling;
- the household has then received a *daily diary*, a *household diary* and a *personal diary* for each member of the household, in order to record during a whole month expenditures and incomes;
- finally, some additional questions were asked within a *final interview*, on: the household (organisation, household tasks sharing, etc.), the dwelling and its surroundings (equipment, public transport facilities, security, etc.); purchasing habits, household equipments in durable consumption goods.

D. Definition of the survey units

The survey unit is the private household.

A *household* is defined as a small group of persons who share the same dwelling, share part or the totality of their incomes and wealth and consume collectively some goods and services, mainly the accommodation and the food.

ERC only considers private households. Thus, collective households (e.g. persons living in residential homes or prisons) and the non-profit organisations (such as charity institutions) do not belong to the reference population.

In order to catch the characteristics of the households and their members, the role of *reference person* is attributed to one of the household members. It concerns the person with the highest income. This status allows to define socio-economic categories and to classify the household in the social stratification.

E. Contents

Incomes

The term "income" is quite vague per se and can lead to misunderstandings. This is because it can design a whole series of income sources and aggregates. IN the ERC, the term "income" does not refer to the financial means of a person (personal income), but rather of the whole household (household income). More precisely, it represents the sum of the incomes of all the household members coming from all considered sources, as well as the incomes non attributable to a specific household member.

Other than an income from work or from annuities or pensions, household can also receive incomes from property, reimbursements from insurances, from renting dwellings or from royalties. Incomes are not necessarily monetary: in kind incomes are also considered among the hoseuhold incomes. They refer to, for example. The cash value of fruits and vegetables coming from the own garden, or the gifts received by the household.

In order to obtain a precise and exhaustive income report, the survey distinguishes between labour incomes, property incomes, and transfer incomes in the following way:
- *labour incomes:* incomes from employees' activities, and incomes from self-employed activities;
- *property and rental incomes:* interests, annuities from life-insurances, rents, etc.;
- *transfers incomes:* social benefits (pensions from AVS/AI, unemoployment insurance, pensions from occupational schemes, etc.) and incomes from other various transfers (alimony, private supplementary pensions, etc.).

Expenditures

In order to classify expenditures, the survey distinguishes between consumption expenditures and transfers expenditures:
- in the nomenclature of household *consumption expenditures*, expenditures are classified according to their type of usage; the COICOP nomenclature, established by EUROSTAT and adapted by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, was used as a basis for this classification;
- *transfer expenditures* include the following elements: insurances (sickness insurance premiums, social security contributions, occupational pensions contributions, etc.), taxes, contributions, gifts and other payments.

Household expenditures for professional use, the savings and the investments were not considered.

F. Quality of data

Response rate

28.2% of the initially selected households and 35.1% of contacted households completed the interview.

Weighting procedure
In order to determine the incomes and the expenditures of all private households residing in Switzerland, the data from the sampled households were weighted by taking the following factors into consideration:
- the sample probability (the probability of a household to be sampled from the SWISSCOM phone directory);
- certain variables that have an influence on the non-participation of the households, such as the household size, the socio-economic group of the reference person, and the nationality of the reference person.

This weighting procedure in two stages, applied for all the survey months, allows compensating for the distortions linked to the household participation. ERC 2000 results are thus based on a household structure realistic and representative of the permanently resident Swiss population.

Data checking and imputation: variable consolidation

The consolidated variables are those tat concern the main mandate of ERC, i.e. the description of the structure of the incomes and expenditures of private households according to different household categorisations. On top of their collection on the field, they have undergone substantial checks and treatments with the aim of ensuring their:
- exhaustivity: missing values have been imputed;
- correctness: abhorring data were identified and corrected.

Non consolidated variables were collected for the documentation of annexed themes: they were collected through the questionnaire and were not further worked. It can thus be that some errors subsist as far as their content is concerned.

G. Uses of the survey

Publications
Yearly reports on revenues and expenditures of the Swiss households.

Poverty and Income Distribution
The above mentioned publications do not report any indicator of poverty or income inequality.

In the report "Vivre en Suisse 199-200 – Leben in der Schweiz 1999-2000", edited by E. Zimmermann & R. Tillmann in 2004, and published on the basis of the results from the Swiss Household Panel, poverty (defined as the percentage of persons living in household whose equivalised (using the modified OECD equivalence scale) income – after social contributions but before taxes - is lower than 50% of median national income) was reported to be at 7.2% in 1999 and 6.4% in 2000.