Ireland 1994: Survey Information

Summary table

	Initial sample	IE94
Generic		
Name of survey	Living in Ireland Survey / European Community Household Panel (ECHP)	
Institution responsible	National level: Economic and Social Research Institute (Community level: Eurostat)	
Frequency	Annual	
Survey year / Wave	Wave 1 (1994)	Wave 2 (1995)
Collection period	June-December 1994	June-December 1995
Survey structure	Panel	
Coverage	All private households in all the national territory (incl. collective households but excl. institutional ones)	
Geographic information	NUTS3	
Files delivered	5 cross-sectional files: the households' register file, the households' questionnaire file, the personal register file, the individual questionnaire file and the Sample weights file.	
Sample size		
Households	4,048 (completed)	3,584
Individuals	9,905 (completed personal interviews to 16+)	8,534
Sampling		
Sampling design	Two-stage sampling with District Electoral Divisions (DED) selected systematically within each stratum and households of the electors selected within each DED	In successive waves, the sample includes: - *old households* (unless all members are deceased, moved to an institution or outside the EU, or not containing any 'initial sample person') - *newly generated households*, i.e. new/pre-existing hhds created/joined when someone from a previous wave hhd moves out
Sampling frame	Register of Electors	
Questionnaires	Household Register, Household Questionnaire and Individual Questionnaire	
Standard classifications		
Education	1-digit ISCED-97	
Occupation	4-digit ISCO-88	
Industry	3-digit NACE/ISIC	
Income		
Reference period	1993 (whole year)	1994 (whole year)
Unit of collection	Mostly individual, excl. housing allowances, social assistance, rental income and inheritance/lottery winning.	
Period of collection	Mostly monthly income together with number of months received during reference year; some yearly income.	
Gross/net	Most variables are collected net of taxes and contributions (with the exception of self-employment earnings, and wages which are collected also gross).	
Data editing / processing		
Consistency checks	Computer checking programs to verify questionnaire routing and to carry out a limited range of plausibility checks.	
Weighting	Household level weights that take into account: - adjustment for sample attrition (from Wave 2 onwards) - external checks on population structure (demographic/socio-economic/social welfare) - grossing-up to population size	
Imputation	None.	

This document is based upon "The European Community Household Panel (ECHP): Survey methodology and implementation", 1996 and "Monitoring Poverty Trends: Data from the 1997 Living in Ireland Survey", by T. Callan, R. Layte, B. Nolan, D. Watson, C.T. Whelan, J. Williams and B. Maitre, Dublin, Stationery Office/Combat Poverty Agency, 1999.

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A. General characteristics

Official name of the survey/data source:
Living in Ireland Survey / European Community Household Panel (ECHP)

Administrative Unit responsible for the survey:

Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)
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The Living in Ireland Survey is the Irish component of the European Household Panel Survey (ECHP), a standardised survey conducted in Member States of the European Union under auspices of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). The survey involves annual interviewing of a representative panel of households and individuals in each country, covering a wide range of topics on living conditions. It was launched in response to the increasing demand in the EU for comparable information across the Member States on income, work and employment, poverty and social exclusion, housing, health and many other diverse social indicators concerning living conditions of private households and persons.

A major aim of the survey is to provide an up-to-date and comparable data source on personal incomes. The survey provides detailed information at the individual and household levels on a variety of income sources: wage income, rent subsidies, unemployment and sickness benefits, social assistance benefits, occupational and private pensions, and so on.

Following a two-wave pilot during 1993 in all 12 Member States at the time, the full-scale survey began with Wave 1 in 1994 and ended with Wave 7 in 2000, when it was decided to drop the input-harmonised ECHP for the output-harmonised SILC (Survey of Income and Living Conditions). Although the ECHP is a household survey with a high degree of co-ordination, the collection of data takes place in each country, and consequently a degree of flexibility has been allowed so as to permit each country to adapt common procedures to its national situation. In Ireland, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) is responsible for selecting the national sample, adapting the questionnaire to national standards and carrying out the filed work, basic data processing and editing at the national level.

B. Population, sampling size and sampling methods

Population

Total population, population above 16 and household population, information at the end of the year.

	1994	1995
Total population	3,520,000	3,582,000
Population above 16	2,581,900	2,634,462
Household population	1,127,000	1,145,700

Source: Eurostat

Sample size

The sample size for each Member State was determined on the basis of various theoretical and practical considerations and the available budget. In Ireland, the initial sample comprised 7,252, of which 4,048 were interviewed; additionally, 9,905 personal interviews were carried out. The sample was normally distributed proportionately across geographical region, so as to maximise the precision of estimates at the national level, and all part of the population were sampled at the same rate, i.e. there was no over sampling of any particular groups.

	Wave 1	Wave 2
Households		
Completed households	4048	3584
Individuals		
N. in completed households	14585	12649
Eligible for interview	10418	9049
Interviewed	9904	8535

Coverage and sampling frame

Coverage – The objective of the sample design was to obtain a representative sample of private households in the whole territory of Ireland, including collective households (private households containing numerous ‘sub-households’, such as boarding or lodging

houses and army barracks); institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, convents, monasteries or prisons are not included). Among those effectively excluded from the target population are a number of small groups known to face a high risk of poverty – such as the homeless and travellers not living in private households – as well as those living in institutions, whose poverty risk is harder to assess a priori.

Sampling frame – The frame used for the Living in Ireland Survey was the Register of Electors. This provides a listing of all adults age 18 and over who are registered to vote in the Dáil, Local Government or European Parliament elections (only names and addresses). This means that the target sample selected using the ESRI's RANSAM procedure was a sample of persons, not of households. Since the probability of selection is greater for households with a larger number of registered voters, this means that the resulting sample will tend to over-represent larger households. This was taken into account in re-weighting the sample for analysis.

Initial sample design and selection

The survey is based on two stage sampling with 2 or more PSUs selected systematically within each stratum:

- the selection of Irish District Electoral Divisions (PSU) in the first stage;
- the selection of a small number of households at the second stage within each selected PSU; the selection of the ultimate sampling units was made in Ireland in a slightly different manner than in other ECHP countries: first, a sample of electors was selected, and then the household of each elector selected taken into the sample; this meant that the selection probability of any household varied in direct proportion to the number of electors in it .

The criteria for explicit stratification comprised the unemployment rate, urban/rural environment and the region.

Longitudinal sample

The initial sample comprised all usual residents of the households selected as above. At any subsequent wave, the eligible population consists of:

- sample persons, i.e. all initial Wave 1 usual residents who are still alive and eligible for the ECHP, and children born subsequent to Wave 1 to sample persons; members as they become aged 16+ become eligible for the personal interview; in this way the survey population is kept up-to-date for demographic changes except for immigrants into the original population;
- non-sample persons: such persons are covered using the same procedures; these are persons who reside in the same household with one or more sample persons; however, the survey does not follow up non-sample persons who move into households not containing any sample person.

The following table identifies the households which are eligible (E) for any wave N. This depends on the outcome of the household interview at waves (N-1) and (N-2). The remaining households are dropped from the survey (D).

		Wave (N-1) household interview status		
		Completed	Not completed: 1. physical incapacity 2. non-contact 3. 'initial refusal'	Not completed: 4. definite refusal 5. ineligibility
Wave (N-2) household interview status	Completed wave (N-2) household	E	E	D
	New household in wave N-1	E	E	D
	Not completed wave N-2 household	E	D	D

To this will be added newly formed households resulting from the movement of sample members since the last wave. Additional sample households may be added to augment the ECHP. Also, persons moving to collective household are each treated as a new one-person household in its own right. Deducted will be the very few households, which at the time of wave N no longer contain a sample member (i.e. have become non-existent or contain only non-sample members).

The individual members of sample households are eligible for an interview unless they have moved outside the EU or to an institution. Apart from members of a private household comprising one or more panel members, panel members who have moved into a collective household (non-institutional collective accommodation, e.g., boarding house, residential educational establishment, or other accommodation shared by 5 or more unrelated people, with individual responsibility for the running of the household) and outside the country of origin but within EU are also to be interviewed.

C. Data collection and acquisition

Field work

Field work was carried out by experienced interviewers working for CSO and ESRI. Face-to-face personal interviewing was the main mode of data collection; the reference person provided information on the household questionnaire and then the person concerned for the individual questionnaire; however, proxy for the individual interview was permitted (9.5% in Ireland for Wave 1). In situations where the individual could not be personally contacted, the provision of 'self-completion' was allowed, i.e. the interviewer leaving a questionnaire to be completed by the respondent him/herself; where possible, an attempt was made to verify the information with the respondent subsequently. Conventional 'paper and pencil' interviewing was used together with computer-assisted data entry (CADI). Respondents received a gift in appreciation of their participation (1 Lottery ticket per respondent).

Data collection period

Much of the information, especially on household and personal income, is collected in the ECHP for the calendar year preceding the interview. Therefore it is desirable to collect the information as soon after the end of the reference year as possible. There are also some substantive advantages in making the fieldwork duration short, though operationally it may be necessary or even desirable to prolong this duration. However, data collection in most cases began 4-8 months after the end of the reference year, and in a number of countries extended to the very end of the following year. This applies to all waves in so far as countries try to retain their successive waves to be exactly one year apart. The duration of fieldwork has also varied, though mostly it is in the range 3-6 months. A number of practical reasons have contributed to the delay in starting fieldwork following the reference year. In most countries there are competing requirements from other surveys and regular operations. The second main reason has been the difficulty in completing budgetary and organisational arrangements for stating fieldwork each year.

Data collection in Ireland

	Wave 1	Wave2
Field work	June-December 1994	June-December 1995

Questionnaire

Eurostat has sought harmonisation of the questionnaires employed in each country in terms of their structure, content and interpretation. The Community ECHP questionnaire is composed of three parts:

- *Household Register:* it has the functions of: controlling and tracing evolution of the sample over time, collecting information on non-responding cases, maintaining records of interviewers' performance, providing critical information for the linkage of households and persons over time and also collecting a few basic items of substantive information; definition and control of the sample is the basic function of the Household Register; it keeps a record of all addresses, households and individuals in the sample for each wave, and as they are carried over from one wave to the next and linked across waves; records are kept of changes in household addresses, of the outcome of all interviewing, and of reasons for non-response where the interviewing has not been completed; in the manner the HR is a basic instrument of operational control in the ECHP.
- *Household Questionnaire:* it collects information on: changes in household location, housing conditions, amenities, problems and possession of durable, housing tenure, mortgage and rent amounts paid, financial situation of the household (debt burden, etc.), sources of household income and the approximate total net monthly amount, and housing allowance, social assistance, and rental, property and other income received by the household as a whole.

- *Personal Questionnaire:* through personal interview with each member aged 16 or over the 31st December of the preceding year, it collects detailed information on each person's economic activity and income, and on a large number of other variables.

The ESRI adapted the Community ECHP questionnaire to the national conditions; moreover, a substantial part of the questionnaire was devoted to supplementary questions of national interest: the principal domains covered by the extended questionnaire relate to income from agriculture, housing, the link between health and employment, biographic information on the work and level of education of the respondent's parents, and some additional information on the general situation o the household.

D. Definition of the survey units

Household

Community definition: for the purposes of the ECHP, a household is defined at the Community level in terms of two criteria: the sharing of the same dwelling and the common living arrangements. All the individuals considered by the household to form part of the household are taken into account, even if they are temporarily absent for reasons of work, study or sickness.

National definition: Ireland followed the proposed definition of household in terms of both common accommodation and common arrangements. Unrelated persons normally residing in the household such as boarders and domestic staff are considered to be part of the household; tenants/subtenants and lodgers are also included, while persons temporarily with the household such as guests or visitors are excluded. Persons temporarily away or absent from the household, such as institutionalised persons (hospital/nursing home, full0time education, military service, other) and persons working out of town, on travel or other, are included if absence is temporary and there is an expectation of coming back.

Head of household (HoH) and reference person (RP)

Community definition: for Wave 1, both concepts were used according to the following definition: a HoH/RP must be defined at the point of data collection in order to meet 3 principal objectives:

- as a reference point for establishing the relationship of all members of the households;
- to select a respondent for the household questionnaire;
- to determine to whom certain components of household income should be attributed in the individual questionnaire.

From Wave 2 onwards, the concept of HoH was dropped, relationships between household members are recorded using a matrix in the household register and the RP has been defined for the sake of simplicity and comparability as the member who owns or is responsible for the accommodation. The respondent to the household questionnaire is chosen according to the following list of priorities:

- the first preference is for the person who responded to the household interview of the preceding round;

- otherwise, an eligible 'panel' member, with priority in the following order: the RP; the RP's spouse or partner, another eligible 'panel' member (member of the initial sample);
- at the last resort, any eligible interviewee even though not a panel member.

National definition: The HoH for Wave 1 was defined as the owner or tenant of the dwelling, and he/she was automatically considered as the reference person; as a result, the RP may be not economically active while the household is effectively run by an economically active younger member.

E. Contents

Labour market information

The ECHP encompasses two related measures of the individual's economic activity:

Current activity status: status during the reference week, i.e the 7 (full) days preceding the interview (a moving reference period rather than a fixed period in terms of specific calendar dates is used because of the extended data collection period of the ECHP).

The categories of classification of the total population are presented below:
Total population
Working age population (16+)
Employed (at work or with job but temporarily not at work)
Normally working for 15+ hours per week
Normally working for <15 hours per week
Unemployed (not working and seeking and available for work)
Not economically active (not seeking and/or not available for work)
Population below the working age (<16)

Labour force (economically active population) = Employed + Unemployed
Population not economically active = Not economically active + Population below the working age

Labour force participation rate = Labour force / Working age population
Unemployment rate = Unemployed / Labour force

Main activity status: according to the main activity concept, persons are classified as being in job or self-employment if they presently work for at least 15 hours per week; for the remaining, the main status (including the status of being unemployed) is determined according to self-declaration, in principle on the basis of the most time spent.

Income

Eurostat's main concern was with disposable income (i.e. gross income minus compulsory deductions for tax and Social Insurance contributions) in the calendar year

before the interview; however, details on both current income receipts from these sources and receipts in the previous year were collected in the Irish version of the questionnaire, allowing both current and annual income to be measured. Information on household income is obtained in two forms:

- a simple, approximate indicator of the household current total net monthly income (obtained from one single item in the household questionnaire),
- a detailed enumeration of individual components of income at the household and individual levels over the preceding year.

Individual level income comprises:

- *Income from employment (including training and apprenticeship):* this is obtained for persons normally aged 16 and over at the 31st of December of the preceding year, who at any time during the preceding year receive a wage, salary or other form of pay for work as an employee or an apprentice; normal gross as well as net earnings (including additional payment such as from overtime, bonus, etc.) per month are asked for, along with the normal hours worked as to permit the computation of wage rates; if a person had different jobs during the reference year, not at the same time, this person had to answer on the job with the longest duration.
- *Income from self-employment:* in this case gross amount after deduction of expenses is sought; the reference period is the most recent year or similar duration for which the respondent can provide the information; in the case of partnership with persons outside the household, the respondents' own share only is recorded; in the case of partnership involving household members, the total amount is recorded in the questionnaire of the main persons responsible for the business; when actual amounts cannot be specified, approximate information in the form of a range is sought.
- *Income from casual/secondary work:* only the total net amount received during the reference year is recorded.
- *Income from private transfers and from financial assets:* only the total net amount received during the reference year is recorded; a range is asked for when the actual amounts cannot be specified.
- *Income from social and social insurance transfers:* individual components are specified in detail following the ESSPROS classification; when the normal net amounts per month and the number of months received cannot be given separately, the total net amount for the reference year is recorded.

Household level income comprises components of income which are normally received by the household as a whole, rather than by members individually; this includes:

- housing allowance received by owners or tenants (in the interest of simplifying the question sequence, the current monthly amount and number of months received during reference year is asked for households who report receiving such an allowance at the time of the interview)
- social assistance: for both cash and non-cash assistance, the specific months of receipt are recorded (rather than simply the total number of months during the reference year), along with the normal monthly amount in the case of cash assistance
- rental income: total for the reference year; a range is sought if the actual amount cannot be specified.
- lump sum receipts: approximate ranges.

Gross versus net distinction: for certain components, the questionnaire does not attempt to make a sharp distinction between gross and net amounts in order to limit response burden; in the main, however, the overall amount obtained can be taken to approximate the concept of net income, i.e. net of income tax and social insurance deductions at source; note that this is not always the same as disposable income, normally defined as net of final tax settlement (direct additional payment or refund) on the income; such information on tax is not included in the ECHP questionnaire.

In addition to the detailed enumeration of the income components for the preceding year, some information collected is relating to the current situation:

- current gross and net monthly income from employment (including training and apprenticeship) for persons normally working 15 hours or more a week;
- current gross and net monthly income for persons normally working less than 15 hours a week but having worked for at least one hour during the seven days preceding the interview.

F. Quality of data

Response rates

The sample from the Wave 1 (1994) Living in Ireland survey was followed in subsequent years and re-interviewed. The follow-up rules for the survey meant that new households might be included in each wave where a sample person from Wave 1 moved to another household. All individuals in the Wave 1 sample were to be followed in Wave 2 and household and individual interviews were to be conducted, as long as the person still lived in a private or collective[1] household within the EU. The wave-on-wave response rate is reported below.

Number of Completed Households and household response rate

	Wave 1	Wave 2	
Households			% Hsds
Completed Households	4,048	3,584	80%
Non-response (NR)	3,038	794	18%
Non-sample	166	97	2%
Total Hsds	7,252	4,475	100%
Household response rate (excluding non-sample)			82%

[1] Collective households are private households containing numerous 'sub-households' and include boarding or lodging houses and army barracks. They do not include institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, convents or prisons. If an individual moved to a collective household, they were followed and interviewed, and information on their 'sub-household' was collected using the household questionnaire and the household register.

Number Sample Persons in Completed Households and N Interviewed

	Wave 1	Wave 2	
Individuals			% Ind
N. in Completed Hsds	14,585	12,649	84%
N in NR Hsds	-------	2,286	15%
N in Non-Sample Hsds	-------	117	1%
Total Individuals		15,052	100%
Eligible for individual Interview	10,418	9,049	
Interviewed	9,904	8,532	94%

In Wave 1, there were 4048 completed sample households containing 14,585 individuals. Of these, 10,418 were eligible for individual interview and 9904 (95 per cent) were interviewed individually. The total number of households eligible for inclusion in Wave 2 was 4475, which included newly generated households[2]. In Wave 2, 3584 households were completed, 794 did not respond, and 97 were non-sample households[3]. The household response rate (when non-sample households are excluded) was 82 per cent. The 3584 completed households contained 12190 sample persons, of whom 8760 were eligible for individual interview (born in 1978 or earlier) and 8314, or 96 per cent, were actually interviewed.

The main reason for household non-response was refusal (9% of the eligible sample in Wave 2). Among the newly generated households, difficulties in obtaining forwarding addresses for those who moved also contributed to the non-response rate.

Given the relatively high sample attrition rate, it was important to carefully check for any biases that may be introduced if attrition is related to characteristics of households, such as size, location, economic status and income. These checks were conducted in the course of devising sample weights for the data in Wave 2, using information on the households and individuals from the previous wave's interviews. The table below provides a summary of these results. The data in the tables are weighted by carrying forward the household weight from the previous wave.[4] These weights do not provide an accurate match to the population, so the distributions should only be used to compare the characteristics of responding and non-responding households. For weighting purposes, non-sample households are included; that is, households which had moved abroad outside the EU or where the members had died between waves are included in 'All households'.

[2] These include (a) households generated when someone from a Wave 1 household moves out to set up a new household or (b) pre-existing households that a mover from a wave 1 household had joined by 1995.

[3] Non-sample households are those where all members are deceased, moved to an institution or outside the EU, or households not containing a 'sample person' – someone who was in one of the original households in wave 1.

[4] Newly generated households, for this purpose, get same household weight as the household from which they were generated.

Previous Wave Characteristics of All Households and Responding Households in Wave 2

		All Hsds	Respondent Hsds	
		Per cent	Per cent	Diff.
Head-Sex	Male	76%	76%	0.5%
(% Households)	Female	24%	24%	-0.5%
Head-Age Group	Under 25	2%	2%	-0.2%
(% Households)	25-34	16%	16%	-0.1%
	35-44	21%	22%	1.2%
	45-54	20%	19%	-0.7%
	55-64	16%	16%	-0.8%
	65+	24%	25%	0.6%
Head-Marital	Married	59%	60%	0.8%
Status	Separated/Div.	6%	6%	-0.3%
(% Households)	Widowed	14%	14%	0.3%
	Never Married	21%	20%	-0.7%
Hsd. Size	One	21%	21%	0.2%
(% Households)	2	21%	21%	0.4%
	3	15%	14%	-0.5%
	4	16%	17%	0.3%
	5	14%	14%	0.0%
	6+	13%	13%	-0.4%
N At Work	0	35%	36%	0.6%
(% Households)	1	36%	37%	0.6%
	2	21%	21%	-0.2%
	3+	8%	7%	-1.1%
Head-	Employee	39%	38%	-0.6%
Economic Status	Self-employed	9%	9%	0.1%
(% Households)	Farming	8%	8%	0.2%
	Educ/training	0%	0%	0.0%
	Unemployed	9%	9%	0.0%
	Disabled	3%	3%	0.0%
	Retired	18%	18%	0.5%
	Home Duties	14%	13%	-0.2%
Urban/Rural	Dublin	30%	29%	-0.6%
(% Households)	Other Urban	18%	18%	-0.5%
	Rural	52%	53%	1.1%
Hsd Moved?	Same Address	88%	94%	6.8%
(% Households)	New Address	12%	6%	-6.8%
Split/Original Hsd	Original Hsd	93%	97%	4.3%
(% Households)	Split Hsd	7%	3%	-4.3%
Poverty Status in W1	Not Poor	83%	82%	-0.7%
(% Households)	Poor	17%	18%	0.7%
N. Social Welfare	U.A. etc.	8%	8%	-0.4%
Recipients in Hsd.	U.B.	2%	2%	0.0%
(% age 15+)	OAPC/Ret. Pen.	4%	4%	0.2%
	OAPNC	4%	5%	0.3%
	WID._C	2%	3%	0.1%
	WID_NC	1%	1%	0.0%
	LPA	2%	2%	-0.1%

D.B.	1%	1%	0.1%
I.P.	1%	1%	0.1%
DPMA	1%	1%	0.0%

In general, the results of the table are encouraging. Although, as mentioned above, there is an association between non-response and changing address (which particularly affects young, single householders) the overall impact on the sample structure is slight.

In Wave 2, 2.4% of all households had a head who (in Wave 1) was under age 25; while the proportion for completed Wave 2 households had dropped only 0.2 percentage points to 2.2 per cent.

Apart from the loss of roughly half of the households, which had changed address between waves (including the newly-generated households), the impact on the sample distribution of previous-wave characteristics amounted to, at most, 1 or 2 percentage points. In particular, the differences between the completed and total sample in terms of economic status of the head, numbers at work in the household, total numbers receiving the major social welfare payments, and Wave 1 poverty status of the household were very small.

Overall then, although the attrition rate is relatively high, it has only a minor impact on the sample distribution of household characteristics. There is no evidence that households with specific characteristics related to the measurement of poverty and income distribution are being selectively lost from the sample.

Data checking

Each wave the data are checked as thoroughly as possible, both at the micro and the aggregate level, and longitudinally against the previous (and where possible, the following) wave. The checks are carried out at the national level in the first instance, then centrally by Eurostat. The checks comprise range and routine checks, followed by structural, cross-sectional and longitudinal consistency and plausibility checks.

Imputation

Imputations are confined to missing income components and are done centrally by Eurostat, hence are not included in this survey.

Sample weights

The same procedure was used in developing the weights for Waves 2, 3 and 4, but in the discussion below we will focus on the Wave 4 (1997) weights.

The household weights were developed in a number of steps:

1. The first step was to derive weights to control for any bias due to sample attrition at the household level between waves of the survey. In constructing the Wave 2 weights, the Wave 1 household weight was carried forward to the Wave 2 sample. The characteristics of all Wave 2 households (including the newly-generated

households)[5] were compared to those of all completed Wave 2 households. Since no information was available on the Wave 2 characteristics of non-completed households, the Wave 1 characteristics were used[6]) in comparing the two groups. The household characteristics examined were household size, number of adults over 18 years; number over age 65; number at work; number unemployed; number of males and females in each of 11 age groups; number of males and females in each of (a) 11 age/marital status categories, (b) 9 economic status categories, (c) 5 socio-economic groups, and (d) 4 broad levels of education; and number of recipients of 12 different social welfare payments. In addition, the corresponding characteristics of the 'head' of household[7] were examined: age group, sex, level of education, socio-economic status, socio-economic group and marital status. Also included were the urban/rural location of the household in Wave 1 (Dublin, other urban and rural), the poverty status and equivalised income decile in Wave 1 (this information had not yet been computed for Wave 3) household, whether the household had moved since the previous wave, and whether the household was a split household in Wave 3.

In general, the distribution of the characteristics examined was very similar for the responding and non-responding Wave 2 households. Although the sample attrition rate between Waves 1 and 2 is pretty high, there is certainly no indication any selectivity in the attrition is having a notable impact on the distribution of the major correlates of household income and poverty status.

The adjustment for sample attrition involved adjusting the Wave 1 household weights so that the distribution of each of the characteristics for the responding Wave 2 households was equal to the distribution of these characteristics for the total sample. The Gross program written by Johanna Gomulka was used. This program uses a minimum distance algorithm to adjust an initial weight so that the distribution of characteristics in a sample matches that of a set of control totals. In the present case, the initial weight was the household weight from Wave 1 and the totals for all households (responding and non-responding, with the Wave 1 weight applied) were used as the control totals.

2. The next step was to apply external checks to the household weights using data from the 1995 Labour Force Survey and other sources, such as the Department of Social Welfare Published statistics on social welfare recipiency levels. At this stage, the current characteristics of the completed Wave 2 sample were compared to those of external sources. Even if there was no sample attrition between waves, some

[5] Newly-generated households are households formed when a sample person from the previous wave moves out and either sets up a new household or joins a non-sample household. In either case, the individual is followed and interviews are conducted in the 'newly-generated' household. Note that in checking for sample attrition effects we included households that would not have been eligible for inclusion in Wave 2 – either because the household members died, moved to an institution or moved outside the EU.

[6] In the case of newly-generated households, the Wave 1 characteristics of the household the individual(s) moved from were used.

[7] The 'head' was taken as the household reference person (the person responsible for the accommodation). If a couple was responsible for the accommodation, the characteristics of the male partner were used.

adjustment to the household weights would be needed at this point because the inclusion of newly-generated households and their members has an impact on the structure of the sample, principally by adding more newly-formed households which tend to have an over-representation of young, single adults. The first stage in this external comparison involved using a special tabulation of the 1995 LFS which was obtained from the Central Statistics Office. This classified households along six dimensions: Number of adults in household (6 categories), location (Dublin, other urban and rural), number of individuals at work (0, 1 and 2 or more), socio-economic group of household head (agriculture/fishing; professional/managerial; other non-manual; manual; and 'not stated'); whether the household contains any persons age 65 or over; and whether the head is under age 25. The cells of the table were used to adjust the Wave 2 household weights, and further adjustments were made according to the marginal distributions on each of these variables.

The second stage in constructing the Wave 2 household weights was to adjust the weights from the previous stage to control for characteristics of individuals obtained from the Labour Force Survey microdata for 1995 and from the Department of Social Welfare's published report on Social Welfare Statistics for 1995. The external population characteristics used were household size, number of adults in the household, urban-rural location, socio-economic group of the household head, presence of individuals age 65 or over, whether the head is under age 25; number of males and females in each of 10 age groups, in each of 11 age/marital status groups, and in each of 8 principal economic status categories; number of recipients of each of 12 major types of social welfare payment; and size of farm for farm households. (Again, the Gross programme was used, with the initial weight being the household weight from the previous step and the control totals derived from the LFS and the Department of Social Welfare Statistics.

Apart from incorporating weights to control for attrition from previous waves, and the availability of new technology in the form of the Gross programme, the logic and general strategy in developing the weights for Waves 2 was very similar to that used in Wave 1. Carrying forward the weights from the previous wave meant that little further adjustment was needed in Waves 2 for the distribution of characteristics such as household size or farm size, except insofar as these were associated with attrition or the effects of including newly-generated households in the sample.

G. Uses of survey

The data from the Living in Ireland Survey has been used extensively for research in a number of policy areas including poverty and anti-poverty strategies, pension provision for the elderly, the training and education systems, the tax and Social Welfare systems; health policy; pension coverage and the circumstances of people with disabilities.

Once integrated into the ECHP, the entire dataset becomes a unique source of information on household income and living conditions in the European Union because

of the comparability of the data generated as well as the multi-dimensional coverage and the longitudinal design of the instrument which allows the study of changes over time at the micro level. These specific features made it possible to respond to the increasing demand for comparable information on income, labour, and various social indicators. Numerous ECHP data requests originating from the Commission (DGII, DGV, DGXXII) and the OECD have been answered. Various National Data Collection Units (NDUs) have also extensively used ECHP data. Eurostat publications drawing on ECHP results include to date 7 "Statistics in Focus", 5 "horizontal" publications, 2 methodological volumes, and over 100 technical and methodological documents. Wide use of ECHP data has been made in the context of two major Commission reports: the annual *Employment in Europe* report and the biennial *Social Protection in Europe* report.

Poverty

A great deal is known about the extent of low income and deprivation and the types of household at risk of poverty in 1994, both from the study by T. Callan, B. Nolan, B.J. Whelan, D.F. Hannan and S. Creighton "Poverty in the 1990s: Evidence from the Living in Ireland Survey, General Research Series Paper 170, Dublin, 1996 and subsequent studies also using the 1994 Living in Ireland Survey. No major national analysis calculated poverty rates for Ireland for the 1995 Wave of the Living in Ireland Survey.