Austria 2000: Survey Information

Summary table

	Initial sample	AT00
Generic		
Name of survey	Austrian European Community Household Panel (ECHP) / *Europäisches Haushaltspane*	
Institution responsible	National level: Interdisciplinary Center for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (ICCR) (Community level: Eurostat)	
Frequency	Annual	
Survey year / Wave	1995 (Wave 1, ECHP Wave 2)	2001 (Wave 7, ECHP Wave 8)
Collection period	September – December 1995	October 2001 – March 2002
Survey structure	Panel	
Coverage	Whole territory (a national representative sample plus a regional sample for areas affected by high rates of unemployment, not supplied to LIS)	
Geographic information	NUTS1 (information originally recorded in NUTS3 level)	
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	3,382 households	2,544 completed households
Individuals	7,441 individuals 16 and over	5,982 eligible individuals (of which 5,605 with completed personal interview)
Sampling		
Sampling design	Two-stage sampling: first a sample area was selected, and then, within this area, a building object/housing unit was selected	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')
Sampling frame	'Building register' *(Gebäuderegiste*r)	-*newly generated households*, i.e. new/pre-existing hhds created/joined when someone from a previous wave hhd moves out
Questionnaires	Household questionnaire and Individual questionnaire	
Standard classifications		
Education	1-digit ISCED-97	
Occupation	1-digit ISCO-88 (information originally collected in 2-digit accuracy)	
Industry	3 categories only with corresponding 2-digit NACE codes (same as above)	
Income		
Reference period	1994 (whole year)	2000 (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	Basic data editing was done in parallel with the data entry by the fieldwork institutions. Further checks and cleaning carried out by the ICCR.	
Weighting	Household level weights were computed by ICCR to: inflate to total population, adjust to the population distribution of the Mikrozensus, and take systematic sample attrition problems into account.	
Imputation	A first-set of imputations was carried out by the ICCR and is included in the LIS files: mostly panel data imputation (Row and Column method) plus similar methods for persons for which there is no longitudinal information. The more complex imputation carried out centrally by EUROSTAT was not included in the files used by LIS.	

This document is based upon "The European Community Household Panel (ECHP): Survey methodology and implementation", 1996 and on "Querschnittsbericht 7. Welle 2001 – Zahlen für 2000", by R. Heuberger, Europaisches Haushaltspanel – Forschungsberichte, Wien, Oktober 2002 (see http://www.iccr-international.org/echp/documentation.html).

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A. General characteristics

Official name of the survey/data source:
Austrian European Community Household Panel (ECHP) / *Europäisches Haushaltspanel*

Administrative Unit responsible for the survey:

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The European Household Panel Survey (ECHP) is a standardised survey conducted in the 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.

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, but Austria joined only in 1995 following the entry of Austria in the European Union, 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. The implementation of the first Wave in Austria was made possible with the financial support of both Eurostat and the Austrian

Federal Ministry for Social Affairs (BMAS). The survey was carried out by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (IFS/ICCR) in collaboration with the public opinion research institutes FESSEL and IFES, under the supervision of the Austrian Statistical Office (ÖSTAT). The implementation of the first wave of the ECHP was preceded by a feasibility study (1993) and a pilot study (1994/1995). The pilot survey was used to select a data collection unit and for checking the applicability of the questionnaire in the Austrian context.

The ECHP data allow a comprehensive analysis of the income and living conditions of the Austrian population. The questionnaire used addresses in detail the subject areas of income, fixed household expenditures, including debts, work, training and education, child care, health and social relations. On the subject of income, the ECHP data enable, perhaps for the first time in Austria, the investigation of the relations and relative significance of various income components, including transfer payments, per individual and per household. Given the comparatively high response rate achieved and the quality of the data, the ECHP database consequently provides a rich source of policy-relevant information and one that may be further used for the application of micro-simulation models that inquire into the effects of various taxation and social welfare measures. The panel aspect of the survey will allow the charting and analysis of the longitudinal development of income relations and the exploration of the short, medium and long-term effects of macro-economic and political economic developments at the micro level of household economies. Last but not least, the participation of Austria to the ECHP project allows drawing comparisons with other countries on the subjects addressed.

B. Population, sampling size and sampling methods

Sample size and coverage

The sample size for each Member State was determined on the basis of various theoretical and practical considerations and the available budget. In Austria, the sample for the main survey was conceptualised and drawn by the Austrian Statistical Office. It comprised (a) a nationally representative sample of 4,967 addresses (expected net sample: 3,500, response rate 70%), and (b) a regional sample (oversampling) of 714 addresses in Burgenland, Mühlviertel and Waldviertel (expected net sample 500), areas affected by high rates of unemployment. In the 2001 wave, the sample consisted of 2,544 completed households, and 5,605 completed personal interviews (out of 6,873 including children and adults who did not answer the personal questionnaire).

See the document http://www.lisproject.org/techdoc/ie/at94survey.pdf for detailed information on the initial sample design and selection.

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

The fieldwork for the seventh wave (ECHP Wave 8) of the survey was carried out in the months of October 2001 to March 2002 by IFES and FESSEL.

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.

In order to meet national specificities (as well as specific client needs from the Austrian side), the Community version of the questionnaire had to be revised to quite some extent. Despite these quite extensive changes, however, it is still possible on the basis of the Austrian variables to construct most of the EUROSTAT variables. For a detailed overview of the main revisions introduced for the Austrian version of the questionnaire, see http://www.lisproject.org/techdoc/ie/at94survey.pdf.

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.

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.

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.

<u>Income</u>

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 achieved sample for the whole of Austria amounts to 2,544 households, including 6,873 individuals, of which 5,982 eligible individuals (aged 16 or over); of those, a total of 5,605 answered to the personal questionnaire, giving an individual response rate of 93.7 per cent.

Sample weights

The sample attrition rate is significantly higher for the population in poverty and was compensated for by the weighting process.

The attrition rate between two waves is of about 10% for the total population and 16% for persons at risk of poverty. Therefore the proportion of poor persons decreases continuously in the sample. Only because of this selective attrition, there is a reduction in poverty rate of about 7-8 per cent per year.

Imputation

In about 17% of interviewed households at least one component of total household income was missing; in 62% of the se households, this concerned only one component from one household member. Since the missing income components are not independent on the number of household members, nor on the type and amount of the income, those were imputed.

The largest part of the imputations is based on the "Row and Column" method (see Von Little & Su, 1989), a special imputation methodology for panel data, by which average values of certain interviewed persons are combined with average values of certain points in time. These imputed values were then corrected with residual values, through a full stochastic imputation method similar to Hot-Deck methods.

For persons for whom there is no longitudinal information, a similar method was used. For the imputation of the amount of missing income components the following variables were used according to each model used:
- general variables: age (in 4 age brackets), sex and highest attained educational level (4 groups), a similar method was used. For the imputation of the amount of missing income components the following variables were used according to each model used;
- specific variables for certain income components: current labour force status, qualification, position in work, income from self-employment, income from dependent work, number of children below 27 in the household, size of the household.

The more complex imputation carried out centrally by EUROSTAT was not included in the files used by LIS.

G. Uses of survey

The data from the Austrian ECHP 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 and inequality

"Querschnittsbericht 7. Welle 2001 – Zahlen für 2000", by R. Heuberger, Europaisches Haushaltspanel – Forschungsberichte, Wien, October 2002 reports poverty rates as calculated from the 2001 Austrian ECHP (with incomes referring to 2000). Using the modified OECD equivalence scale, the number of households threatened by poverty is 12

per cent with the 60% of median equivalent income threshold, 6 per cent with the 50% threshold and 20 per cent with the 70% threshold.

The poverty gap (average equivalent income of the persons at risk of poverty as a percentage of poverty line considered as 60% of median equivalent income) has been computed at 67 per cent before the social transfers and 21 per cent after.

The Gini coefficient was calculated at 0.28 before social transfers and 0.24 after social transfers.