Greece 2000: Survey Information

Summary table

	Initial sample	GR00
Generic		
Name of survey	Household Income and Living Conditions Survey [European Community Household Panel (ECHP)]	
Institution responsible	National level: General Secretariat of the National Statistical Service of Greece [Community level: Eurostat]	
Frequency	Annual	
Survey year / Wave	Wave 1 (1994)	Wave 9 (2001)
Collection period	November-December 1994	May-July 2001
Survey structure	Panel	
Coverage	All private households in all areas of Greece (urban, semi-urban, rural), excl. collective households and foreign households not speaking the Greek language.	
Geographic information	NUTS1	
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	5,523 completed interviews out of in initial sample of 6,131	3,916 completed interviews out of 4,079 in initial sample
Individuals	16,321 individuals (12,492 of which 16+)	11,428 individuals in completed households, of which 9,418 adults (16+) interviewed
Sampling		
Sampling design	Two-stage sampling with Regional Development Services selected within each of the 10 strata and city blocks and further households selected within each RDS	In successive waves, the sample includes: - *old households* (unless all members are deceased, moved to an institution or outside EU, or not contain '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		
Questionnaires	Household Register, Household Questionnaire, Adult Questionnaire (16+)	
Standard classifications		
Education	Close to 1-digit ISCED	
Occupation	1-digit ISCO-88	
Industry	3 main sectors (agriculture, industry and serveices)	
Income		
Reference period	1991 (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	Computer checking programs to verify questionnaire routing and to carry out a limited range of plausibility checks.	
Weighting	Household level cross-sectional weights (shared weights) and individual level longitudinal weights that take into account of adjustment for sample attrition (from Wave 2 onwards) and external checks on population structure (demographic/socio-economic/social welfare)	
Imputation	None.	

This document is based upon "Instructions for the interviewers of the Survey Household Income and Living Conditions – Wave 1", General Secretariat of the National Statistical Service of Greece, Censuses Division, Section of Family Budgets and Special Population Survey, Athens, October 1994, and "The European Community Household Panel (ECHP): Survey methodology and implementation", 1996.

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A. General characteristics

Official name of the survey/data source:
Household Income and Living Conditions Survey / European Community Household Panel (ECHP)

Administrative Units responsible for the survey:

National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG)

Division of Population and Labour Market Statistics

46, Pireos and Eponiton str., 18510 Pireas

Responsible: George Douros

http://www.statistics.gr

The Household Income and Living Conditions Survey is part of the community statistical program European Community Household Panel (ECHP) to which all member states participate.

The basic target of the survey is the study, at European level, of the household living conditions mainly in relation with their income. Such a study presupposes the following up, for a long time period, of the changes occurring in households' life (employment, education, income, etc.). For this exact reason, the survey has the form of a repeated and continuous survey through which, in different time periods (waves) from the initial sample of households information is collected from the same persons and from the same households irrespective of where they have moved.

Maintaining comparability of data in all member states imposes, in the design and compilation of Questionnaires, to take into account EUROSTAT's instructions and Questionnaires adjusted to country specific situation and procedure.

This survey is conducted after a common decision of the Ministers of National Economy and Finance on the basis of a contract signed by EUROSTAT and the NSSG.

In 1993, the pilot survey was conducted in two waves, in a sample of 130 households in Attiki Department. The main regular survey has been conducted for the first time in November 1994.

The purpose of the present survey is to investigate through the time certain socio-economic magnitudes affecting the living conditions of the population and forming negative social situations such as the "permanent poverty", etc. To this aim data is collected from the household members on:

-   their income from all sources (work, property, social allowances, etc.);
-   employment and work conditions;
-   housing conditions (quality of dwelling, facilities, etc.);
-   education level and status of vocational training;
-   daily activities;
-   health status;
-   their personal view about their economic and social situation (work, salaries, education-training, etc.).

B. Population, sampling size and sampling methods

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 all Member countries the initial sample consisted of 57,000 households. In Greece, a sample of about 5,000 households proportionate covering all areas (urban, semi-urban, rural).

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 10
Households					
Total households	10,941				3,662
Completed households	4,438	3,853	3,490	3,366	3,067
Individuals					
N. in completed households					7,805
Eligible for adult interview	8,963				6,040
Adults interviewed	8,741	7,505	6,715	6,461	5,610

<u>Coverage and sampling frame</u>

Coverage – The objective of the sample design was to obtain a representative sample of private households in the whole territory of Greece, including urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Persons living in communities are not covered.

Sampling frame –

<u>Initial sample design and selection</u>

For the sample design the method of the two-stage stratified sampling was adopted. According to their urbanisation degree, the urban agglomerations, Municipalities and Communes were divided into 10 major strata. Further, from the above major strata, Greater Athens and Greater Thessaloniki were distributed into sub-strata of equal size, while the rest were divided into the 13 Regional Development Services. In each of the above sub-stratum, the selection of the survey sample was made having the city block (or group of adjoining city blocks) as the primary unit and the household as the household as the secondary one.

The households falling into the sample, due to the type of survey, were then surveyed in 3 waves, that is, in three consecutive years 1994, 1995 and 1996, irrespective of whether they moved to a new address. For example, if during the second wave a household or one of its members has moved to a new address in the same or another town, it was surveyed in this new address.

In cases where in one area unit, due to absence, refusals or communication weakness, cooperation with some households was not achieved, the interviewer could not proceed to a substitution of household. Only cooperating households were finally interviewed.

<u>Longitudinal sample</u>

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

Households are contacted at different stages. Initially, they receive an introductory letter, where the framework and the objectives of the survey are explained; furthermore it announces the telephone or personal contact of the interviewer. Every year a leaflet is also edited where the main results of the previous wave are presented.

In a second stage, the interviewers contact the respondents. If the household has already been interviewed, this can be done by telephone, otherwise it happens though a face-to-face interview.

The result of these contact trials is registered on the contact sheet (or Household Register). A household is abandoned after it cannot be contacted or refuses to collaborate for 5 consecutive times.
Extract from the Instructions to the Interviewers" of the NSSG.

Interview Technique
The success of the survey depends mainly on the interviewer's capability in creating an atmosphere of confidence and cooperation with the household members aiming at the collection of the most accurate answers. To meet this goal, the interviewer has to explain simply and comprehensively to the household members how significant this survey is to both them and our country. He must also explain the reason why they have to answer the questions. The interviewer, therefore, must have very carefully studied both instructions and questionnaires and must very well know what he is asking for and why before starting the interview.

Conducting the household - During the first interviewer's visit to the surveyed household, he will ask to meet the head or his wife, he will introduce himself saying that he is an official or a special collaborator of the NSSG and he will show his service identification. Then, he will explain the purpose of his visit and ask to talk to the household members for a few minutes. When entering the house, he will concisely describe what is the Household Income and Living Conditions Survey, by whom and why it is conducted, what kind of information he is going to ask, which of the household members he has to cooperate with and for how many years the survey is going to be repeated. In case the person to whom the interviewer is referred asks for additional explanations or clarifications, these have to be provided very promptly. I case the household hesitates or refuses to cooperate, the interviewer has to insist politely adding that information provision to the state is obligatory and that the data collected are considered confidential and that no use will be made by any other state authority.

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 field work 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 field work 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 field work 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.

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 (household members born in 1984 or earlier for the 2001 survey), it collects detailed information on each person's economic activity and income, and on a large number of other variables.

National Questionnaires: the national questionnaires contain some additional questions with respect to the Community ones.

D. Definition of the survey units

Household dwelling

National definition: As dwelling is considered a separate and independent structure which was built or converted to cover the habitation needs of a family (household). Besides that, as dwelling is also considered every space neither constructed nor converted for purpose of habitation, but however used as a dwelling during the reference period. As dwelling is not considered the space which although fulfills the above definition, is used for other purposes (i.e. offices, warehouses, collective households, apartments used as laboratories, etc.).

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: household is defined as either one person living alone or a group of persons, not necessarily related, living at the same address with common housekeeping – i.e. sharing a meal on most days or sharing a living or sitting room, etc. More specifically:
- One-person households: one person living alone in one dwelling or in one room of the latter and does his own housekeeping; two or more persons living at the same address, related or not, without common housekeeping and each one of them has the exclusive use of at least one room;
- Multi-person households: one couple or parents with their children or one parent with children; one couple with or without children, parents of the couple and the resident servants, if any; two or more persons, not necessarily related, living at the same address with common housekeeping; one or less than 5 boarders residing with a private household will be considered as its numbers.
The following situations are excluded from the survey:
- Collective households such as: hotels, hostels, hospitals and nursing homes, reformatory establishments, military camps and the like; besides, as collective households may be considered family enterprises providing their boarders with rooms and meals as well as 5 or more persons who though living at the same address have no common housekeeping;
- Foreign households not speaking the Greek language.

Household members

As household members are considered the persons, related or not, who comprise the household, that is, have common living arrangements or a shared budget and consider the household's address as their principal (permanent) residence.

Special cases in the determination of household membership:
- Persons living with the household but without common housekeeping: this situation may apply to resident servants, other employees, lodgers, grown-up children, etc; the

following rules may be used: if the person considers some other place to be his/her principal residence, then the person should not be included here; otherwise, if the person is related to the household head, he/she may still be considered a member; if not related, the person should be included as a separate household.
- Persons spending only a part of the time with the household: normally these persons should be included if his/her spouse is a household member: otherwise follow the presuppositions of the paragraph above.
- Visitors to the household (guests): relatives or not (guests) of the head or spouse who intend to stay with the household for a long period, that is, for one year or more, will be considered as household members; guests who do not comprise or stopped being members of another household or have not another main residence elsewhere will be considered household members, even if they intend to stay less than one year;
- Persons temporarily away: persons, who according to the above are considered as household members, would normally be recorded in the household register even if during the survey period were temporarily absent for some reason and for a period not exceeding one year; reasons of temporal absence may be: tourism or recreational travel; imprisonment or awaiting for trial; patient in hospital or clinic; work outside the area of household residence, i.e. salesmen, fishermen, working in public transport means, etc; studies in another town; compulsory military service, etc. Special cases of household temporarily absent: certain categories of persons would normally be included irrespective of the length of absence: person with spouse a household member, who considers this address to be his/her main residence; unmarried children of the RP or his/her spouse under 21 years away for full-time education; persons who have been resident household members in the past, expect to return soon (within the year), e.g. a person who was away for a long time (being in jail, student abroad, etc.) and will be back within the year, but are presently institutionalized. Absent persons not in the above categories would be excluded.

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

Community definition: for ECHP 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 ECHP 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: IN the ECHP the concept if the Household Head is not used, but the concept of the "Reference Person" is defined. The RP is identical to the Household Head if only he/she is economically active (working or looking for work). Otherwise as RP we consider the spouse/partner of the head, if she is economically active. Finally, the RP would be the oldest economically active person in the household.

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 theextended 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.

National income definition - Income is a survey variable of crucial importance, as this is the basic factor in the information of household living conditions. As income will be considered the total monthly or annual receipts of a person in cash or in kind, coming either from his/her work or other sources. Income is regarded wages, salaries, pensions, profits from agricultural, livestock breeding, commercial, etc. enterprises, rental income, interests or shares, benefits, etc.

Reference periods

The time periods to which the data collected in the survey refer, are called reference periods. The following reference periods were used in the present survey, namely:
- for employment and unemployment: the week preceding the day of survey conduct (work of main activity), 7 past days preceding the day of survey conduct (work of secondary job), 4 past weeks preceding the day of survey conduct (second job, steps taken to find work), 4 past working weeks preceding the day of survey conduct (hours worked, absence from work), 2 next weeks, after the day of the survey conduct (availability for work), 12 next months, after the day of survey conduct (chances of finding work), 5 past years (unemployment);
- for income and social security contributions: current month (monthly rent, loan payments, household's income, income from main job, health insurance), month of previous calendar year (social benefits, income from salaried work, allowances, insurance, pension, etc.), previous calendar year (profit from self-employment, investments, interests, assistance from relatives, etc.);
- for social relations, daily activities, health: current week - the week preceding the week of survey conduct (caring for children, invalids, etc.), past week – preceding the

day of survey conduct (conduct with other persons), 2 past weeks preceding the week of survey conduct (health problems), 12 past months preceding the survey conduct (hospitalisation, visits to doctors).

F. Quality of data

Response rates

The total number of households successfully interviewed in 1991 was, representing per cent of the valid sample. In 2001, households of the initial valid sample of did not participate to the survey, implying a response rate of per cent.

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.

G. Uses of survey

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 income distribution indicators

Eurostat publishes some indicators of income distribution and monetary poverty in its Structural Indicators database (see http://forum.europa.eu.int/irc/dsis/structind/info/data/index.htm):

At risk of poverty rates by age (cut-off point: 50% of median equivalised income)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total population	16	14	15	15	14	14	14
Less than 16 years	12	13	13	10	11	12	13
65 years and over	27	24	25	27	25	24	23

Inequality of income distribution: Gini coefficient

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total population	35	34	35	35	34	33	33