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**CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENT THE MIGRATION SECTION OF THE CES
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2010 ROUND OF POPULATION AND HOUSING
CENSUSES**

The 2008 Ad Hoc Module of the EU-LFS:
Describing and analysing migrants, opportunities and limitations*

Submitted by Eurostat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of the present short paper is to present and describe the ad hoc module on the labour situation of migrants and their immediate descendants, which will be attached to the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) in 2008.
2. The paper will examine the objectives of the module and the characteristics that will be studied. It will also discuss the expected outcome of the ad hoc module, what kind of statistics we could expect from the module – and, not to be overlooked; what kind of statistics the module will **not** be able to provide.

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3. The paper will also touch upon the interrelation between the ad hoc module and the core modules of the EU-LFS. The main conclusion of the paper is that while it is hoped that the module will shed light on many aspects of the integration process of the foreign population in the EU Member States, its main advantage lies in its ability to analyse the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants.

II. THE OBJECTIVES

4. The issue of immigration has come into the forefront of policy development in the European Union in recent years. Traditionally, immigration and migrants have been the subject of national policies, but with Schengen, with the common European labour market, and with common problems facing the countries of the European Union with respect to aging and social policies, the question of migration from non-EU countries has achieved greater significance.

5. The European Council in Thessaloniki in June 2003 considered that a successful integration of migrants contributes to social cohesion and economic welfare. Immigration policies should especially contribute to the demographic and economic challenges which the EU is currently facing.¹

6. For monitoring the immigration phenomena and the adaptation of migrants to the labour markets of Europe, statistics must be developed. For this purpose an ad hoc module to the European Union Labour Force Survey has been developed over the past two years.

II.1 Main objectives

7. The stated objectives of the ad hoc module on migrants are three:

- Identifying the population of migrants and their immediate descendants.
- Provide comparable data on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants, as well as allow for comparison with other groups of society.
- Analyse the factors affecting the adaptation of migrants to the labour market.²

II.2 Other objectives

8. The EU-LFS contains in its core set of variables several variables that allow for analysis of foreign nationals or foreign born population. Yet, these variables have long been considered of inferior quality, especially as the coverage of the foreign born population is poorer than of the locals. Often this is due to language difficulties or poorer coverage of foreign nationals in the

¹ Thessaloniki European Council 19 and 20 June 2003. Presidency Conclusions (Brussels 11638/03).

² Eurostat. 60th meeting of the Statistical Programme Committee, 16 Nov. 2006, (CPS 2006/4/EN).

relevant sampling frames. Certain lack of harmonisation in the definitions of key variables has also contributed to lack of comparable data.

9. The ad hoc module 2008 on the labour situation of migrants and their immediate descendants has thus the secondary objective of improving the coverage of the EU-LFS on foreign born persons in particular and improve the EU-LFS in general.

10. For example, one of the outcomes of the preparatory work on the ad hoc module is the recommendation that the concept of usual residence be harmonised in the Member States, but currently there are differences, which mainly affect the coverage of migrants.

II.3 What the module cannot do

II.3.1. The population not covered

11. In discussing the scope of the ad hoc module the Task Force recognised that several sub-groups of migrants would be badly covered or mostly out of the scope of the survey. These sub-populations would be:

- *Asylum seekers*, as they reside in collective housing in many countries or are outside the sampling frame in other;
- *Short term migrants*. In the international conventions on migration, short term migrants are those who change their usual residence from one country to another with the aim of living in the second country for more than 3 months but less than 1 year. The Task Force recommended that the survey be restricted to long term migrants, i.e. those who have resided or intend to reside in the host country for 1 year or more. Although difficult in practice, this sub-group could be identifiable through the Labour Force Surveys of the sending countries;
- *Return migrants*. As the focus of the module as well as European policy makers is on the foreign born population, the migration which consists of persons moving their usual residence back to their native country is not observed in the module. For individual Member States, however, the identification and observation of this particular group could be of national policy interest.³

II.3.2. Restrictions from the subject

12. When considering the ad hoc module on migrants and their immediate descendants it is worth to emphasise that there is no definition of “integration behind the survey. Integration can be viewed both as an outcome and as a process.

13. In terms of outcomes, extreme care should be taken not to over-interpret the results. Migrants may well show the same employment rate as the locals, but occupied in two distinct

³ It is, e.g., interesting to note that migration statistics in Malta consist almost only of analysing the return migrants.

labour markets, especially if local communities of migrants are strong. That would be an indication of segregation rather than integration.

14. We should also give consideration to the fact that migrants bring their own customs and expectations. This is often true with regard to labour force participation of women. Is it both desirable and achievable to expect the migrant women and their families to shed their preconceptions and accept the host country attitudes towards working women? Doing so would force migrant women on to the labour market. That would be markedly different from the history of the integration of the non-migrant women in the labour market, where women's movements fought for being allowed to work and for having the same freedoms as men.

II.2.3. Design based restrictions

15. Integration can also be viewed as a process. From this perspective it must also be emphasised that an ad hoc module to the EU-LFS may not always give rise to the best research questions. The EU-LFS is a statistical survey, describing the population at a point in time. It contains some questions with regard to past events and main reasons for these events, but such questions tend to be few and are mainly for the purpose of classifying the current population.

16. As stated above, the third objective of the ad hoc module refers to analyses of factor affecting the integration of the migrant population. This is extremely difficult to achieve except in a properly designed in-dept longitudinal research with plethora of questions and properly set up control groups.

17. This is not the design of either the LFS or of the ad hoc module. The factors that are observed, such as language skills, education, legal restriction etc. are thus presumed, they are attributes of the persons involved, or description of their current status, rather than something that is observed to affect their situation. This in turn reduces the power of the analysis as all judgements about causes and effects must be deduced from observing the correlations in different population groups.

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS

18. Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98⁴ puts a limit to each ad hoc module, so that it cannot exceed 11 variables. This constraint is put there for the purpose of protecting the Labour Force Survey, so that extracurricular requests will not be able to overshadow the main business of the EU-LFS. There is also second constraint, even if not legally binding, in that the subject of any ad hoc module should be related to the main subject of the LFS; crossing the variables of the ad hoc module and main variable of the LFS should always be of primary concern for the ad hoc module.

19. Variables or characteristics in the LFS are not equivalent to questions in a questionnaire, but a condensed version there of for the purposes of transmitting minimal set of data items. Thus

⁴ OJ L 77/3, 14.3.1998.

a variable in an EU-LFS regulation may seem dense, complex and multi-dimensional, where as in actual field work it is supposed that the Member States use several questions in order to be able to fully code to the variable in question.

20. The core EU-LFS contains several variables which are related to the subject of the ad hoc module of migrants. The ad hoc module was designed taking into account these variables so that when the ad hoc module will be conducted, altogether 16 variables will be directly connected with identifying and analysing the target population.

21. The 16 variables can be roughly classified into three main groups. The first and main group relates to the identification and classification of migrants and their immediate descendants. The second group relates to measurements of obstacles and methods of overcoming those, while the third group is concerned with participation in government programs which are directly aimed at assisting foreign born population in adjusting to life in the new country.

III.1. Identification and classification

22. The main class of variables in the 2008 ad hoc module concerns identification and classification of the sub-population of interest. This part of the module is also the only one in which all but two variables are compulsory for all Member States. It has thus sometimes been referred to as the “light version” of the module. The identification and classification variables constitute altogether 10 out of the 16 variables pertaining to population of interest.

III.1.1. Classification variables in the core LFS

23. As mentioned above, there are five variables or four characteristics already in the core LFS, which must be observed together with the ad hoc module. These are:

- i. Country of birth
- ii. Nationality
- iii. Number of years of residence
- iv. Country and region of residence 1 year before

24. Country of birth is currently an optional variable in the core LFS. However, only Germany will make use of the optional status of the variable, mainly because country of birth is still considered a sensitive issue especially for those Germans born in Germany before 1945 but outside the current borders of the Federal Republic of Germany. As the German LFS nevertheless checks if a person was born inside the current territory of the FRG, a proxy using nationality for the country of birth or previous nationality if a citizenship has been changed would be acceptable for the purposes of the ad hoc module.

25. Nationality or citizenship is the standard variable used for identifying “foreigners”. Due to the complexity of modern migration patterns, the nationality however can no longer be used solely for analysing migrants. It must be examined in tandem with other descriptive variables like country of birth, years of residence etc.

26. The variable “number of years of residence” has been identified as somewhat problematic, as the Member States implement the variable in a different manner. When

considering the issue the Task Force for preparing the module discovered that two variables were actually of interest: the year when the person (last) established residence in the country and the total accumulated length of stay in the country. In line with the recommendations for the 2010 Census it was also considered more practicable to have the simpler variable (year when the (last) residence was established) in the core and the more complex variable in the module. Thus the Task Force proposed also a change in the definition of the variable in the core module, as well as in the coding scheme. By this change the Task Force considered that a long term solution towards harmonisation of the variable would be achieved.

III.1.2. Classification variables in the ahm2008

27. The ad hoc module itself contains four identification variables. These are:

- i. Year of citizenship acquisition
- ii. Country of birth of father
- iii. Country of birth of mother
- iv. Total number of years of residence in the host country

28. The variable “year of citizenship acquisition” allows the analyst not only to identify naturalised persons, but also those who were nationals at birth. This permits analysis of the data according to, among other, an integration model, where the naturalised migrants constitute the highest stage of integration in the host country society. In addition, the variable is important for differentiating the foreign born population between persons with “national” and “foreign” background, which is the preferred method of analysis in some Member States.

29. The two variables on country of birth of the father and of the mother (who may or may not be present in the household) are, together with country of birth, vital for identifying the immediate descendants of migrants. By asking for country of birth of both parents greater flexibility in the analysis is achieved, as well as better possibilities of comparing the data with other information. In some administrative statistics this information is also used in order to differentiate the foreign born population between persons with “national” and “foreign” background. As for the country of birth, Eurostat is ready to accept proxy answers in case of Germany, i.e. nationality or former nationality of the mother or father if he or she was born abroad.

30. The fourth variable relating to the total number of years in the host country has already been discussed, this variable should measure the accumulated number of years exposed to the culture and society of the host country, even if the stay has been interrupted on occasion.

III.1.3. Other classifications

31. A fifth variable of the ad hoc module logically belongs to the identification variables, even if it is not included in the “light version” of the ad hoc module. This is the variable “Reason the person mostly had for migrating (last migration)”.

32. Even if there are obvious recall problems involved, moving from one country to another cannot be properly analysed unless the main reasons for the migration are established. The

labour market behaviour and / or situation of persons entering a country for family reasons is, e.g., generally different from the persons who come in order to seek or take up employment.

33. This variable is also important in order to link the statistics on basis of the ad hoc module to international statistics on migration which classifies migrants on basis of the main reason for migration, much in line with the categories of this variable.

III.2. Obstacles and methods

III.2.1. Legal obstacles

34. The module contains two simplified variables with regard to possible legal obstacles, that prevent a respondent fully or partly to engage in the host country labour market. In both cases the idea is to enable analysis with this information in the background, as legal impediments for either residence or labour market participation will *a priori* contribute to the explanation of the different behaviours of the different groups.

35. The first variable regards the current residence permit, if it is of limited duration or not, and whether it can be extended. The purpose of this variable is **not** to discover illegal residents who could either answer No or leave the question unanswered. Nevertheless, this variable is sensitive for this reason, and the INSEE of France must opt out of the variable due to legal concerns.

36. The second variable examines if the person is legally restricted or not in accessing the labour market and which specific restrictions apply (with regard to occupations and/or enterprises or with regard to self-employment). The Task Force pointed out that there are possibilities of constructing this variable in a less sensitive way by making use of information from the core, as well as making use of administrative data where appropriate.

III.2.3. Diploma equivalents

37. Third variable in this class is “Use of facilities for establishing what highest qualification equates to in the host country system”. While the educational attainment of all persons in the sample is established via the core LFS, there is an additional need to verify if the education a person has attained from abroad is accepted as equivalent to the host country diploma. This is of course only relevant in occupations where a diploma is required, a non-acceptance of e.g. licence to drive a bus would seriously hamper a bus-driver to seek employment in his or her chosen profession while lack of recognition of this licence is of smaller if any relevance for other occupations.

III.2.3. Language skills

38. Fourth variable in this class of variables is “Need to improve host country language skills to get an appropriate job”. It is enormously difficult to measure all the facets of language skills in relation to migration. Not speaking a host language can be an obstacle, but that is not a given. On the other hand fluent skills in a foreign language can be an asset. There are also degrees of language skills and different domains of speaking, understanding, reading and writing. As the size of the module is limited, the ad hoc module takes the approach of accepting the expert

assessment of the respondent that he or she needs to improve his or her language skills in order to get an appropriate job.⁵

III.2.4. Help in finding current job

39. The last variable in this class of variables pertains to how the current job was found. Its full label is “Main help received in the host country in finding the current job or setting up own business”. As no meaningful analysis of this variable can be made without comparing the foreign born population to the population at large, this question must be put to all persons currently in employment. It may well turn out that eventually this variable will be most interesting for the fact that it covers everybody!

III.2.5. Problem of discrimination

40. When canvassing the variables regarding obstacles and methods it immediately comes to mind, how is discrimination against foreigners—which surely must exist—handled in the ad hoc module? The Task Force, which prepared the ad hoc module, did indeed reflect on this matter.

41. The Task Force, however, quickly discovered that there is no objective way of measuring discrimination against any person in a household survey. The perceived slights against ethnicity, gender, age, appearance, religion etc. could be measured, but whether or not this can be verified in actual practice as a definite obstacle is beyond the scope of the survey instrument. Any deduction with regard to possible discrimination would thus have to be done indirectly; on the basis of how groups, that are otherwise equal, fare in the labour market.

III.3. Government intervention

42. The third class of variables is actually only one variable, albeit with 3 dimensions: “Use of services for labour market integration in the 2 years following the last arrival”. The variable concerns the foreign born population’s use of three specific services which are or could be targeted for its integration and or adaptation to the host country in the 2 years after entering the country. Due to possible recall problems and also the question of relevancy to the current situation, the variable is restricted to those who entered the host country in the past 10 years.

43. The services are a) job counselling or job search assistance, b) labour market training programmes and c) host country language tuition. The respondents should be able to answer if they have participated in more than one such programme.

IV. RELATIONS WITH THE CORE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

44. The second main objective of the ad hoc module in 2008 is to “[p]rovide comparable data on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants, as well as allow for

⁵ As an aside, this may actually be a variable where a proxy answer gives a more objective assessment than the respondent him or herself.

comparison with other groups of society.’⁶ This is obviously an inescapable consequence of attaching the module to the EU-LFS, as all the relevant groups get the core questions of the Labour Force Survey, and, in addition, the ad hoc module provides the analytical groups.

45. The European Union Labour Force Survey provides a rich set of data allowing for in-depth structural analysis of the labour market. The primary focus of the survey is the participation in the labour market and various characteristics of this labour force participation. It also contains several items relating to the socio-demographic attributes of the working age population.

46. To turn up all possible classifications and cross-classifications in the core EU-LFS and the ad hoc module is beyond the scope of this paper. What follows is, however, a short overview of the main features of the datasets.

IV.1. The main core variables

47. There are altogether 125 variables defined in Commission Regulation (EC) No 430/2005 on the organisation of the labour force survey⁷. They are roughly classified in to 14 modules, with some of the variables belonging to more than one module

IV.1.1. Demographic background

48. These variables relate mainly to the relationships within the household, age, sex, country of birth and of nationality.

IV.1.2. Labour status in the reference week

49. These variables concern whether or not a person was employed in the reference week or if not, whether he or she was looking for a work, which methods he or she used and whether he or she is available to start a new job if a job were found. These variables are the foundation for the main classification variable of the Labour Force Survey, which divides the population into four categories: employed persons, unemployed persons, inactive persons and children under the age of 15.

IV.1.3. Employment characteristics of the main job

50. Most people have only one job, and these variables cover the main attributes of this job or the main job in case of multiple job-holders. The variables concern attributes of the work place, such as economic activity, size and location, the occupation and employment status, and the various characteristics of the employment contract, such as length, permanency and full time / part time distinction.

⁶ Eurostat, CPS 2006/4/EN, cited above.

⁷ OJ L 71, p. 36, 17.3.2005.

IV.1.4. Hours worked

51. The variables on hours worked comprise the usual hours of work, the actual hours worked in the reference week, the reason for the difference and the number of overtime hours.

IV.1.5. Second job

52. In case of a second job, the main characteristic of this job is collected, i.e. the employment status, economic activity of the local unit and the number of hours actually worked in the reference week.

IV.1.6. Underemployment

53. The variables on underemployment are mostly shared with corresponding items relating to unemployed persons in the module on labour status. In addition, this module covers the wish for having more hours than currently, how many hours are wish for and whether the person has looked for another job or a second job.

IV.1.7. Search for employment

54. While not strictly necessary for determining the status of the unemployed or underemployed this module covers distinctive features of the search for employment, such as type of the employment, duration of the search, relationship with public employment offices, reasons why a person is not seeking for work and willingness to work in case a person is not seeking work.

IV.1.8. Education and training

55. The module on education and training provides important background information. The module is in three sections; enrolment in the formal school system, current participation in training programs and the highest completed education a person has attained and when. Information is collected on the ISCED level of the formal education and on the field of education for all three sub-sections. In addition there are two variables on the purpose of the training program and the relationship with the paid or unpaid hours of work.

IV.1.9. Previous work experience of persons not in employment

56. The variables in this module are with regard to past employment of the person, if there was any. They cover when the person left the last employment and why, professional status, occupation and the economic activity.

IV.1.10. Situation one year before the survey

57. These variables concern the location one year before the survey and are thus of some consequence for examining recent flows. In addition, the main labour status one year before the survey is established and professional status, economic activity and occupation if the person was employed one year before.

IV.1.11.Main labour status (optional)

58. The main labour status is an optional variable in the dataset. However, only Germany, UK, Bulgaria and Switzerland do not collect information on this variable.

IV.1.12.Income (optional)

59. There is a pending regulation for the Council and European Parliament changing the status of the income variable so that countries will have to supply data. It is, however, envisaged that the data on income will be limited to relative outcomes within the countries, i.e. the data will be provided in deciles, rather than in absolute monetary incomes.

IV.1.13.Technical items relating to the interview

60. While the variables in this module mainly concern with technical items, such as the week number of the reference week and weighting factors, it also contains substantial information like the region of the household and the degree of urbanisation.

IV.1.14.Atypical working times

61. Finally, the module on atypical working times concerns the work organisation of the main job in shift work, evening and night work or work during the weekend.

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND AVAILABILITY OF DATA

62. The ad hoc module on the labour situation of migrants and their immediate descendants will be implemented in the year 2008. The Member States will have two options of implementing the module, either by observing all the migrants in the second quarter of the year or select a sub-sample (using the panel structure of the survey) covering all the weeks of the year. In either case the ad hoc module respondents and the panel or panels they are select from must cover all variables of the EU-LFS.

V.1. The light version

63. In preparing the ad hoc module on migrants, it was recognised by the Commission that since the phenomena of migration was unevenly spread over the Union, the data collected would in many cases be of little national interest due to small sample sizes and greater margins of errors in many Member States.

64. For this reason, countries for which the expected number of foreign born persons aged 15-74 years is less than 1,500 in the quarterly sample will only have to provide data on the first four identification variables, i.e. year of citizenship acquisition, country of birth of father and mother and total number of years of residence in the host country. This concerns 14 Member

States of the EEA and the two Acceding Countries, out of 29, but only an estimated 4.7% of the total number of foreign born persons in these countries plus Croatia and Switzerland.⁸

65. The Member States concerned are nevertheless strongly encouraged to implement the full module—if at all possible—both for their own future reference, as well as for reducing the bias of the EU aggregates.

V.2. When will the data be available?

66. The Member States involved have the whole year 2008 for interviewing and field work. The final deadline for the data delivery is 31 March 2009.

67. Experience shows, however, that the data may not be available until much later or in the winter 2009-2010, due to data verification and evaluation processes. The unit responsible for the LFS within Eurostat is now studying ways to speed up the process.

68. By June 2010 the full set of anonymised data should be ready for dissemination to researchers.

VI. CONCLUSION

69. The sub title of this paper referred to opportunities and limitations. This fits as a description of the ad hoc module in 2008 on the labour situation of migrants and their immediate descendants. The opportunities are enormous, the mere fact of combining this survey with the by far biggest social survey in Europe will yield unsurpassed wealth of data and enable researchers and policy makers to ask and answer questions which have only been imagined until now. The implementation of the ad hoc module will also create opportunities for the labour statisticians in charge of the labour force surveys to improve the sampling designs, questionnaires and weighting schemes with overall gains in precision and validity of the surveys.

70. Yet, despite these benefits, we must be aware that there are limitations: not all type of questions can be answered by the ad hoc module. It is, e.g., important to realise that the survey does not deal directly with integration of the migrant population in the host society. The obstacles for integration are pre-selected and may suffer from subjective mode of questioning with consequences for interpretation of the results. Not all migrants are covered, with recent migrants, short term migrants, return migrants and asylum seekers badly covered or not at all. Finally, as migration is unevenly spread over the Member States of the European Statistical System, slightly less than half of the Member States will only be covered with a minimum set of questions, albeit the more important part of the ad hoc module.

⁸ Eurostat 2006. “LFS module 2008 on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants”. Doc. Eurostat/F2/LAMAS/21/06.

71. All of these issues, in addition to the sensitivity and possible subjectivity of many of the variables relating to the integration processes, are recognised by Eurostat and the Member States and will lead to extra care in the analysis and presentation of the results.⁹

72. For migration statisticians, as well as labour statisticians, the year 2008 will thus be an interesting year.

⁹ Cf. for instance the Draft minutes of the Meeting of the European Directors of Social Statistics, Luxembourg, 18-19 September 2006 (Doc. Eurostat/F/06/DSS/10/EN)