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REPORT

2010 International Conference on Comparative EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions Warsaw, Poland, 25–26 March 2010

The Conference on Comparative EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions was held in Warsaw from 25th to 26th March 2010. This Conference, hosted by the Central Statistical Office of Poland, was organised by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the Network for the analysis of EU-SILC (Net-SILC). The papers presented at the Conference were the first results of the research carried out by Net-SILC partners.

Net-SILC is funded by Eurostat and consists of a group of researchers from 18 institutions using the comparative EU data source Community Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (“EU-SILC”). It brings together expertise from European Statistical System bodies and academics, and it is coordinated by the Luxembourg-based research institute CEPS/INSTEAD. The aims of Net-SILC are to develop methodologies for the analysis of EU-SILC and to carry out in-depth comparative research on incomes and living conditions.

Altogether there were 168 participants from 31 countries (30 from European countries). Concerning the papers, 21 contributed papers were presented in 5 sessions. The last part of conference (Session 6) was dedicated to panel discussion about future of EU-SILC in the wider context of EU statistics. This part was supported by background paper “*Beyond GDP, measuring well-being and EU-SILC*” prepared by Anthony B. Atkinson (Nuffield College, Oxford and London School of Economics, UK) and Eric Marlier (CEPS/INSTEAD).

The conference was opened by Józef Oleński, the President of Central Statistical Office of Poland. The opening session speakers were Carin Lindqvist-Virtanen (Chair of the EU Social Protection Committee's Indicators Sub-Group), Antonia Carparelli (Directorate-General “*Employment, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities*”) European Commission, and Inna Steinbuka (Eurostat, European Commission).

The first two sessions were dedicated to *Income, Poverty and Deprivation* topics.

First speech was given by **Anthony B. Atkinson** (Nuffield College, Oxford and London School of Economics, UK). In his presentation, the author stressed the importance of EU-SILC to the analysis of the financial dimensions of poverty and inequality in Europe. Other papers presented in this part of the conference

focused on such issues as: *income poverty in regions of Europe; inequality, growth and mobility; income poverty and material deprivation in European countries; gross change in European's living conditions, income from own consumption and in-work poverty*. They were critically discussed by

Third session was devoted to **Methodological Issues**.

At the next session (**Session 4**) presented papers were concentrated on **problems of health, social participation and households**. Fifth session was devoted to the **labour market** while in sixth session a wide spectrum of questions related to **taxes, government spending and current policy issues** were in the centre of interest. More information is available at <http://www.stat.gov.pl/eusilc/>.

Below is the detailed information on the sessions and topics discussed by paper givers and by invited discussants:

Session 1: Income, Poverty and Deprivation I

Chair: Pascal Wolff, Eurostat, European Commission

- Income distribution and financial poverty: EU-SILC in national and international context, *Anthony B. Atkinson (Nuffield College, Oxford and London School of Economics, UK), Eric Marlier and Anne Reinstadler (CEPS/INSTEAD Research Institute, Luxembourg)*;
- Macro determinants of individual income poverty in 93 regions of Europe, *Anne Reinstadler (CEPS/INSTEAD) and Jean-Claude Ray (University of Nancy, France)*;
- Inequality, growth and mobility: The inter-temporal distribution of income in European countries, *Philippe Van Kerm and Maria Noel Pi Alperin (both CEPS/INSTEAD)*;
- Income poverty and material deprivation in European countries, *Alessio Fusco (CEPS/INSTEAD), Anne-Catherine Guio (IWEPS, Belgium) and Eric Marlier (CEPS/INSTEAD)*.

Discussant: Brian Nolan, University College Dublin, Ireland

Session 2: Income, Poverty and Deprivation II

Chair: Eric Marlier, CEPS/INSTEAD, Luxembourg

- Towards an inclusion balance – Accounting for gross change in European's living conditions, *Matthias Till and Franz Eiffe (Statistics Austria)*;
- Income from own consumption, *Merle Paats and Ene-Margit Tiit (Statistics Estonia)*;
- In-work poverty in the EU, *Sophie Ponthieux (French Statistical Office (INSEE))*.

Discussant: Stephen Jenkins, ISER, University of Essex, UK

Session 3: Methodological Issues

Chair: Jean-Marc Museux, Eurostat, European Commission

- The EU-SILC rotational design and annual trends of cross-sectional indicators, *Martina Mysíková (Institute of Economic Studies, Charles University and Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic) and Martin Zelený (Czech Statistical Office)*;
- Sampling and non-sampling errors in EU-SILC, *Vijay Verma and Gianni Betti (University of Siena, Italy)*;
- The distributional impact of imputed rent in EU-SILC, *Veli-Matti Törmälehto, Anneli Juntto, Marie Reijo, Hannele Sauli (Statistics Finland)*;
- Robustness of some EU-SILC based indicators at regional level, *Vijay Verma and Gianni Betti (University of Siena, Italy)*.

Discussant: Olympia Bover, Bank of Spain, Spain

Session 4: Health, social participation and households

Chair: Rudi Van Dam (Federal Public Service Social Security, Belgium)

- Analysing the socio-economic determinants of health in Europe: new evidence from EU-SILC, *Cristina Hernández-Quevedo, Cristina Masseria, Elias Mossialos (London School of Economics, UK)*;
- Social participation in European countries, *Orsolya Lelkes (European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Austria)*;
- Household structure in the UE, *Maria Iacovou and Alexandra Skew (ISER, University of Essex, UK)*.

Discussant: Conchita D'Ambrosio, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

Session 5: Labour Market

Chair: Janusz Witkowski, Central Statistical Office of Poland

- Employment and social inclusion in the EU, *Marco Di Marco (Italian Statistical Office (ISTAT))*;
- Labour market returns to education in Europe – the potentials of analysis with EU-SILC, *Johannes Giesecke, Kathrin Leuze, Rita Nikolai (Social Science Research Centre Berlin (WZB), Germany)*;
- Distribution of earnings in the Euro-area and the EU, *Andrea Brandolini, Alfonso Rosolia and Roberto Torrini (Bank of Italy)*;
- Educational intensity of employment and polarization in Europe and the U.S., *Donald R. Williams (Kent State University, USA)*.

Discussant: John Micklewright, University of London, UK

Session 6: Taxes, Government Spending and Current Policy Issues

Chair: Anthony B. Atkinson, Nuffield College, Oxford and London School of Economics, UK

- The impact of public services on the distribution of income in European countries, *Rolf Aaberge, Audun Langørgen and Petter Lindgren (Statistics Norway)*;
- Distributional effects of direct taxes and social transfers (cash benefits), *Vaska Atta-Darkua and Andrew Barnard (Office for National Statistics (ONS), UK)*;
- Economic downturn and stress testing European welfare systems, *Francesco Figari, Andrea Salvatori and Holly Sutherland (ISER, University of Essex, UK)*.

Discussant: André Decoster, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium

Final Panel: The future of EU-SILC in the wider context of EU statistics

Chair: Jean-Louis Mercy, Eurostat, European Commission

- *A.B. Atkinson, Nuffield College, Oxford and London School of Economics*;
- *Isabelle Engsted-Maquet, Directorate-General "Employment, Social affairs and Equal opportunities", European Commission and EU Social Protection Committee's Indicators Sub-Group*;
- *Michael Forster, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)*;
- *Stefan Lollivier, Statistics France (INSEE)*;
- *Inna Steinbuka, Eurostat, European Commission*.

Conference Discussion and Conclusions

In discussion, apart from appreciation for the project in general – for its policy relevance and the scope in terms of geographical coverage and informational richness – some important methodological issues were raised too, along with suggestions on dealing with them. One concerned the need to constant improvements of applied research methodology, with suggestion to establish a special group of survey experts taking care of that (V. Verma). Another addressed the problem of an inconsistency between cross-sectional and panel elements of income measurement, with suggestion for better elaboration (incorporation) of the longitudinal module in the data collection and processing systems (S. Jenkins)

Prof. Olenski, in his concluding remarks on behalf of the host organization (GUS), expressed gratefulness to the Eurostat and Net-SILC authorities for choosing GUS as his co-organizer, and for collaboration in arranging the meeting in Warsaw.