

Note on ESS Round 10 data releases

December 2022

Face-to-face and self-completion modes

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, several countries were unable to deliver face-to-face fieldwork at ESS Round 10. A total of 9 countries switched to a self-completion (web and paper) approach, while 22 countries used ESS's usual face-to-face fieldwork approach.

The countries to deliver a self-completion approach were: Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden. The Round 10 2nd release includes data for six of these countries (all apart from Cyprus, Israel and Latvia, which will be included in a 3rd release in Spring 2023).

A small number of modifications were made to the ESS questionnaire when preparing a self-completion version. The main changes were:

- The Human Values Scale and parental education questions were excluded from the self-completion questionnaire, due to concerns over the questionnaire length in this mode.

- 'Don't know' and 'Refusal' options were not included in the self-completion questionnaire. Instead, those not wishing to answer a question were instructed to leave it blank and move on to the next question.

- A subset of items from the Round 10 COVID-19 module were included at the start of the self-completion questionnaire. This change was made to help ensure the self-completion questionnaire would start with questions widely seen as interesting and topical, to encourage people to start the survey. These items were included near the end of the face-to-face questionnaire.

- The orientation of the 11-point response scales was vertical for the web self-completion and horizontal for the paper self-completion questionnaire. All 11-point scales were presented horizontally to respondents in the face-to-face survey (using showcards).

- There were some updates to the format of the highest qualification questions for respondents and their partners for the self-completion approach.

However, responses across face-to-face and self-completion modes are coded to the same ISCED code frame.

- Other minor wording changes were made to support the self-completion format – for example, adapting interviewer instructions to respondent instructions.

Beyond these changes, data users should be aware that respondents may respond differently to questions asked in different modes. This can particularly apply to questions where certain responses may be seen as socially desirable or undesirable, and so the way people respond may be impacted by the presence of the interviewer. In addition, the sample composition of those taking part in a self-completion survey might be different to those who would have taken part in a face-to-face survey. As a result, caution is advised when making comparisons between countries using face-to-face and self-completion approaches at ESS Round 10, and when making time series comparisons in a country that has used a self-completion approach at Round 10.

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Fieldwork timing

Another impact of the pandemic was that Round 10 fieldwork was carried out over a longer period than a usual ESS Round. The first country (Slovenia) started fieldwork in September 2020 and the final countries finished fieldwork in August 2022 (Belgium, Ireland and the UK – all to be included in a 3rd data release in Spring 2023).

The pandemic may have resulted in some attitudinal and behavioural changes; therefore, the timing of fieldwork may be particularly important at this round. Users are encouraged to review the fieldwork dates for countries and consider this when carrying out analysis between Round 10 participating countries, or when comparing country level results at Round 10 with previous ESS rounds.

Other notes on Round 10

The pandemic had other impacts on face-to-face fieldwork at Round 10. Notably, some countries achieved considerably lower response rates than in previous rounds, due to issues

with interviewer capacity and willingness of people to participate in a face-to-face interview. This may impact on the Round 10 data and comparability with previous ESS Rounds.

Finally, some countries carried out video interviews as a complementary mode to in-person interviewing in response to the pandemic (see below for how to identify video interviews in the data set).

Accessing the Round 10 data

Separate integrated data files can be downloaded for face-to-face and self-completion countries in the Round 10 2nd data release. If users wish to carry out analysis including both face-to-face and self-completion countries, they can create a combined data file using the ESS Data Wizard. Users can select the variables, countries and rounds they wish to include. A single data file will be produced based on this selection.

The data file will include a mode variable (**mode**) to identify which interviews have come from face-to-face interviews and which from self-completion. This variable includes the following values:

- 1: Interview, Face to face (CAPI)
- 2: Interview, Video (web-based)

3: Self-completion, Self-administered web-based questionnaire (CAWI)

4: Self-completion, Self-administered paper questionnaire (PAPI)

Users who want to look at the data for face-to-face countries only should filter the **mode** variable by selecting codes 1 and 2. Users who want to look at the data for self-completion countries only should select codes 3 and 4. The **mode** variable also allows users to separately analyse interviews carried out in-person (code 1) and by video (code 2), as well as between web (code 3) and paper (code 4) self-completion.

Feedback from data users

We would welcome feedback from data users on any unusual or surprising results that may relate to mode differences or other circumstances around ESS Round 10 fieldwork. This may be valuable in helping us to prepare for ESS's future permanent transition to a self-completion approach. If you do have any feedback, please email essdatasupport@sikt.no with details. 