

METHODS – APPROACHES – DEVELOPMENTS

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on this publication:

Division B 2,
tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 20 77
fax: +49 (0) 611 / 75 39 50
institut@destatis.de

General information
on the data supply:

Information service,
tel:+49 (0) 611 / 75 24 05
fax: +49 (0) 611 / 75 33 30
<https://www.destatis.de/.../Contact>

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The catchword

Introducing the administrative cost index in Germany

Background

The Programme for Bureaucracy Reduction and Better Legislation adopted by the Federal Government in 2006 included the target that the administrative costs determined for businesses as part of the baseline measurement should be reduced by 25% by the end of 2011. After the programme was finished, the Federal Government adopted a new agreement on targets that the administrative costs should in the long term be kept at the lower level achieved. To be able to assess goal achievement over time, the Federal Government decided to introduce an index of administrative costs on 1 January 2012. It commissioned the Federal Statistical Office to take over the methodological development, calculation and publication of the administrative cost index. This paper outlines the methodological structure of the index and presents first results.

Methodological structure of the administrative cost index

The administrative cost index refers to the administrative costs borne by businesses in Germany as defined by section 2 subsection 2, second sentence of the Act on the Establishment of a National Regulatory Control Council. According to this definition, administrative costs comprise costs "caused by duties for natural or legal persons to provide information." Duties to provide information are legal obligations "to procure, make available or transmit data and other information for authorities or third parties" (section 2 subsection 2, third sentence of the Act on the Establishment of a National Regulatory Control Council). Examples of duties to provide information are the primary surveys of official statistics or the duties of businesses to prepare tax declarations and balance sheets. The Act and, consequently, the administrative cost index refer to federal legal provisions, including EU legal acts which are implemented through federal legal acts. This does not include EU regulations that are directly applicable in the Member States without having to be implemented through federal acts, the legislation of the Länder and local government authorities with their own provisions.

The purpose of the administrative cost index is to allow assessing to what extent the administrative costs have changed since 1 January 2012, when the process of reducing administrative costs was finished. Consequently, the administrative cost index as at 1 January 2012 has been set at 100. Rising values indicate a (re-)increase in administrative costs and vice versa.

The administrative cost index is calculated for any month n according to this formula:

$$BKI_n = \frac{BK_n}{BK_{1.1.2012}} \cdot 100$$

With BKI_n = administrative cost index (*Bürokratiekostenindex*) in month n

BK_n = administrative costs (*Bürokratiekosten*) in month n

$BK_{1.1.2012}$ = administrative costs as at 1 January 2012

The administrative costs in month n are calculated by

$$BK_n = BK_{1.1.2012} + \Delta BK$$

With ΔBK = change in administrative costs since 1 January 2012

The change in administrative costs refers only to the effects initiated by a change in a federal legal provision. Changes in administrative costs caused, for example, by business fluctuations

are not included. This is because the goal of the administrative cost index is to represent only the effects of legislative activities on the development of administrative costs.

When an act or ordinance is adopted by the Federal Cabinet, the effect of that regulation on the administrative cost index is included in the index. As, however, the regulation can still be changed in the further legislative process before it finally comes into force, the effects on administrative costs as determined and on the index values are provisional ex-ante estimates at this point in time. This is why the Federal Statistical Office measures a regulation's actual effects on the businesses when it has been in force for a sufficiently long time (generally two years) and when practical experience in applying it has been acquired. This will lead to a correction in the index if the result of the measurement differs from the original estimate. Such changes are not shown retrospectively, but for the point in time when the results from the subsequent measurements become available. This means that changes in index values may be due to two different causes. The first is an estimated change in administrative costs due to a regulation adopted by the Federal Cabinet and the second is a result measured by the Federal Statistical Office that differs from the original estimate.

The administrative cost index is based on a total of about 9,000 obligations of businesses. However, the ten most expensive obligations account for slightly more than half of the overall burden. Most of these are obligations from fiscal and commercial law, e.g. turnover or corporation tax declaration, balance sheet preparation, disclosure requirement. The administrative costs of businesses that are caused by reporting obligations for the statistical offices play a minor role. Changes in the administrative costs that are caused by fiscal and commercial law have the same effect on the index development as have changes in the total of the other 9,000 obligations. Therefore, when changes in such obligations are envisaged, the legislative bodies are well advised to take account of the impact on administrative costs at an early point in time.

Publication and first results of the administrative cost index

The Federal Government decided that the administrative cost index should be calculated and published monthly by the Federal Statistical Office for the entire Federal Government. The first index value was published on the website of the Federal Statistical Office in October 2012. However, the index was first calculated already for May of the same year, so that index values are available as from 1 January 2012, except for the months from February to April (cf. table). The data are always released on the 15th day of the month following the reference period. This means that the index for October 2013 was released on 15 November 2013.

Table: values of the administrative cost index since January 2012

Year	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
2012	100.00	.	.	.	100.27	100.30	100.24	100.25	100.21	100.23	100.25	100.27
2013	100.28	100.29	100.25	100.26	100.30	100.30	100.32	100.33	100.33	100.32	-	-

. = figure unknown

- = not available yet

Only at the beginning of the calculations, a major increase in the index was observed, which was mainly due to (new) recording obligations in the area of financial markets. Afterwards, the measures creating and reducing burdens have largely offset each other. It should be noted that 2013 has been a Bundestag election year, which means that there have been narrow limits to legislative activities due to the discontinuity principle¹. For this reason alone, it is not possible to take the results of 2013 as a basis for deriving a trend for the subsequent years.

¹ The subject-related discontinuity after the end of an electoral period means that any bills not yet adopted by the old Bundestag have to be introduced and negotiated again (<http://www.bundestag.de/service/glossar/D/diskont.html>). Due to this principle, in the election year, all legislative projects of a legislative term that cannot be adopted by the end of the legislative term will be stopped.

Dr. Daniel Vorgrimler, tel: +49 (0) 611 /75 34 86, e-mail: daniel.vorgrimler@destatis.de

Daniel Kühnhenrich, tel: +49 (0) 611 /75 46 72, e-mail: daniel.kuehnhenrich@destatis.de

Ansgar Bitz, tel: +49 (0) 611 /75 25 59, e-mail: ansgar.bitz@destatis.de

Methods of federal statistics - Further development

The new sample of rents in the consumer price index

In consumer price statistics, net rents exclusive of heating expenses are the largest individual item, with a weight of 21%. Also, the public debate about rising rents, especially in conurbations and university towns, shows how important rents are for the perception of prices. This is why their correct and representative inclusion in consumer price statistics is so important. The sample used so far has not allowed to do any other evaluations than the compulsory programme, that is, calculating federal and Länder results regarding the development of rents over time. Also, private small-scale landlords have not sufficiently been covered by the sample as no suitable sampling frame has been available. The environment and housing register, which is based on the register of addresses of the 2011 census of buildings and housing and on selected individual data of that census, now provides a sampling frame that can also be used to revise and improve the index of net rents exclusive of heating expenses in the consumer price index. Currently, a new sample of rents is being set up.

The main objectives of the new sample were defined in a workshop with users in June 2010. The main items were the following.

- Spatial distribution of the sample: collection of rents all over Germany, while covering the regions according to their relevance for consumption; application of a suitable spatial classification; taking account of future requirements to be met by regional price comparisons
- Landlord types: systematic inclusion of private small-scale landlords; development of a suitable landlord type classification.
- Improving price measurement
- Publication: availability and accessibility of special evaluations, methodological descriptions and results.

Based on these requirements, a new design for collecting rents in the consumer price index has been developed. By using the environment and housing register, a random sample can be applied for the first time. It will be stratified by three dimensions.

- Product classification of the consumer price index (COICOP): for the future basis 2015=100, five types of dwellings will be distinguished (dwellings with up to/over 70 m² constructed until/after 1948; and one-family houses).
- Regional stratification: The stratification variable used here is the types of administrative districts (in terms of settlement structure) within a regional policy region. Types distinguished are cities not attached to an administrative district, urban administrative

districts, rural administrative districts with first signs of conurbation, and thinly populated rural administrative districts.¹

- Landlord types: The classification developed here distinguishes between three types of landlords: private small-scale landlords; public institutions and housing cooperatives; private-sector housing companies.

The new sample will comprise just under 20,000 dwellings all over Germany, which is a sampling fraction of about 1‰ of the rented dwellings in Germany. Allocation to the various strata is done according to the size of the dwelling stock. As regards the landlord types, the costs of data collection are also taken into account.² Consequently, private small-scale landlords, where data collection and respondent care are much more expensive than for housing companies, are represented underproportionally, though systematically, in the sample. By explicit weighting, this shortcoming will be offset in the index calculation.

Unfortunately, the environment and housing register does not contain all variables needed for setting up the sample of rents (variables not available are, for example, data on the dwelling size or on letting / owner occupancy). Therefore, a pre-survey has to be conducted. The relevant sample is larger than that used for continuous price collection because buffers had to be included for nonresponse, owner occupancy, the rotation to be introduced in the future, and replacements. The statistical offices of the Federation and the Länder have been conducting the pre-survey since September 2013 among 32,000 owners of 75,000 dwellings. When the pre-survey has been finished and evaluated, the target sample will be drawn, which will be set up as from July 2014. It will take effect in the consumer price index in January 2015.

Bernhard Goldhammer, tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 43 14, e-mail: bernhard.goldhammer@destatis.de

Automated price collection on the internet - a workshop report

For a few years, the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) has used the generic term of "multi-functional consumer price statistics" to push projects forward whose purpose is to modernise consumer price statistics. The first goal is to examine whether, and to what extent, common data collection and data use can be achieved for different areas of consumer price statistics (consumer price index, purchasing power parities) without reducing data quality. Second, modern data collection methods are to be tested for suitability for purposes of consumer price statistics. This includes the use of mobile data entry equipment for price collection in shops, the use of scanner data, and the use of automated procedures of data collection from the internet (web scraping). As regards the latter issue, a feasibility study has been undertaken at the Federal Statistical Office since the beginning of 2012, which is the subject of this article.

E-commerce has increasingly gained in importance over the last few years. According to the outlet type weighting³ of the consumer price index, the proportion of e-commerce and the mail order business was 5.1% of the entire basket of goods for base year 2010. For some product groups (major groups of the COICOP⁴), the percentage is markedly higher, especially for clothing and footwear (20.9%), furnishings and household equipment (13.3%) and recreation and culture

¹ For the German term of siedlungsstruktureller Kreistyp (type of administrative district in terms of settlement structure) see the documentation of the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning at http://www.bbsr.bund.de/nm_1067638/BBSR/DE/Raubeobachtung/Raumabgrenzungen/Kreistypen4/kreistypen.html.

² See Krienbrock, L. (1993): Einführung in die Stichprobenverfahren. Oldenbourg, München/Wien, 2nd edition; pp. 91ff.

³ See Sandhop, Karsten: Geschäftstypengewichtung im Verbraucherpreisindex, in *Wirtschaft und Statistik* 3/2012, pp. 266 - 271.

⁴ Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose

(11.1%). Another fact that is important for price collection is that large retail businesses now have online shops where they offer products at the same price as in their local shops. The proportion of products for which prices could be collected via internet should therefore be estimated much higher than the mere value from the outlet type weighting.

In the various areas of consumer price statistics (consumer price index, purchasing power parities), data from the internet are used already now. In most cases, the price collectors manually call up the web pages and manually enter the prices into the files or databases. The purpose of the project is to examine whether price collection can be done in an automated way by using web scraping technologies. By web scraping, web pages are automatically called up at specific points in time defined earlier and data previously defined are extracted.

The question of whether such procedures are suited for the different consumer price statistics essentially depends on the time intervals at which price collection is done and on the extent to which the data to be collected are constant. For the consumer price index (CPI), prices are collected monthly. Prices for a specific product are collected until the product loses market relevance or until it completely disappears from the market. In these cases, the product is replaced, i.e. the price collector chooses an alternative product and performs quality adjustment where required. Except for such product replacements price collection for the CPI seems to be generally suitable for the use of automated procedures. For the calculation of purchasing power parities, price collection for individual product groups is done in a rolling way every three years. This means that there is not a constant situation as in the CPI because the products must be specified in a very detailed way to allow the required place-to-place comparability and because, after three years, changes in specification can occur for many products. Therefore, using automated procedures seems to be useful only for very comprehensive price collection which has to be performed over a longer period of time (e.g. air travels).

Generally, various approaches might be applied for the use of web scraping. For example, large data quantities could be collected.¹ For two reasons, such an approach is not examined in the feasibility study. One problem is the correct allocation of products to the product categories, which would have to be done in an automated way due to the data quantity. Also, legal problems might occur because all price data shown on a web page are copied.² It was therefore attempted in the feasibility study to imitate the manual price collection as far as possible. In this approach, web scraping can be applied only if the project can clearly be identified. This may be done either through an item number or, for more complex products such as flights, through several data.

For the development and use of automated procedures, a web scraping tool called iMacros is applied in this feasibility study. iMacros is used to control the web pages and to extract the data. Through an interface, the tool can be controlled by external programs. In this case, Java controls the tool and takes the role of the price collector. All decisions required for price collection must be taken account of in the program. For example, a specification for air travels is that prices must be selected for flights departing around noon. When the flight data have been retrieved, the departure times are extracted and it is checked which of the flights displayed are relevant. Also, lacking price observations must be identified. At fixed points in time the program is automatically started (using Windows Scheduled Tasks), and for a sample selected in advance it simulates the work steps which currently are done manually to display the price. Finally the relevant price is extracted. The product metadata required for identification (e.g. item number, technical characteristics) are retrieved from a database. When the price data and metadata have been extracted, they are stored in a database, too.

The web pages from which prices are collected may be subject to change at regular intervals. In web scraping, the structure of the HTML codes is used for extracting the required data.

¹ The Billion Prices Project of the MIT follows such an approach (<http://bpp.mit.edu/>).

² Sonntag Michael: "Zur Urheberrechtlichen Zulässigkeit von Screen Scraping", in: Erich Schweighofer, Franz Kummer (Eds.): Europäische Projektkultur als Beitrag zur Rationalisierung des Rechts, OCG, 2011.

Consequently, program modifications are required when a web page has changed. The feasibility study also examines how often changes are made and what efforts are subsequently required to keep the programs permanently operational.



For the following surveys, automation was tested.

Purchasing power parities

- Flights
- Hotels
- Mail order business for clothing and footwear (price comparison for several countries)

Consumer price index

- Mail order business (1 company)
- Mail order pharmacies
- Hired cars
- Rail travels
- City trips

To assess the suitability of the automated procedures, the extracted price data are then compared with the data collected manually. For many surveys, most of the data are consistent. It is also obvious, however, that even slight differences in the survey period can lead to price differences.

Experience has shown so far that using the procedures to calculate purchasing power parities is less promising because over a period of three years changes are likely to occur for most web pages. The time-consuming surveys that have been automated for purchasing power parities are so complex that changes to be applied to the programs take more time, too. As mentioned above, the automated procedures are better suited for the CPI surveys. For most of the surveys tested, the procedures run smoothly. To do a cost-benefit analysis, however, it would be necessary to have longer-term experience as to how time-consuming the program changes would be. It is therefore not possible yet to definitely assess whether automated procedures are suitable for use in regular statistics production.

Karola Brunner, tel: +49 (0) 611 /75 43 90, e-mail: karola.brunner@destatis.de

New conceptual design of the statistics on recipients of basic security benefits in old age and in cases of reduced earning capacity

Basic situation and background

The Twelfth Book of the German Social Code (SGB XII) regulates public assistance benefits. Under Section 41 of this Book, basic security benefits in old age and in cases of reduced earning capacity are granted to older people and people whose earning capacity is permanently impaired, i.e. people without sufficient earnings or property income to live on. The minimum age threshold for basic security benefits in old age is 65 years for people born before 1947. For people born in or after 1947, the threshold increases gradually to 67 years for those born in 1964 or later. Basic security benefits in cases of reduced earning capacity are paid to eligible people who are at least 18 years old and have not yet reached the age threshold.

The statistics on recipients of basic security benefits in old age and in cases of reduced earning capacity (EVAS catalogue no. 22151) are secondary statistics which are derived from an exhaustive survey of existing administrative data. They provide comprehensive and reliable information on the social and financial effects of SGB XII as well as on the group of benefit recipients. The data are also required for planning further amendments in order to refine SGB XII.

Up to now and including the reference year 2014, the statistics have been compiled in a decentralised manner through a stock survey taken as at 31 December of each year. The Federal Statistical Office takes charge of the conceptual design of both the survey and the processing procedure and carries out the organisational and technical preparations. The statistical offices of the Länder collect the data and process them to obtain statistical results at Land level. The Federal Statistical Office collates all the Land results and produces federal results.

The legal basis for the statistics on recipients of basic security benefits is the Twelfth Book of the Social Code governing Public Assistance Benefits (Section 1 of the Act of 27 December 2003, Federal Law Gazette I, pp. 3022, 3023), which was last amended by Section 1 of the Act of 1 October 2013 (Federal Law Gazette I, p. 3733).

Revision of the Twelfth Book of the Social Code (SGB XII)

The Act of 20 December 2012 amending the Twelfth Book of the Social Code prescribed changes, inter alia, in Section 46a which took effect on 1 January 2013. Pursuant to that amendment, the Federation reimburses the Länder for 75% of the net expenditure incurred in 2013 by the authorities responsible for cash basic security benefits. From 2014 onwards, the level of reimbursement will be 100% in each calendar year. Apart from the fact that the Federation will assume the full costs of basic security benefits, the statistics on the eligible recipients will be amended.

The rules governing the collection of data on recipients of basic security benefits are mainly contained in the Second Part of SGB XII – Federal Statistics Concerning the Fourth Chapter – (Sections 128a to h of SGB XII) and will enter into force on 1 January 2015.

In accordance with those rules, the statistics will have to be reorganised from the first reference quarter of 2015 from decentrally produced annual statistics into centrally compiled quarterly statistics. The list of variables covered will be modified and extended. Under Section 128g (2) of SGB XII, the obligation to provide information rests with the local and regional public assistance authorities that are responsible for implementing the Act in accordance with the Fourth Chapter. Pursuant to Section 46b (1) of SGB XII, these authorities are appointed under Land law. On the whole, the reports of roughly 1,050 authorities will have to be collected and processed centrally by the Federal Statistical Office.

Survey variables

In general, the survey variables to be covered by the centralised statistics from 2015 onwards are based on the list of variables and the variable values of the statistics produced up to and including 2014. The following new variables and variable values will be added as of 2015:

Where benefits are received by people not living in institutions, the number of people living in the household will be recorded. For those living in institutions, the type of institution will be covered. Information will in future also be collected on what other social benefits are paid to recipients of basic security benefits under SGB XII.

New variables are the date of and reason for the end of benefit receipt, the standard rate of benefit granted to a basic security recipient, and information on whether a different standard benefit rate was determined.

Different need levels will in future be recorded individually, in great detail and by type. Accordingly, information will be collected on contributions to six different categories of health and long-term care insurance.

Periodicity

Under Section 128f (2) of SGB XII, the variables (except for the start and end of benefit receipt and the underlying reason for each) have to be collected by way of a stock survey at the end of each reference quarter. However, the data on the need levels and the income of the recipients refer to the complete third month of the reference quarter.

In accordance with Section 128f (3) of SGB XII, the start and end of benefit receipt, and the reason for each, have to be recorded for the whole three months' period together with the relevant personal characteristics. If benefit receipt ends, the duration of benefit receipt is additionally recorded.

From 2015 onwards, the need for education and participation assistance will be covered for each month of the quarter together with the personal characteristics, as stipulated by Section 128f (4) of SGB XII.

Electronic data transmission

Pursuant to Section 128h (1) of SGB XII, self-consistent sets of microdata have to be transmitted by the authorities obliged to provide information to the Federal Statistical Office within 30 working days after the end of the reference quarter. Because of the different numbers of public holidays in the Länder, the deadline for data delivery may vary by one day, depending on what quarter and what Land is concerned.

Under Section 128h (1) of SGB XII, in conjunction with the amendments to the Federal Statistics Law (BStatG) of 25 July 2013, the data have to be transmitted electronically. This means in particular that delivery by paper questionnaire or on data media will no longer be permissible.

Electronic transmission should be made via eSTATISTIK.core, an online reporting procedure developed jointly by the statistical offices of the Federation and the Länder as part of an eGovernment project. The eSTATISTIK.core procedure reduces the burden on the respondents because they are enabled to retrieve the data directly from their software systems and to transmit them via the internet to the single data entry point for official statistics.¹

Where transmission is made between IT networks of the Federation and the Länder, the national network designed for communication between German authorities has to be used pursuant to Section 128h (1) of SGB XII for such data transmission.

Johannes Proksch, tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 87 05, e-mail: johannes.proksch@destatis.de

¹ Information on eSTATISTIK.core can be found at <http://www.statspez.de/core/index.html>.

Towards redesigning the statistics of youth work

More content and closer empirical examination of the social infrastructure for children and juveniles

Children and youth work is a central element of the system of social benefits aimed at supporting the development of young people in Germany.¹ It includes open, group-specific and project-specific forms of work with focuses e.g. on education, recreation and sports or the International Youth Exchange. One of its special features is that, in legal terms, youth work is a state-guaranteed benefit in accordance with Section 11 of the Social Code, Book VIII, while its organisational form, goals and topics can be chosen in a largely independent way by those providing the work. Although the juveniles are not entitled to individual support, they have a right to choose and to express their wishes, which results in a variety of work forms and of focuses in terms of topics, politics or beliefs. Apart from public youth welfare institutions, many individuals are involved in youth work for non-government institutions in various ways either on a voluntary or on a full-time basis. It is definitely a mass phenomenon with major importance for the civil society. Youth work enjoys much public support and, at the same time, there is a growing focus on the socio-economic living situation of juveniles, especially in the light of demographic change. Consequently, the interest in continuously monitoring and analysing this part of public welfare benefits tends to increase.

Reasons for rearranging the statistics: problems of content and validity

Despite their potential importance, public awareness of the official statistics of youth work measures as part of public youth welfare², which have been produced since 1982, has been rather low. Closely related products of official children and youth welfare statistics such as the widely noticed surveys regarding the extension of child day care centre capacities get much more public attention. The main reason for this low awareness is that the survey was no longer able to meet a growing need for information. This is due to the fact that the survey had been designed to have a limited empirical information value and that its methodology had not changed much since then.

The old list of variables included just core data on selected individual measures of youth work, and only on those for which public funds were paid. Although this covered a core function of official statistics, that is, cost and effectiveness control regarding the use of budget funds, it did not meet data demands put forward by institutions doing pedagogical-sociological youth research, youth policy makers, and youth organisations. The empirical reliability of the results was also impaired by factors caused either by the survey methodology or the structural diversity of the very subject-matter of the survey. In addition, the periods covered by each survey were quite long because of the four-yearly periodicity.³

Redesign project accompanied by scientific experts

Discussions were held between experts and Destatis on completely redesigning the survey to adjust it to increasing information needs. On that basis, a decision was taken in late 2010 to set up a relevant project, which was started in October 2011. At the same time, the survey was discontinued for 2012 by the federal legislators. The project, which will run until mid-July 2015, is scientifically accompanied by the Work Unit for Public Children and Youth Welfare Statistics

¹ For the following cf. Mündler, J. & Trenczek, Th.: Kinder- und Jugendhilferecht, 7th edition, Köln 2011, pp. 55-57.

² Statistics in accordance with Section 98 No. 10 of the Social Code, Book VIII, results up to 2008, and quality report at <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Soziales/KinderJugendhilfe/ErzieherischeHilfelnsgesamt.html>

³ More information on the old version of the statistics of youth work in Rauschenbach, Th. & Schilling, M. (ed.): Kinder- und Jugendhilfereport 2, Analysen, Befunde und Perspektiven, Weinheim and München 2005.

(Arbeitsstelle für Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistik - AKJ^{stat}) within the research association of the German Youth Institute and TU Dortmund University.¹

Optional approaches to, and goals of the redesign were presented to experts from the political and scientific communities, from associations and authorities already in 2012. The new survey guidelines were selected and defined in close cooperation with the experts in early 2013. In summer 2013, first tests were done with a survey tool prototype. At the same time, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth was supported in preparing a bill. The provisions on the list of variables and on the obligation to provide information were implemented in applicable law when the Act on Simplifying Public Children and Youth Welfare Administration was adopted.² This also takes account of an increasing data demand caused by the recent establishment of a separate policy field dealing with youth policy.³

Key points of the revised survey concept

In methodological terms, the main idea of the redesign is that the survey should cover additional contents while, at the same time, conducting the survey should be simplified, among other things, by taking the following measures:

- *Simplifying the definition of the group of respondents:* In accordance with the new legal situation, the obligation to provide information is limited to non-government institutions recognised in accordance with Section 75 (1) and (3) of the Social Code, Book VIII, to the extent that they received public funds, and to the entirety of public institutions of public youth welfare. This group of respondents is clearly defined and ensures comparability as the criteria for recognition are the same for the whole of Germany. Addresses can rather easily be obtained from the agencies responsible for recognition (usually Land youth councils or youth welfare offices), especially for public institutions, most of which are part of the municipal administration. As non-government institutions generally undergo just one recognition procedure, there are hardly any double entries in the data set produced. As a result of this cut-off procedure, which is based on legal-fiscal criteria, the new group of respondents tends to be smaller than the previous one because individuals and specific institutions are exempted from the obligation to provide information. The group of respondents thus is automatically restricted to large and long-lived survey units making a relevant contribution to the statistical mass of information.
- *New survey contents:* The current coverage of measures, i.e. forms of youth work offered only once, will be supplemented by observing open work and youth group work. The list of variables includes data on participants, management staff, duration and frequency of actions offered. The special part concerning measures of International Youth Work will be maintained. A new variable is the place where the activity is performed. Where youth work is offered for specific places, it will now be possible to have the results in a much more detailed breakdown (down to municipality level; so far, most results have been broken down to Land level only). The survey will be conducted at two-year intervals.
- *Additional elements of survey simplification* include approaches to using administrative data when determining the group of respondents and a changeover to a retroactive survey mode, which allows improved monitoring of response rates and completeness.

Future course of the project

¹ For more information on the activity contributed by the AKJ^{stat} please refer to: Pothmann, J. et al.: Neue amtliche Statistik für die Kinder- und Jugendarbeit - Einblicke in die Entwicklung eines Erhebungsinstrumentes für die Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistik, in: Forum Jugendhilfe, 2013, number 1, pp. 34-37.

² Cf. Law of 29 August 2013 - Federal Law Gazette part I, p. 3464, Bundesrat Printed Paper 93/13 and Bundestag Printed Paper 17/13023.

³ "Alliance for the youth", more information at <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Kinder-und-Jugend/eigenstaendige-jugendpolitik.html>

The survey will be conducted for the first time in 2016 for reference year 2015 and the organisational preparation will start in 2014. Major tests will be performed in cooperation with the statistical offices of the Länder to gain first experience and to obtain ideas on how to design the survey documents. For test purposes, parts of the group of respondents have been determined and addresses compiled in Hessen, Thüringen and Nordrhein-Westfalen. Prototypes of the envisaged survey tool were presented to a larger number of voluntary test persons. The results suggest general acceptance and feasibility of the survey concept. The feedback will be analysed to make the explanatory notes and variable definitions more precise. Similar tests are being prepared, among others, in Baden-Württemberg.

Conclusion

It is expected that the new statistics of youth work will provide an information density which, together with other products of official statistics (e.g. statistics of institutions and staff in public youth welfare), will allow to get a broad overview of the situation, capacities, trends and structures of youth work in Germany. The exploration and conceptualisation phases have successfully been completed. First practical experience suggests that it will be possible to maintain the balance between the depth and width of the data material on the one hand and the efforts of data collection and processing on the other.

Ludwig Karg, tel: +49 (0) 228 / 99 642 81 39, e-mail: ludwig.karg@destatis.de

Events

Federal Statistical Office presents the 2013 Gerhard Fürst Awards

Charlotte Articus and Michael Klüsener won the 2013 Gerhard Fürst Award of the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) for their scientific dissertations in the "Master's/Bachelor's Theses" category.

The diploma thesis on "Small Area Approaches to Estimating Regional Rental Prices" prepared by Charlotte Articus was supervised by Professor Ralf Münnich at Trier University. Michael Klüsener's master's thesis entitled "Concept to Calculate a Quarterly Gross Domestic Product for Nordrhein-Westfalen" was supervised by junior professor Dominik Wied at TU Dortmund University.

The annual Gerhard Fürst Award for outstanding scientific projects closely related to official statistics was given by the Federal Statistical Office for the 15th time. The above two papers were rated by the expert jury as equally excellent and worthy of the award. The Gerhard Fürst Award money of 2,500 euros is therefore shared by the two prize winners.

Two junior academics each received a Prize for Young Researchers in the "Doctoral Theses" category. First, Dr. Julia Kowalewski was honoured for her doctoral thesis on "Intersectoral Relations and Employment Development in German Regions", which she prepared at the Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg and the Hamburg Institute of International Economics under the supervision of Professor Bräuninger. Second, Destatis awarded the prize to Dr. John P. Weche Gelübcke for his doctoral thesis entitled "Foreign-controlled Enterprises in Germany: Empirical Studies on Comparative Firm Performance", which was written at the Leuphana University Lüneburg and supervised by Professor Joachim Wagner.

Each of the two prizes comes with 2,000 euros.

The annual scientific awards of the Federal Statistical Office are intended to intensify the co-operation between the scientific community and the official statistical agencies. At the same time, the prizes aim to encourage junior scientists to make extensive use in their empirical research of the wide variety of data offered by official statistics. The papers submitted are assessed by an independent expert jury.

The setting for the presentation of this year's Gerhard Fürst Awards was provided by the 22nd scientific colloquium on "Measuring Poverty", which was held by the Federal Statistical Office together with the German Statistical Society in Wiesbaden on 21 and 22 November 2013.

The laudatory speeches on the award-winning papers were given by the chairman of the expert jury, Professor Dr. Ullrich Heilemann (Leipzig University). The laudatory speeches were published in the December issue of the "Wirtschaft und Statistik" journal.

Short versions of the award-winning papers and more detailed information on the presentation of the Gerhard Fürst Awards can be found on the Federal Statistical Office's [website](#).

Birgit Baptistella, tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 26 03, e-mail: birgit.baptistella@destatis.de

22nd scientific colloquium on "Measuring Poverty"

On 21 and 22 November 2013, the 22nd scientific colloquium on "Measuring Poverty", organised by the Federal Statistical Office together with the German Statistical Society (DStatG), took place in the Wiesbaden Museum.

Measuring poverty is a matter of intense debate among scientists, with one of the first questions being "What actually is poverty and how can and should it be measured?". In his welcome address to the participants, the President of the Federal Statistical Office, Roderich Egeler, used this question to illustrate in more detail the topic of this year's event.

The colloquium was moderated by Prof. Dr. Ralf Münnich of Trier University. In his introductory speech, he introduced the topic and, in addition to the established poverty measurement approaches, looked more closely at current aspects of statistical poverty measurement.

The first part of the event focussed on conceptual questions and in particular on poverty caused by difficult circumstances in life such as situations where family members are in need of care, unemployment, and old age poverty. The second part of the colloquium was dedicated to the data bases of poverty measurement and to ways of refining them.

Talks were given by renowned scientists from universities and research institutes and representatives from the [Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#), the [Institute for Employment Research of the Federal Employment Agency](#), [Eurostat](#), the Federal Statistical Office and the Land Statistical Office of Lower Saxony, who had been invited by the organisers of the colloquium.

The Federal Statistical Office and the German Statistical Society as the organisers considered it important to include the various perspectives of academic social research, applied research, politics and official statistics in the event's programme. As a result, the audience could benefit from a wide range of interesting and exciting insights.

The [conference documentation](#) comprising all accompanying presentations and the programme, which contains abstracts of the contributions, is available from the website of the Federal Statistical Office.

Birgit Baptistella, tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 26 03, e-mail: birgit.baptistella@destatis.de

Call for papers

8th user conference on "Research Based on the Microcensus - Social Structure and Social Change Analyses"

Mannheim, 11 - 12 November 2014

The 8th user conference will focus on social structure and social change investigations in Germany. Participants are invited to present research findings derived from the microcensus data and to discuss the results obtained. In addition, the conference will promote the exchange of experience among the data users and between the data users and the representatives of the statistical offices. The target group of the event includes scientists who work, or intend to work, with microcensus data. Currently, the relevant scientific use files cover the period from 1973 to 2010. A scientific use file of the 2011 microcensus including supplementary data on employment is expected to become available to researchers at the beginning of 2014. From the 2005 microcensus onwards, the data provide a wide range of opportunities for detailed analyses, for instance, of the information provided in the supplementary programmes on issues such as migration background, births, labour market and employment, housing situation, health and health insurance, and commuter patterns.

Presentations are invited from any area of work addressing matters of social structure or social and economic change. Methodological papers or studies providing comparisons with other data sets are also welcome.

Those interested in giving a talk at the conference are requested to submit an abstract of the intended presentation using the relevant web form at <http://www.gesis.org/en/events/conferences/mz-nutzerkonferenz/> by **31 March 2014** at the latest (note: the link and the web form will be available from January 2014). The abstract of no more than 1,000 words should also contain the title of the presentation and indicate the data basis used, the name and e-mail address of the author, and the institution where he or she works.

The conference will be organised and held by the German Microdata Lab (GML) of GESIS and the Federal Statistical Office (Division F 2 "Population, Microcensus, Housing and Migration"). GESIS contacts for any questions regarding the conference will be: Andreas Herwig (tel: +49 (0) 621 12 46 288) and Bernhard Schimpl-Neimanns (tel: +49 (0) 621 12 46 263); e-mail: mzkonferenz@gesis.org.

Thomas Haustein, tel: +49 (0) 611 / 75 81 34, e-mail: thomas.haustein@destatis.de