



Event data collection Guidelines for ESS National Coordinators

**Ineke Stoop and Henk Fernee¹
July 2010**

1. Introduction

In Round 5 data on events will be collected in a way that slightly differs from Round 4. As is Round 4, National Coordinators or individuals from their team will upload information on national events (and international events that have a national impact) that drew attention in their country, based on newspapers. Internet news will also be allowed as a source, provided that the internet news site reports newspaper news. The upload tool on the ESS website (www.europeansocialsurvey.org) has been improved for Round 5 and technical problems have been resolved. The event submission page has been simplified, the link to the questionnaire within the tool has been highlighted and more explanation has been added for key fields. .

Every country is asked to report events according to the guidelines presented here. The lack of reported events in a number of countries, as happened in previous rounds, is a serious threat to the value of the event database and should be avoided in round 5. Please make sure that the possible impact in a country of an event is reported. So for example, rather than just reporting 'elections' the national issues – if any – regarding this event should be reported. The relationship of the event with the questions in the questionnaire may have a more important impact than the event itself.

During Round 5 a feasibility study will take place examining how event data could be collected in a more standardised, harmonised way. This study will take place in a few countries only.

2. How to collect and report on media-reported events

Type of events

An event may have a clear location in time and space (e.g. Greece wins the European Championship in Lisbon on 4 July 2004). Other events may simmer for a protracted time, surface and submerge (political scandals, preamble to and aftermath of elections). Besides, events may comprise many sub-events (war in Iraq). For this reason it is difficult to give a clear-cut definition of an event. In the reports, an event is something that is reported in the media on a particular day. Several reports on the same event may share the super-event identifier: in round 5 it will be possible to identify the same events across different manifestations of the event. The closing down of factories, for instance, (as in Belgium the Forest Volkswagen plants in round 3) may take longer periods, covering the first news,

¹ The Central Coordinating Team of the ESS requests that the following form of words should be used to cite this document: Stoop, I and Fernee, H. (2010) *ESS Round 5 Event data collection Guidelines for National Coordinators*. The Hague: European Social Survey, SCP.

negotiations, demonstrations and the final outcome. For this purpose a ‘super event’ category has been introduced, that links specific individual events to the super event.

Round 5 reporters should monitor the categories of events as mentioned in the framework below. A single event may belong to one or more categories (e.g. fraud and election). Events should be reported once they get ‘prominent attention’ in national newspapers. For the purposes of monitoring, prominent attention means ‘making front page news’ or ‘appearing regularly in larger articles on later pages’. Special attention should be paid to events relevant to questions in the questionnaire, and especially in the rotating modules (see also “link to the questionnaire” in the framework).

International events should be mentioned whenever they make front page news in national newspapers. Attention should be paid to the national aspect of international events (national reactions, discussions in Parliament, possible political consequences, etc.)

Timing and mode of reporting

Every National Reporter is asked to upload their reports in English. To avoid backlogs and to ensure that events are evaluated as they were seen at the time when they were reported in the newspapers, it is recommended that National reporters upload these reports **every fortnight** and do not wait until the end of fieldwork.

The reports will build up a database similar to the one from Round 4. A number of practical problems have been resolved for Round 5. There are more possibilities for providing aggregate reports, the event reporting tool can provide information on what happens in other countries and how other countries report on events. It also functions as an administrative tool and is also the final deliverable to the Commission as part of the ESSi-I3 project.

Event reporting should start **two weeks before the start of fieldwork**. Reporters are also requested to submit a short overview of what happened or changed in their country between Round 4 and Round 5. This overview should also give some idea of (changes in) the political landscape. The overview can be uploaded using the event reporting tool on the ESS website (see section 3 for guidance).

Sources

National Reporters should base their bi-weekly reports on a selection of newspapers that cover the major media-reported events in their country. Reports based on one newspaper only might lead to an imbalanced result, as many have their own areas of interest (for example genetic modification, crime, royalty or football) or political bias. Therefore, it should be ensured that the coverage of events is not determined by the particular interests or public of a single newspaper but rather reflects the attention that is paid to events across different media. It is not recommended to select newspapers from one part of the country only, if regional differences are expected.

Information can be collected from ‘paper’ newspapers and from websites of newspapers. No selection criteria for newspapers will be prescribed, but reporters are asked to mention in advance which source(s) they will use, and indicate the type of newspaper (broadsheet or tabloid; left wing or right wing; national coverage, URL, etc.). An overview of the newspapers/sources to be used will have to be entered online at the start of event reporting. You will only have to do this once - assuming that the sources used will not change. If a web link is provided in the reports on individual events this should specifically refer to the

individual event and not to the newspaper in general.

Framework

	Explanation	Categories
Name	Name of specific event <i>The name of a specific event could be an interpretable newspaper headline</i> <i>(no poetic names 'Dust to dust', or 'Double Dutch' or 'Home alone' or 'Trojan horse victory')</i>	(Examples, not necessarily real) Crime among the elderly rapidly increasing Netherlands win world championship football Civil war in Serbia Young girl saved in Kabul by British soldier Major credit card fraud Tony Blair to be EU president Social benefits for immigrants severely cut down Euro on the rise Turkey to enter EU
Super event	Longstanding issue to which particular event belongs	(To be identified by event reporters) Conflict in Iraq Conflict in Afghanistan Volcano ash Financial crisis
Category	Select one or more categories	Election (national, local), plebiscite, referendum Resignation, appointment, dismissal of politically significant person; Fall of cabinet, change government, new government Significant change of laws; Strikes, demonstrations, riots (mention topic) Acts of terrorism Events involving ethnic minorities, asylum seekers; Events concerning the national economy, labour market Political, financial, economic scandal, frauds National events (royal weddings, sports championships) Crimes (kidnappings, robberies) Disasters (outbreaks foot and mouth/mad cow disease, extreme weather conditions) International conflict (Israel-Palestine conflict, Iraq, Pakistan) that have a national impact Major international events that draw vast local attention Events related to trust in courts and the police Events related to the reconciliation of family and work
Short description	Similar to header in newspaper or introduction news item	As Luxembourg's procurer Roby Biever confirmed, terrorists had chosen the two towers of the EU-Parliament in Luxembourg-Kirchberg as goal for a terrorist attack. Biever confirmed the information of a German TV-channel.
Timing	When did reports on the event appear in the media	From DATE to DATE
Web link	Only if free and (semi)-permanent; link to newspaper article, not to newspaper in general	http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/blog/2010/may/19/thailand-crackdown-redshirts
Link to questionnaire	Select issues if applicable	Reliance on media (A1 to A7) (how much people depend on the different forms of media (radio, television, internet etc.) for informational or other purposes) Community relations (A8 to A10) (the state of relations between different communities in a country, including aspects of mutual trust, harmony and influence) Political engagement (B1 to B3 and B11) (people's involvement with politics in the country, how much do they feel they can understand and engage with it, do they feel involved in the political processes in their own country) Trust in political institutions (B4 to B10) (public's trust in macro political institutions and bodies, people's perception of the role of these bodies) Collective action/ actions by members of the civil society (B13 to B19) (how active are people as members of the civil society in making their opinions/stance known by taking some sort of action) Salience of political parties (B20 to B23) (prominence of national political parties in people's perception or claims made in relation to a specific political party) Personal wellbeing and life satisfaction (B24) (factors affecting people's health or feeling of contentment at the nation level) Perception of national performance (B25 to B29) (perceptions/evaluation of how the economy, government, democratic values and health services are being functioning at the national level) Limits of state intervention (B30 to B32)

		<p>(state's involvement and extent of that involvement in regulating public life in the country with regards to ensuring economic parity, freedom of way of life, anti-systemic forces)</p> <p>Environmental problems (B33) (environment, ways of tackling environmental problems)</p> <p>Economic effects of immigration (B37 to B38) (impact of immigration (from both within the EU and outside) on the economy of the country)</p> <p>Cultural diversity (B39 to B40) (cultural diversity on the country's population and society due to immigration of people from outside)</p> <p>Violent Crimes targeting individuals and perception of safety (C5 to C10) (level of violence in society or people's perceptions with regards to the likelihood of becoming targets/victims of violent crimes)</p> <p>Discrimination (C24 to C25) (experience /complaint of discrimination or stereotype in the country, on the basis of one or more of the following: colour or race, nationality, religion, language, ethnic group, age, gender, sexuality, disability)</p>
Possible effects on fieldwork	Areas closed off because of animal diseases, heavy storms, confidentiality scandals	Freezing weather paralyzes transport networks: schools closed.

3. ESS R5 event reporting tool

The event reporting tool can be accessed via the ESS website (www.europeansocialsurvey.org). After logging into the intranet, click on 'submit an event' under the 'ESS Event Reports' item on the menu on the left-hand side of the screen. You can then complete the form that appears.