



# PROSPECTUS

EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY  
EUROPEAN RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE  
CONSORTIUM



## INTRODUCTION

Consumers of mainstream news will be all too well aware of the various threats to democracy that are ongoing in our society - as well as ideological, political, economic and environmental tensions - that are in need of urgent resolution. The provision of high quality data from the ESS is a critical element in responding to such emergent problems.

By providing accurate data about the values, opinions, attitudes and beliefs of Europe's citizens, it provides a bedrock of hard information which is both reliable and extensive. This is increasingly important at a time when unreliable data, 'fake news' and 'alternative facts' are readily available in any search engine.

This prospectus sets out the contribution of the ESS. It is our hope that it provides politicians, legislators, policy makers, business leaders and ordinary citizens alike with a sense of how important these data can be, and that it will encourage those in a position to do so to ensure that all of Europe is covered in future waves of the ESS.

**Professor Michael Breen**  
Chair, ESS ERIC General Assembly

## FOREWORD

The European Social Survey (ESS) was established against a background of poor availability of academically rigorous cross-national data, in particular in regard to attitudes, beliefs and values. The founders of the ESS, Roger Jowell and Max Kaase, had the vision and determination not only to develop the scientific blueprint for the study but also to persuade national funders, the European Science Foundation and the European Commission that a knowledge gap existed and to agree therefore to fund and nurture a rigorous, high quality, comparative general social survey for the wider social science community.

As Europe faces grand societal challenges including immigration, changing family and relationship arrangements, climate change, welfare reform, declining political trust, increased populism and persistent health inequalities (amongst others), the European Social Survey is providing robust data that illuminates changes and stability in the social fabric of Europe. With over 100,000 registered users, and over 3,000 publications already identified, along with clear evidence of impact 'beyond academia', the ESS has already established itself as a critical pillar of the European Research Area. In addition, its methods and methodological research programme ensure that the infrastructure remains 'state of the art' and helps to position Europe as a global leader in terms of comparative social science.

The vision of the founders of the survey have clearly been realised. As the ESS matures into a formal research infrastructure with its own legal status, we invite all countries within geographic Europe to join the existing members and ensure pan-European coverage. Together we can provide a platform to ensure that the views of the people within Europe are heard in relation to these grand challenges. Academics, policy makers and those in civil society then have robust data to inform both discussion and decisions. This prospectus provides details about the infrastructure as well as information on how to apply for membership. 

**Dr. Rory Fitzgerald**  
ESS ERIC Director, February 2017

**“ Access to high quality comparative data will help us to improve our understanding of the profound social, political, economic and demographic changes occurring in Europe as well as the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. ”**

**Máire Geoghegan-Quinn**  
European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science (2010-14)  
speaking at the launch of ESS ERIC, London, UK, 31 January 2014

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Social Survey (ESS) is a pan-European research infrastructure providing freely accessible data for academics, policymakers, civil society and the wider public. It was awarded European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) status in 2013.

The work of the ESS ERIC includes organising a survey every two years measuring social attitudes and behaviour; utilising and developing the highest standards in cross-national research; providing direct and virtual training programmes; and supporting free access to its growing data and documentation archive ([www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org)).

Participating Members fund a Core Scientific Team who design and provide quality assurance for the survey as well as distributing and curating the data. Members fund their own national teams to implement the survey in their country, engaging commercial survey agencies, National Statistical Institutes and non-profit research institutes to conduct interviews in peoples' homes.

The ESS has been mapping attitudes and behavioural changes in Europe's social, political and moral climate for over 15 years. Launched in 2001, the first round of surveys was conducted in 2002 and gathered results from 22 countries. Since its inception, 36 countries have taken part in the ESS.

By adopting rigorous approaches to probability sampling, question-testing, event-recording, translation and response rate enhancement, the ESS has become THE authoritative source of information about changing social values in Europe.

This general social survey measures attitudes on a wide range of subjects. The ESS was primarily designed as a time series to monitor changing attitudes and values across Europe. The questionnaire therefore consists of a main core section that includes a number of questions that have been answered every two years since 2002. Each question has a unique identifier to enable people to easily compare data over time.

The development of this 'core' part of the ESS questionnaire followed recommendations made by academic experts who were consulted by the Core Scientific Team during the early planning stages of the ESS.

Additionally, in each round of the ESS, multi-national teams of researchers based in ESS countries are selected to contribute to design part of the questionnaire. Two 'rotating' modules are selected following a Call for Proposals placed in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

As a result, the ESS always includes questions measuring attitudes towards the media, health and wellbeing, trust in institutions and governments, education and occupation, social capital and social trust, household circumstances, citizen involvement and democracy, social exclusion, political values and engagement, socio-demographics, immigration and crime.

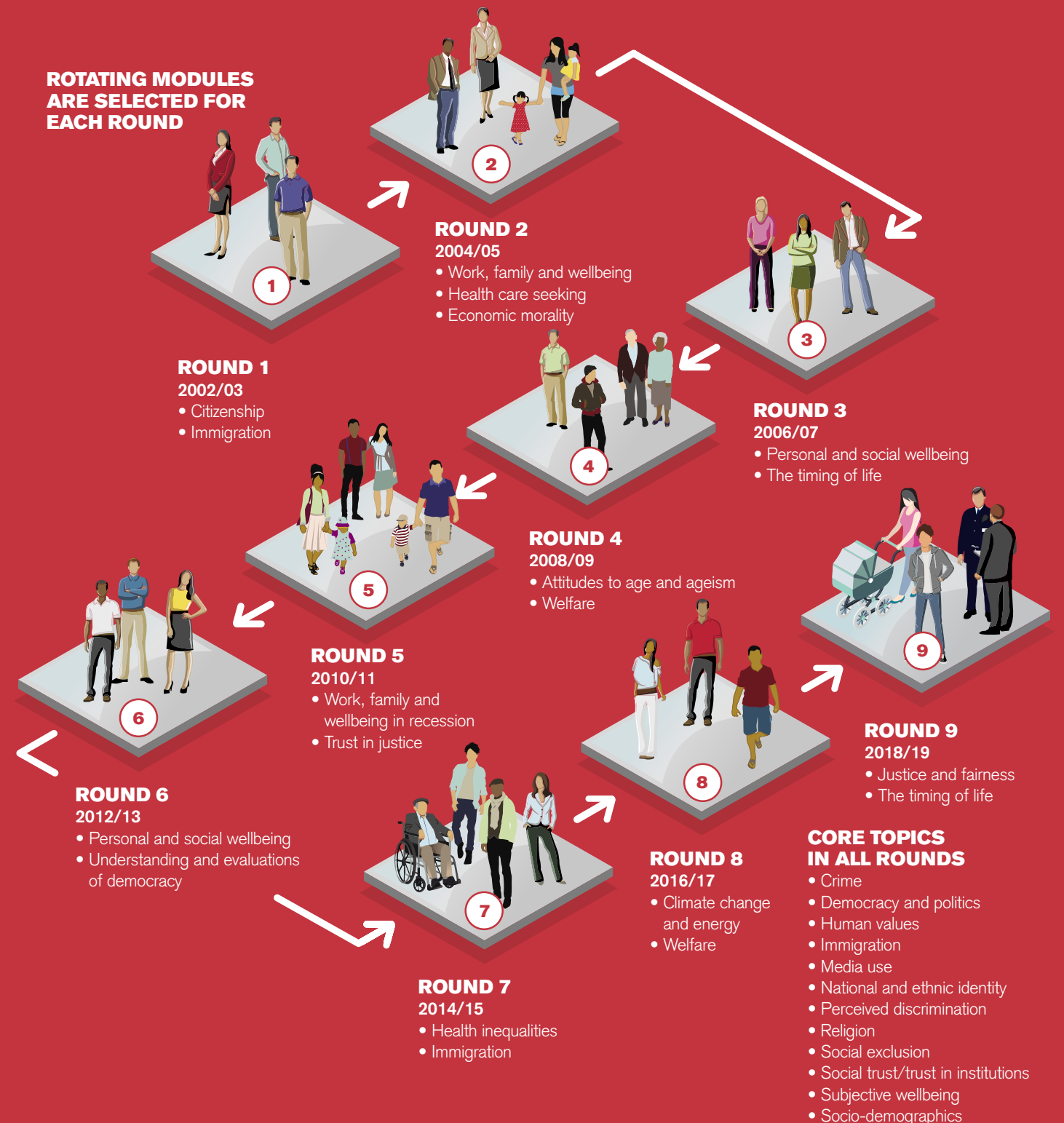
The ESS has asked questions designed in collaboration with external academics on citizen involvement, health and care, economic morality, family, work and wellbeing, timing of life, personal and social wellbeing, welfare attitudes, ageism, trust in the police and courts, democracy, immigration, social inequalities in health and attitudes to climate change and energy security. Some of these topics have been repeated at a later stage.

By measuring the results over time, the data reveals intriguing contrasts and similarities between European countries. This rigorous comparative data collection is then used by the academic community, their research often facilitating pan-European and member state political, social and economic debate. This allows scholars, policymakers, think tanks and other interested parties to measure and interpret European people's views cross-nationally and over time.

Seven rounds of survey data have now been compiled, fieldwork for the eighth began in September 2016 and the ninth round will be running officially from 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2019.

European countries are welcome to join the ESS, even if they have previously not taken part or have been absent for some time. The inclusion of new Members enables ESS ERIC to increase the body of comparative data available and leads to lower costs of participation for all the nations involved. Support can be provided by the central ESS team to help prepare countries participating for the first time.

Once a country has become a Member of the ESS, they must appoint a National Representative who is given full authority to vote on all issues considered at the General Assembly. Each Member must also appoint a National Coordinator to manage the activities of the ESS ERIC within their own country. They have overall responsibility for ensuring





## Executive Summary (continued)

the successful undertaking of fieldwork for the survey. This is often outsourced to a supplier, but the National Coordinator is ultimately responsible for the national implementation of the ESS interviews.

The ESS annotates its source questionnaire to guide translators in using national instruments so that the survey has the same meaning in every language. The questionnaire is translated into any language spoken as a first language by more than five per cent of each country's population.

In line with the central Specification for Participating countries made available for each round, each National Coordinating Team identifies a suitable sampling frame and produces a sample design to be implemented in their country.

The ESS provides comprehensive materials for interviewer training and briefing sessions. It is vital that the interviewing is as consistent as possible across all European countries taking into account necessary national adaptation. Briefing sessions explain the ESS project: the questionnaire and rules. All interviewers must be personally briefed once assigned to undertake ESS fieldwork.

The survey fieldwork is gathered over a minimum of one month within a designated maximum period of four months, and all countries aim to achieve an effective sample size of at least 1,500 respondents, though this number is reduced for countries with smaller populations. Once the fieldwork is completed, National Coordinating Teams deposit their data in the ESS data archive.

The ESS continues to build a huge amount of freely accessible data measuring the behaviour and social attitudes of Europeans. In addition the national teams monitor and record political claims contained in media reports during the time when fieldwork is being undertaken. This helps to ensure



that current and future data analysts can be aware of the national context in which questions were being answered.

Over 350,000 face-to-face interviews have been completed since 2002. There are over 100,000 registered users of the data, who can analyse it online using a web-based programme called Nesstar or download it for detailed analysis in programmes such as SPSS, R or STATA. Users are also aided through an online training programme called ESS EduNet.

The data is available to download completely free of charge from anywhere in the world. When downloading customisable datasets, users are offered a number of options: they can download information from more than one survey round and for numerous countries. Data files can be downloaded in a number of formats. The ESS data wizard allows users to choose which variables to include in their own bespoke dataset.

A Multilevel Download makes it possible to add information about countries and several regional levels to the respondents in the ESS data. This was partly funded by the

Descartes Prize for Excellence in Scientific Collaborative Research, awarded to the ESS in 2005.

Internal analysis of Google Scholar from 2003-15 found that 3,104 English academic journal articles, books, chapters, conference papers or working papers referenced the ESS. €

**“When considering new policies, governments in the past were often ignorant of their citizens' preferences and needs. Now European governments have a source for counteracting that ignorance.”**

**Professor Sir Roger Jowell CBE**  
Co-founder of the ESS

## CONTENTS

1. Introduction and Foreword	1	<b>Findings from the European Social Survey</b>	
2. Executive Summary	2	8. Rotating modules addressing key social themes	24
<b>What Is The European Social Survey?</b>		Democracy and Citizen Involvement	24
3. The European Social Survey ERIC	6	Family, Work and Wellbeing	25
The History	6	Attitudes towards Immigration	26
Structure and Governance	8	Social Inequalities in Health	27
Operational Activities	8	Welfare Attitudes in a Changing Europe	28
4. Joining the European Social Survey ERIC and financial data	10	Public Attitudes to Climate Change and Energy	29
Country Affiliation to the ESS ERIC	10	9. Policy making from a cross-national european perspective	30
Costs for Fieldwork, National Coordination and Country Contribution	11	10. Prospectus: Impact Study	32
Procedures to Apply for Participation	12	11. ESS Publications	36
Auditing of ESS ERIC Accounts	13	ESS Topline Findings	36
5. A biennial cross-national social survey of high quality	14	Findings Booklets	36
Methodological Rigour	14	ESS on Wellbeing	37
Questionnaire Design	16	12. References	37
Test Questionnaire	16	Contact Information	37
Translation	16		
Sampling	18		
Interviewer Training	18		
Media Claims Recording	18		
Data Preparation and Deposits	19		
6. A rich tool for academic studies, education and training	20		
ESS EduNet for eLearning	20		
Training Courses	20		
Registered User Statistics	20		
ESS Bibliography	21		
7. Data and documentation with unrestricted access	22		
Datasets Available without Additional Costs	22		
Cumulative and Harmonized Data	22		
Multilevel and Contextual Data	23		





# WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY?

## THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY ERIC

### THE HISTORY

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national general social survey that has been conducted across Europe since 2002. Every two years, face-to-face interviews are conducted in people's homes with newly selected, cross-sectional samples of all those aged 15+ living within a country.

The initiative to develop the ESS started in 1995 within the Standing Committee for the Social Sciences of the European Science Foundation (ESF). Committees under the leadership of Professor Sir Roger Jowell of the United Kingdom and Professor Max Kaase of Germany were set up to produce an ESS Blueprint.

With the assistance of Dr. John Smith of the ESF, this provided the basis for an ESF decision to start developing the ESS Project. Sir Roger Jowell was asked to assemble a core team and apply to the European Commission for central funding to be matched by the participating countries. This application was successful and the first round of the ESS started in 2001 with fieldwork beginning in 2002.

The survey has measured the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations in more than thirty nations. The main aims of the ESS are:

- To chart stability and change in the social structure, conditions and attitudes in Europe and to interpret how Europe's social, political and moral fabric is changing;
- To achieve and spread higher standards of rigour in cross-national research in the social sciences, including for example, questionnaire design and pre-testing, sampling, data collection, reduction of bias and the reliability of questions;
- To introduce soundly-based indicators of national progress, based on citizens' perceptions and judgements of key aspects of their societies;
- To undertake and facilitate the training of European social researchers in comparative quantitative measurement and analysis;
- To improve the visibility and outreach of data on social change among academics, policy makers and the wider public.

In 2005, the ESS was the first social science project to win the annual Descartes Prize for Excellence in Scientific Collaborative Research. Awarded by the European Union, the Descartes Prize was awarded to a transnational team that had achieved exceptional scientific or technological results through collaborative research.

Following an application to the European Commission submitted by the UK on behalf of a total of 15 countries, the ESS was awarded European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) status in November 2013. An ERIC is a fully recognized legal entity under European Union law.

The European Social Survey ERIC was recognised as an ESFRI Landmark by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) in March 2016. The announcement was a significant achievement for the ESS ERIC reflecting the maturity of the infrastructure.

ESFRI is a strategic instrument of the European Union to develop the scientific integration of Europe and to strengthen its international outreach. The ESS was previously included on the ESFRI Roadmap in 2006, 2008 and 2010. The Roadmap identifies research infrastructures of pan-European interest, corresponding to the long-term needs of European research communities, covering all scientific areas.

ESFRI Landmarks are research infrastructures that were implemented or began implementation under previous stages of the ESFRI Roadmap. Only high quality and established research infrastructures are given ESFRI Landmark status - which helps ensure they continue to be recognised by national governments.

**“The ESS aims to improve the visibility and outreach of data on social change among academics, policy makers and the wider public.”**

## STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The Statutes of the ESS ERIC detail its governance and funding arrangements. ESS ERIC is governed by a General Assembly which appoints the Director. Members of the General Assembly are represented by a National Representative.

The current Chair of the General Assembly is Professor Michael Breen from Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland. The Deputy Chair is Professor Algis Krupavicius from Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania.

The ESS ERIC Headquarters (HQ) is based within the School of Arts and Social Science, at City, University of London. It is the first ESS ERIC to be hosted in the UK.

The Director, Dr. Rory Fitzgerald and his team at ESS ERIC HQ, City, University of London, are supported in the design and implementation of the ESS ERIC Work Programme by six other institutions that collectively comprise the Core Scientific Team (CST). These are:

- GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (Germany)
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium)
- NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Norway)
- SCP – The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Netherlands)
- Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Spain)
- University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Deputy Directors are in post in four institutions:

- Deputy Director HQ: Dr. Eric Harrison, ESS ERIC HQ, City, University of London
- Deputy Director Scientific: Dr. Angelika Scheuer, GESIS, Mannheim, Germany
- Deputy Director Methodological: Dr. Ineke Stoop, SCP, Hague, Netherlands
- Deputy Director Strategic: Bjørn Henrichsen, NSD, Bergen, Norway

The General Assembly appoints an independent Chair (not from the Members) who serves for a term of four years (renewable). A Deputy Chair is appointed for a four year period from amongst the National Representatives who attend the General Assembly.

The General Assembly meets at least twice a year and has three standing committees: a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), a Methods Advisory Board (MAB) and a Finance Committee (FINCOM).

The Host Institution has been City, University of London following a brief initial period at NatCen Social Research in the UK, and this arrangement is periodically reviewed by the General Assembly every four years.

The ESS ERIC Director also convenes a National Coordinators' (NC) Forum, attended by National Coordinators appointed by ESS ERIC Members and Observers along with the Core Scientific Team.

The ESS ERIC subscribes to the Declaration on Ethics of the International Statistical Institute (ISI), to which the Survey Agencies that conduct the data collection will be asked to adhere, in addition to any co-existing national obligations that they may have.

## OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

As stated in the ESS ERIC statutes, each country must appoint a National Representative who will sit on the General Assembly. The chosen National Representative will be given full authority to vote on all issues raised during the General Assembly.

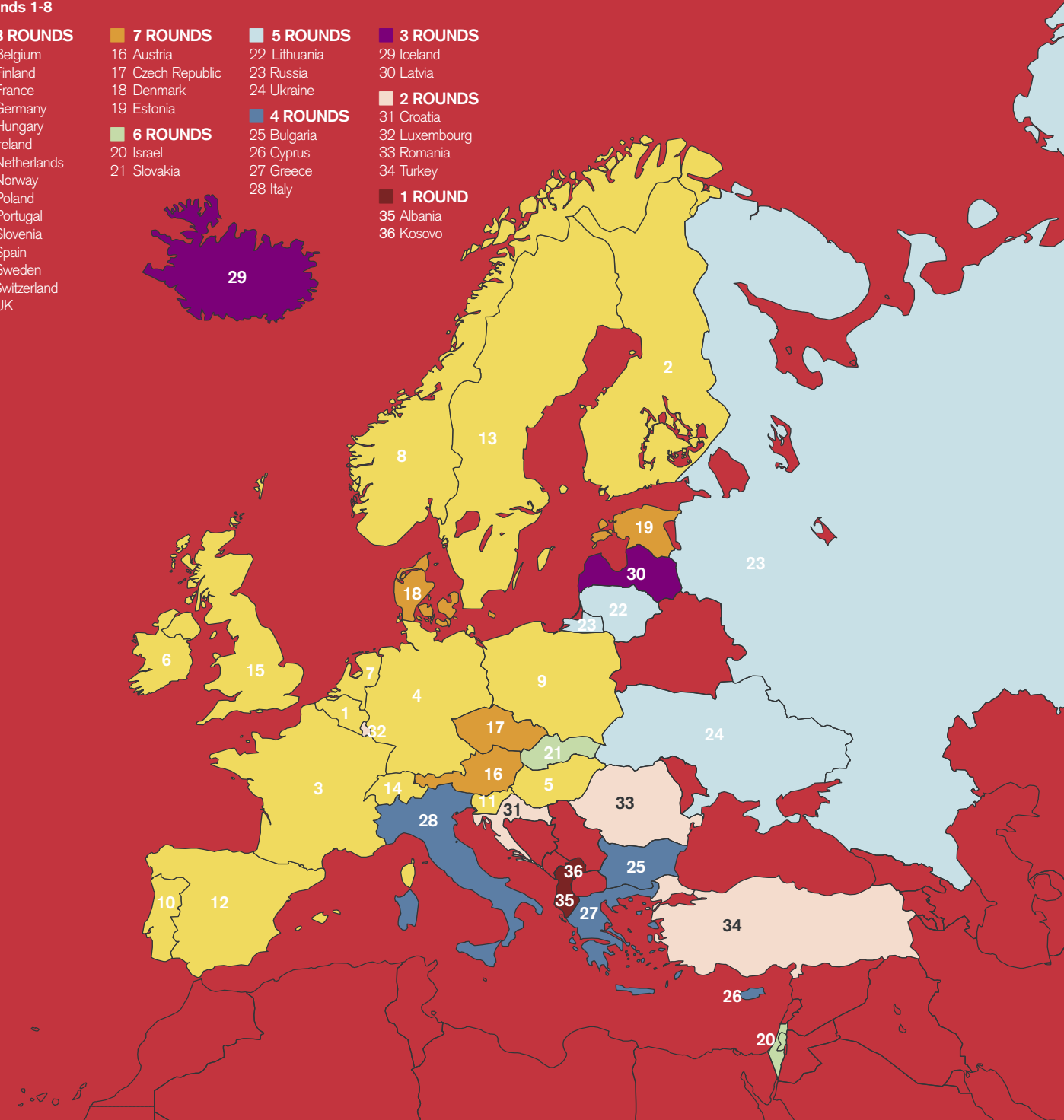
Each country must also appoint a National Coordinator. The key roles of a National Coordinator are to coordinate the activities of the ESS ERIC at a national level and assure it is compliant with the specifications issued by the Director, when necessary. They also contribute to discussion about the ESS methodology and questionnaire design.

The National Coordinator has overall responsibility for undertaking the fieldwork for the survey. This can be outsourced to another supplier, but overall responsibility for the fieldwork rests with them. ←

## ESS PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

### Rounds 1-8

<b>8 ROUNDS</b>	<b>7 ROUNDS</b>	<b>5 ROUNDS</b>	<b>3 ROUNDS</b>
1 Belgium	16 Austria	22 Lithuania	29 Iceland
2 Finland	17 Czech Republic	23 Russia	30 Latvia
3 France	18 Denmark	24 Ukraine	<b>2 ROUNDS</b>
4 Germany	19 Estonia	<b>4 ROUNDS</b>	31 Croatia
5 Hungary	<b>6 ROUNDS</b>	25 Bulgaria	32 Luxembourg
6 Ireland	20 Israel	26 Cyprus	33 Romania
7 Netherlands	21 Slovakia	27 Greece	34 Turkey
8 Norway		28 Italy	<b>1 ROUND</b>
9 Poland			35 Albania
10 Portugal			36 Kosovo
11 Slovenia			
12 Spain			
13 Sweden			
14 Switzerland			
15 UK			







## JOINING THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY ERIC AND FINANCIAL DATA

### COUNTRY AFFILIATION TO THE ESS ERIC

Countries affiliated to the ESS ERIC are defined in three categories: Members, Observers and Guests.

**Members** have full voting rights on the General Assembly and are legally responsible for the ERIC. They have a long-term commitment to ESS ERIC but they may withdraw from membership by giving two years notice to the General Assembly, which must be submitted before the end of a biennial survey cycle period.

**Observers** are admitted to ESS ERIC for a period of four years, but have no voting rights and are not legally responsible for ESS ERIC. To remain as an Observer, they must apply to the General Assembly for an extension.

**Guests** are admitted to the ESS ERIC for a two-year (one round) period. As with Observers, they have no voting rights and are not legally responsible for the ERIC.

The benefits of joining the ESS ERIC are multiple. Each country receives the full support of the Core Scientific Team, operating from seven countries across Europe, in preparing for fieldwork as well as providing assistance during data collection. In addition, the CST helps to check the quality of the data as well as carefully compiling a single international data file and curating the data for future use.

Scientists across Europe participate in the SAB, MAB and in the NC Forum, all giving active input in the ongoing development of the infrastructure, leading to a high quality design as described in chapter 5 and accessible data and findings as described elsewhere in this Prospectus.

### COSTS FOR FIELDWORK, NATIONAL COORDINATION AND COUNTRY CONTRIBUTION

All Members, Observers and Guests are required to conduct the biennial ESS surveys at their own expense, according to the ESS Specifications distributed for each round. The National Coordinator is a key informant for these costs. In their absence potential funders must consult relevant scientists to estimate the costs.

All participating countries are also required to contribute to the central coordination costs of the ESS ERIC. This contribution is made up of a minimum contribution for all countries and – for wealthier countries – an additional amount, calculated relative to the GDP of each country. Moreover, a substantial financial additional contribution is made by the host country, the United Kingdom.

The central budget for the ESS Work Programme during Round 9 will be €2,538,405 for the 2017-2018 financial year and €2,563,789 in 2018-2019.

The table below presents the country contributions for Member and Observer countries participating in the ninth (2017-2019) and tenth (2019-2021) rounds.

COUNTRY	2017-2018 (€)	2018-2019 (€)	2019-2020 (€)	2020-2021 (€)
United Kingdom	764.909	764.909	764.909	764.909
Austria	61.447	62.204	62.968	63.741
Belgium	69.831	70.749	71.675	72.611
Czech Republic	41.033	41.399	41.770	42.144
Estonia	21.855	21.855	21.855	21.855
Finland	46.509	46.981	47.457	47.938
France	278.671	283.581	288.541	293.551
Germany	371.913	378.607	385.368	392.197
Hungary	21.855	21.855	21.855	21.855
Ireland	46.664	47.138	47.617	48.101
Italy	216.120	219.834	223.586	227.376
Lithuania	21.855	21.855	21.855	21.855
Netherlands	101.340	102.859	104.395	105.945
Norway	66.671	67.528	68.393	69.268
Poland	71.089	72.031	72.981	73.942
Portugal	42.712	43.110	43.513	43.920
Slovenia	21.855	21.855	21.855	21.855
Sweden	74.328	75.332	76.345	77.369
Switzerland	87.386	88.639	89.905	91.183
Guests	110.365	111.469	112.584	113.710
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.538.405</b>	<b>2.563.789</b>	<b>2.589.427</b>	<b>2.615.321</b>

Guest countries have to contribute as though they are a Member and therefore there is no financial benefit in being a Guest country. The aggregate income of Guest countries contributes to the central budget. Guest status allows countries to join one round and benefit from the experience, ideally leading to future membership.

Funds are also used for promoting the use of the data as well as ensuring the ESS remains at the forefront of methodological developments.





## PROCEDURES TO APPLY FOR PARTICIPATION

To apply to participate in the ESS ERIC, applications for membership should be in writing to the Chair of the General Assembly, copied to the Director.

In the letter, potential new members should explain how they intend to contribute to the objectives and activities described in Article 2, and how they will fulfil the obligations required to take part.

Applicants must explain how they will fulfil the requirement to undertake the survey in their country at their own expense and to the specifications set out by the Director and agreed by the General Assembly. A template can be provided from the office of the Director.

Once a letter from an applicant is received, the General Assembly will enact a simple majority vote to decide whether the new country can be included. Any application must be approved by the country's relevant Government ministry, though private enterprises can sometimes fund participation for Guest status countries.

The procedure to apply for participation with Guest status is similar and described in a document which is available on request.

## AUDITING OF ESS ERIC ACCOUNTS

The accounts of ESS ERIC are audited professionally and independently.

**“ In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Consortium as at 31 May 2015, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2015). ”**

**Audit Findings Report**  
Grant Thornton UK LLP,  
21 December 2015

### Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 May 2015

	1 June 2014 to 31 May 2015 €	1 June 2014 to 31 May 2015 € Restated*
<b>INCOME</b>	2,714,720	1,171,275
Direct Costs	(2,696,973)	(1,161,917)
<b>GROSS SURPLUS</b>	17,1747	9,358
Administrative expenses	(17,747)	(9,358)
<b>RESULT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	-	-

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MAY 2015

	2015		2014	
	€	€	€	€
			Restated*	
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Debtors	22,581		619,091	
Cash at bank	3,024,895		1,233,288	
	3,047,476		1,852,379	
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	(3,047,476)		(1,852,379)	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	-		-	
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	-		-	
<b>RESERVES</b>				
Accumulated result	-		-	
Income and expenditure account	-		-	
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	-		-	



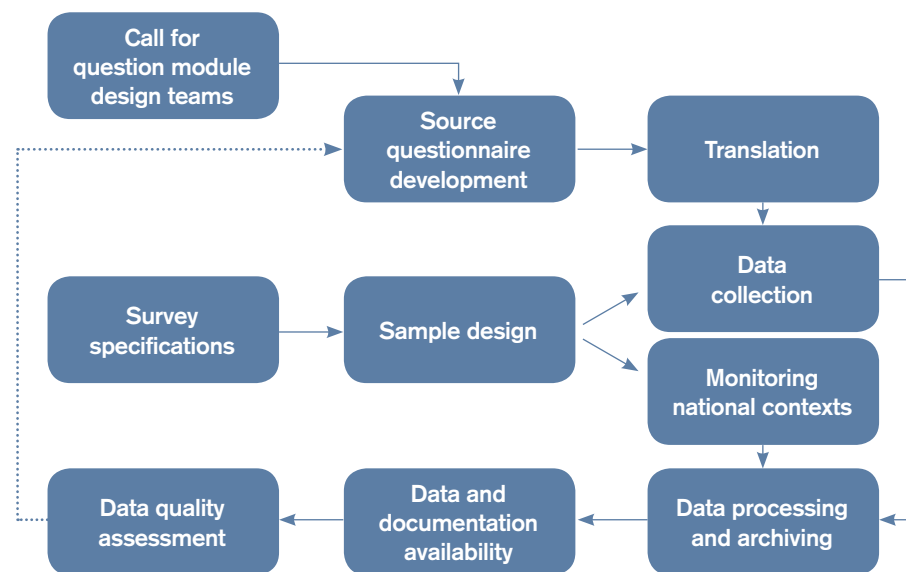
## A BIENNIAL CROSS-NATIONAL SOCIAL SURVEY OF HIGH QUALITY

### METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR

By sharing the central costs of coordinating the ESS and covering only their own national costs, each ESS ERIC participant gets access to high quality comparative data that helps to provide context to their own national data.

The high quality methodology and data collection makes the ESS more expensive than less rigorous surveys. There are a number of reasons that justify this investment:

1. In order to make comparisons between countries it is necessary to design and implement a survey in an equivalent manner. Otherwise differences between countries may reflect methodological rather than real substantive differences.
2. As less scientific but cheaper methods are frequently used by social scientists it is necessary to have high quality benchmark data. The ESS plays that role for social scientists acting as a gold standard data source. The ESS is not an opinion poll conducted using non-scientific methods over a short time period and should not be compared to them in terms of costs or methods.
3. Alternatives to survey data such as administrative, transactional and social media data cannot be tailored to the theoretical research questions, limiting the academic rigour of any analysis.



4. Alternatives to survey data outlined in 3. are rarely available to the same extent or format cross-nationally hindering their utility for comparative work. There are also few sources of alternative data that cover the attitudinal focus of the ESS.

The ESS therefore utilises and develops best practice and scientifically driven methods which are required to produce the high quality outputs on which social scientists rely.

Questionnaires at each round of the survey cover a range of topics that tap into key issues facing contemporary Europe. The questionnaire takes an average of one hour to administer in British English but longer in some other countries. From Round 9 all countries are required to administer the questionnaire using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing. Alternative data collection modes are not permitted since mixing data collection modes can seriously

undermine comparability between countries and across time.

Developed by leading European subject specialists, the questionnaire combines continuity with change through a consistent core module and a series of rotating modules - selected via a Europe-wide competition.

#### Core module:

The ESS was primarily designed as a time series that could monitor changing attitudes and values across Europe. For this reason its questionnaire comprises one core module containing items measuring a range of topics of enduring interest to the social sciences as well as the most comprehensive set of socio-structural ('background') variables of any cross-national general social survey. The exact number of items can change from round to round but each question has a unique variable name to assist users working with data over time.

#### Rotating modules:

In each round of the ESS, multi-national teams of researchers are selected to contribute to the design of two rotating modules for the questionnaire. Rotating modules are selected following a Call for Proposals placed in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and circulated widely. Applicants may apply for 'new' modules and, since 2010, for 'repeat' modules as well. Design and pre-testing of the modules is intensive and takes place over a 19 month period.

Two modules have been selected for ESS Round 9 (2018). 'The timing of life' is a repeat module exploring perceptions of the life course and attitudes towards key moments within that. It incorporates a split ballot design that allows analysis of differences in outlook along lines of gender. It was fielded in Round 3 (2006) and a successful application to repeat the module was led by Principal Applicant, Professor Francesco Billari, Bocconi University, Milan, Italy.

'Justice and fairness in Europe' responds to the substantial growth of inequality in recent decades by examining multiple dimensions of justice, making distinctions between for instance: distributive and procedural justice; reflexive and non-reflexive evaluations of justice; and the scope and timing of justice. The new module will look at justice and fairness in the context of respondents' income to help establish how Europe copes with growing inequality. It will be included for the first time following an application led by Professor Stefan Liebig of the Department of Sociology at Bielefeld University in Germany.

Rotating modules are now subject to expert review, input from national teams, cognitive interviewing in multiple countries, stages of quantitative pre-testing and advance translation.



“The new Round 9 module will look at justice and fairness in the context of respondents' income to help establish how Europe copes with growing inequality.”



## TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

The ESS includes a set of experiments in every round to evaluate the reliability and validity of ESS questions. These Multi Trait Multi Method experiments have also been used to populate a Survey Quality Predictor (SQP) database which helps questionnaire designers to predict the reliability and validity of draft questionnaire items prior to fielding them.

## TRANSLATION

**In cross-national research in which the data collection is administered in various languages, it is vital that translation is undertaken to the highest possible quality.**

Words and phrases such as 'democracy', 'social life' or 'unification' can mean different things to different people at different times in different countries. The ESS annotates its source questionnaire in an attempt to ensure that a translation conveying the same meaning can be used in all countries.

The ESS uses a team approach to translation involving several stages of review, adjudication, pre-testing and documentation. To ensure that the survey is fully representative of any given country, the questionnaire is translated into each language spoken as a first language by more than five per cent of each country's population.

The ESS strives to achieve a principle of equivalence with regard to its translations. Translation procedures of the ESS are guided by the requirements outlined in the Specification for Participating countries and the following key principals:

- The ESS source questionnaire is designed in British English taking into account how it will be translated. Each national team will translate it into one or more target languages.
- The ESS follows TRAPD methodology - Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pretesting and Documentation.
- All National teams are provided with detailed Translation Guidelines and a Translation Quality Checklist which outlines the procedures to be followed
- Following translation, a selection of items are subject to two innovative additional steps - verification and survey quality predictor (SQP) coding
- All translated questionnaires must be pre-tested following the completion of verification and SQP coding

The ESS Translation process is overseen by an ESS Translation team, assisted by a Translation Expert Panel (TEP). The Panel's role is to advise the ESS on translation-related matters. These relate both to the general ESS translation strategies and to specific issues where the ESS Translation Team and/or the ESS Core Scientific Team seek external expertise. The Panel holds meetings, normally once every ESS round, and provides expert input in-between when applicable.



**“The ESS uses a team approach to translation involving several stages of review, adjudication, pre-testing and documentation.”**



## SAMPLING

The objective of the ESS sampling strategy is the design and implementation of workable and equivalent sampling plans in all participating countries. Sampling in the ESS is guided by the requirements outlined in the Specification for Participating countries and the following key principles:

- Samples must be representative of all persons aged 15 and over (no upper age limit) resident within private households in each country, regardless of their nationality, citizenship or language
- Individuals are selected by strict random probability methods at every stage
- Sampling frames of individuals, households and addresses may be used
- All countries must aim for a minimum 'effective achieved sample size' of 1,500, or 800 in countries with ESS populations of less than 2 million after discounting for design effects
- Quota sampling is not permitted at any stage
- Substitution of non-responding households or individuals (whether 'refusals', 'non-contacts' or 'ineligibles') is not permitted at any stage

Each National Coordinating team is responsible for identifying (or generating) a suitable sampling frame and producing a sample design suitable for implementation in their country. They are supported in this task by a member of the ESS Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel who is assigned to assist them.

**“The European Social Survey makes its data freely available to all for non-commercial use.”**

## INTERVIEWER TRAINING

ESS interviewers must be trained (task specific) and briefed (project specific). The Core Scientific Team (CST) provides a series of pre-structured slides and related materials to be used as the basis for briefing sessions.

Briefing is different from training in that it is project specific, i.e., it describes the ESS project, the ESS questionnaire, and ESS rules. All interviewers must be personally briefed by the NC or Survey Agency upon being hired for a survey round and before carrying out their assignment. Their briefing must cover in detail how to code observation data, how to follow contact procedures and complete the contact forms, and how to follow respondent selection procedures (if applicable).

## MEDIA CLAIMS RECORDING

Events can profoundly affect attitudes and perceptions in the short and long term. A single act of terrorism, for instance, can change the context of people's responses to a range of issues that may affect answers from different countries.

ESS National Coordinators monitor and record political claims reflected in key media reports in each country during the time when fieldwork is being undertaken. This helps to ensure that current and future data analysts can be aware of the national context in which questions were being answered. This is especially important should national events at the time have a temporary effect on the answers provided.



## DATA PREPARATION AND DEPOSITS

A unique quantitative source of data about stable as well as changing European attitudes, the European Social Survey makes its data freely available to all for non-commercial use.

Access to the ESS datasets, each covering over 20 countries and including more than 350,000 face-to-face interviews across Europe, is available via the ESS data website. Highly user-friendly, it offers data users the options of conducting simple analyses online, and of downloading all or parts of the dataset for more detailed or complex analysis.

The ESS survey fieldwork period will last at least one month within a four-month period, usually between September and December in the calendar year. It is the responsibility of the National Coordinating Team to undertake fieldwork, and deposit their data in the ESS data archive once the fieldwork has been completed.

There are no restrictions on access, nor any privileged arrangements for certain users. So scholars, journalists, researchers, the general public and those most intimately involved in running the project all have equal and simultaneous access to each round's findings. In addition, they have access to a comprehensive technical report and supporting data that describe and explain all aspects of the project. However commercial use of the data is not generally allowed. ◀

## A RICH TOOL FOR ACADEMIC STUDIES, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In this data driven age, equipping the next generation in data literacy is more critical than ever before. ESS data is therefore an important resource for educating the social scientists of the future. By using data from the ESS, junior social scientists can be equipped with the analytical and communication skills that are vital to careers in countless industries. Repeat cross-sectional surveys such as the ESS provide the policy makers of tomorrow with the data required to develop the skills needed to better understand their society for the benefit of everyone.

In countries without developed data infrastructures, the ESS provides a nationally meaningful yet comparative data source that attracts thousands of users from across Europe. Whilst some go on to be social scientists many others take those data skills into other fields and careers. The ESS provides a tool for teaching data skills to help equip the next generation for the data driven age.

### ESS EDUNET FOR E-LEARNING

A web-based training tutorial, ESS EduNet, has been made available to help guide users to exploit the data beyond simple descriptive statistics.

The e-learning tool has been specifically developed for use in higher education. It provides hands-on examples and exercises designed to guide users through the research process, from a theoretical problem to the interpretation of the statistical results.

EduNet was created to implement a social science laboratory where theoretical questions can be explored using high quality empirical data.

There are several topics available, covering measurement errors; multilevel models; immigration; weighting the ESS; wellbeing; family, gender and work; regression; human values; social and political trust and latent variable modelling. The accompanying data are extracts from the ESS available for online analysis or download. These extracts are especially prepared for the topics.

The tool includes animated videos that interactively answer frequently asked questions.

### TRAINING COURSES

The ESS training courses focus on key aspects of the survey lifecycle from a comparative, cross-national perspective. The specific aim is to equip researchers with the skills and knowledge they need to improve the rigour and equivalence of cross-national survey research in the European context.

Training sessions are offered in person or online, and relate to survey questionnaire design, translation, collecting responses, methodology and weighting. They are taught by experts in the field of social sciences, face to face or via the ESS website. Currently ESS ERIC is providing courses in collaboration with other social science infrastructures through the H2020 SERISS grant (see [www.seriss.eu](http://www.seriss.eu)).

### REGISTERED USER STATISTICS

The ESS ERIC is a major European facility offering access to an ever increasing body of data on Europeans' social attitudes and behaviours.

ESS ERIC documents the usage of ESS data from the launch of ESS Round 1 in 2002 to date. Two groups of users are measured:

- "Registered users" – registered at the ESS web site and thereby eligible for using ESS data
- "ESS data downloaders" – registered users who have downloaded ESS data at least once

There are 134,867 registered ESS data users and ESS data has been downloaded on 97,676 occasions (February 2019).

Registered users and ESS data downloaders have been broken down by country, user type (faculty members, students etc.) and data type (ESS round, cumulative data and multilevel data). Further information can be found on the ESS ERIC website.

Using or downloading the data led to the publication of 3,904 academic journal articles, books, chapters, conference papers or working papers in English from 2003 to 2017. This includes 1,848 journal articles, 718 conference papers, 623 books and chapters and a further 473 working papers. Of the 3,904 publications, 3,320 were substantive and 584 were methodological.

FIG. 1 Registered ESS Users since January 2005

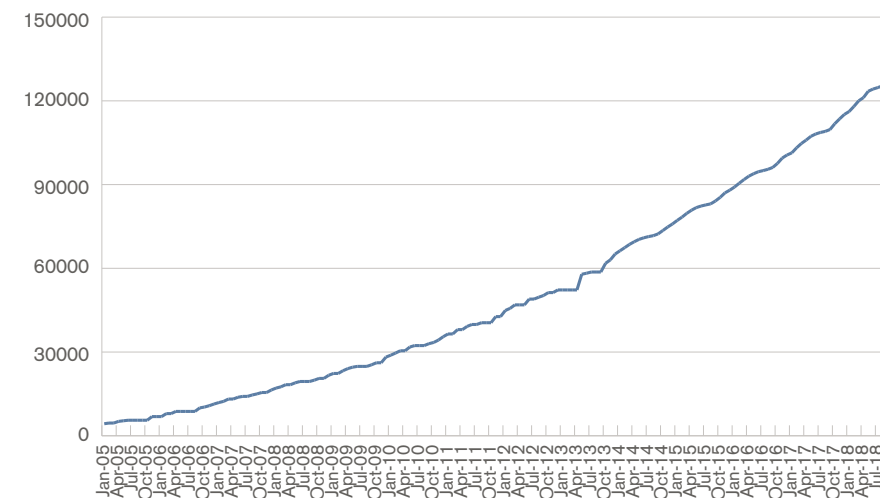
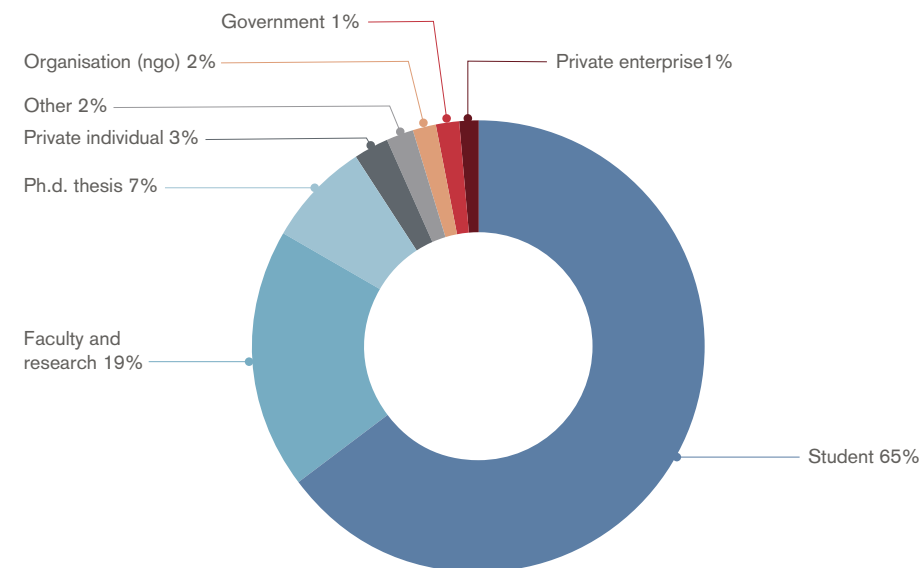


FIG. 2 Data downloaders type of user activity



### ESS BIBLIOGRAPHY

The ESS Bibliography is available online, and contains information about many of the publications based on the cross-national European Social Survey. This includes analysis of ESS data, ESS methodology research and descriptions, and documentation of the ESS.

For academic texts listed, the Bibliography provides full publication details including the title, year of publication, author(s) and publisher. The Bibliography allows users to find out if the author(s) used ESS data in other publications or search for the book online.

The overall number of ESS based academic publications continues to grow, due to ESS questionnaire content, high quality standards, dense time series, open access and excellent online tools.

The online Bibliography is updated periodically to ensure that most academic publications using ESS data are logged and searchable to all data users. ➡



## DATA AND DOCUMENTATION WITH UNRESTRICTED ACCESS

### DATASETS AVAILABLE WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COSTS

The ESS data is available free of charge for non-commercial use and can be downloaded from the ESS website after a short registration.

All information gathered since 2001 is included online. Each new survey in the series provides another layer of accurate data to inform academic debate and European governance.

It allows governments, policy analysts, scholars, students and members of the public to interpret how people in different countries and at different times see themselves and the world around them.

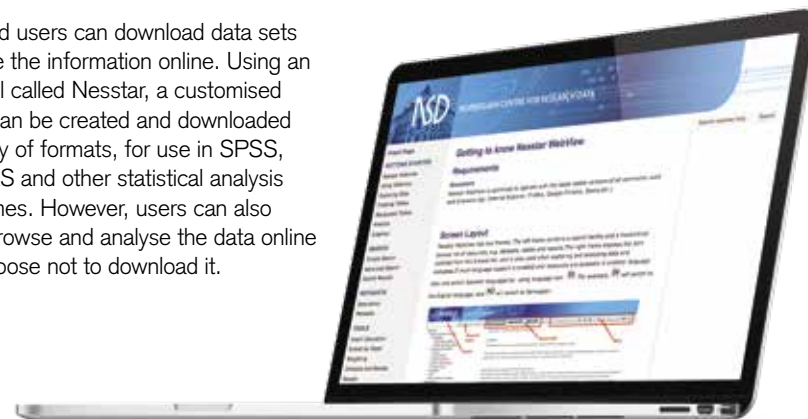
With a view to exchanging best practice worldwide, all ESS protocols, methods, procedures and data are made available to everyone on the website. It is completely transparent.

Registered users can download data sets or analyse the information online. Using an online tool called Nesstar, a customised data file can be created and downloaded in a variety of formats, for use in SPSS, Stata, SAS and other statistical analysis programmes. However, users can also search, browse and analyse the data online if they choose not to download it.

### CUMULATIVE AND HARMONIZED DATA

The ESS Cumulative Data Wizard gives access to cumulative data from countries that have been included in the integrated ESS files in two or more rounds.

This means users can generate and download a customised subset of the ESS cumulative file by selecting rounds, countries and variables. A Study Description and documentation of the selected variables is generated for each customised data file and is included in the download.



“Each new survey provides another layer of accurate data to inform academic debate and European governance.”

### MULTILEVEL AND CONTEXTUAL DATA

The purpose of ESS Multilevel Data is to make it easier for the research community to understand the context in which ESS respondents lived at the time of interview. It means additional data about the ESS, the countries and regions where respondents live, can be added to ESS survey data.

The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics or Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) is a geocode standard for referencing the subdivisions of countries for statistical purposes. It was developed and regulated by the European Union and applies to European Union, European Free Trade Association and candidate countries.

The Multilevel Download makes it possible to add information about countries and several regional levels to the respondents in the ESS data. The country specific region variable decides how it is possible to merge contextual data on regions to the individual level ESS data.

The contextual variables are collected to shed light upon themes such as:

- Demography and geography
- Economy
- Health
- Education
- Crime
- Political institutions
- Composite measures

Most variables are collected for several years. The ESS Multilevel Data was partly funded by the Descartes Research Prize awarded to the ESS in 2005. €





# FINDINGS FROM THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY

## ROTATING MODULES ADDRESSING KEY SOCIAL THEMES

### DEMOCRACY AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

European attitudes towards democracy formed part of the Round 6 survey (2012) and Citizen Involvement was investigated during Round 1 (2002). These were both covered as rotating modules.

**Dr. Mónica Ferrin, University of Zurich**

The rotating module on Democracy of the European Social Survey Round 6 provides a detailed account of how Europeans think democracy should be and of how Europeans think their democratic systems actually are – or how they perform. This is an issue of key importance in light of the alleged legitimacy crisis European democracies have undergone in the past decades. Round 6 reveals relevant findings in this regard.

First, there is strong commitment to democracy among the citizens, independently of the democratic quality of the country in which they live. Not only do Europeans think that democracy is a good thing per se, but they value all ideal characteristics of democracy, such as freedom of expression and accountability.

Second, there is a shared understanding among Europeans of what is essential in a democracy: equality before the law and

free and fair elections are the two essential features of democracy for most people in all European countries. On top of that, some Europeans add a long list of issues requiring attention with regard to democracy (from politicians paying more attention to citizens' needs, to increasing citizens' participation in decision-making, etc.). As it stands, the most demanding citizens live in countries where the quality of democracy is lower than the European average.

Third, there is a large gap between what Europeans expect from democracy in the ideal and what they get from their democratic systems in practice. Although citizens' evaluations vary across dimensions of democracy and across country, all democracies fall short of citizens' ideals. This is particularly the case in relation to the outcomes of democracy (social equality and protection from poverty), where the gap is most alarming. Round 6 provides a powerful tool for politicians to understand what citizens are dissatisfied with in their democratic countries and to know the sources of disenchantment.

Round 6 is also useful to identify potential flaws in citizens' involvement, since we find that bad evaluations of democratic performance relate to abstention. Indeed, among the non-voters, evaluations of the different aspects of democracy are significantly worse than among the voters. This finding has important implications for the study of citizens' involvement. It supplies an additional explanation of why people abstain from voting which might alert European governments: long term dissatisfaction with democracy might not only threaten democratic support in a country but – since it is sharper among non-voters – it might also put into danger the legitimacy of decisions taken by the political representatives.

### FAMILY, WORK AND WELLBEING

Survey questions relating to family, work and well-being were included in the rotating modules during Round 2 (2004) and Round 5 (2010) surveys.

**Professor Helen Russell, Economic and Social Research Institute**

**Professor Duncan Gallie, Nuffield College, University of Oxford**

The economic crisis unleashed by the bank failures of 2008 was the most severe since the 1930s. The first repeat module of the European Social Survey (ESS) carried out in 2010 (Round 5) built upon a set of questions initially asked by the ESS in 2004 (Round 2) about family, work and well-being. This provided a direct comparison between the period prior to the crisis and a period in which most countries had emerged from the recession.

The repeat module assessed the implications for people's everyday experience of the quality of their jobs, their family lives and personal well-being and for their sense of commitment to the institutions of their society. It allowed an assessment of whether the experience of the crisis was similar across Europe or differed as a result either of the severity of the crisis or the degree of protection offered by national institutional systems. Key findings were reported in the 19 countries for which there were comparable data available by the spring of 2012 for both 2004 and 2010.

The findings from the European Social Survey provide evidence that the economic crisis had significant effects for the quality of work. It led to a reduction in the level of training provided by employers, to changes

in patterns of work organization in several of the East European countries, to higher levels of work intensity and to greater job insecurity. At the same time it undermined social integration through the negative effects of job insecurity on young people's commitment to employment and by undermining people's trust in politics and their satisfaction with democracy.

However there was also a marked stability over time in many of the differences between countries and country groups. Most notably the Nordic countries continued to stand out as providing by far the highest quality of work and the greatest protection against the psychological distress caused by unemployment. It is clear that the institutional framework of countries – in particular their patterns of employment regulation and the nature of their welfare states – plays an important role in determining the quality of people's everyday lives.

The two ESS modules enable us to study the effects of the economic crisis up to 2010. But this is clearly far from the end of the story. From 2011, Europe entered into a new phase of the crisis – the Sovereign Debt crisis. This is likely to have led to an even greater disruption of people's work and family lives, particularly in Southern Europe. It could well have led to a much greater polarization between different European regions. It was also a phase of the crisis that was characterized in many countries by a particularly severe restructuring of the public sector, which is likely to have led to particularly harsh consequences for women.

It will be vital to ensure that the ESS continues to monitor the changing patterns of work life in Europe and their implications for both the family and the wider community.



## ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION

Survey questions on Immigration are included in every round. A more comprehensive set of Immigration questions were also included in rotating modules fielded in Round 1 (2002) and Round 7 (2014).

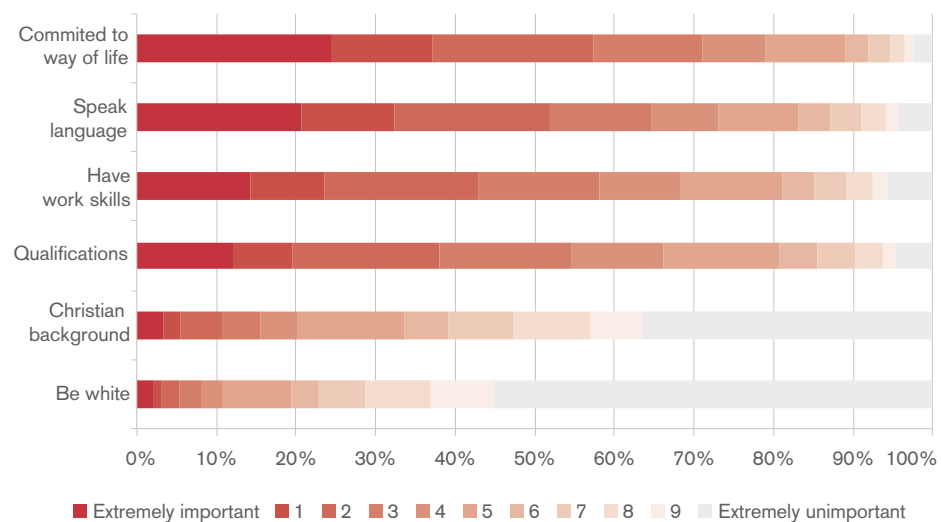
**Professor Anthony Heath, Centre for Social Investigation (CSI), University of Oxford**

**Lindsay Richards, Centre for Social Investigation (CSI), University of Oxford**

Immigration continues to be one of the most topical and pressing political issues in Europe, with voters in many countries rating it high on the political agenda, and new 'radical right' political parties (such as the Front National in France) focussed on opposition to migration emerging in many countries. With continuing high levels of labour migration to many rich western European countries, as well as continuing pressure to accept asylum seekers from war zones around the world, this topic is unlikely to lose its political significance in the foreseeable future.

Government responses to immigration and the refugee crisis are in part driven by public opinion and the fear that voters will be or already have been disenchanted by liberal immigration policies. However, the public's views tend to be much more nuanced than is often realized. In round 7 of the European Social Survey, for example, European publics were found to be more sympathetic to highly-skilled migrants than to low-skilled and poorly-educated migrants and saw commitment to the destination country's

**FIG. 3 'Way of life', language, and skills are considered more important than religious, economic, and racial background as immigration criteria**



Question: Please tell me how important you think each of these things should be in deciding whether someone born, brought up and living outside [country] should be able to come and live here.

Includes: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, and Slovenia.

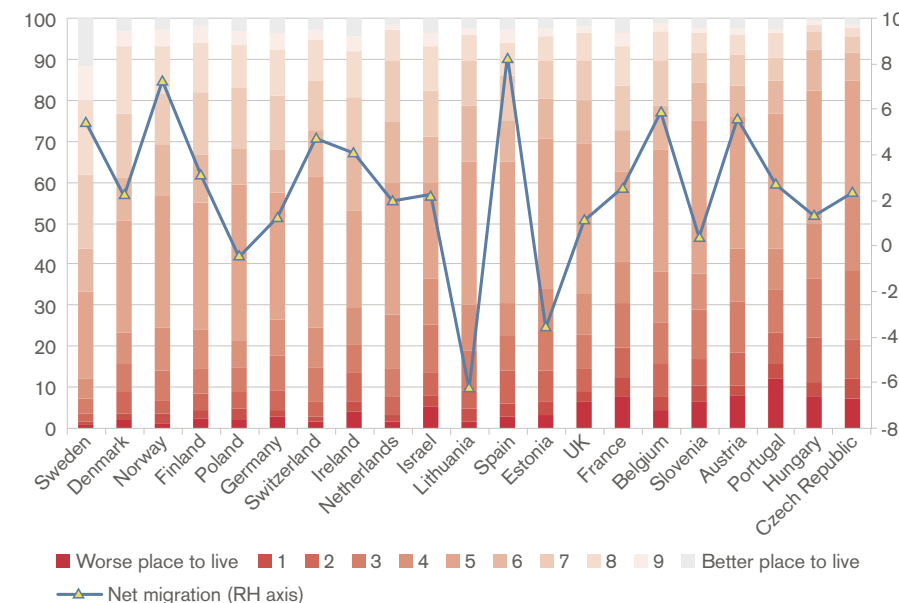
ESS round 7 (20014/15) only; population and design weights used; N = 42,000

way of life, the ability to speak the country's language and work skills as the key criteria for accepting migrants.

Data from Round 7 of the European Social Survey provides another challenge to prevailing assumptions about the drivers of anti-immigrant sentiment. As the following chart shows, negative attitudes towards immigration do not straightforwardly relate to the numbers of migrants arriving in a country. For example Iceland and Sweden have relatively high net migration rates yet are the two countries most favourable to immigration. The drivers of anti-immigration sentiment are more complex than is usually supposed.

Data from Round 7 of the ESS, conducted in 2014, is enabling us to conduct a thorough examination of the drivers of these cross-national differences and of change over time in anti-immigrant sentiment. It is, for example, enabling us to compare the importance of competition for jobs and housing with concerns about a country's ability to assimilate migrants from different religious and cultural traditions. It should shed new light on the warmth of the welcome for different kinds of migrants, such as those from Muslim countries, or those who are refugees.

**FIG. 4 Net migration rates do not correspond to attitudes to immigration (countries are ordered from positive attitudes (Sweden) to negative ones (Czech Republic))**



Question: Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries? 0-10 with higher scores for a better place.

Net migration rates are per thousand population in 2015. Source: CIA world fact book

ESS round 7 (2014/15) only

## SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN HEALTH

Data was collected on health inequalities across Europe in a Round 7 (2014) rotating module.

**Dr. Tim Huijts, Queen Mary, University of London**

In 2005 the World Health Organisation set up a 'Commission on the Social Determinants of Health' which systematically examined the contribution of social determinants to health inequalities within

and between countries. Since publication of its final report in 2008, various national governments have commissioned similar reports (such as the Marmot Review of Health Inequalities in England), as has the European Union. The social determinants of health and health inequalities have therefore become increasingly recognised as of significance to population health.

However, there is little by way of comprehensive pan-European data on the social determinants of health, or on a range of health outcomes. The core module of the ESS contains detailed data on a number of social determinant variables (e.g. unemployment, occupational classes, family structure, dimensions of social capital, income

etc.), but less on health (apart from self-rated health and limiting long term illness) and does not cover other key determinants (such as life styles) at all. In general, social surveys lack rich information on health and lifestyles, and health surveys lack detailed information on the social structure of societies.

By including a rotating module on the social determinants of health in the ESS we have addressed this problem. In addition to measures that were already present in the earlier waves of the ESS, this rotating module includes items on chronic conditions, BMI, healthcare use and access, risk behaviour, working conditions, housing, unpaid care and childhood conditions. We believe that the ESS may now become a key source of health and health determinant data for both policy makers and researchers within comparative health research.

It has been increasingly recognised by European governments that those interventions which positively change the social determinants can improve health and reduce health inequalities. However, all the official reports have highlighted the lack of evidence on ways to improve health inequalities. Of course, one way to do this is to commission more experimental evaluations of interventions. Another is to conduct more "natural experiments" of existing policies and interventions by comparing different countries.

The rotating module on the social determinants of health and health inequalities has helped to achieve this by creating and making publicly available a comprehensive and comparable pan-European dataset, which includes a wide range of health outcomes. The influence of different European policy arrangements (policy regimes) on health and health inequalities can then be compared. Additionally, as the module includes a range of validated mental and physical health outcomes then such comparisons will be more extensive and specific than previous ones using ESS data.

In addition, the module will help researchers to examine and compare the influence of the social determinants of health, with the intention of testing the relative empirical contribution of the different theories of health and health inequalities (cultural-behavioural, material and psychosocial), and how this might vary by country and policy context. It has not been possible to do this on a pan-European scale before. Establishing which of the models is most influential on various health outcomes across different European countries is important in terms of both theory-development and thinking about priorities for policy actions to improve population health and/or reduce health inequalities. Initial results are available in the *Topline Findings Series* issue 6.

## WELFARE ATTITUDES IN A CHANGING EUROPE

Welfare attitudes across Europe were included in the Round 4 (2008) survey and it will be repeated in Round 8 (2016). Some welfare questions are included in the core module.

**Professor Wim van Oorschot, Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven**

In all European countries the welfare state with its social benefits and services became substantially challenged in the past decades. For instance, intensified international economic competition threatens the redistributive capacity of national welfare states, while population aging, new family arrangements and increasing labour market flexibility confront the welfare state with new social risks that have to be taken care of. However, the welfare state is not only challenged by structural changes, increasingly it is also subjected to more ideologically grounded accusations



of undermining individual autonomy and responsibility, of damaging traditional social ties and of weakening private forms of solidarity and self-help.

As a result, substantial welfare reforms are visible in many European countries, although they often take different forms and directions depending on national legacies and circumstances. But in all cases traditional solidarities, such as between older and younger generations, between rich and poor, between active and inactive people are under pressure. For many, the solidarity between natives and newcomers has turned into a central welfare issue. Basically, the cohesion of European societies, to which the traditional welfare state has contributed so much, has become a major concern.

The welfare attitudes of European populations play an important role in opening or blocking the way for intended welfare reform measures, while they also strongly affect the social legitimacy of measures taken. This makes it important to know, not

only what people's attitudes are to present-day welfare debates and policies, but also how the public feels about the future of their welfare states. The European Social Survey modules on welfare attitudes are designed to generate this kind of knowledge.

What the first module of 2008 found thus far is, for instance, that in terms of welfare attitudes there seem to be two European worlds. In the North-West people generally endorse the principle of redistribution and welfare state responsibility for citizen's well-being and they evaluate positively the way in which these principles are implemented. In the South and East people endorse the principles, but are mostly disappointed about the benefits and services that are actually delivered to them.

As for the general legitimacy of the welfare state, it was found that quite a few Europeans are critical about the moral and economic consequences of welfare provision by the state (e.g. that welfare would make people less responsible for each other and

themselves, that welfare would be bad for people's work ethic and for economic competitiveness), but Europeans even more so see the social advantages of welfare provision (that welfare reduces inequality and stimulates social order, and that welfare provision leads to better quality of life for many).

Given the economic problems, an interesting example of a finding is also that the better the economy fares, the more welfare minded and solidarity oriented Europeans tend to be. Or, the other way round, and perhaps more telling, in times of economic hardship the wider public in Europe tends to be less in favour of shared solidarity.

## PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

This is a completely new rotating module included in the Round 8 (2016) survey with fieldwork taking place in late 2016 and early 2017.

**Professor Wouter Poortinga, Cardiff University**

Global climate change is one of the major environmental threats the world is currently facing. The ways in which individuals, governments and the international community respond to the threat is to a large extent contingent on the public views about the reality and consequences of climate change. The fundamental shifts in energy use and production that are needed to mitigate climate change can only be met by sustained public support for action. There are however large differences in public understanding of climate change and the willingness to take and support action. Public perceptions tend to vary across countries and cultural-political groups and also fluctuate over time.

Various studies have tried to understand the complexities of public opinion on climate change. Psychological research has shown that the willingness to take individual action is largely dependent on concerns about the environment and personal norms. Views on climate change appear to have become politicised. In particular in the US, national surveys show increasing polarization according to political ideology and party identification. While in the UK politically conservative and disengaged groups are more likely to express a climate sceptical view and less likely to support action on climate change, there is no evidence for further polarisation over time.

Variations across countries and time are perhaps more difficult to explain, primarily due to a lack of good quality cross-national and longitudinal data. Several explanations have been put forward to explain increasing climate scepticism, including a loss of trust in climate science, the economic downturn pushing aside concerns about the environment and the media giving too much attention to climate sceptics. Research indicates that extreme weather events, such as flooding, can influence public views on climate change, and a number of studies have shown that temperature anomalies are associated with public beliefs in the reality of climate change.

The importance of socio-economic factors is shown by research that climate change directly competes for public attention with other day-to-day concerns, such as the state of the economy. Evidence for media effects in climate perceptions is however less clear, although climate scepticism in terms of media coverage and public opinion appear to be largely an Anglophone phenomenon.

The climate and energy module that is part of Round 8 of the European Social Survey is specifically designed to create a comprehensive, theoretically-grounded dataset that will help to make robust comparisons of Europeans' perceptions of climate change, energy security and energy preferences. This comprehensive dataset will help to provide a better understanding of how such perceptions are shaped by individual and socio-political contextual factors. ◀



## POLICY MAKING FROM A CROSS-NATIONAL EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

“The European Social Survey is a great project of incredible value. The huge amount of scientific data collected on public attitudes and behaviour, enabling comparisons across European nations and also over time, makes it a very useful tool for effective policy-making, including in reducing social inequalities in health.”

**Vytenis Andriukaitis**  
European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, 23 February 2017

An understanding of public attitudes is critical to formulating public policy, especially in an era of falling political participation and electoral turnout. The results from ESS surveys can have a useful impact on pan-European governance and contribute to policy changes in participating countries.

The ESS illuminates social and political attitudes of the resident population and relates these to data about people's behaviour or social circumstances. It employs high scientific standards, many of which had previously been regarded as unattainable in a survey of this nature. It means that ESS data can be used to gather an understanding of the effect of legislative changes on the resident population.

This section includes a number of examples where the ESS has directly affected policy.

Round 4 data assisted the Bulgarian Parliament in the development of two pieces of national immigration legislation: the Investment Promotion Act and the Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria. The Investment Promotion Act ensured the equal treatment of Bulgarian and foreign investors whilst the Law on Foreigners allowed for improved legal rights for visiting foreign nationals.

Data taken from the ESS Round 5 rotating module, Trust in Justice, was used in the European Commission's Euro-Justis project. The Euro-Justis project provided European

Union institutions and member states with new indicators for assessing public confidence in the justice system.

The ESS module was referenced by the UK's National Audit Office (NAO) to a House of Commons parliamentary committee as an example of how the Ministry of Justice government department could compare justice in the UK with justice in other European countries. Data from the Trust in Justice module additionally appeared in a 2012 Ministry of Justice report, leading to changes in the way Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary monitors the work of senior police officers.

The ESS organised a seminar on justice, which was hosted by the Centre for European Policy Studies, a leading European think tank, and attended by senior officials from the European Commission. A seminar was also given to the UK Cabinet Office on justice in 2012.

The Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs and Education has benefited from using ESS methodology. Seminars about the ESS were held in 2009 and the ESS was used by Ministry-funded initiatives, such as the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) study in 2011. Prior to this, immigration data collected during Round 3 was used in a report by the Estonian Office of the Minister of Population Affairs in 2008.

The UK Office of National Statistics (ONS) Measuring National Wellbeing Programme commenced in 2010. It set out to provide a fuller picture of society by supplementing existing economic, social and environmental measures with the opinions of the population.

In support of the programme, the ONS analysed ESS core questionnaire items measuring life satisfaction and happiness, and the ESS Round 3 module on wellbeing.

ONS measures of subjective wellbeing were also developed following discussions with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) about its Round 3 ESS findings. In addition, the Strategy and Analysis Team at the UK Cabinet Office deployed evidence from the ESS to ensure the concept of wellbeing was understood across all government departments.

The ESS Round 4 rotating module on Experiences and Expressions of Ageism was developed by the University of Kent and the ESS. The module was complemented by an in-depth programme of work between the University of Kent, charity Age UK and the UK Government Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The UK DWP commissioned the team to produce reports using ESS data, working in collaboration with a senior researcher at DWP. The ESS held a seminar at the DWP in 2013 on this topic to introduce the DWP and other Government analysts to the ESS dataset and present the ESS findings. The Coordinators of the EU and UK Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity also discussed ESS data at this event, underlining the importance of preparing for an ageing society.

Other policy examples include:

- Survey data from Round 3 and 6 about young people appeared in a 2016 report published by the French Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Ministère des Affaires Sociales et de la Santé).
- ESS data has been used in reports by German Federal Offices and Ministries as well as in local administrations in Germany, often as a reference distribution for local surveys, for example on migration.



- The Polish ESS national coordinating team provided ESS-based training at the National Bank of Poland in 2011.
- The ESS periodically organises substantive policy seminars about its data. These have been held on democracy at the European and Italian Parliaments (2015), wellbeing, welfare attitudes, and family, work and wellbeing (2013, 2014) and immigration (2017) at the OECD. Events on trust in the police and courts were held at the European Policy Centre (2012). In 2017 an event was held with Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis (Health and Food safety) at the European Commission.
- The ESS showcased data and the online analysis portal to staff at the UK House of Commons Library research department in 2016. ☞

“(The ESS enables) governments, policy analysts and scholars to keep up with societal trends that affect how democracy is working and how European citizens perceive their lives, their nation and the world.”

**David Willetts**  
UK Universities Minister, June 2011

## PROSPECTUS: IMPACT STUDY

An independent report published in September 2017 by Technopolis Group (UK) found that the European Social Survey has high levels of academic, teaching and non-academic impact across Europe.

The Impact Study highlighted what has been achieved through the use of ESS methods and data by researchers, teachers and policymakers. Technopolis examined academic resources, sought examples of non-academic use, interviewed stakeholders and carried out an online survey of data users.

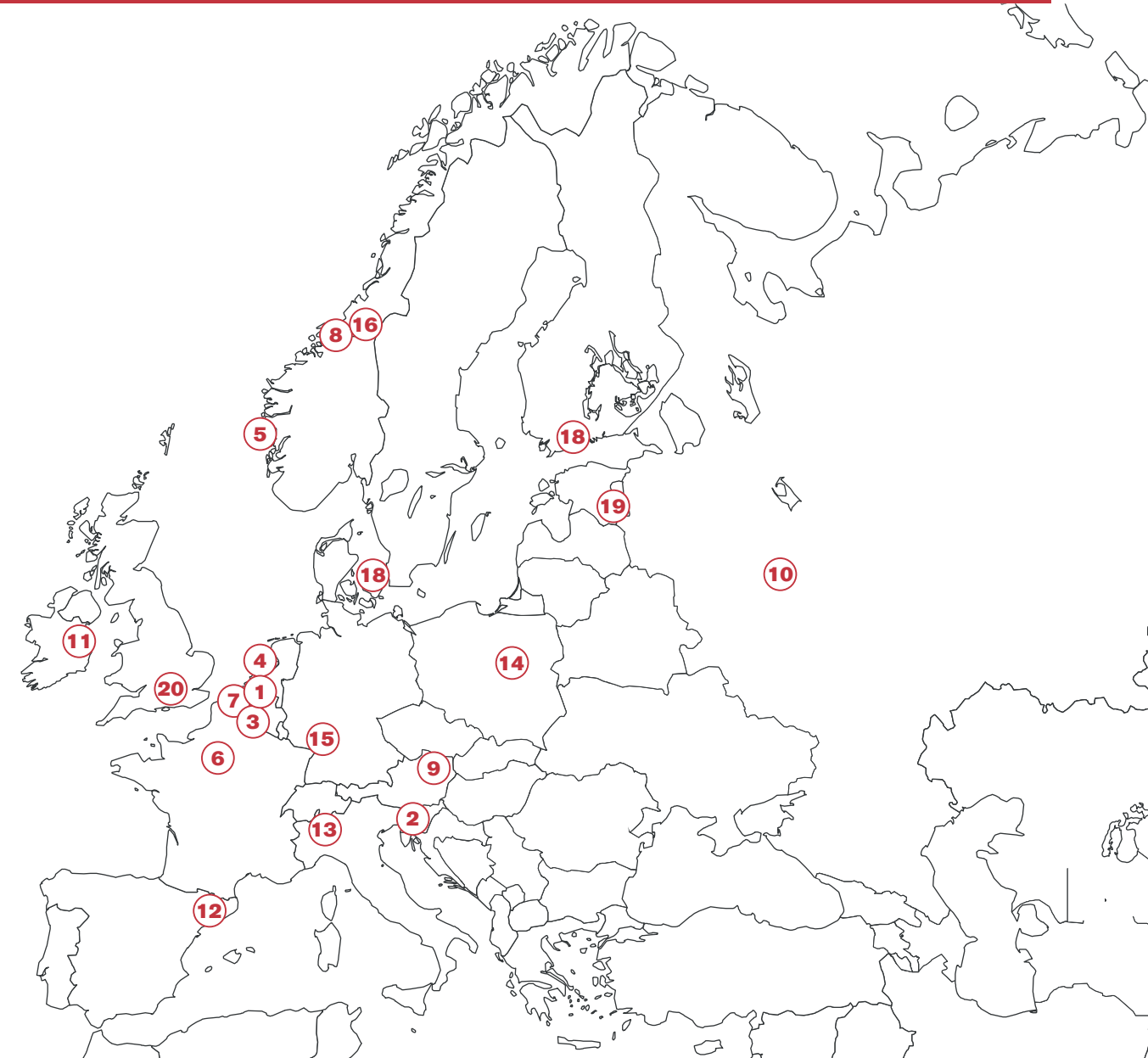
The report's authors found that the ESS continues to be highly regarded amongst international values and attitudes surveys, offering extremely high quality data that is a critical academic resource for researchers across the social sciences.

The study established that there are over 2,700 ESS-based academic publications, of which over 900 are journal articles listed in the Web of Science. The bibliometric analysis - undertaken by the Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) on behalf of Technopolis - revealed that 22% of these journal articles are amongst the top-10% most cited articles within their field, 12% above the expected average.

Furthermore, the ESS has seen considerable academic impact in terms of influencing the design of other surveys. Eurofound's European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) is one example of a major survey that has benefitted from using the methods employed by the ESS, and these methods have influenced other international surveys: European Values Survey (EVS), the Survey for Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

The report found that ESS data is notable as a teaching resource, particularly within materials developed for students learning about survey methodology and quantitative data analysis. 18 universities across Europe have over 500 registered users, indicating widespread teaching use in these organisations. Teaching use is likely to be even more extensive than these figures suggest, as lecturers who spoke to Technopolis explained that they often download the data and distribute it amongst their students for analysis.

“The ESS has seen considerable academic impact in terms of influencing the design of other surveys.”

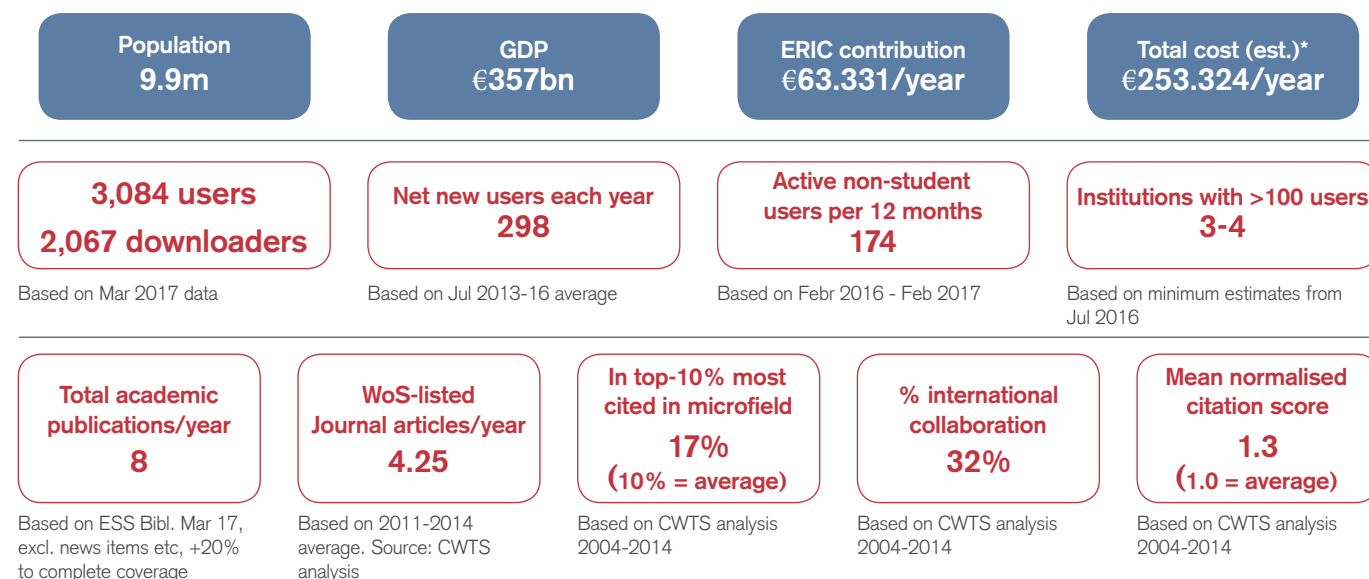


Rank	Institution	Country	Count	Rank	Institution	Country	Count
1	Universiteit Antwerpen	BE	2744	11	UCD	IE	535
2	University of Ljubljana	SI	1853	12	Uniersitat Pompeu Fabra	ES	531
3	KU Leuven	BE	1242	13	Bocconi University	PL	530
4	University of Amsterdam	NL	1213	14	Warsaw School of Economics	PL	525
5	University of Bergen	NO	942	15	University of Mannheim	DE	522
6	Sciences Po	FR	876	16	HINT	NO	516
7	ULG	BE	654	17	University of Copenhagen	DK	508
8	NTNU	NO	654	18	University of Helsinki	FI	501
9	University of Vienna	AT	644	19	University of Tartu	EE	475
10	NRU HSE	RU	582	20	LSE	GB	465



## Prospectus: Impact study (continued)

FIG. 5 The hypothetical median ESS member/observer country



**NB:** Upward tendency on most indicators – these figures present and absolute minimum estimate!

Included in an appendix of case studies, it was established that the ESS is widely used as a teaching resource at a number of institutions across Europe, including the University of Vienna (Austria), University of Geneva (Switzerland), Charles University Prague (Czech Republic), Masaryk University (Czech Republic), University of Tartu (Estonia), Sciences Po (France), Radboud University Nijmegen (The Netherlands), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Umeå University (Sweden).

When it comes to non-academic impact, the report identified numerous examples where ESS data has had an influence on public policy, changes in the law and use by public, private and charitable organisations.

- ESS data was used by the Austrian Ministry for Labour Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK). Data on welfare is regularly used for research and by policymakers to support decision

making. BMASK also funds a study where ESS is used to see possible effects of the economic crisis on welfare attitudes.

- The Ministry of Social Affairs in Estonia has used ESS data since 2008. It contributed in the process of preparing the Ministry's Strategy of Children and Families 2012-2020 with data collected contributing to internal policy discussions.
- France Stratégie - a public think-tank attached to the Prime Minister - has used ESS data in several reports. France Stratégie's report findings have been disseminated through the general media and through public debate, in particular on social inequalities.
- The report highlighted the use of ESS data for a regional extension of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) in Germany - a tool initially created by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Commission.

- ESS data was used by the Háttér Society (Hungarian organisation for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Queers and Intersex people) and Institute for Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Social Sciences. Their analysis resulted in the inclusion of LGBTIQI people as a disadvantaged group in the Budapest Equal Opportunity programme 2017-19.
- European Union agency Eurofound, based in Ireland, has recently produced two reports using ESS data: one in 2016 on the labor market and one in 2017 on social mobility. The latter has been downloaded thousands of times from the Eurofound website.
- The 'Lithuanian Action Plan for Citizenship Education 2016-2020' was a multi-institutional endeavour to stimulate young people to become more active in civil society using ESS indicators that allowed for an international benchmark of Lithuania with other European countries.



- The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) is a government agency that published a report based on ESS data: Trust, life satisfaction and opinions on immigration in 15 European countries. It found that attitudes towards a generous asylum policy had become more positive and received widespread media coverage.
- NordMod 2030 - a pan-Nordic research project - used ESS data on central topics such as trust and satisfaction with public services in the Nordic countries. The project was commissioned by the Co-operation Committee of the Nordic Social Democratic parties and trade union LOs (SAMAK) and the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS).
- The Polish national ESS team provided training sessions to staff at Poland's Central Statistical Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny) that led to a European programme (ESS Vision 2020) to standardise official statistics agencies.

- The Centre for Judicial Studies (Centro de Estudos Judiciários, CEJ) in Portugal now includes ESS data on the evaluation of justice and trust in judicial institutions in the curriculum for the training of future judges and public prosecutors.
- ESS data regarding the social wellbeing of citizens, using indicators on life satisfaction and happiness, has been used in reports produced by The Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development in Slovenia. The Institute's director reports directly to the President and their reports offer Slovenian policymakers a unique insight into the comparative position of their country on various indicators, notably around wellbeing.
- The ESS has been used for research on migration and attitudes towards immigrants by researchers at Umeå University in Sweden. The research by Umeå University has been used by the Swedish delegation for migration studies (Delmi), which published the results as a report.

- The ESS module concerning trust in the police and criminal courts fed into a strategic reorganisation of the Swedish police service and national efforts to strengthen local policing. The same module was used to support several projects in Albania, informing the design of community policing approaches, through revealing citizens' needs.
- The concept of 'wellbeing' has become increasingly important for government organisations in the UK. Data from the ESS contributed to the development of wellbeing measures and informed the debate on policy aims beyond economic growth. In addition to academic research groups, the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and, more recently, the What Works Wellbeing Centre have been instrumental in developing and transmitting insights from analysis of ESS data to national policy audiences. ◀

## ESS PUBLICATIONS

### ESS TOPLINE FINDINGS

In 2011, the ESS launched a new series of Topline Findings documents, which are concise cross-national summaries of particular topics covered in the questionnaire.



Topline Findings	ESS Data used
1. Trust in Justice	Round 5
2. Welfare Attitudes in Europe	Round 4
3. Economic Crisis, Quality of Work and Social Integration	Rounds 2 and 5
4. Europeans' Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy	Round 6
5. Europeans' Personal and Social Wellbeing	Round 6
6. Social Inequalities in Health and their Determinants	Round 7
7. Attitudes towards Immigration and their Antecedents	Round 7

### FINDINGS BOOKLETS

Two Findings Booklets have been produced and offer a more general overview of the wide scope of topics covered by the ESS.

The first of these - using results from the first three rounds of the survey (2002-06) - showcased highlights from a range of academics on welfare provision, ageing and financial security, online access, trust in institutions, education and politics, families and work, religion, migration, citizenship, sex and sexuality and training.

The more recent publication covered five survey rounds (up to 2010) and included academic articles about European Social Survey integration, work either side of the economic crisis, social determinants of health, gender equality, health and wellbeing, the welfare state, satisfaction with democracy, ageism, political participation, marriage and partnerships, crime and immigration.



Findings Booklets	ESS Data used
Key findings from the first three rounds of the ESS	Rounds 1-3
Key findings from the first five rounds of the ESS	Rounds 1-5

All of the documents produced are available in hard-copy format or as a downloadable PDF from the ESS ERIC website.



### ESS ON WELLBEING

A key future challenge for policymakers across Europe is ensuring the health and wellbeing of their populations. With this in mind, ESS created a new interactive website in 2015 to present the latest findings on wellbeing: [www.esswellbeingmatters.org](http://www.esswellbeingmatters.org)

This initiative – Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing: Findings from the European Social Survey – showcases the scope that ESS data provide for exploring the definition, distribution and drivers of subjective wellbeing across Europe. Academics, policymakers and students are encouraged to explore the new website and use the resource for their own research and informing policy.

The website is accompanied by a Wellbeing Booklet published in June 2015: Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing: Findings from the European Social Survey. ◀

## REFERENCES

<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>  
<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/>  
<http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/>  
<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/bibliography/>  
<http://essedunet.nsd.uib.no/>

## CONTACT US

Membership enquiries should be directed to the Director of ESS ERIC using the contact details below.

If you have a general enquiry about the European Social Survey or would like to find out more, please contact the ESS team based at City, University of London:

ESS ERIC Headquarters  
 City, University of London  
 Northampton Square  
 London, EC1V 0HB  
 United Kingdom  
 +44 (0)20 7040 4901

✉ [ess@city.ac.uk](mailto:ess@city.ac.uk)

🌐 <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>





# FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ESS

The European Social Survey is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) that provides cross-national data about public attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

If you have a general enquiry about the European Social Survey or would like to find out more, please contact the ESS team based at City, University of London:

ESS ERIC Headquarters  
City, University of London  
Northampton Square  
London, EC1V 0HB  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0)20 7040 4901

✉ [ess@city.ac.uk](mailto:ess@city.ac.uk)

🌐 [europeansocialsurvey.org](http://europeansocialsurvey.org)

🌐 [esswellbeingmatters.org](http://esswellbeingmatters.org)

🐦 [ESS\\_Survey](https://twitter.com/ESS_Survey)

📘 [EuropeanSocialSurvey](https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanSocialSurvey)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 676166.

Designed and produced by **Blackwood Creative Ltd**  
[weareblackwood.com](http://weareblackwood.com)

