Quality matrix for the European Social Survey, Round 8

Overall fieldwork and data quality report

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Introduction

From its foundation in 2001, the European Social Survey has prioritized methodological rigour and comparability across countries and over time. Quality assurance and control procedures have been adopted to verify and monitor quality at different stages of the survey lifecycle. At the end of each survey round, the quality of the collected data and the overall data collection process is assessed in view of both the ESS quality commitment to data users and continuous quality improvement.

The purpose of this report is to inform interested substantive data users, survey methodological researchers, survey sponsors and practitioners, on the quality of the European Social Survey Round 8 data and data collection process. The report integrates and elaborates on the 23 country-specific quality reports that were produced in 2018. The focus is on the strengths and relative weaknesses in the different stages of the (national) survey lifecycle for the participating countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), rather than the cross-national survey lifecycle of the European Social Survey as a whole (which would include rotating topic selection, questionnaire design, the preparation of specifications, guidelines and templates for participating countries etc.). For some elements in the survey lifecycle, the ESS Specification (European Social Survey, 2015) provide clear benchmarks in the form of standards to adopt and targets to achieve. For other elements, the distribution of practices or quality indicators across countries may be informative.

The European Social Survey aims for cross-national comparability through standardisation of survey design and implementation (input harmonisation). Most of the specifications are formulated with respect to survey design choices, procedures and documentation. Compliance is no guarantee for high data quality and falling short does not necessarily mean that data quality is poor, but deviations do increase the risk of serious threats to data quality. Contextual factors also have to be acknowledged. The survey climate and survey population characteristics (e.g. at-home patterns, language barriers), survey capability and infrastructure, available funding and regulations, may facilitate or impede compliance, even if they do not justify deviations.

The assessment mainly draws on ESS data and documentation that is publicly available, i.e. the main questionnaire, interviewer questionnaire and contact form data, the data documentation report (based on the submitted National Technical Summaries) and documents such as advance letters to respondents. Stages in the survey lifecycle which are sparsely documented additionally draw on information from the ESS Sampling Expert Panel, Translation Team, SQP Team, Fieldwork Team and country contacts.

1 Timing of activities

Figure 1.1 shows a timeline with the key milestones in the Round 8 data collection for each participating country. In view of comparable data collection periods (taking at least one month between September and December) and a timely data release, the ESS Specification suggests that sampling preparations are preferably completed by the end of June, and translation and pretesting by the end of August.

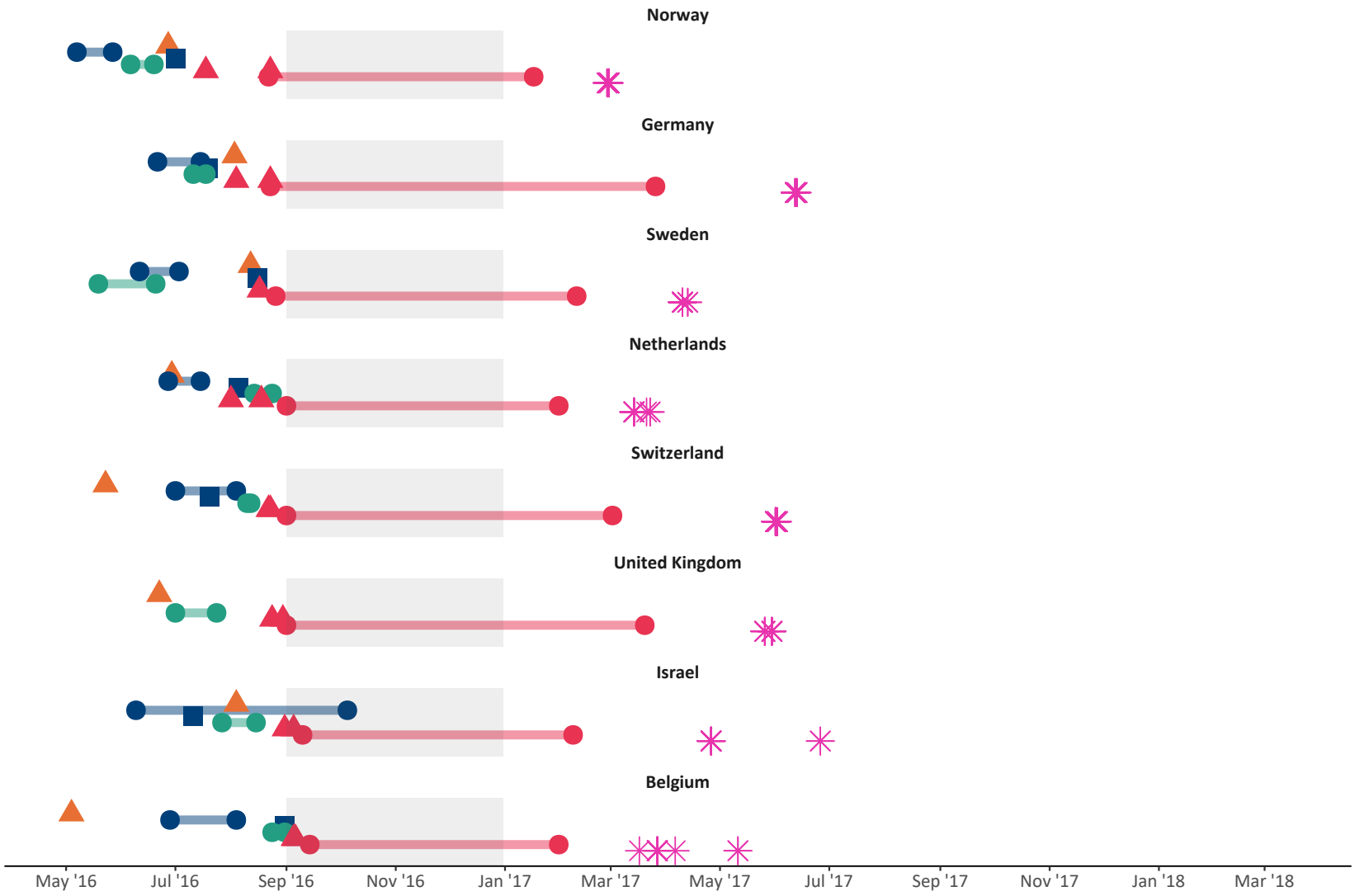
Relative to the timetable proposed in the ESS specifications, the preparatory activities related to sampling, translation and pretesting were completed on schedule in 5 countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). The sampling design was signed off only after the end of June 2016 in 16 countries, cApStAn verification was completed only after the end of August 2016 in 10 countries, SQP coding was started after the end of August 2016 in 9 countries, and pretesting was completed after the end of August 2016 in 14 countries. In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation and Spain, all of the preparatory activities were completed late relative to the project timetable.

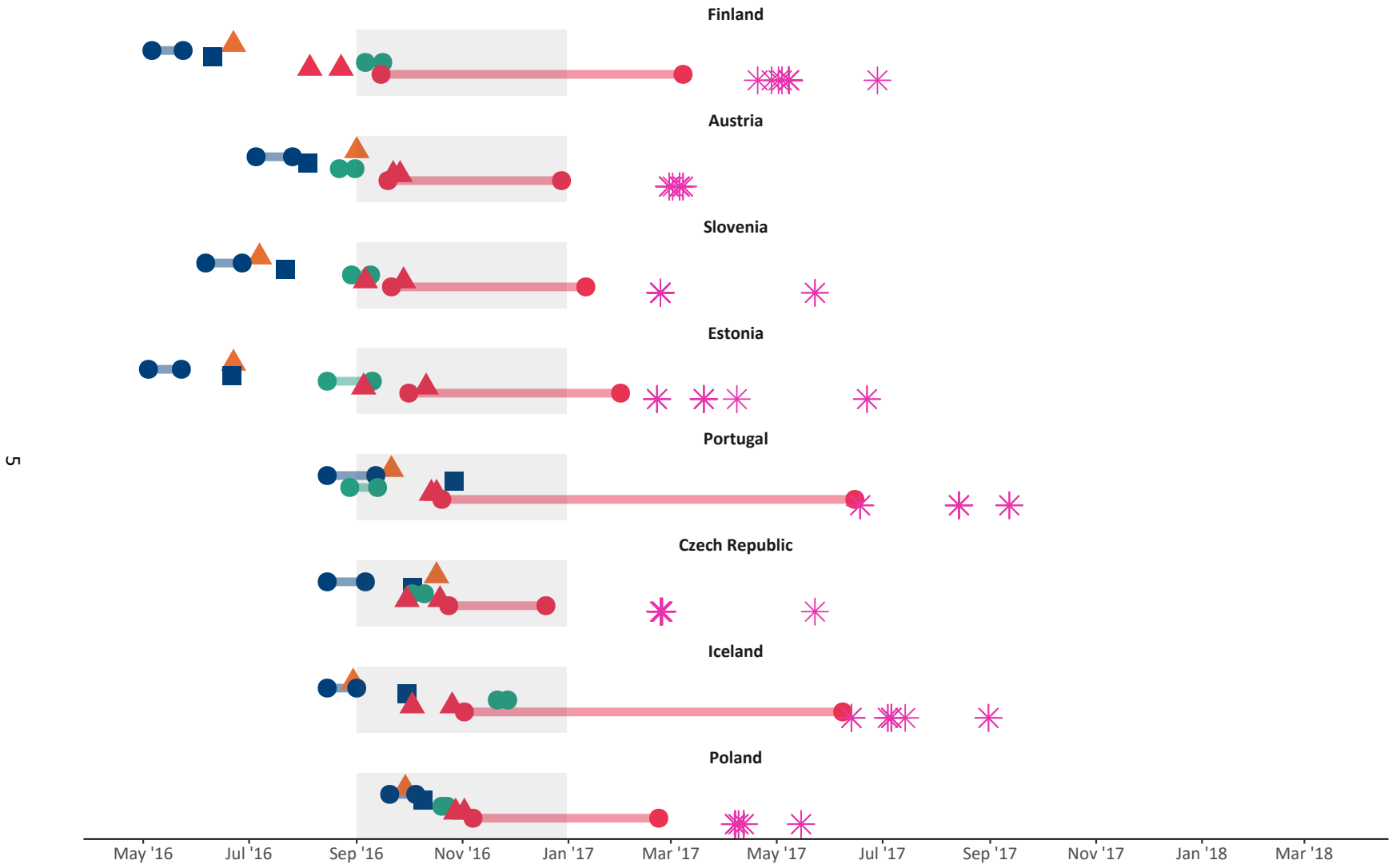
Fieldwork in Austria and the Czech Republic was completed by the end of December 2016. In 16 countries, fieldwork was extended beyond this date, and in Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Spain, fieldwork only started in 2017.

For 18 countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) complete deposits were made by the end of August 2017 (only for Norway, a complete deposit of all data and documentation was made by the end of February 2017). These countries were included in the first data release (October 2017). For Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain, complete deposits were made between the second week of September 2017 and the end of August 2018. These countries were added in the second data release (May 2018).

Figure 1.1 Timeline, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 Data documentation report, information from the Sampling Expert Panel, Translation Team, SQP Team, Fieldwork Team and Archive. Countries are ordered by fieldwork start. The deposit for Lithuania was considered complete only with the deposit of the raw data file, at the end of August ’18.

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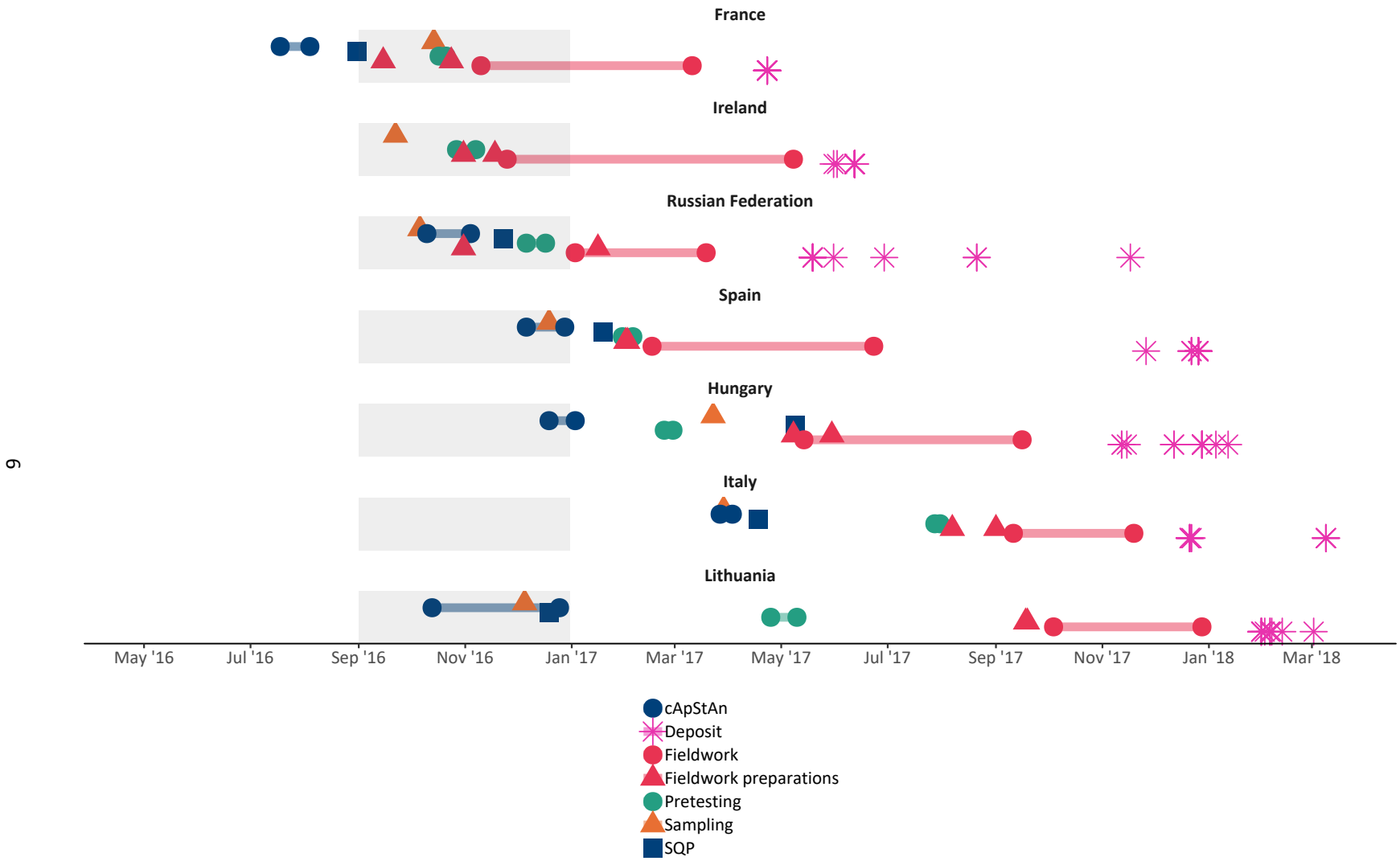
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Mar '18
cApStAn
Deposit
Fieldwork
Fieldwork preparations
Pretesting
Sampling
SQP

Taking the date of the first recorded preparatory activity as the start of the national survey lifecycle and the date at which the deposit of data and documentation was considered complete as the end, we observe that the cycle took between 34 weeks (Poland) and 97 weeks (Lithuania). In the median country, the cycle took 50 weeks (Table 1.1). This suggests that a national coordinator has to be available for at least one year in order to prepare, implement and monitor the different steps in the national lifecycle.

Table 1.1 National lifecycle duration, Round 8

Country	Start	End	Duration (weeks)
Austria	5 July 2016	8 March 2017	35.1
Belgium	4 May 2016	11 May 2017	53.1
Czech Republic	15 August 2016	23 May 2017	40.1
Estonia	4 May 2016	22 June 2017	59.1
Finland	6 May 2016	8 May 2017	52.4
France	18 July 2016	23 April 2017	39.9
Germany	21 June 2016	13 June 2017	51.0
Hungary	19 December 2016	12 January 2018	55.6
Iceland	15 August 2016	31 August 2017	54.4
Ireland	22 September 2016	12 June 2017	37.6
Israel	9 June 2016	26 June 2017	54.6
Italy	27 March 2017	22 December 2017	38.6
Lithuania	13 October 2016	22 August 2018	96.9
Netherlands	27 June 2016	23 March 2017	38.4
Norway	7 May 2016	28 February 2017	42.4
Poland	20 September 2016	15 May 2017	33.9
Portugal	15 August 2016	12 September 2017	56.1
Russian Federation	6 October 2016	21 August 2017	45.6
Slovenia	6 June 2016	23 May 2017	50.1
Spain	6 December 2016	26 December 2017	55.0
Sweden	19 May 2016	13 April 2017	47.0
Switzerland	23 May 2016	2 June 2017	53.6
United Kingdom	22 June 2016	30 May 2017	48.9

Note:
Based on ESS8 Data documentation report, information from the Sampling Expert Panel, Translation Team, SQP Team, Fieldwork Team and Archive.

2 SAMPLING

National teams are expected to develop and implement the best sampling strategy possible, in close collaboration with the Sampling Expert Panel (replaced by the Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel in Round 9) and in accordance with the following three guiding principles (The ESS Sampling Expert Panel, 2016).

1. A sampling frame (preferably a list of named individuals) that provides the best possible coverage of the ESS target population
2. Use of random probability methods at all sampling stages
3. A gross sample size that can reasonably be expected to yield, given the design and results in the previous rounds, the targeted level of statistical precision

2.1 SAMPLING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL

In order to assure the sampling quality, participating countries' sampling designs have to be documented, and assessed and signed off by the Sampling Expert Panel before the start of fieldwork. A sample design data file, containing all relevant information such as inclusion probabilities at each stage, clustering and stratification, also has to be deposited along with the main survey data for all countries in order to check the implementation of the design and produce design weights.

The sample design summaries were properly signed off by the Sampling Expert Panel before the start of fieldwork in all participating countries (Figure 1.1, p. 6; Table 2.1). Among the 18 countries where fieldwork started in fairly good time, the sample design summary was signed off between 1 week (the Czech Republic) and 19 weeks (Belgium) before the start of the fieldwork.

National teams of all countries also managed to deposit sample design data files (see section 8, p. 132).

Table 2.1 Sampling quality assurance and control, Round 8

Country	Sampling design signed off	Sample design data file deposited
Austria	1 September 2016	6 March 2017
Belgium	4 May 2016	27 March 2017
Czech Republic	17 October 2016	23 February 2017
Estonia	22 June 2016	20 March 2017
Finland	22 June 2016	2 May 2017
France	14 October 2016	23 April 2017
Germany	3 August 2016	12 June 2017
Hungary	23 March 2017	12 December 2017
Iceland	30 August 2016	13 June 2017
Ireland	22 September 2016	12 June 2017
Israel	4 August 2016	26 June 2017
Italy	29 March 2017	21 December 2017
Lithuania	5 December 2016	5 February 2018
Netherlands	29 June 2016	14 March 2017
Norway	27 June 2016	28 February 2017
Poland	29 September 2016	12 April 2017
Portugal	21 September 2016	12 September 2017
Russian Federation	6 October 2016	31 May 2017
Slovenia	7 July 2016	23 May 2017
Spain	19 December 2016	22 December 2017
Sweden	12 August 2016	13 April 2017
Switzerland	23 May 2016	2 June 2017
United Kingdom	22 June 2016	30 May 2017

Note:
Based on information from the Sampling Expert Panel and Archive.

2.2 Sampling frame

In 13 countries (Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland), a sample of individual persons was drawn from the population register. In 9 countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom), a sample of (household) addresses was drawn from an existing list, such as a postal register or an administrative address register. Only in the Russian Federation, an area sample design with field enumeration was implemented (the sample was drawn from a complete list of dwelling units enumerated in selected areas prior to fieldwork). Random route procedures were used in none of the countries (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Sampling frames, Round 8

Country	Source	Unit
Existing list of individual persons		
Belgium	Population register	Individual person
Estonia	Population register	Individual person
Finland	Population register	Individual person
Germany	Population register	Individual person
Hungary	Population register	Individual person
Iceland	Population register	Individual person
Italy	Population register	Individual person
Norway	Population register	Individual person
Poland	Population register	Individual person
Slovenia	Population register	Individual person
Spain	Population register	Individual person
Sweden	Population register	Individual person
Switzerland	Population register	Individual person
Existing (household) address list		
Austria	Postal register	Address
Czech Republic	Administrative address register	Address
France	Master sample	Address
Ireland	Postal register	Address
Israel	Population register	Address
Lithuania	Administrative address register	Address
Netherlands	Postal register	Address
Portugal	Utility customer list	Address
United Kingdom	Postal register	Address
Field enumeration		
Russian Federation	Field enumeration	Address

Note:
Based on ESS8 Sample design summaries.

2.2.1 Coverage of the target population

The ESS target population consists 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. The sampling frames that are used should allow covering the target population as completely as possible. Table 2.3, Table 2.4, Table 2.5 and Table 2.6 present some indicators on geographical exclusions, age limits, exclusions of foreign citizens and opt-out lists as possible sources of undercoverage in participating countries.

In principle, the ESS covers the whole territory of participating countries. Overseas territories, located outside the European continent, can be assumed to be implicitly omitted from the ESS target population, and are accordingly excluded from countries' sampling frames. Certain (small) geographic regions are additionally excluded from the frame in some countries, mostly for practical reasons (Table 2.3). Only in Belgium, a small region was excluded on the basis of language. In 4 countries (France, Iceland, Spain and the United Kingdom), some (European) islands and/or and remote, sparsely populated areas were excluded. The populations concerned are fairly small.

No upper age limit was imposed in any of the participating countries. The absence of upper age limits is evident from the age distributions in the net sample. All participating countries' net samples included a non-trivial number of elderly target respondents (Table 2.4). Only in Poland, fewer than 1% of respondents were 85 years or over and none exceeded the age of 90 years. A lower age limit of 15 years should be adopted. However, in 4 countries (Austria, Ireland, the Russian Federation and Spain), no respondents aged 15 years were actually interviewed. The lack of any 15 year olds is not impossible (due to nonresponse), but somewhat unlikely.

For the 13 countries where a sample of individual persons was drawn from the population register (and in a sense in Israel, where a sample of (household) addresses was drawn from the population register), adequate coverage obviously hinges on the extent to which all target population members are properly registered.

Foreign residents may be especially at risk of undercoverage. Recent immigrants are often not yet registered, and illegal immigrants not at all. In addition, some countries maintain separate registers for foreign residents and/or asylum seekers. For 7 countries (Finland, Germany, Israel, Norway, Poland, Spain and Switzerland), the inclusion of (registered) foreign residents was explicitly reported (Table 2.5). However, in 2 countries (Israel and Poland), no respondents with a different citizenship was actually interviewed. The lack of any foreign residents in the net sample is not impossible (due to nonresponse), but somewhat unlikely. For the remaining 7 countries where a sample was drawn from the population register, the inclusion of foreign residents was not explicitly mentioned, but at least some foreign respondents were actually interviewed, suggesting that this group was not altogether a priori excluded.

Even if properly registered, some particular groups in the target population are occasionally omitted from the sampling frame in view of respecting their previously established survey participation preferences, or controlling their survey burden. In some countries, an opt-out list of people who should not be contacted for the purpose of requesting survey participation is maintained(Table 2.6).[1] For 2 countries (Finland and Hungary) such an opt-out list was reported to have been applied before sampling, and no 'Refusal because of opt-out list' is

[1]An opt-out list is a register of people who have indicated they do not wish to be contacted, by telephone, by mail or at all, for direct advertising, market research and/or any other purpose. The lists may be maintained by a government authority, a survey agency or a professional organization of which the survey agency is a member. National opt-out lists for commercial purposes are fairly common, but do not necessarily apply to face-to-face contact attempts or academic research. According to the ESS Specifications (The ESS Sampling Expert Panel, 2016), listed target population members should not be excluded from the sampling frame, but treated as nonrespondents when selected ('Refusal by opt-out list'; see subsection 6.4, 81).

Table 2.3 Coverage of the target popuation: Residence, Round 8

Country	Geographic exclusions	
Austria	No	
Belgium	Yes	The German-speaking Community was excluded because the additional cost that would be required to administer the questionnaire in German could not be covered.
Czech Republic	No	
Estonia	No	
Finland	No	
France	Yes	All islands, including Corsica, and overseas territories were excluded.
Germany	No	
Hungary	No	
Iceland	Yes	The remote island of Grímsey was excluded.
Ireland	No	
Israel	Yes	The Palestinian population residing in the disputed region of the West Bank was not included.
Italy	No	
Lithuania	No	
Netherlands	Yes	Overseas territories were excluded.
Norway	No	
Poland	No	
Portugal	Yes	Overseas territories were excluded.
Russian Federation	Yes	The disputed region of Crimea was not included in view of comparability with earlier rounds.
Slovenia	No	
Spain	Yes	The smaller islands of the Balearic and Canary Islands were excluded.
Sweden	No	
Switzerland	No	
United Kingdom	Yes	The areas north of the Caledonian Canal, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands were excluded.

Note:
Based on ESS8 Sample design summaries.

Table 2.4 Coverage of the target popuation: Age, Round 8

Country	Reported		Observed in net sample	
	Lower age limit	Upper age limit	15 years old (%)	85 years or older (%)
Austria	No	No	0.0%	1.0%
Belgium	No	No	0.5%	1.8%
Switzerland	No	No	0.8%	1.4%
Czech Republic	No	No	1.1%	0.5%
Germany	No	No	0.8%	1.1%
Estonia	No	No	0.5%	2.8%
Spain	No	No	0.0%	2.8%
Finland	No	No	0.7%	2.2%
France	No	No	0.5%	4.0%
United Kingdom	No	No	0.2%	3.1%
Hungary	No	No	0.6%	1.9%
Ireland	No	No	0.0%	2.3%
Israel	No	No	0.5%	1.8%
Iceland	No	No	0.5%	1.7%
Italy	No	No	1.2%	2.8%
Lithuania	No	No	0.8%	0.8%
Netherlands	No	No	0.5%	2.6%
Norway	No	No	1.0%	2.3%
Poland	No	No	1.4%	0.7%
Portugal	No	No	0.3%	1.8%
Russian Federation	No	No	0.0%	0.9%
Sweden	No	No	1.1%	3.0%
Slovenia	No	No	0.9%	2.1%

Note:
Based on ESS8 Sample design summaries and ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

Table 2.5 Coverage of the target popuation: Foreign citizenship, Round 8

Country	Reported	Observed in net sample
	Exclusion of foreign citizens	Foreign citizens (%)
Austria		5.9%
Belgium	?	8.0%
Switzerland	No	18.7%
Czech Republic		0.4%
Germany	No	5.9%
Estonia	?	12.3%
Spain	No	5.8%
Finland	No	1.7%
France		4.3%
United Kingdom		5.8%
Hungary	?	0.2%
Ireland		9.3%
Israel	No	0.0%
Iceland	?	1.9%
Italy	?	6.1%
Lithuania		0.2%
Netherlands		2.1%
Norway	No	6.1%
Poland	No	0.0%
Portugal		2.3%
Russian Federation		1.2%
Sweden	?	3.2%
Slovenia	?	2.1%

Note:
Based on ESS8 Sample design summaries and ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

observed as outcome code. For 2 countries (Germany and Slovenia), such an opt-out list was reported to have been applied after sampling, but while some refusals because of opt-out list are correspondingly observed in Slovenia, this outcome code was not used in Germany.

It is also possible for the sampling frame to include sample units that are not part of the ESS target population (overcoverage). To the extent that overcoverage is accurately estimated and the gross sample size correspondingly adjusted, and non-target population members (ineligible cases) are properly identified by the interviewers in the field, *overcoverage*, while introducing "deadwood" in the fieldwork and thereby adding to fieldwork cost, is less cause for concern than undercoverage from a quality perspective. Table 2.7 shows the ineligibility rates and a detailed breakdown by final outcome.

Still, the prevalence of particular ineligibility codes (and some related nonresponse codes) may be indicative of the up-to-dateness and accuracy of the frame (Table 2.8). Among countries with a sample of individual persons drawn from the population register, the overall proportion of persons who have moved ranges between 0.2% (Iceland) and 14.3% (Poland). The proportion is 3.4% in the median country and exceeds 5% in Hungary, Italy, Poland and Spain. The proportion of persons who are deceased is much lower (0.2% in the median country and higher than 1% only in Spain). Given that up-to-dateness of the frame would affect both proportions, it is not surprising to find them fairly strongly correlated ($r = 0.617$, $p = 0.025$).

Among countries with a sample of (household) addresses, the overall proportion of unoccupied addresses and the proportion of untraceable addresses in the gross sample may be considered as indicators of frame accuracy. The overall proportion of unoccupied addresses ranges between 0.8% (Israel) and 9.8% (Ireland). The proportion is 3.9% in the median country and exceeds 5% in Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The proportion of untraceable addresses is usually lower (0.4% in the median country and higher than 1% only in France, Lithuania and Portugal). The two proportions are moderately correlated ($r = 0.526$, $p = 0.065$). Unoccupied addresses and untraceable addresses may be due to somewhat distinct frame quality issues.

Table 2.6 Coverage of the target popuation: Formal opt-out, Round 8

Country	Reported		Observed in gross sample
	Opt-out list applied before sampling	Opt-out list applied after sampling	Refusal because of opt-out list (%)
Austria			0.0%
Belgium	No	No	0.0%
Switzerland	No	No	0.0%
Czech Republic			0.0%
Germany	No	Yes	0.0%
Estonia	No	No	4.7%
Spain	No	No	0.0%
Finland	Yes	No	0.0%
France			0.0%
United Kingdom			0.0%
Hungary	Yes	No	0.0%
Ireland			0.0%
Israel			0.0%
Iceland	No	No	0.0%
Italy	No	No	0.0%
Lithuania			0.0%
Netherlands			0.0%
Norway	No	No	0.0%
Poland	No	No	0.0%
Portugal			0.0%
Russian Federation			0.0%
Sweden	No	No	0.8%
Slovenia	No	Yes	16.0%

Note:
Based on ESS8 Sample design summaries and ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

Table 2.7 Ineligibility rate and detailed breakdown, Round 8

	Ineligible									
Country	43	51	61	62	63	64	65	67	Total	N[a]
Austria	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.9%	0.8%	0.1%	0.9%	3.0%	3966
Belgium	0.2%	1.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	2.9%	3204
Czech Republic	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.2%	0.0%	2.2%	3390
Estonia	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%	3140
Finland	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	3400
France	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	3.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	5.2%	4300
Germany	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	1.4%	9456
Hungary	0.4%	3.4%	0.6%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	5.0%	4006
Iceland	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	2002
Ireland	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	0.3%	8.8%	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	10.9%	4800
Israel	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	1.5%	3500
Italy	0.7%	1.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	3.5%	5497
Lithuania	0.1%	0.2%	1.9%	1.8%	3.1%	5.0%	1.2%	0.1%	13.4%	3827
Netherlands	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	2.8%	0.9%	1.1%	0.5%	5.9%	3370
Norway	0.2%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.1%	2.6%	3000
Poland	0.3%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	9.0%	2675
Portugal	0.0%	0.1%	0.5%	0.2%	6.8%	1.0%	0.3%	0.2%	9.1%	3100
Russian Federation	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	1.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	3900
Slovenia	0.2%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.5%	2.5%	2400
Spain	1.7%	2.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	4.8%	3038
Sweden	0.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	3750
Switzerland	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.7%	2946
United Kingdom	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	5.6%	1.0%	0.2%	1.8%	8.8%	5000

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

43 'Deceased'; 51 'Moved out of country'; 61 'Derelict or demolished house'; 62 'House not yet built, not ready for occupation'; 63 'House not occupied'; 64 'Address not residential: business'; 65 'Address not residential: institution'; 67 'Other ineligible'

[a] *N* refers to the gross sample size.

Table 2.8 Indicators of frame up-to-datedness, Round 8

Country	Moved[a]	Deceased[b]	Unoccupied address[c]	Untraceable address[c]	N[d]
Existing list of individual persons					
Belgium	3.8%	0.2%	0.9%	0.4%	3204
Estonia	3.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3140
Finland	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3400
Germany	4.6%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	9456
Hungary	8.5%	0.4%	1.0%	0.4%	4006
Iceland	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2002
Italy	5.6%	0.7%	0.7%	1.3%	5497
Norway	2.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	3000
Poland	14.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	2675
Slovenia	3.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	2400
Spain	11.1%	1.7%	0.4%	0.4%	3038
Sweden	2.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3750
Switzerland	1.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	2946
Existing (household) address list					
Austria	0.3%	0.1%	1.0%	0.4%	3966
Czech Republic	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%	0.3%	3390
France	0.1%	0.0%	3.9%	2.8%	4300
Ireland	0.6%	0.0%	9.8%	0.5%	4800
Israel	0.4%	0.0%	0.8%	0.4%	3500
Lithuania	0.4%	0.1%	6.8%	2.2%	3827
Netherlands	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.4%	3370
Portugal	0.1%	0.0%	7.5%	7.5%	3100
United Kingdom	0.0%	0.0%	5.8%	0.1%	5000
Field enumeration					
Russian Federation	0.2%	0.0%	1.6%	0.1%	3900

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] 'Moved' contains nonresponse codes 52 'Moved to unknown destination' and 53 'Moved, still in country' and ineligibility code 51 'Moved out of country'

[b] 'Deceased' contains ineligibility code 43 'Deceased'

[c] 'Unoccupied address' contains ineligibility codes 61 'Derelict or demolished house', 62 'House not yet built, not ready for occupation' and 63 'House not occupied'

[d] 'Untraceable address' contains nonresponse code 54 'Address not traceable'

[e] *N* refers to the gross sample size.

2.3 (Random probability) selection procedures

Sample designs vary considerably between countries, from unstratified, simple random samples to multi-domain designs with multiple stages and complex stratification schemes. The following Section 2.3.1 describes the selection procedures that were used to draw a random sample of individual persons or (household) addresses that are to be assigned to interviewers in the field (hereinafter jointly referred to as 'field units'). For countries where the sample consists of (household) addresses, the interviewers additionally have to apply selection procedures to determine the target respondents. The household and witin-household selection procedures that were used are presented in Section 2.3.2 (p. 28).

2.3.1 Field unit selection

Table 2.9 shows an overview of participating countries' field unit selection procedures implemented in Round 8, ordered by basic design characteristics.

In 9 countries, a multi-domain design was implemented, with a multi-stage cluster design but different cluster sizes in the two domains (the Russian Federation) or (more typically) with a multi-stage cluster design in the domain that represents rural areas, and an unclustered design in a second domain representing the urban centres with high population density (Austria, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal). In 8 countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom), a multi-stage cluster design in a single domain was implemented, and in 6 countries (Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland) a (simple) random sample was drawn in a single domain and without clustering.

Table 2.9 Field unit selection procedures, Round 8

Country	Multiple domains	Clustering	Cluster selection	Field unit selection
Existing list of individual persons				
Estonia	No	No		Units: individual persons Alg.: SysRS
Finland	No	No		Units: individual persons Alg.: SysRS
Norway	No	No		Units: individual persons Alg.: SRS
Sweden	No	No		Units: individual persons Alg.: SRS
Switzerland	No	No		Units: households Alg.: Poisson Units: individual persons Alg.: SRS
Belgium	No	Yes	Units: municipalities Alg.: PPS	Units: individual persons Alg.: SysRS
Germany	No	Yes	Units: municipalities Alg.: PPS	Units: individual persons Alg.: SysRS
Slovenia	No	Yes	Units: clusters of enumeration areas Alg.: PPS	Units: individual persons Alg.: SRS
Spain	No	Yes	Units: census sections Alg.: PPS	Units: individual persons Alg.: SysRS
Hungary	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: settlements Alg.: PPS	Units: individual persons Alg.: SRS
Iceland	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: municipalities Alg.: PPS	Units: individual persons Alg.: SRS

Table 2.9 Field unit selection procedures, Round 8 *(continued)*

Country	Multiple domains	Clustering	Cluster selection	Field unit selection
Italy	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: municipalities Alg.: PPS	Units: individual persons Alg.: SRS
Poland	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: municipalities Alg.: PPS	Units: individual persons Alg.: SRS
Existing (household) address list				
Netherlands	No	No		Units: addresses Alg.: SRS
Czech Republic	No	Yes	Units: municipalities Alg.: PPS	Units: addresses Alg.: SRS
Ireland	No	Yes	Units: clusters of addresses Alg.: PPS	Units: addresses Alg.: SysRS
Israel	No	Yes	Units: statistical areas Alg.: PPS	Units: addresses Alg.: SRS
United Kingdom	No	Yes	Units: postcode sectors Alg.: PPS	Units: addresses Alg.: SysRS
Austria	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: statistical enumeration districts Alg.: PPS	Units: addresses Alg.: SRS
France	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: 'interviewer action areas' Alg.: PPS	Units: addresses Alg.: SRS
Lithuania	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: elderships Alg.: PPS	Units: addresses Alg.: SRS

Table 2.9 Field unit selection procedures, Round 8 *(continued)*

Country	Multiple domains	Clustering	Cluster selection	Field unit selection
Portugal	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: municipalities Alg.: PPS	Units: addresses Alg.: SRS
Field enumeration				
Russian Federation	Yes	Yes	(rural domain) Units: settlements Alg.: PPS (urban domain) Units: electoral districts Alg.: SRS	Units: addresses Alg.: SRS

Note:
Based on ESS8 Sample design summaries.
SRS = simple random sample; SysRS = systematic random sample; PPS = probability proportional to size

The Sampling Expert Panel has strongly recommended the use of stratification. (Proportionate) stratification ensures that the distribution in the gross sample matches the population distribution for the stratification variables, and can increase the statistical precision of survey estimates. Stratification can either be explicit (sampling units drawn independently from distinct subgroups which are defined by the stratification variables, e.g. geographic regions) or implicit (sampling units drawn by systematic random sampling from a list which is sorted by the stratification variables, e.g. age or geolocation).

Table 2.10 shows an overview of the stratification variables applied in participating countries, ordered by basic design characteristics. Some explicit or implicit stratification was used in all countries except for the Netherlands.

- Stratification by geographic regions was most commonly used. In a few countries the sample was also stratified by address (e.g. Finland, Ireland) to ensure that the sample is geographically evenly spread.
- Individual-level stratification variables such as age and gender were rarely used, even if this information may well be available in countries where a sample of individual persons is drawn from the population register. Other individual-level socio-demographic characteristics such as citizenship, household composition, employment status or education level, which may be even more strongly related to survey items (although often not available or of low quality), were not used in any country.
- When clusters such as municipalities or settlements are drawn in the first step of a multi-stage cluster design, the size of these clusters was frequently used as a proxy for urbanicity.
- In several countries other relevant area characteristics, such as socio-economic indicators in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and dominant nationality in Israel, were used.

Table 2.10 Stratification, Round 8

Country	Multiple domains	Clustering	Explicit stratification	Implicit stratification
Existing list of individual persons				
Estonia	No	No	NUTS3 regions, gender	Age
Finland	No	No	-	Gender, address and date of birth
Norway	No	No	NUTS2 regions, gender and age group	
Sweden	No	No	NUTS2 regions	
Switzerland[1]	No	No	-	NUTS2 regions
Belgium	No	Yes	NUTS2 regions	Gender and age, and municipality size
Germany[2]	No	Yes	NUTS3 regions and municipality size class	
Slovenia	No	Yes	-	NUTS3 regions and settlement size class
Spain	No	Yes	NUTS2 regions and census section size class	Address
Hungary	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and municipalities/municipal districts (in the urban centres domain) or NUTS2 regions and municipality size class (in the rural domain)	
Iceland	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and geographic regions (in the rural domain)	
Italy	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and municipalities (in the urban centres domain) or NUTS1 regions and municipality size class (in the rural domain)	
Poland	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and municipalities/municipal districts (in the urban centres domain) or NUTS2 regions and municipality size class (in the rural domain)	
Existing (household) address list				
Netherlands	No	No	-	
Czech Republic	No	Yes	-	NUTS3 regions and settlement size

Table 2.10 Stratification, Round 8 *(continued)*

Country	Multiple domains	Clustering	Explicit stratification	Implicit stratification
Ireland[3]	No	Yes	-	Address, and address cluster location and socio-economic class
Israel	No	Yes	Geographic regions, dominant nationality and education level, and area size class	
United Kingdom[4]	No	Yes	-	NUTS1 regions and postcode sector socio-economic class
Austria	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and municipal districts (in the urban centre domain) or NUTS3 regions (in the rural domain)	
France	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and municipalities/municipal districts (in the urban centres domain) or NUTS2 regions (in the rural domain)	NUTS3 regions and address cluster size (in the rural domain)
Lithuania	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and municipalities and NUTS3 regions (in the urban centres domain) or NUTS3 regions (in the rural domain)	
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and municipalities (in the urban centre domain) or NUTS2 regions and municipality size class (in the rural domain)	
Field enumeration				
Russian Federation	Yes	Yes	Urbanicity domains, and municipalities/municipal districts (in the urban centres domain) or geographic regions (in the rural domain)	Settlement size (in the rural domain)

Note:

Based on ESS8 Sample design summaries.

[1] The geographical distribution of the sample is controlled through Poisson sampling with joint inclusion probabilities adjusted for NUTS2 regions.

[2] A systematic random sample was drawn from lists ordered by name for practical reasons rather than for the purpose of improving statistical precision.

[3] Socio-economic class is based on the percentage residents in higher professional/managerial group.

[4] Socio-economic indicators used: level of deprivation (IMD), percentage households that are privately rented, percentage residents who are pensioners.

2.3.2 Household and within-household selection

If a sample is drawn from an (existing or enumerated) list of (household) addresses, a target respondent has to be selected by the interviewers at the doorstep. If each address corresponds to one household, a target respondent has to be selected from the eligible household members (within-household selection). If an address may correspond to multiple households, one or more households first have to be selected from the resident households (household selection). Random probability selection procedures also have to be used in these steps of the sample design. For household selection, the Kish grid method is being used in the ESS. Two acceptable methods which have been commonly used for within-household selection are the Kish grid method and the (last, next or nearest) birthday method.[2] The birthday method was used for within-household selection in 7 countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Portugal) and the Kish grid method was used in 3 countries (France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom).

[2]The new Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel has elaborated on the relative benefits of the two methods and expresses a preference for the Kish grid method (The ESS Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel, 2018). By the Kish grid method, the interviewers have to list all households at an address and/or all household members in a household in a systematic order, and to select a household number, respectively a household member number, from a look-up table. In Round 9, the Rizzo method has been adopted in several countries for within-household selection. This method is less obtrusive for households with two household members, by adding a step whereby either the screener respondent or the other household member is randomly selected. A list of household members has to be made only for larger households.

2.4 Sample size determination

The third key step in the development of the sample design is to determine the gross sample size, the number of sampling units which have to be drawn to meet the level of statistical precision targeted in the ESS.

The ESS Specifications require a minimum 'effective' net sample size of 1500 respondents (800 in countries with a target population size less than 2 million) in each country. Supported by the Sampling Expert Panel, each national team has to determine a gross sample size sufficiently large to reach this target based on realistic estimates of the ineligibility rate, response rate and design effect. The design effect is a summary measure of the relative loss in the accuracy of estimates under the chosen sample design compared to a simple random sample. Both clustering in a multi-stage cluster sample design and unequal selection probabilities resulting from, for example, within-household selection, add to the design effect. Design effects have to be compensated for by additional completed interviews in order to reach the targeted level of statistical precision (the effective net sample size). Note that in 3 countries (France, Germany and Hungary), a reserve sample was drawn in addition to the main sample, allowing additional batches of sample units to be put in field if response rates are inadequate. In Germany and Hungary, part of the reserve sample was actually used.

In 15 countries, the ESS minimum target effective net sample size of 1500 (800 for small population countries) was actually achieved (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland) or very close to being achieved (Belgium, the Czech Republic, France and Iceland). In Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland and Slovenia, the effective net sample size that was actually achieved substantially exceeded the ESS minimum target.

In the other countries, an effective net sample size of between 43.3% (Portugal) and 94.6% (Lithuania) of the ESS minimum target was achieved. Shortfalls are mostly due to the available funding not allowing for a suffi-ciently large gross sample, especially if large design effects can be expected. In 7 countries (Austria, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom) of the 8 countries where the ESS minimum target effective net sample size was not expected to be achieved, given reasonable estimates of the gross response rate and design effect, the ESS minimum target was indeed not reached. In the Netherlands, the target net sample size was adequate, but the gross response rate was overestimated and/or the design effect was underestimated, so that the ESS minimum target was ultimately not achieved.

Table 2.11 Expected and realised sample size, Round 8

Country	Planned				Realised		
	Gross sample size	Reserve sample size	Net sample size	Effective net sample size	Gross sample size	Net sample size	Effective net sample size
Austria	3966		2000	1201	3966	2010	1228
Belgium	3204		1740	1500	3204	1766	1481
Czech Republic	3390		2302	1501	3390	2269	1478
Estonia[1]	3140		2000	2000	3140	2019	2019
Finland	3400		2332	2332	3400	1925	1925
France	4300	700	1974	1307	4300	2070	1487
Germany	9259	10441	2994	1661	9456	2852	1827
Hungary	3332	943	1672	1298	4006	1614	1330
Iceland[1]	2002		1087	962	2002	880	780
Ireland	4800		2614	1499	4800	2757	1656
Israel	3500		2572	896	3500	2557	961
Italy	5496		2424	1497	5497	2626	1504
Lithuania	3827		2245	1301	3827	2121	1419
Netherlands	3370		1815	1500	3370	1681	1385
Norway	3002		1602	1602	3000	1545	1539
Poland	2675		1703	1500	2675	1688	1591
Portugal	3100		1534	977	3100	1270	650
Russian Federation	3900		2652	842	3900	2430	1037
Slovenia[1]	2400		1200	1017	2400	1304	1142
Spain	3038		1799	1499	3038	1958	1623
Sweden	3750		1800	1800	3750	1551	1551
Switzerland	2950		1513	1513	2946	1525	1525
United Kingdom	5000		2282	1275	5000	1959	1136

Note:

Based on ESS8 Sample design summaries and ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Reported figures on planned net (effective) sample size are derived from the planned gross sample size and expected response rate, ineligibility rate and design effect, and rounded to the nearest whole number. Because of rounding in sample size calculations, figures may diverge slightly from the corresponding figures reported in the sample design summaries.

[1] Only an effective net sample size of 800 is required because the target population size is less than 2 million.

3 Translation and localisation of the source questionnaire

With the objective of cross-national comparability, the European Social Survey has adopted an ask-the-same-question approach to questionnaire development. A source questionnaire is developed in English by the CST and the questionnaire design teams, and national language versions are produced by the national teams by translation of the source questionnaire into the language(s) relevant to the target population.

Adequate coverage of the ESS target population, which includes all residents in private household irrespective of nationality, citizenship or language, necessitates national questionnaires to be produced for all languages used as first language by a non-negligible share (5% or more) of the population.

The national questionnaires have to be functionally equivalent (i.e. equivalent in terms of meaning and form) to the source questionnaire. Rigorous localisation and translation procedures are specified to that end.

Localisation involves adapting a select number of source questionaire items to the national (social, economic, political, legal) context.

Translation of the source questionnaire into the target language(s) involves the following key steps.

1. Translation, review and adjudication (including shared language consultation) using a committee or team approach
2. External assessment of linguistic quality
3. Assessment of comparability of questionnaire items' formal characteristics by the SQP Team
4. National pretesting (see subsection 4.2, p. 44)

3.1 Localisation

Several items in the source questionnaire are country-specific (see Table 3.1 for an overview of country-specific items in Round 8).

In order to maintain inter-temporal comparability, consistency is generally preferred for the (core) country-specific items on religion, political party affiliation, partnership status, education level and ancestry, as for the other core and repeated items, unless adjustments are necessitated by changes in the social or political structure, or (anticipated) shifts in population characteristics. Few changes were made in Round 8 (Table 3.2). The religion items were not changed in any of the participating countries. The partnership status items were adjusted in 6 countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Italy and Spain) and the education level items were adjusted in 3 countries (Germany, Israel and Slovenia). The newly developed ancestry item, and the corresponding European Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups, was piloted in Round 7 (Heath, Schneider, & Butt, 2016). The Classification was subsequently revised based on the experiences fielding the item. For Round 8, the country-specific showcards were adjusted for all countries that previously participated in Round 7, and new country-specific showcards were introduced for the countries that did not. From this point forward, the country-specific showcards will only need to be reviewed periodically. The income deciles that form the response options for the household income item, on the other hand, are normally updated with each survey round on the basis of (recent) household income distribution statistics.

The respective consultation documents for the country-specific items were properly signed off for all countries.

Table 3.1 ESS country-specific items, Round 8

	Country-specific variables	Harmonised variable(s)	Consultation and formal sign-off required	Data Documentation Report
Religion	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Political party affiliation	Yes	No	No	Appendix A3
Partnership status[a]	No	Yes	Yes	Appendix A4
Education level	Yes	Yes	Yes	Appendix A1
Household income[b]	No	Yes	Yes	Appendix A2
Ancestry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Appendix A9

[a] Country-specific variables are retained only for a small number of countries (Finland and the United Kingdom in Round 8).

[b] Answer categories correspond to income deciles (with country-specific income labels) in participating countries. No bridging is required.

Table 3.2 Implementation of ESS country-specific items, Round 8

Country	Religion		Partnership status		Education level		Household income	Ancestry	
	Any changes	Signed off	Any changes	Signed off	Any changes	Signed off	Signed off	Any changes	Signed off
Austria	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belgium	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Czech Republic	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Estonia	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
France	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Germany	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hungary	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iceland	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Ireland	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Israel	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Lithuania	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Netherlands	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norway	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poland	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portugal	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Russian Federation	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Slovenia	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sweden	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Switzerland	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note:
Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

3.2 Questionnaire languages

Across all 23 participating countries, 33 country-language versions of the ESS questionnaire were produced, covering 21 different languages (Arabic, Catalan, Czech, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish; Table 3.3).

For 14 countries, the target language (Austria, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, the Russian Federation and Sweden), one of the target languages (Estonia, Finland, Israel and Lithuania), or all target languages (Belgium and Switzerland) were shared with at least one other participating country. Figure 3.1 illustrates how languages are shared across these countries. For each shared language except for Swedish (shared between Sweden and Finland, even if the Swedish dialect spoken in Finland is somewhat distinct), some shared language consultation with at least one other country took place. The main unnecessary differences in wording should thereby have been eliminated, contributing to cross-national comparability.

For the remaining 7 countries, the target language(s) were not shared and no harmonisation consultation was needed.

Table 3.3 ESS questionnaire languages, Round 8

Questionnaire language	Countries
Arabic	Israel
Catalan	Spain
Czech	The Czech Republic
Dutch	Belgium and the Netherlands
English[1]	Ireland and the United Kingdom
Estonian	Estonia
Finnish	Finland
French	Belgium, France and Switzerland
German	Austria, Germany and Switzerland
Hebrew	Israel
Hungarian	Hungary
Icelandic	Iceland
Italian	Italy and Switzerland
Lithuanian	Lithuania
Norwegian	Norway
Polish[2]	Ireland and Poland
Portuguese	Portugal
Russian	Estonia, Israel, Lithuania and the Russian Federation
Slovenian	Slovenia
Spanish	Spain
Swedish	Finland and Sweden

Note:

Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

[1] The source questionnaire is localised for use in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

[2] In Round 8 the Polish questionnaire was localised for use in Ireland.

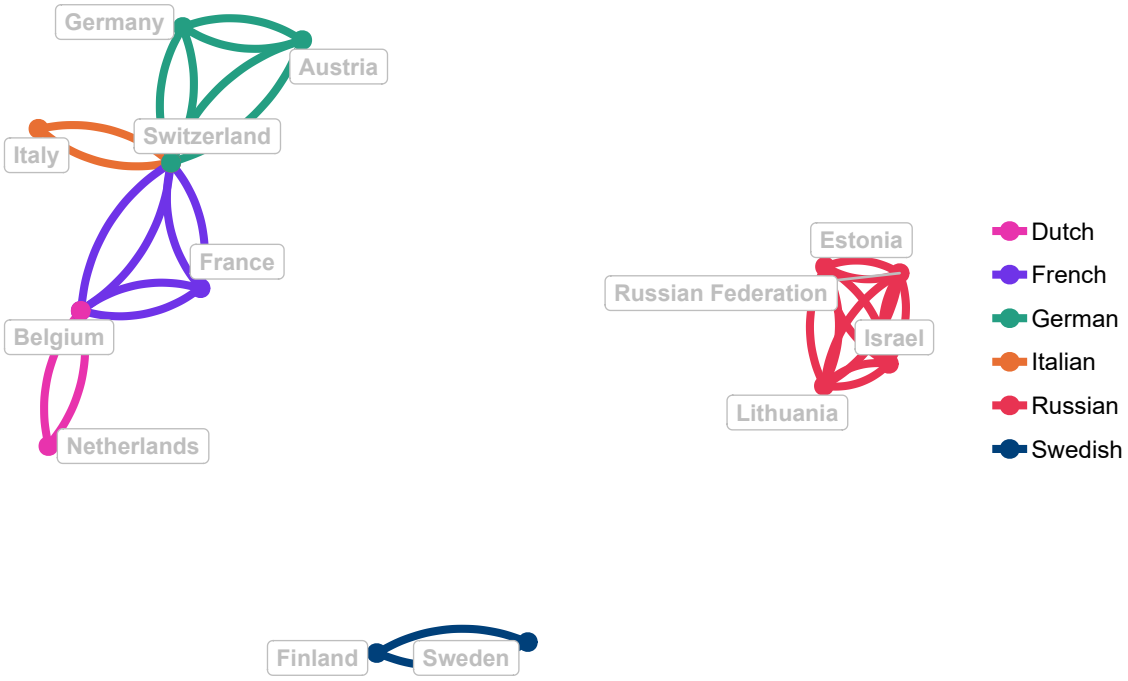


Figure 3.1 Shared languages, Round 8
Note: Based on information from ESS Translation Team.

3.3 External verification and harmonisation of formal item characteristics

Once the Translation, Review, Adjudication, and shared language consultation steps in the translation process are completed, the linguistic quality of the translated questionnaires is assessed by cApStAn, an external verifier, on the basis of the Translation and Verification Follow-up Form(s) (TVFFs).

The external verification was completed for all translated questionnaires (Table 3.4). Only for Israel (Arabic), the verification was not yet completed by the start of the fieldwork (see Figure 1.1, p. 6). Among the 15 countries where verification was completed before the start of fieldwork and fieldwork started in fairly good time, verification was completed between 4 weeks (Switzerland) and 19 weeks (Estonia) before the start of the fieldwork.

Verification took between 1 week (Italian, Italy) and 5.5 weeks (Russian, Lithuania). In the median country, verification took 3 weeks.

In the final step in the production of the translated questionnaires before the national pretesting, comparability of the formal characteristics of items is assessed for a set of questionnaire items (17 in Round 8) via the Survey Quality Predictor (SQP) platform. National teams are required to code item characteristics,[3] and the SQP Team provides corrective suggestions for harmonisation with the corresponding items in the source questionnaire.

SQP coding (for at least the main target language) was done before the start of the fieldwork in all countries

[3] SQP coding is required for each country's main target language, and recommended for any additional target languages.

Table 3.4 External verification of translation, Round 8

Country	Language	Start	End	Duration (weeks)
Austria	German	5 July 2016	26 July 2016	3.0
Belgium	Dutch	28 June 2016	15 July 2016	2.4
	French	6 July 2016	4 August 2016	4.1
Czech Republic	Czech	15 August 2016	6 September 2016	3.1
Estonia	Estonian	4 May 2016	23 May 2016	2.7
	Russian	10 May 2016	23 May 2016	1.9
Finland	Finnish	6 May 2016	24 May 2016	2.6
	Swedish	6 May 2016	24 May 2016	2.6
France	French	18 July 2016	4 August 2016	2.4
Germany	German	21 June 2016	15 July 2016	3.4
Hungary	Hungarian	19 December 2016	3 January 2017	2.1
Iceland	Icelandic	15 August 2016	1 September 2016	2.4
Ireland[2]	English			
	Polish			
Israel	Arabic	12 September 2016	5 October 2016	3.3
	Hebrew	9 June 2016	28 June 2016	2.7
	Russian	11 July 2016	15 August 2016	5.0
Italy	Italian	27 March 2017	3 April 2017	1.0
Lithuania	Lithuanian	13 October 2016	7 November 2016	3.6
	Russian	18 November 2016	25 December 2016	5.3
Netherlands	Dutch	27 June 2016	15 July 2016	2.6
Norway	Norwegian	7 May 2016	27 May 2016	2.9
Poland	Polish	20 September 2016	5 October 2016	2.1
Portugal	Portuguese	15 August 2016	12 September 2016	4.0
Russian Federation	Russian	10 October 2016	4 November 2016	3.6
Slovenia	Slovenian	6 June 2016	27 June 2016	3.0
Spain	Catalan	6 December 2016	28 December 2016	3.1
	Spanish	6 December 2016	28 December 2016	3.1
Sweden	Swedish	11 June 2016	3 July 2016	3.1
Switzerland	French	1 July 2016	4 August 2016	4.9
	German	1 July 2016	4 August 2016	4.9
	Italian	1 July 2016	4 August 2016	4.9
United Kingdom[1]	English			

Note:

Based on information from ESS Translation Team.

[1] The source questionnaire is localised for use in the United Kingdom.

[2] The source questionnaire is localised for use in Ireland and the United Kingdom. In Round 8 the Polish questionnaire was localised for use in Ireland.

except for Portugal (Table 3.5, see Figure 1.1, p. 6). Among the multiple-language countries, SQP coding was done for all target languages in Belgium and Spain. For Estonia, Finland, Israel, Lithuania and Switzerland, coding was done only for the main target language.

Table 3.5 SQP coding, Round 8

Country	Language	Start
Austria	German	4 August 2016
Belgium	Dutch	9 August 2016
	French	31 August 2016
Czech Republic	Czech	3 October 2016
Estonia	Estonian	21 June 2016
	Russian	
Finland	Finnish	10 June 2016
	Swedish	
France	French	31 August 2016
Germany	German	19 July 2016
Hungary	Hungarian	9 May 2017
Iceland	Icelandic	30 September 2016
Ireland[2]	English	
	Polish	
Israel	Arabic	
	Hebrew	11 July 2016
	Russian	
Italy	Italian	18 April 2017
Lithuania	Lithuanian	19 December 2016
	Russian	
Netherlands	Dutch	5 August 2016
Norway	Norwegian	1 July 2016
Poland	Polish	9 October 2016
Portugal	Portuguese	27 October 2016
Russian Federation	Russian	23 November 2016
Slovenia	Slovenian	22 July 2016
Spain	Catalan	19 January 2017
	Spanish	19 January 2017
Sweden	Swedish	16 August 2016
Switzerland	French	
	German	20 July 2016
	Italian	
United Kingdom[1]	English	

Note:
Based on information from ESS Translation Team.

[1] The source questionnaire is localised for use in the United Kingdom.

[2] The source questionnaire is localised for use in Ireland and the United Kingdom. In Round 8 the Polish questionnaire was localised for use in Ireland.

4 Survey instrument implementation and pretesting

The next step in the survey lifecycle is to program and/or print the translated questionnaire(s), and to test the survey instrument(s). The mode by which the questionnaire is to be administered is an essential factor in the design and implementation of the instrument(s). The ESS main questionnaire (and preferably the supplementary questionnaire) is to be administered to all respondents using face-to-face interviewing. The supplementary questionnaire may be self-administered if it is not included as an extension of the main questionnaire.

National teams have to make sure that the survey instruments implement the finalised questionnaires (including routings) correctly and completely, and a national pretest has to take place.

4.1 Main and supplementary questionnaire administration mode

As required, the ESS main questionnaire was administered by face-to-face interviewing in all participating countries in Round 8. In 14 countries the (main) questionnaire was administered by paper-and-pencil interviewing (PAPI) in (one of) the (earlier) rounds, but most have already moved to computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) (Figure 4.1). Italy and the Czech Republic completed the transition from PAPI to CAPI administration in Round 8. Only Israel, Lithuania, Poland, the Russian Federation and Spain are still to make the transition to CAPI in the next round.

In Round 8, the ESS supplementary questionnaire was administered as an extension of the main face-to-face interview in all countries except for Hungary (Figure 4.2). In 14 countries the supplementary questionnaire was (at least partially) self-administered in (one of) the earlier rounds.

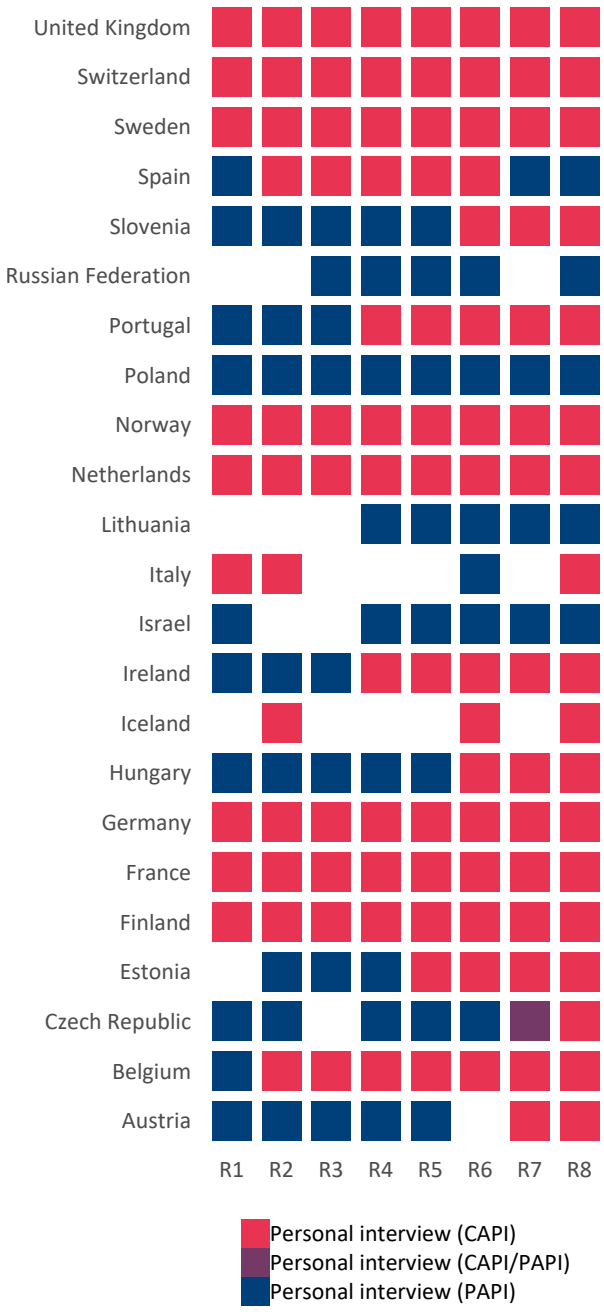


Figure 4.1 (Main) questionnaire administration mode, Rounds 1-8
Note: Based on ESS1-ESS8 Data documentation reports.

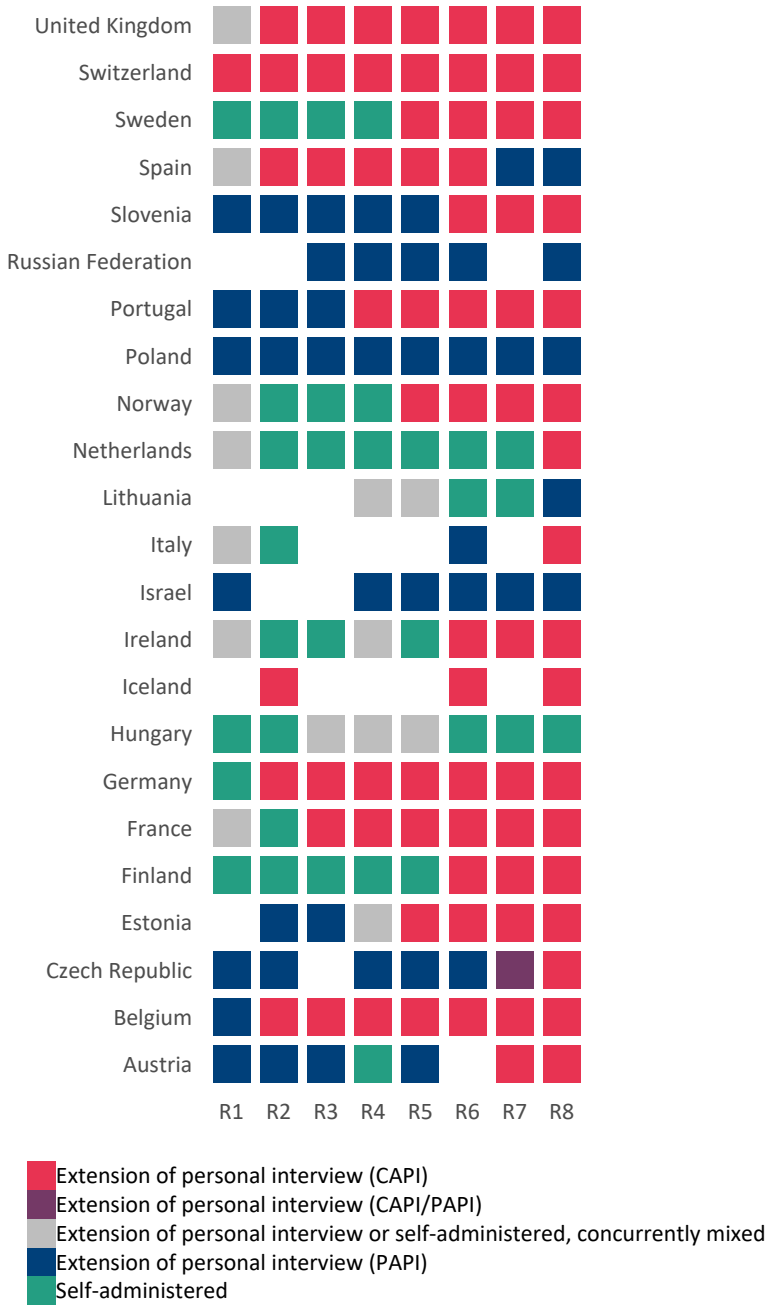


Figure 4.2 Supplementary questionnaire administration mode, Rounds 1-8

Note: Countries are categorised as 'Concurrent mixed mode' if at least 10% of questionnaires were administered (as reported by the interviewers via the Interviewer Questionnaire) in a mode different from the mode formally adopted. Based on ESS1-ESS8 Data documentation reports, ESS data from Interviewer Questionnaire, ESS1 edition 5.1; ESS2 edition 3.2; ESS3 edition 2.0; ESS4 edition 2.0; ESS5 edition 3.0; ESS6 edition 2.1; ESS7 edition 2.1; ESS8 edition 1.0 and information from ESS Fieldwork Team.

4.2 National pretesting

A national pretest involving personal interviews took place in all participating countries. The number of pretest interviews exceeded the minimum number of 30 in all countries except for Belgium and Iceland. In the median country, 34 pretest interviews were conducted, and in 9 countries there were 50 or more pretest interviews (Table 4.1).

The pretest was properly completed before the start of fieldwork in all countries except for Finland and Iceland, where it was completed less than half a week and 4 weeks after the start of fieldwork, respectively (see Figure 1.1, p. 6; Table 4.2). Among the 16 countries where the pretest was completed before the start of fieldwork and fieldwork started in fairly good time and, the pretest was completed between 1 week (the Netherlands) and 10 weeks (Sweden) before the start of the fieldwork.

Pretesting took between less than half a week (Switzerland) and 5 weeks (Sweden). In the median country, pretesting took 1.5 week.

Table 4.1 National pretest, Round 8

Country	Language	Number of pretest interviews
Austria	German	30
Belgium	Dutch	12
	French	8
Czech Republic	Czech	30
Estonia	Estonian	40
	Russian	
Finland	Finnish	144
	Swedish	
France	French	32
Germany	German	55
Hungary	Hungarian	30
Iceland	Icelandic	12
Ireland	English	50
	Polish	
Israel	Arabic	20
	Hebrew	20
	Russian	20
Italy	Italian	31
Lithuania	Lithuanian	48
	Russian	12
Netherlands	Dutch	50
Norway	Norwegian	30
Poland	Polish	30
Portugal	Portuguese	30
Russian Federation	Russian	50
Slovenia	Slovenian	30
Spain	Catalan	
	Spanish	40
Sweden	Swedish	50
Switzerland	French	20
	German	20
	Italian	10
United Kingdom	English	34

Note:
Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.
In most multiple-language countries, the number of pretest interviews is in some way balanced by language. For countries for which no information by language is available, the number is presented with the main interview language.

Table 4.2 National pretest, Round 8 *(continued)*

Country	Start	End	Duration (weeks)
Austria	22 August 2016	31 August 2016	1.3
Belgium	24 August 2016	31 August 2016	1.0
Czech Republic	3 October 2016	10 October 2016	1.0
Estonia	15 August 2016	10 September 2016	3.7
Finland	6 September 2016	16 September 2016	1.4
France	17 October 2016	21 October 2016	0.6
Germany	11 July 2016	18 July 2016	1.0
Hungary	23 February 2017	28 February 2017	0.7
Iceland	21 November 2016	27 November 2016	0.9
Ireland	27 October 2016	7 November 2016	1.6
Israel	27 July 2016	15 August 2016	2.7
Italy	28 July 2017	31 July 2017	0.4
Lithuania	25 April 2017	10 May 2017	2.1
Netherlands	14 August 2016	24 August 2016	1.4
Norway	6 June 2016	19 June 2016	1.9
Poland	20 October 2016	23 October 2016	0.4
Portugal	28 August 2016	13 September 2016	2.3
Russian Federation	6 December 2016	17 December 2016	1.6
Slovenia	29 August 2016	9 September 2016	1.6
Spain	30 January 2017	5 February 2017	0.9
Sweden	19 May 2016	20 June 2016	4.6
Switzerland	10 August 2016	12 August 2016	0.3
United Kingdom	1 July 2016	24 July 2016	3.3

Note:
Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

5 Interviewer recruitment and training

5.1 Interviewer capacity and workload

A sufficient number of interviewers should be engaged, both for the purpose of launching and maintaining a powerful fieldwork, and for the purpose of limiting the negative effect of interviewers' individual systematic differences in administering the questionnaire on the effective net sample size. The ESS Specification therefore limits the interviewer workload (the total number of sample units assigned to each interviewer) to 48 sample units.

Table 5.1 presents an overview of the number of (active) interviewers for each participating country in Round 8. In order to assess the adequacy of the interviewer capacity, the raw number of interviewers active in the fieldwork has only limited informational value. The gross sample size, representing the total workload to be distributed among the available interviewers, after all, varies across countries (see subsection 2.4, p. 29) and larger gross sample sizes require larger numbers of interviewers. The number of active interviewers per 48 cases in the gross sample size ranges between 0.9 (Estonia and Portugal) and 4.0 (the Czech Republic). This is equivalent to one active interviewer per 56.4 to 12.1 cases (referred to as the 'theoretical workload'). In the median country, there were 1.7 interviewers per 48 cases in the gross sample size, or equivalently, one interviewer per 27.9 cases. In 4 countries (Estonia, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland), the theoretical workload exceeded 48 cases so that the number of interviewers was insufficient to avoid workloads larger than 48 cases even if all cases could have been evenly distributed. The number of interviewers was rather low in many of the other participating countries, forewarning the risk of a capacity bottleneck in fieldwork and/or inflated interviewer effects reducing the effective net sample size. On the other hand, more than two interviewers were active per 48 cases in the gross sample size in 6 countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Poland, the Russian Federation, Spain and the United Kingdom). For these countries the expectation was that the interviewer capacity would be sufficient.

However, both the degree of geographical dispersion of cases and the (necessary) intensity of re-issuing activities are critical factors to consider. The adequacy of the interviewer capacity is therefore more validly assessed on the basis of the distribution of the actual interviewer workloads observed.[4]

Table 5.2 presents some descriptive statistics of observed interviewer workloads. The average interviewer workload ranges between 12.1 (the Czech Republic) and 59.2 (Portugal). In the median country, the average interviewer workload contained 28.8 cases. The observed interviewer workloads do not only vary markedly between interviewers of different countries. In most countries, cases are far from evenly distributed, and interviewer workloads correspondingly vary strongly between interviewers. In Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden, both workloads as small as 5 or fewer cases and workloads exceeding 100 cases are observed. The standard deviation exceeds 50% of the average interviewer workload in 13 countries, and even exceeds the average interviewer workload in Iceland.

In 7 countries (the Czech Republic, Finland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and the Russian Federation), (nearly) all interviewers had workloads smaller than 48 cases, while in 5 countries (Estonia, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland), at least 1 in 4 interviewers had workloads larger than 48 cases. The proportion of interviewers with workloads larger than 48 cases ranges up to about 3 in 5 (Estonia).

[4] In some countries, telephone calls are made by interviewers without strict assignment of particular sets of sample units. The 'workloads' for these interviewers can be extremely large. For this reason, only sample units for which at least one attempt by personal visit was made are included in the interviewers' workload figures.

Table 5.1 Number of interviewers, Round 8

Country	Number of active interviewers[a]	Gross sample size	Sandardised number of active interviewers[b]	Theoretical workload[c]
Austria	107	3966	1.3	37.1
Belgium	139	3204	2.1	23.1
Czech Republic	280	3390	4.0	12.1
Estonia	61	3140	0.9	51.5
Finland	129	3400	1.8	26.4
France	173	4300	1.9	24.9
Germany	283	9456	1.4	33.4
Hungary	132	4006	1.6	30.3
Iceland	48	2002	1.2	41.7
Ireland	103	4800	1.0	46.6
Israel	138	3500	1.9	25.4
Italy	199	5497	1.7	27.6
Lithuania	144	3827	1.8	26.6
Netherlands	121	3370	1.7	27.9
Norway	81	3000	1.3	37.0
Poland	134	2675	2.4	20.0
Portugal	55	3100	0.9	56.4
Russian Federation	253	3900	3.1	15.4
Slovenia	53	2400	1.1	45.3
Spain	139	3038	2.2	21.9
Sweden	78	3750	1.0	48.1
Switzerland	61	2946	1.0	48.3
United Kingdom	217	5000	2.1	23.0

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] The number of active interviewers includes all interviewers for which at least one personal visit was recorded. Compared to the total number of unique interviewer numbers, 19 interviewers are omitted for Switzerland; 4 interviewers are omitted for Iceland; 3 interviewers are omitted for Norway; 1 interviewer is omitted for Poland and Sweden. For Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, the total number of unique interviewer numbers differs from the number of interviewers reported via the NTS.

[b] The standardised number of active interviewers is derived as the ratio of the number of active interviewers and the number of sets of 48 cases in the gross sample size.

[c] The theoretical workload, or the workload which would be observed if cases could have been evenly distributed among the interviewers and on one occasion only, is derived as the ratio of the gross sample size and the number of active interviewers. By construction, the theoretical workload is inversely proportional to the number of interviewers per *n* cases in the gross sample size.

Table 5.2 Interviewer workload, Round 8

Country	N[a]	Min	Max	Mean	SD	> 48 (%)	> 96 (%)
Austria	107	7	76	37.1	14.6	15.9%	0.0%
Belgium	139	6	60	29.6	15.6	15.1%	0.0%
Czech Republic	280	6	18	12.1	4.0	0.0%	0.0%
Estonia	61	10	87	54.6	19.5	60.7%	0.0%
Finland	129	5	63	23.3	10.4	3.1%	0.0%
France	173	3	99	27.8	13.5	7.5%	0.6%
Germany	283	1	153	34.3	20.7	14.5%	0.7%
Hungary	132	1	108	29.8	20.2	15.2%	0.8%
Iceland	48	1	98	18.6	23.6	12.5%	2.1%
Ireland	103	10	180	46.8	25.9	51.5%	2.9%
Israel	138	6	42	25.4	6.1	0.0%	0.0%
Italy	199	1	55	31.4	8.2	1.0%	0.0%
Lithuania	144	4	48	26.6	11.9	0.0%	0.0%
Netherlands	121	1	109	40.2	22.2	32.2%	0.8%
Norway	81	2	107	27.2	20.9	11.1%	1.2%
Poland	134	1	109	22.3	15.3	3.7%	0.7%
Portugal	55	6	223	59.2	47.3	47.3%	16.4%
Russian Federation	253	1	53	16.3	9.3	0.8%	0.0%
Slovenia	53	18	78	39.5	13.9	22.6%	0.0%
Spain	139	1	79	23.6	13.2	5.0%	0.0%
Sweden	78	1	159	25.1	21.5	6.4%	1.3%
Switzerland	61	13	148	54.6	31.3	45.9%	9.8%
United Kingdom	217	1	64	28.8	12.8	4.6%	0.0%

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to the number of active interviewers.

In 11 countries at least 1 interviewer had a workload larger than 96 cases, twice the size of the workload limit. Such large workloads are, fortunately, rare (only 1 interviewer in France, Hungary, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden). Only in Portugal and Switzerland, about 1 in 6 and about 1 in 10 interviewers, respectively, had a workload this large.

5.2 Interviewer experience

Interviewers are expected to have been appropriately trained and have relevant experience. As evident from the relative frequency distribution of interviewers' experience (prior ESS experience, other face-to-face interviewing experience, no face-to-face interviewing experience) presented in Table 5.3, large numbers of interviewers in most of the participating countries have at least some prior experience in face-to-face interviewing. In 14 countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden), (nearly) all interviewers had at least some prior experience in face-to-face interviewing. Only in Iceland and Portugal, about 5 in 6 and about 4 in 7 interviewers, respectively, had no prior experience in face-to-face interviewing.

In all countries except for Italy, part of the interviewer workforce had prior experience in the European Social Survey. The number of interviewers with ESS experience ranges up to about 7 in 8 (Ireland), and in 16 countries more than 1 in 2 interviewers had prior ESS experience.

Figure 5.1 shows how the number of interviewers that were active (per 48 cases in the gross sample size) breaks down by experience category. We previously observed that in 4 countries (Estonia, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland), fewer than 1 interviewer was active per 48 cases in the gross sample size. Considering interviewers with face-to-face interviewing experience only, fewer than 1 interviewer was active per 48 cases in the gross sample size in Iceland and Norway as well. In the median country, there were 1.6 interviewers with face-to-face interviewing experience per 48 cases in the gross sample size, compared to 1.7 interviewers overall.

Table 5.3 Interviewer experience, Round 8

Country	Prior ESS experience (%)	Other face-to-face interviewing experience (%)	No face-to-face interviewing experience (%)
Austria	66.4%	33.6%	0.0%
Belgium	74.1%	25.9%	0.0%
Czech Republic	58.6%	41.4%	0.0%
Estonia	41.0%	59.0%	0.0%
Finland	81.0%	19.0%	0.0%
France	67.4%	32.6%	0.0%
Germany	62.3%	28.1%	9.6%
Hungary	60.6%	39.4%	0.0%
Iceland	14.6%	0.0%	85.4%
Ireland	88.3%	11.7%	0.0%
Israel	62.7%	17.9%	19.4%
Italy	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Lithuania	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%
Netherlands	67.8%	24.6%	7.6%
Norway	57.3%	0.0%	42.7%
Poland	28.1%	71.9%	0.0%
Portugal	20.4%	24.1%	55.6%
Russian Federation	17.0%	68.8%	14.2%
Slovenia	56.6%	43.4%	0.0%
Spain	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Sweden	75.9%	24.1%	0.0%
Switzerland	70.5%	16.4%	13.1%
United Kingdom	36.4%	52.3%	11.2%

Note:
Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

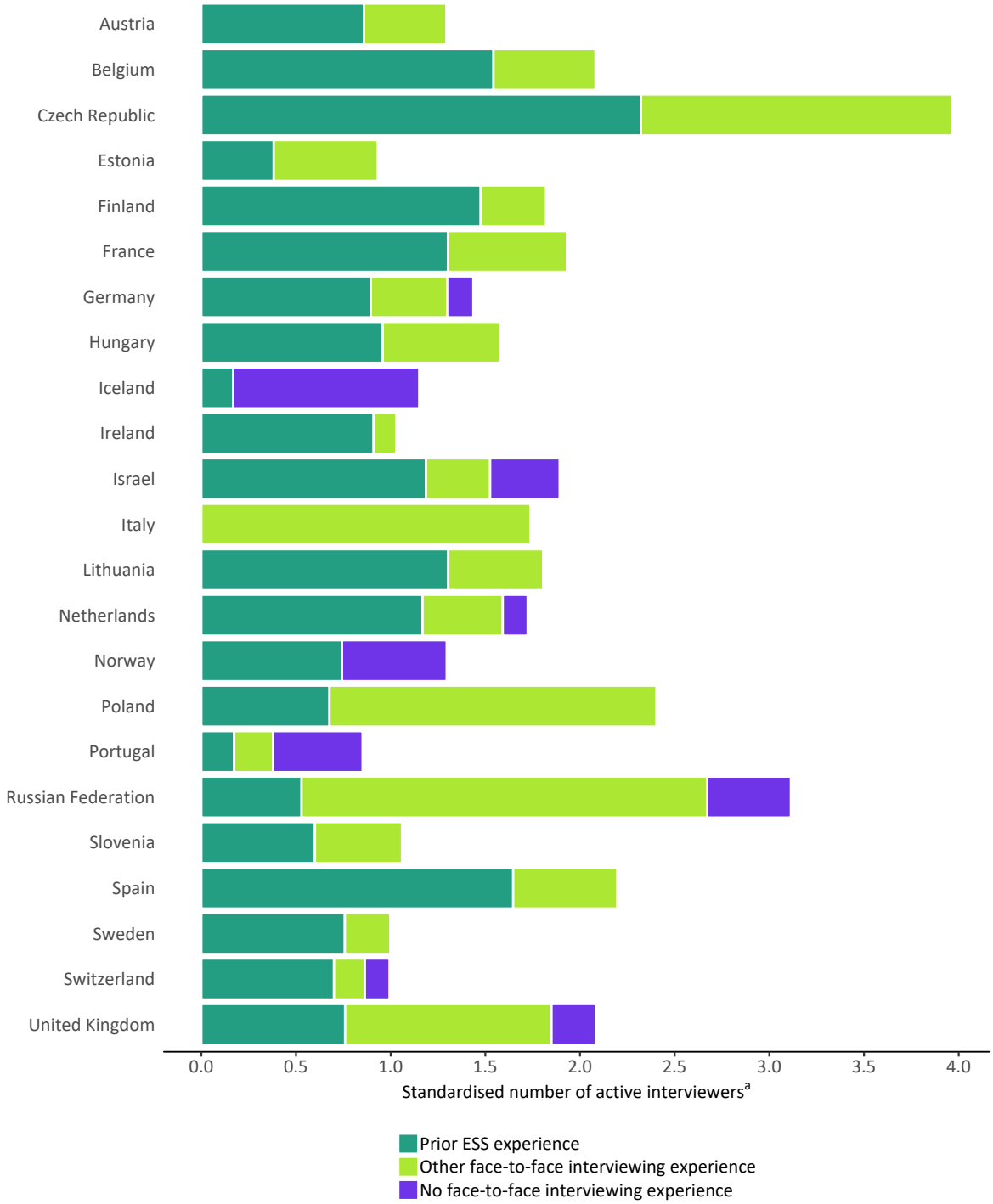


Figure 5.1 Interviewer capacity by experience category, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 Data documentation report and ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] The standardised number of active interviewers is derived as the ratio of the number of active interviewers and the number of sets of 48 cases in the gross sample size.

5.3 Interviewer briefing

The ESS Specification requires that interviewers attend an ESS-specific interviewer briefing before starting their work. This briefing should equip the interviewers with the knowledge about the ESS, its purpose, topics, quality standards and relevance, necessary to successfully represent the ESS in the field. The briefing should also ensure that all interviewers are well prepared to apply the ESS contact procedure and to complete the ESS Contact form, and to administer the ESS Questionnaire according to the ESS rules for standardised interviewing. Any gaps between the ESS instructions and usual practice, as well as any disparity among the interviewers in their application of the ESS task rules should be addressed.

An in-person ESS-specific briefing was organised in all participating countries (Table 5.4). In all countries except the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom, all interviewers attended such a briefing session.

Most countries organised half-day or full-day briefing sessions, as recommended. Only in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, briefing sessions were shorter than 4 hours. For Ireland, Lithuania and Portugal, the briefing sessions were expanded in duration compared to ESS Round 7; while for Austria, the Czech Republic and Norway, they were reduced in duration.

The ESS briefing materials were reviewed, updated and expanded in Round 8 in view of addressing persisting concerns about interviewer-related error by harmonising the ESS interviewer briefings. The following materials were made available by the CST to national teams.

- ESS Briefing presentation slides
- Movie clips on the contact procedure and standardised interviewing
- An annotated ESS Practice interview
- An ESS Interviewer manual, containing all instructions for interviewers

With the introduction of the new ESS briefing materials, the national teams were polled on their use and appreciation of different briefing materials and activities. The ESS8 Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire was completed for 15 countries (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). For these countries, a more detailed examination of the interviewer briefing in Round 8 is possible, as outlined below.

Table 5.4 Interviewer briefings, Round 8

Country	ESS-specific personal briefing	Interviewers briefed (%)	Duration
Austria	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Belgium	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Czech Republic	Yes	33.2%	4 hours or less
Estonia	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Finland	Yes	100.0%	More than 8 hours
France	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Germany	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Hungary	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Iceland	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Ireland	Yes	100.0%	More than 8 hours
Israel	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Italy	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Lithuania	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Netherlands	Yes	100.0%	4 hours or less
Norway	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Poland	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Portugal	Yes	100.0%	More than 8 hours
Russian Federation	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Slovenia	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Spain	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Sweden	Yes	100.0%	4-8 hours
Switzerland	Yes	100.0%	More than 8 hours
United Kingdom	Yes	92.1%	4-8 hours

Note:
Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

5.3.1 Briefing materials and activities

We may assume that some briefing presentation slides are used in all participating countries, and interviewers in all countries reportedly received ESS-specific written instructions (Based on ESS8 Data documentation report). Although not all materials that were used were deposited, the deposited materials show that, notwithstanding the harmonisation efforts, there is still considerable variability in the content, depth and breadth of the interviewer briefings.[5]

The ESS Briefing presentation slides and ESS Interviewer manual were used in some way in many countries, even if rarely adopted in full. These materials were usually (to a varying degree) adapted, or used as source of inspiration to update the materials already in use (Table 5.5).

[5] The level of prior training and experience of the interviewer workforce (see Section 5.2, p. 50), the extent to which the usual practice matches the ESS standards, the perceived needs for improvement, and particular fieldwork conditions and strategies (e.g. incentives, telephone recruitment; see Section 6.3, p. 69) obviously differ across participating countries. Partly for this reason it is not straightforward to assess the adequacy of the briefing materials. We focus here on the adoption of the ESS briefing materials that were made available to national teams in Round 8, and will need to refrain from drawing hard conclusions with respect to country-specific deviations.

Table 5.5 Interviewer briefing presentation slides and written instructions, Round 8

Country	Briefing presentation slides deposited	ESS Briefing presentation slides used	Written instructions deposited	ESS Interviewer manual used
Austria	Yes	Yes, most of it	No	Yes, all of it
Belgium[1]	Yes	Yes, most of it	Yes/No	Yes, all of it/No
Czech Republic	Yes	Only a few parts	Yes	Only a few parts
Estonia	Yes	Yes, most of it	No	Yes, most of it
Finland	No	Yes, most of it	Yes	Yes, most of it
France	Yes	Yes, most of it	No	Only a few parts
Germany	No	Yes, most of it	Yes	Yes, most of it
Hungary	No		Yes	
Iceland	Yes		Yes	
Ireland	Yes	Yes, all of it	Yes	Yes, all of it
Israel	Yes	Yes, most of it	Yes	Yes, all of it
Italy	Yes		Yes	
Lithuania	Yes		Yes	
Netherlands	Yes	Yes, most of it	Yes	Yes, most of it
Norway	Yes	No	Yes	No
Poland	No		Yes	
Portugal	Yes		Yes	
Russian Federation	No		Yes	
Slovenia	No	Yes, most of it	Yes	Yes, all of it
Spain	Yes	Only a few parts	Yes	Yes, most of it
Sweden	Yes	Only a few parts	No	No
Switzerland	Yes	Yes, most of it	Yes	Only a few parts
United Kingdom	No	Yes, most of it	Yes	Yes, most of it

Note:
Based on ESS8 Deposited documentation and ESS8 Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire. The Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire was not completed for The Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and the Russian Federation.

[1] The briefing of Dutch-speaking and French-speaking interviewers was mostly aligned but the ESS Interviewer manual could not be translated into French due to resource constraints, and active role-playing on interview situations was only done with the Dutch-speaking interviewers.

An overview of countries' additional briefing materials and activities is presented in Table 5.6 (contact and recruitment task) and Table 5.7 (questionnaire administration task).

Doorstep situations were both discussed in group and practiced via active role-playing in Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Slovenia and Switzerland. There was group discussion (but no active role-playing) in 5 countries, and active-role playing (but no group discussion) in 2 countries. Only in Norway, Spain and Sweden, particular doorstep situations were neither discussed in group nor practiced via active role-playing. The ESS Contact Form was integrated in the interviewer briefing in all countries except for Sweden, while the relevant movie clips were used in 9 countries.

Interview situations were both discussed in group and practiced via active role-playing in Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. There was group discussion (but no active role-playing) in 3 countries, and active-role playing (but no group discussion) in 2 countries. Only in Germany and Sweden, particular interview situations were neither discussed in group nor practiced via active role-playing. Part of the ESS Questionnaire or the ESS Practice interview was integrated in the interviewer briefing in all countries except for Germany, Norway and Sweden, while the relevant movie clips were used in 8 countries.

For both the contact and recruitment task and the questionnaire administration task, an overall task attention score, ranging from 0 to 4, is determined as the number of materials and activities that were used (of those listed in Table 5.6 and Table 5.7). The median country used 2 of the materials/activities related to contact and recruitment, and 3 of the materials/activities related to questionnaire administration. These scores suggest that overall somewhat more attention was paid in the interviewer briefing to the interviewers' questionnaire administration task than to the contact and recruitment task. The scores are also positively related ($r = 0.564$, $p = 0.028$).

Table 5.6 and Table 5.7 also include a measure of the interviewers' acceptance, as perceived by the briefing instructors, of the ESS contact procedure and the ESS rules for standardised interviewing, respectively. The briefing instructors generally observed the interviewers to be very accepting of the ESS instructions. Only for Germany and Switzerland (for the ESS contact procedure) and for Belgium (for the ESS rules for standardised interviewing), a perceived acceptance lower than 4 on the 5-point scale from 'Not accepting at all' to 'Very accepting' was reported.

Table 5.6 Interviewer briefing materials and activities related to contact and recruitment, Round 8

Country	ESS Contact form	Movie clips of doorstep situations	Group discussions on particular doorstep situations	Active role plays by interviewers on doorstep situations	Interviewers' acceptance of ESS instructions[a]
Austria	Yes	No	No	Yes	5.0
Belgium	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0
Czech Republic					
Estonia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	4.0
Finland	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	5.0
France	Yes	No	Yes	No	4.0
Germany	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2.0
Hungary					
Iceland					
Ireland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5.0
Israel	Yes	No	Yes	No	4.0
Italy					
Lithuania					
Netherlands	Yes	No	No	Yes	5.0
Norway	Yes	No	No	No	4.0
Poland					
Portugal					
Russian Federation					
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5.0
Spain	Yes	No	No	No	5.0
Sweden	No	No	No	No	5.0
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.5
United Kingdom	Yes	No	No	Yes	5.0

Note:
Based on ESS8 Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire. The Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire was not completed for The Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and the Russian Federation.

[a] The interviewers' acceptance of ESS instructions was evaluated by briefing instructors on a 5-point scale from 'Not accepting at all' to 'Very accepting'. Evaluations of multiple instructors in a country were averaged.

Table 5.7 Interviewer briefing materials and activities related to questionnaire administration, Round 8

Country	ESS Questionnaire or Practice interview	Movie clips of interviewing situations	Group discussions on particular interviewing situations	Active role plays by interviewers on interviewing situations	Interviewers' acceptance of ESS instructions[a]
Austria	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	5.0
Belgium[1]	Yes/No	Yes	Yes	Yes/No	3.5
Czech Republic					
Estonia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	4.0
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5.0
France	Yes	No	No	Yes	4.0
Germany	No	Yes	No	No	4.0
Hungary					
Iceland					
Ireland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5.0
Israel	Yes	No	No	Yes	4.0
Italy					
Lithuania					
Netherlands	Yes	No	Yes	No	5.0
Norway	No	No	Yes	No	5.0
Poland					
Portugal					
Russian Federation					
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5.0
Spain	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	4.5
Sweden	No	No	No	No	5.0
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.0
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.0

Note:
Based on ESS8 Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire. The Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire was not completed for The Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and the Russian Federation.

[a] The interviewers' acceptance of ESS instructions was evaluated by briefing instructors on a 5-point scale from 'Not accepting at all' to 'Very accepting'. Evaluations of multiple instructors in a country were averaged.

[1] The briefing of Dutch-speaking and French-speaking interviewers was mostly aligned but the ESS Interviewer manual could not be translated into French due to resource constraints, and active role-playing on interview situations was only done with the Dutch-speaking interviewers.

6 Fieldwork process and outcomes

6.1 Fieldwork quality assurance and control

In order to assure the fieldwork quality, participating countries' planned fieldwork strategies and projections have to be documented, and assessed and signed off by the Fieldwork Team before the start of fieldwork. A contact form data file, containing detailed (attempt- and case-level) paradata on the contact and recruitment process, also has to be deposited along with the main survey data for all countries in order to produce response rates and other indicators on the fieldwork process and outcomes in a uniform way across countries.

The fieldwork questionnaires were properly signed off by the Fieldwork Team before the start of fieldwork in all countries except for Austria, Estonia and Slovenia and the fieldwork projections were submitted in all countries except for Austria, Hungary, Norway and the Russian Federation (Figure 1.1, p. 6; Table 6.1). The fieldwork questionnaire and fieldwork projections were signed off at most 1.5 week (Estonia) and 2.5 weeks (Hungary) after the start of fieldwork, respectively.

Among the 14 countries where the fieldwork questionnaire was signed off before the start of fieldwork and fieldwork started in fairly good time and, the fieldwork questionnaire was signed off between less than half a week (the United Kingdom) and 5 weeks (Norway) before the start of the fieldwork. Among the 15 countries where the fieldwork projections were signed off before the start of fieldwork, the projections were signed off between 1 week (Belgium, Ireland, Israel, Portugal and the United Kingdom) and 8 weeks (France) before the start of the fieldwork.

National teams of all countries also managed to deposit contact form data files (see section 8, p. 132).

Table 6.1 Fieldwork quality assurance and control, Round 8

Country	Fieldwork questionnaire signed off	Fieldwork projections submitted	Contact forms data file deposited
Austria	26 September 2016	22 September 2016	8 March 2017
Belgium	5 September 2016	6 September 2016	27 March 2017
Czech Republic	19 October 2016	30 September 2016	23 February 2017
Estonia	11 October 2016	5 September 2016	22 June 2017
Finland	23 August 2016	5 August 2016	4 May 2017
France	24 October 2016	15 September 2016	23 April 2017
Germany	23 August 2016	4 August 2016	13 June 2017
Hungary	8 May 2017	30 May 2017	12 December 2017
Iceland	26 October 2016	3 October 2016	31 August 2017
Ireland	31 October 2016	18 November 2016	12 June 2017
Israel	31 August 2016	5 September 2016	26 April 2017
Italy	7 August 2017	1 September 2017	21 December 2017
Lithuania	18 September 2017	19 September 2017	6 February 2018
Netherlands	1 August 2016	18 August 2016	23 March 2017
Norway	18 July 2016	23 August 2016	27 February 2017
Poland	2 November 2016	28 October 2016	7 April 2017
Portugal	17 October 2016	14 October 2016	18 June 2017
Russian Federation	31 October 2016	16 January 2017	19 May 2017
Slovenia	28 September 2016	6 September 2016	23 February 2017
Spain	2 February 2017	1 February 2017	26 December 2017
Sweden[1]	17 August 2016		10 April 2017
Switzerland	23 August 2016	22 August 2016	1 June 2017
United Kingdom	30 August 2016	24 August 2016	30 May 2017

Note:

Based on information from the Fieldwork Team and Archive.

[1] Information on fieldwork projections is not available for Sweden.

6.2 Timing and intensity of fieldwork

As shown in Figure 1.1 (p. 6), and summarised in Table 6.2, fieldwork started between the end of August 2016 (Germany, Norway and Sweden) and the beginning of October 2017 (Lithuania). By the end of September 2016, fieldwork had started in 11 countries, and by the end of November 2016, fieldwork had started in an additional 7 countries. Fieldwork in Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Spain started after the beginning of January 2017.

Fieldwork was not completed by the end of December 2016 in any country except for Austria and the Czech Republic. In 9 countries (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), fieldwork started fairly timely but the fieldwork period was extended beyond a 4-month period. In 7 countries (Estonia, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and the Russian Federation), fieldwork simply started late, and in 4 countries (Iceland, Ireland, Portugal and Spain), fieldwork both started late and was extended beyond a 4-month period.

Once fieldwork got underway, it was completed in between 8 weeks (the Czech Republic) and 34 weeks (Portugal). In the median country, fieldwork took 20 weeks.

Figure 6.1 visualizes, for each participating country in Round 8, the intensity of fieldwork efforts in terms of the weekly number of contact attempts over the fieldwork period. The horizontal axis, which represents the time frame of the fieldwork, is fixed across countries (except for Hungary, Italy and Lithuania, where fieldwork was started after the second week of May 2017). The vertical axis (indicating the number of contact attempts in a given week) is scaled differently by country to accomodate differences in gross sample size and, in particular, the volume of telephone contact attempts in some countries. The area colour differentiates initial (blue) and reassignment (green) attempts,[6] and first attempts by each new interviewer to whom the sample unit was assigned (dark shade) and follow-up attempts by the same interviewer (light shade). Not only the timing and duration of the fieldwork, but also the way in which fieldwork efforts evolve over the fieldwork period, differs markedly across countries.

[6] A contact attempt is categorised as a reassignment attempt if the sample unit has been reassigned to a new interviewer. All other attempts are categorised as initial attempts (see subsection 6.6, p. 100).

Table 6.2 Fieldwork duration, Round 8

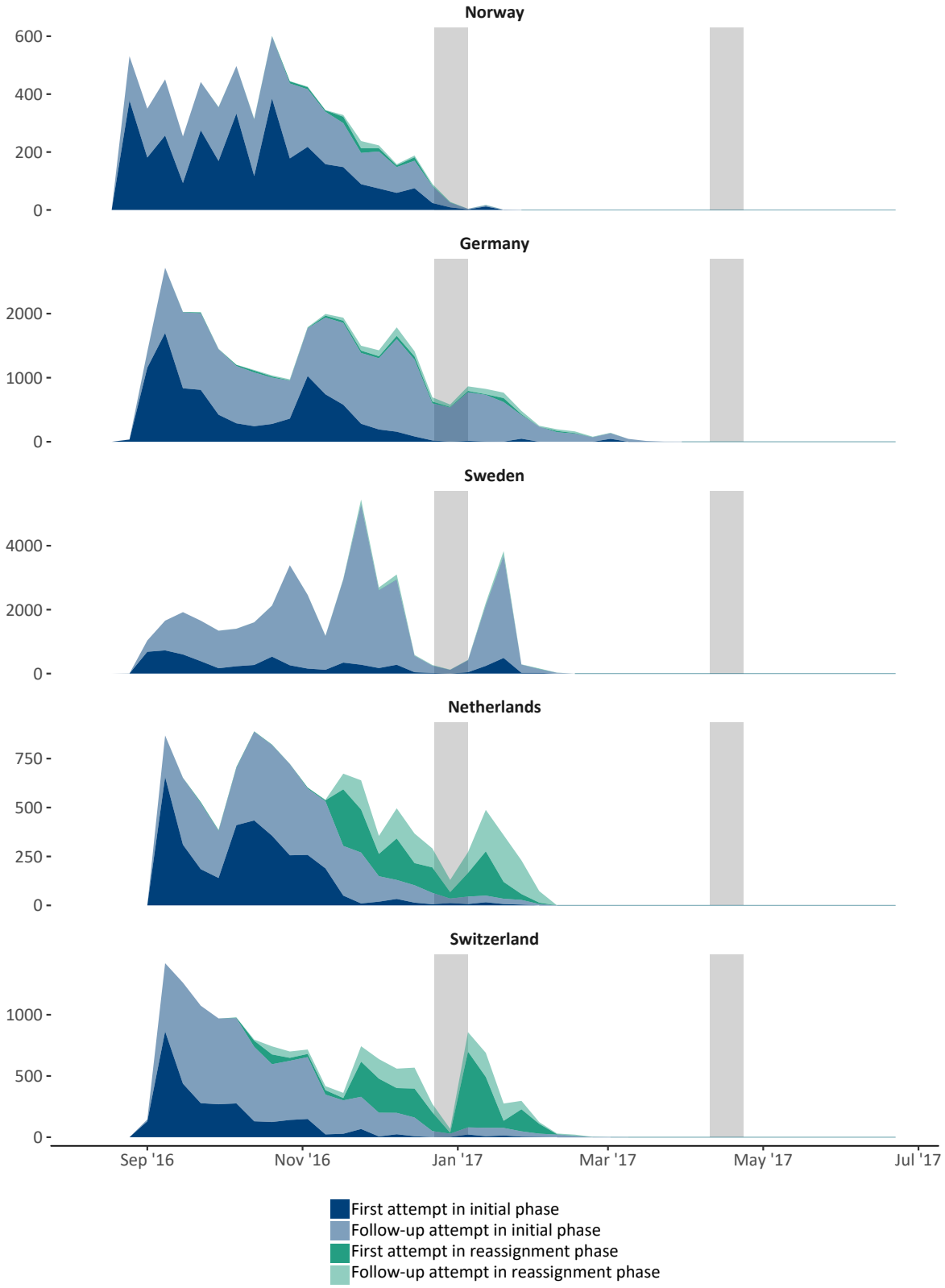
Country	Start	End	Duration (weeks)
Austria	19 September 2016	28 December 2016	14.3
Belgium	14 September 2016	31 January 2017	19.9
Czech Republic	24 October 2016	19 December 2016	8.0
Estonia	1 October 2016	31 January 2017	17.4
Finland	15 September 2016	8 March 2017	24.9
France	10 November 2016	11 March 2017	17.3
Germany	23 August 2016	26 March 2017	30.7
Hungary	14 May 2017	16 September 2017	17.9
Iceland	2 November 2016	8 June 2017	31.1
Ireland	25 November 2016	8 May 2017	23.4
Israel	10 September 2016	8 February 2017	21.6
Italy	11 September 2017	19 November 2017	9.9
Lithuania	4 October 2017	28 December 2017	12.1
Netherlands	1 September 2016	31 January 2017	21.7
Norway	22 August 2016	17 January 2017	21.1
Poland	7 November 2016	22 February 2017	15.3
Portugal	20 October 2016	15 June 2017	34.0
Russian Federation	3 January 2017	19 March 2017	10.7
Slovenia	21 September 2016	11 January 2017	16.0
Spain	16 February 2017	23 June 2017	18.1
Sweden	26 August 2016	10 February 2017	24.0
Switzerland	1 September 2016	2 March 2017	26.0
United Kingdom	1 September 2016	20 March 2017	28.6

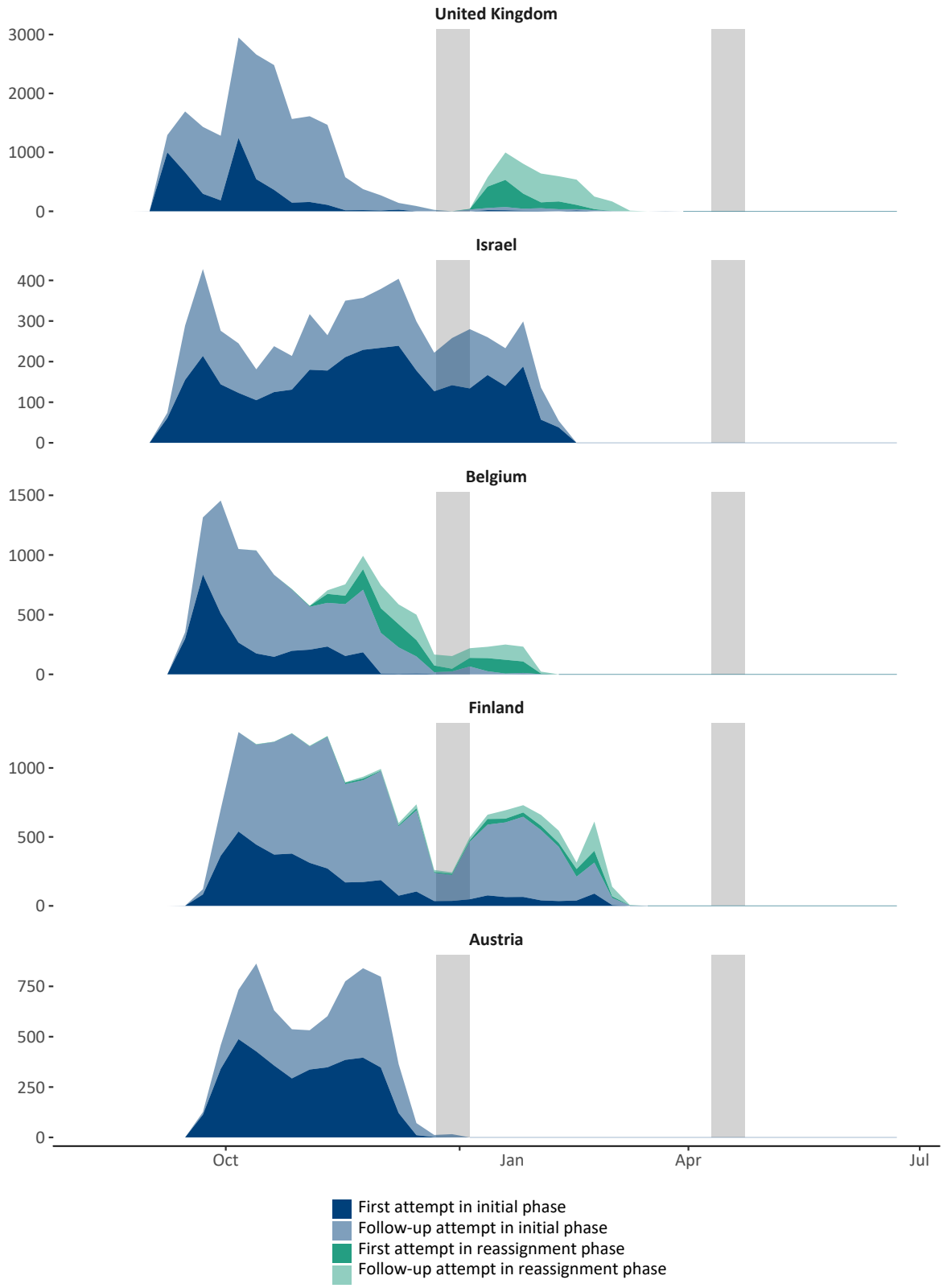
Note:
Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

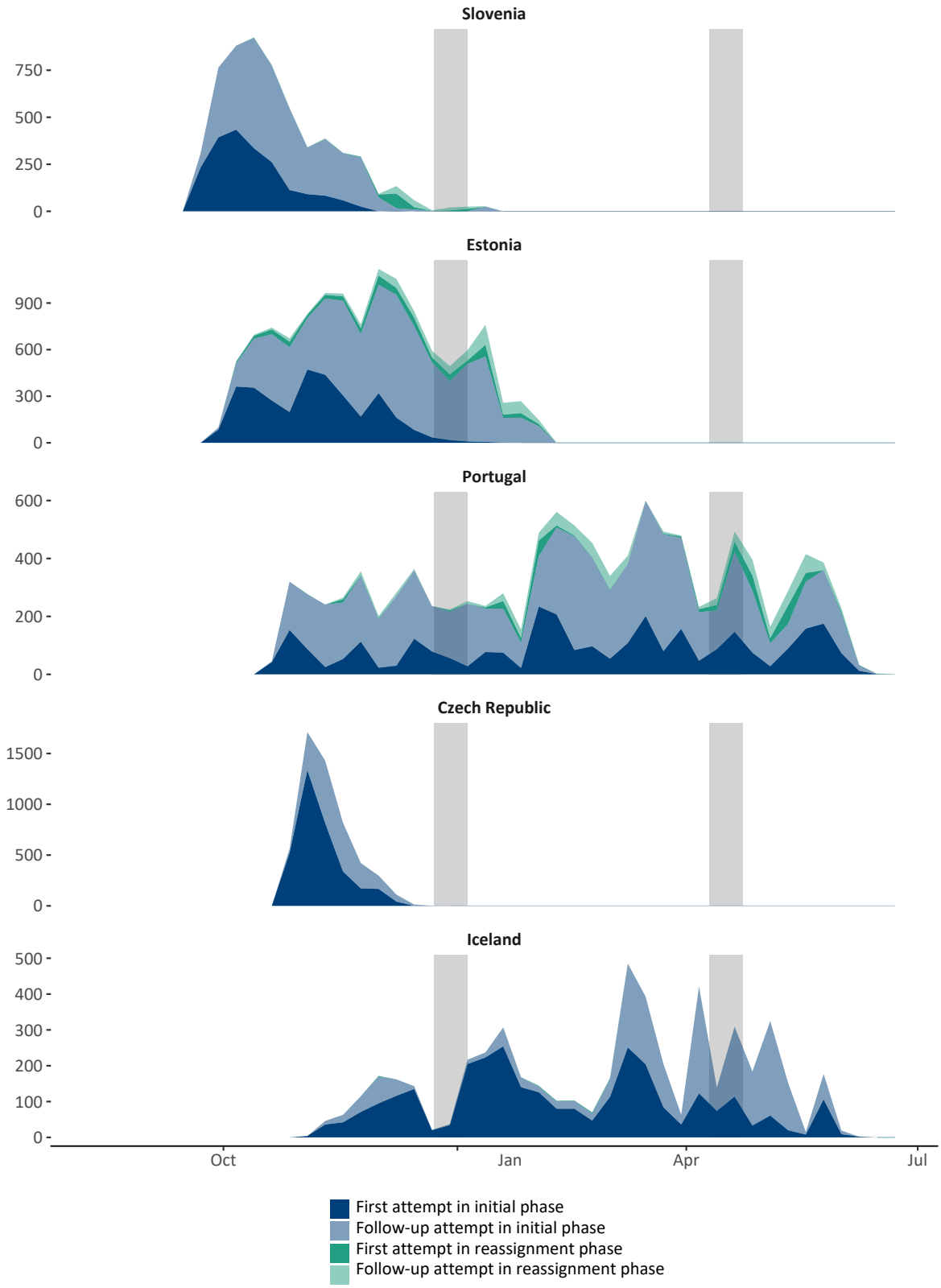
Figure 6.1 Fieldwork flow, Round 8

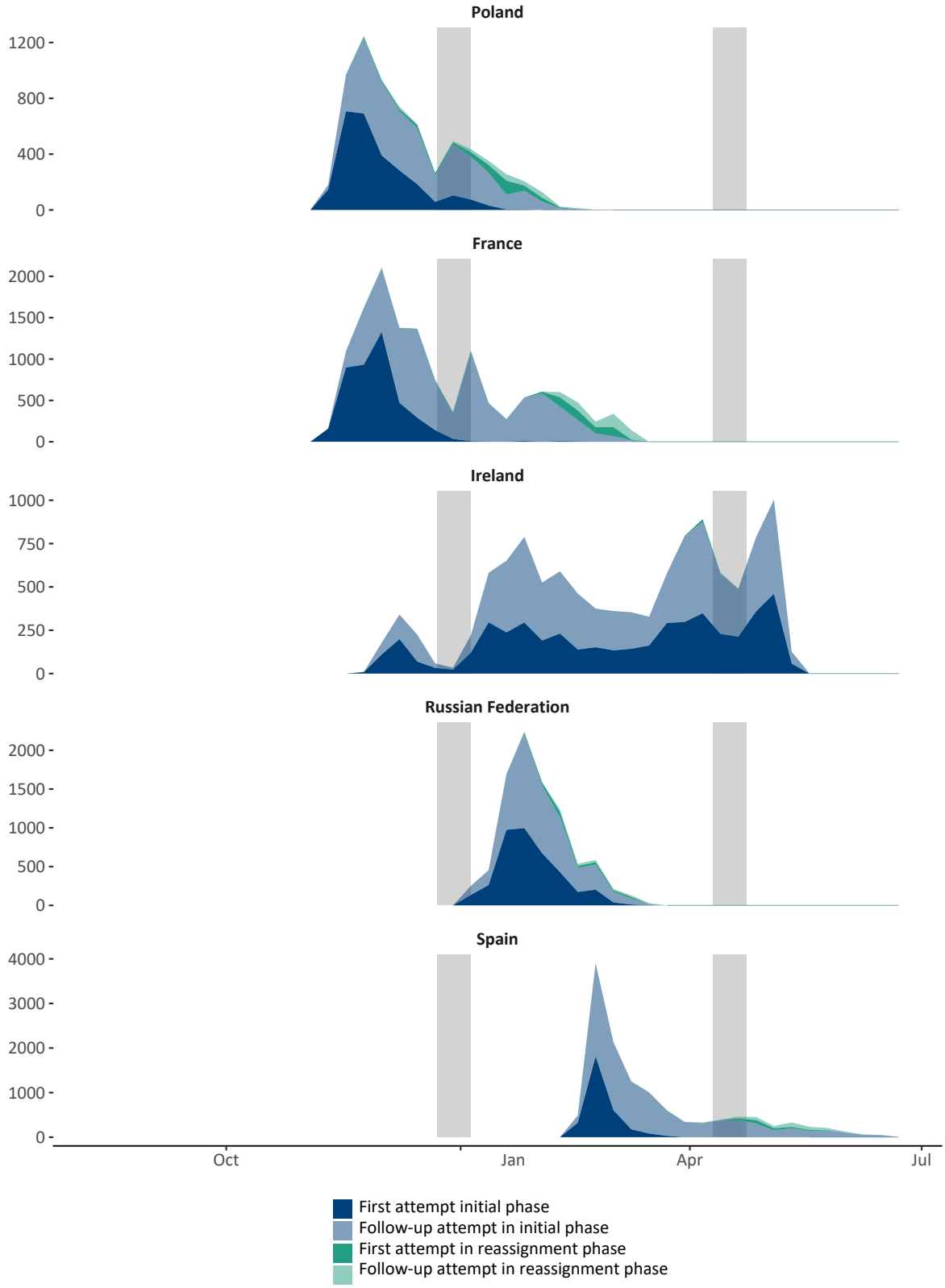
Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

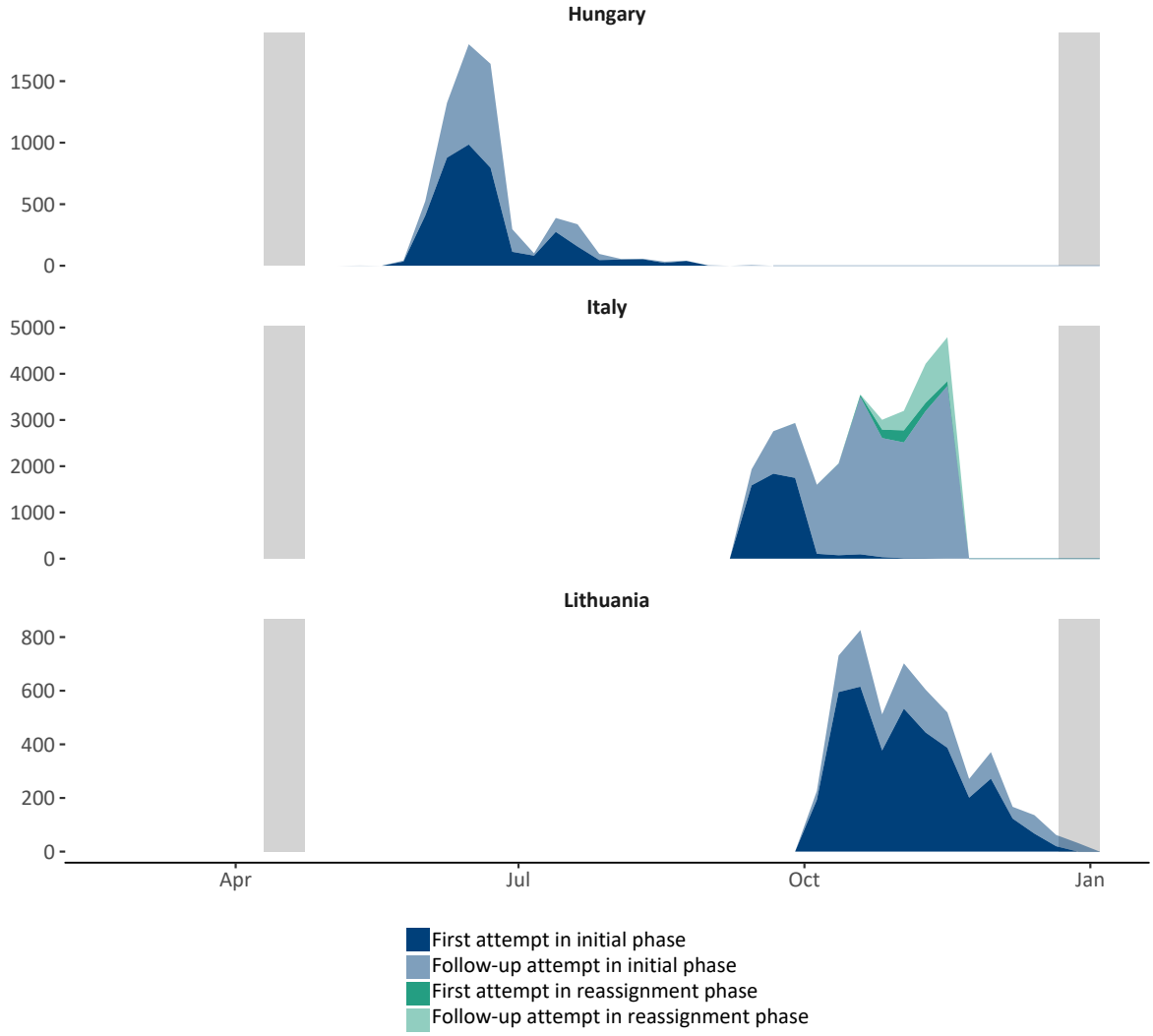
Note: The Christmas period (23 December 2016 to 5 January 2017), the Easter period (10 April 2017 to 23 April 2017) and the Christmas period (22 December 2017 to 4 January 2018) are highlighted. Countries are ordered by fieldwork start. Automated telephone calls, as enumerated under NUMTEL and NUMTELA are not included since they are not dated, and contact attempts with date missing or with a recorded date outside the reported fieldwork period are excluded.




United Kingdom
3000
2000
1000
0
Israel
400
300
200
100
0
Belgium
1500
1000
500
0
Finland
1000
500
0
Austria
750
500
250
0
Oct
Jan
Apr
Jul
First attempt in initial phase
Follow-up attempt in initial phase
First attempt in reassignment phase
Follow-up attempt in reassignment phase


Slovenia
750
500
250
0
Estonia
900
600
300
0
Portugal
600
400
200
0
Czech Republic
1500
1000
500
0
Iceland
500
400
300
200
100
0
Oct
Jan
Apr
Jul
First attempt in initial phase
Follow-up attempt in initial phase
First attempt in reassignment phase
Follow-up attempt in reassignment phase


Poland
1200
800
400
0
France
2000
1500
1000
500
0
Ireland
1000
750
500
250
0
Russian Federation
2000
1500
1000
500
0
Spain
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
Oct
Jan
Apr
Jul
First attempt initial phase
Follow-up attempt in initial phase
First attempt in reassignment phase
Follow-up attempt in reassignment phase


Hungary
1500
1000
500
0
Italy
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
Lithuania
800
600
400
200
0
Apr
Jul
Oct
Jan
First attempt in initial phase
Follow-up attempt in initial phase
First attempt in reassignment phase
Follow-up attempt in reassignment phase

6.3 Contact and recruitment strategies

With the aim of low noncontact rates and high response rates, the ESS Specification imposes a fairly strict contact and recruitment strategy. By the standard contact procedure, (the first) contact should be face-to-face.[7] At least four personal visits are required, on different times of the day and different days of the week, with at least one in the evening and one at the weekend, and spread over at least two weeks, before a sample unit can be abandoned as 'non-productive'.

6.3.1 Number and timing of personal visits

Compliance with the prescribed number and timing of personal visits is assessed by considering personal visits made to sample units that are categorised as final 'Non-contact' (code 20) or 'Broken appointment' (code 31) (see Section 6.4, p. 81). These cases remain potentially productive, and should not have been prematurely abandoned.

Table 6.3 presents some descriptive statistics of the number of personal visits made to these cases in Round 8. The average number of personal visits ranges between 0.0 (Iceland) and 8.7 (Belgium). In the median country, 4.1 personal visits were made on average.

In 7 countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Spain), (nearly) all of the cases were personally visited at least four times before they were abandoned as non-productive, while in 2 countries (Iceland and Sweden), (nearly) all cases were visited fewer than four times. Note also that in some countries (notably Estonia, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland) contact efforts in terms of personal visits are highly concentrated on particular cases. Relatively large numbers of cases (at least about 1 in 4) were abandoned without four personal visits but there were also fair numbers of cases where many more than the required four visits were made.

Even though the same minimum number of personal visits is required in those countries for which an excep-tion to the general principle of face-to-face recruitment is allowed, the number of personal visits made is clearly much lower. Among these countries, between about 1 in 7 (Finland) and (nearly) all (Iceland) cases were abandoned without any personal visit at all, and only up to about 1 in 5 (Finland) cases were visited the required minimum.

Table 6.4 shows the extent to which the specifications on the timing of personal visits are met. In 5 countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Lithuania and Poland), (nearly) all of the cases were personally visited at least once in the evening. In 3 countries (Austria, Belgium and France), (nearly) all of the cases were visited at least once at the weekend. In 4 countries (Belgium, France, Italy and Spain), (nearly) all of the cases were visited at least twice over a period of 14 days. On the other hand, there is no country where (nearly) all of the cases were visited at least twice and with at least up to the first four visits all at different day-time combinations. The highest proportion of cases for which this specification is met (6 in 7 cases) is observed for Austria. In the median country, about 3 in 4 cases were personally visited at least once in the evening, about 2 in 3 cases were visited at least once at the weekend, about 2 in 3 cases were visited at least twice over a period of 14 days, and about 3 in 5 cases were visited at least twice and with at least up to the first four visits all at different day-time combinations.

[7] In some countries with sample frames of named individuals with telephone numbers an excep on to the general principle of face-to-face recruitment is allowed (Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden).

In Belgium, all five specifications were met for about 3 in 4 cases, and in the median country all five specifica-tions were met for about 1 in 4 cases. In 4 countries (Finland, Iceland, Israel and Sweden) all five specifications were met for (almost) none of the cases, but only in Iceland (nearly) all cases were abandoned before any of these specifications being met.

Table 6.3 Compliance with contact specifications: Number of personal visits, Round 8

Country	N[a]	Min	Max	Mean	SD	At least one (%)	At least four (%)
Austria	279	4	6	4.1	0.3	100.0%	100.0%
Belgium	70	4	20	8.7	2.8	100.0%	100.0%
Czech Republic	33	4	4	4.0	0.0	100.0%	100.0%
Estonia	105	0	14	4.5	2.6	99.0%	60.0%
Finland	248	0	7	2.0	1.5	86.7%	20.2%
France	552	1	12	5.0	1.1	100.0%	93.7%
Germany	333	0	17	3.4	2.6	99.4%	40.8%
Hungary	170	0	10	3.6	2.3	99.4%	52.9%
Iceland	303	0	4	0.0	0.3	1.3%	0.3%
Ireland	329	6	10	6.3	0.9	100.0%	100.0%
Israel	148	1	6	1.6	1.0	100.0%	4.7%
Italy	327	2	13	8.4	1.3	100.0%	99.4%
Lithuania	71	4	5	4.0	0.1	100.0%	100.0%
Netherlands	217	0	10	5.0	2.6	96.3%	74.7%
Norway	188	0	5	1.4	1.3	74.5%	11.7%
Poland	37	1	10	6.1	2.8	100.0%	81.1%
Portugal	280	1	21	5.0	3.9	100.0%	55.7%
Russian Federation	357	1	8	3.6	1.2	100.0%	50.7%
Slovenia	43	0	11	3.7	3.3	72.1%	48.8%
Spain	85	2	24	8.1	3.8	100.0%	97.6%
Sweden	285	0	6	0.5	0.9	31.2%	1.4%
Switzerland	342	0	47	4.7	5.1	98.8%	64.6%
United Kingdom	409	1	18	7.8	3.7	100.0%	85.6%

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to all cases categorised as final 'Non-contact' (code 20) or 'Broken appointment' (code 31).

Table 6.4 Compliance with contact specifications: Timing and spread of personal visits, Round 8

Country	N[a]	At least one in the evening (%)[b]	At least one at the weekend (%)[c]	Spread over 14 days (%)	Different days and times (%)[e]
Austria	279	100.0%	100.0%	74.9%	87.1%
Belgium	70	100.0%	100.0%	98.6%	74.3%
Czech Republic	33	84.8%	63.6%	81.8%	75.8%
Estonia	105	65.7%	70.5%	79.0%	55.2%
Finland	248	12.9%	22.2%	47.2%	38.3%
France	552	96.9%	96.9%	96.7%	72.1%
Germany	333	59.2%	47.1%	62.8%	43.2%
Hungary	170	53.5%	62.4%	28.8%	53.5%
Iceland	303	0.7%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Ireland	329	92.4%	82.7%	50.8%	75.7%
Israel	148	42.6%	11.5%	2.0%	25.0%
Italy	327	88.7%	87.8%	99.4%	66.1%
Lithuania	71	100.0%	94.4%	62.0%	83.1%
Netherlands	217	64.5%	58.5%	79.7%	56.2%
Norway	188	45.2%	25.0%	18.6%	23.9%
Poland	37	100.0%	86.5%	83.8%	73.0%
Portugal	280	74.6%	66.1%	41.8%	62.5%
Russian Federation	357	78.7%	81.0%	27.2%	77.0%
Slovenia	43	46.5%	58.1%	62.8%	44.2%
Spain	85	95.3%	90.6%	98.8%	62.4%
Sweden	285	14.0%	9.8%	7.0%	6.7%
Switzerland	342	73.7%	59.6%	70.5%	57.6%
United Kingdom	409	81.7%	80.0%	87.5%	67.7%

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to all cases categorised as 'Non-contact' (code 20) or 'Broken appointment' (code 31).

[b] Visits after 17:00 are categorised as 'evening'.

[c] Visits on Saturday or Sunday are categorised as 'weekend' (except for Israel, where the weekend falls on Friday and Saturday).

[d] Visits are categorised as 'morning' (before 12:00), 'afternoon' (between 12:00 and 17:00), 'evening' (between 17:00 and 21:00) or 'night', crossed with the day of the week. Whether different days of the week and/or different times of the day were attempted is derived for up to the first four visits.

6.3.2 Timing of personal visits

The extent to which the specifications on the timing of personal visits are met is closely related to the typical timing pattern of such visits. Figure 6.2 shows the distribution of (unsolicited)[8] personal visits by times of the day and days of the week. Darker shades indicate that more attempts were made at the respective day and time. Table 6.5 presents the corresponding relative frequency distribution over four day of the week categories (Monday through Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday), and a breakdown of the weekday category (Monday through Thursday) by time of day (morning, afternoon and evening). Nearly all visits were made between 6:00 and 22:00, with the bulk (90%) between 10:00 and 19:00.

Between about 3 in 7 (Lithuania) and about 4 in 5 (Finland) unsolicited personal visits were made on weekdays (about 3 in 5 visits in the median country). Weekday morning visits are relatively rare. In Iceland almost no such visits were made, and in the median country only about 1 in 11 visits were. Weekday visits in the afternoon and in the evening each account for about 1 in 4 visits.

Between about 1 in 17 (Israel) and about 1 in 3 (France) visits were made on Saturdays (about 1 in 5 visits in the median country). In Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland almost no visits were made on Sundays, and in the median country, only about 1 in 13 visits were. Sunday visits are relatively common (about 1 in 5 visits) in Israel, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Sweden.

A commonly observed pattern[9] consists of a relative overrepresentation of weekday evening and Saturday visits, either combined with an average number of Sunday visits (Iceland), or an underrepresentation of Sunday visits (Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). Another pattern consists of a relative underrepresentation of weekday visits combined with an overrepresentation of Saturday visits (Hungary and Poland) or both Saturday and Sunday visits (Lithuania and the Russian Federation). In Austria, Ireland and Italy, evening weekday visits are relatively underrepresented, while in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Israel, Norway and Sweden, Saturday visits are relatively underrepresented, and in Finland, both evening weekday visits and Saturday visits are.

[8] Visits following an appointment (for which the timing likely would have been determined by the target household/respondent are excluded.

[9] Weekday (Monday through Thursday) visits are categorised as 'morning' (before 12:00), 'afternoon' (between 12:00 and 17:00), 'evening' (between 17:00 and 21:00) or 'night'. Friday, Saturday and Sunday visits are considered overall. The observed frequency distribution is compared to the frequency distribution which we would expect if visits were uniformly spread over the week. Timing categories are identified as under- or overrepresented on the basis of a chi-squared test at significance level 0.05.


Austria
Belgium
Czech Republic
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday
6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

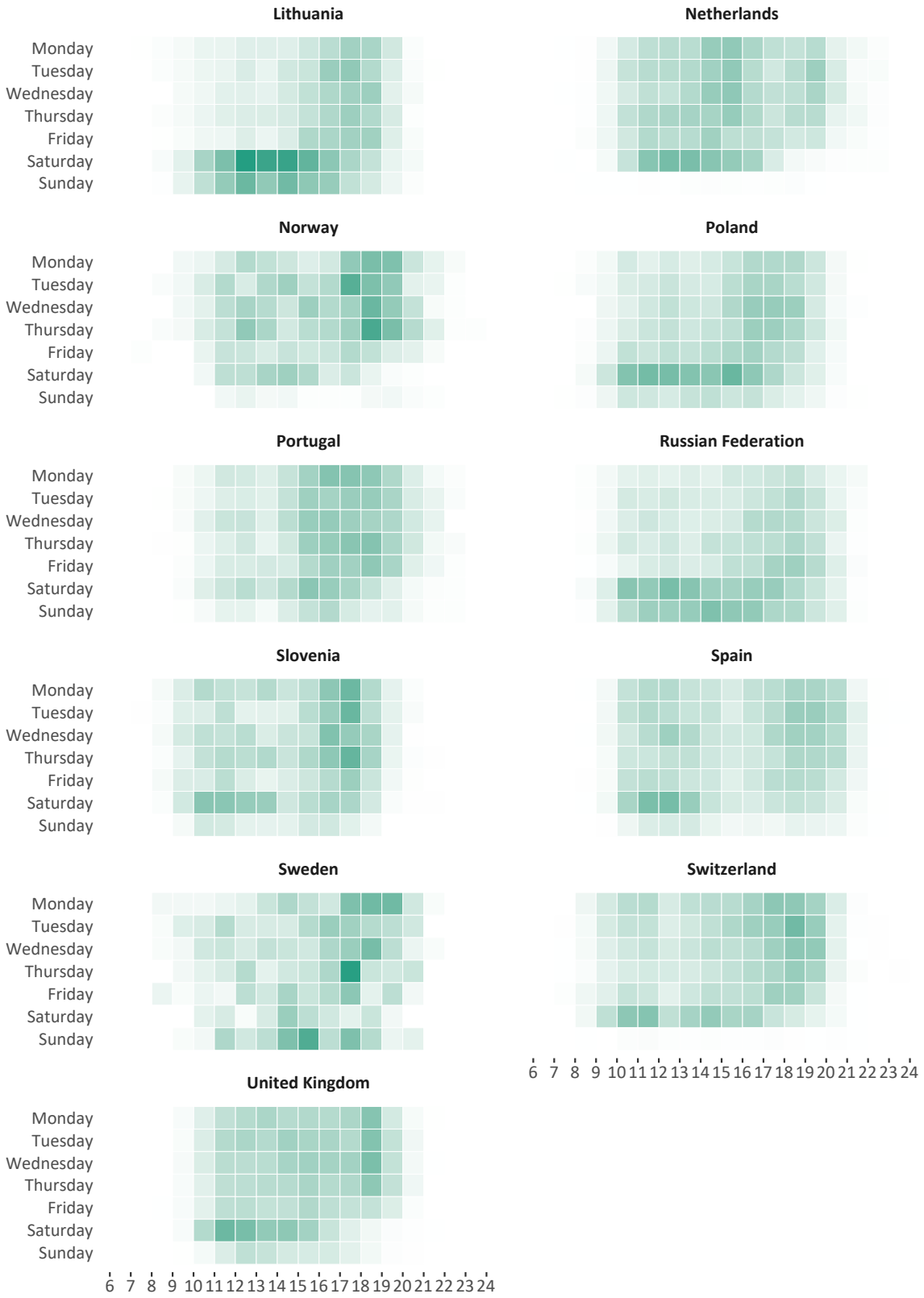


Figure 6.2 Timing of (unsolicited) personal visits, Round 8
Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.
Visits with day of the week or hour missing or with a recorded hour between 0:00 and 6:00 are excluded.

Table 6.5 Timing of (unsolicited) personal visits, Round 8

Country	N[a]	Weekday morning (%)	Weekday afternoon (%)	Weekday evening (%)	Weekday, overall (%)	Friday (%)	Saturday (%)	Sunday (%)
Austria	6596	16.3%	24.6%	17.1%	57.9%	16.3%	16.1%	9.6%
Belgium	9488	8.0%	23.3%	29.6%	60.9%	12.6%	21.6%	4.9%
Czech Republic	4618	9.7%	23.6%	23.4%	57.0%	15.9%	12.8%	14.3%
Estonia	7033	8.5%	31.1%	22.0%	61.7%	12.8%	12.1%	13.5%
Finland	2964	23.3%	46.7%	9.6%	80.1%	12.5%	7.1%	0.3%
France	11788	7.2%	21.5%	28.3%	57.0%	12.7%	30.3%	0.0%
Germany	22186	9.0%	29.1%	25.0%	63.2%	14.7%	19.9%	2.2%
Hungary	6232	9.9%	24.5%	20.1%	54.5%	13.7%	18.3%	13.5%
Iceland	418	3.8%	17.5%	35.9%	57.4%	8.4%	20.8%	13.4%
Ireland	9887	10.7%	37.5%	17.2%	65.4%	13.7%	14.0%	7.0%
Israel	5446	9.8%	33.4%	25.4%	68.8%	6.8%	5.9%	18.5%
Italy	27587	16.7%	24.1%	16.4%	57.2%	15.4%	19.7%	7.6%
Lithuania	4836	4.9%	20.1%	18.7%	43.7%	10.8%	26.2%	19.4%
Netherlands	9304	11.4%	35.8%	20.6%	68.2%	14.2%	17.3%	0.4%
Norway	1721	9.0%	28.6%	37.6%	75.7%	11.2%	10.9%	2.2%
Poland	5539	8.3%	25.0%	19.3%	52.6%	14.2%	23.3%	9.8%
Portugal	9859	5.9%	27.9%	29.6%	63.8%	14.4%	14.4%	7.4%
Russian Federation	8341	7.8%	18.4%	18.3%	44.5%	12.8%	22.3%	20.5%
Slovenia	3920	13.8%	28.1%	20.3%	64.0%	11.7%	17.7%	6.6%
Spain	9677	11.2%	23.6%	28.8%	63.7%	13.6%	16.9%	5.7%
Sweden	719	8.6%	23.4%	29.5%	61.5%	12.7%	8.8%	17.1%
Switzerland	8848	13.2%	25.2%	28.4%	67.0%	14.2%	18.2%	0.6%
United Kingdom	22405	9.1%	32.8%	22.6%	64.5%	12.3%	16.2%	7.0%

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

Weekday (Monday through Thursday) visits are categorised as 'morning' (before 12:00), 'afternoon' (between 12:00 and 17:00), 'evening' (between 17:00 and 21:00) or 'night'

[a] *N* refers to the total number of unsolicited personal visits.

6.3.3 Recruitment mode

Compliance with the face-to-face recruitment requirement is assessed by considering the mode (personal visit, telephone or other) of the first succesful contact for all sample units for which any contact was made.[10] Table 6.6 shows the relative frequency distributions.

In 12 countries, contact was made at a personal visit for (nearly) all contacted cases. Only in Sweden, fewer than 1 in 20 cases were first contacted at a personal visit. In the other countries for which an exception to the general principle of face-to-face recruitment is allowed, the number of cases for which the first contact was made at a personal visit is also naturally fairly low: at most up to about 1 in 3 first contacts (Norway) were made at a personal visit.

[10] Instances of information (such as call centre refusals) having been communicated by the survey agency to interviewers, as well as contact attempts made by interviewers in any other mode (e.g. mail, social media) may be categorised as 'other'.

Table 6.6 Recruitment mode, Round 8

Country	N[a]	Personal visit (%)	Telephone (%)	Other (%)
Austria	3554	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Belgium	3081	95.3%	4.2%	0.5%
Czech Republic	3300	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Estonia	3064	67.7%	24.8%	7.5%
Finland	3007	22.0%	78.0%	0.0%
France	3282	99.5%	0.5%	0.0%
Germany	8954	91.1%	8.9%	0.1%
Hungary	3613	98.9%	0.9%	0.1%
Iceland	1693	19.9%	79.9%	0.2%
Ireland	3957	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Israel	3306	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Italy	4960	98.4%	1.5%	0.1%
Lithuania	3171	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Netherlands	2914	95.4%	3.9%	0.6%
Norway	2787	32.2%	64.5%	3.3%
Poland	2631	98.1%	1.9%	0.0%
Portugal	2317	99.8%	0.1%	0.0%
Russian Federation	3487	99.8%	0.2%	0.1%
Slovenia	1968	94.9%	2.5%	2.6%
Spain	2937	89.5%	3.4%	7.1%
Sweden	3596	4.7%	91.9%	3.4%
Switzerland	2640	86.9%	3.3%	9.8%
United Kingdom	4100	98.4%	0.7%	0.9%

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to all cases for which any contact was made.

6.3.4 Response enhancement: incentives to target respondents

Target respondents can also be offered incentives, unconditionally and/or conditional on cooperation. In all but 5 countries (Belgium, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania and the Russian Federation), some incentives were (standardly) offered, but the particularities vary markedly. Table 6.7 shows an overview of the respondent incentives that were used. Some general remarks based on the reported incentives and rationales:

- Although research suggests that unconditional incentives tend to be more effective, conditional incentives, and in particular those that are of a monetary or quasi-monetary nature such as vouchers and lottery tickets, appear more commonly used.
- Several countries specifically target subgroups which are less cooperative, by restricting incentives to particular areas (e.g. the Russian Federation), allowing the interviewers to offer an (additional) incentive at the doorstep (e.g. Poland) and/or increasing incentives with re-issues (e.g. the Netherlands).
- Unconditional incentives are usually sent with the advance letter. Small items or booklets may serve as a stimulus for people to open the letter (e.g. Finland).
- The perceived value of lottery tickets and other non-monetary incentives can be higher than the actual monetary value. Such incentives can be considered if budgets do not allow monetary incentives of a sufficiently high amount (e.g. Sweden).
- In several countries, experiments have been implemented in Round 8 (e.g. France) or previous rounds (e.g. Switzerland, Poland) to determine a cost-effective incentive structure.

Other response-enhancing measures such as dedicated websites, follow-up letters, and free (helpdesk) telephone numbers etc. are also frequently used but less consistently documented.

Table 6.7 Respondent incentives, Round 8

Country	Unconditional	Conditional
Austria	-	voucher
Belgium[1]	-	-
Czech Republic	-	cash incentive
Estonia	-	lottery ticket (newspaper subscription) and a shopping bag
Finland	packet of chewing gum and a booklet with Statistics Finland findings	lottery ticket (iphone and two vouchers)
France[2]	-	voucher and a lottery ticket
Germany[3]	-	cash incentive
Hungary	-	-
Iceland	-	lottery ticket
Ireland	-	cash incentive
Israel	-	-
Italy	-	voucher
Lithuania	-	-
Netherlands[4]	-	cash incentive
Norway	lottery ticket	-
Poland[5]	wall calendar	-
Portugal[6]	voucher	-
Russian Federation[7]	-	-
Slovenia	-	voucher and a shopping bag
Spain	-	voucher
Sweden	lottery ticket (or cinema ticket)	-
Switzerland	cash incentive	telescopic umbrella
United Kingdom	voucher	-

Note:
Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

[1] Dutch-speaking interviewers could offer a booklet with ESS findings at the doorstep as they saw fit. A subset of re-issued target respondents were offered a conditional cash incentive by way of experiment.

[2] The amount of the voucher incentive increased with re-issues. A subset of target households were offered an unconditional rather than a conditional incentive, by way of experiment.

[3] Interviewers could increase the cash incentive by a certain amount at the doorstep as they saw fit, and the amount of the cash incentive increased with re-issues.

[4] The amount of the cash incentive increased with re-issues.

[5] Interviewers could additionally offer a booklet with ESS findings, a penlight keyring, a high-visibility vest or a magnetic notepad at the doorstep as they saw fit.

[6] The voucher incentive is offered conditional on cooperation in the within-household selection stage.

[7] A conditional non-monetary incentive (chocolate or quality tea) was offered in low-response rate areas.

6.4 Outcome rates and detailed response breakdown

The response rates achieved in Round 8 are presented in Table 6.8. Table 6.8 also presents the non-contact, refusal and other-nonresponse rates.[11] A detailed breakdown of these rates by final outcome is presented in Table 6.9 and Table 6.10. The figures are discussed in the following subsections.

6.4.1 Response rates

The ESS has traditionally targeted a response rate of 70% (European Social Survey, 2015). However, very few countries have been able to reach this (for many countries quite ambitious) response rate target. The Round 8 response rate ranges between 30.6% (Germany) and 74.1% (Israel). The median country achieved a response rate of 53.0%. A response rate of at least 50% was achieved in 16 countries, but it exceeds 60% only in 8 countries (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Poland, the Russian Federation and Spain).

[11] Detailed final outcome or "disposition" codes for all sample units are derived from the sequences of contact attempt outcome codes recorded by the interviewers and the case-level interview and contact form indicators in the integrated Contact Form data set. The response rate is defined as the number of complete and valid interviews relative to the number of issued eligible sample units.

$$RR = \frac{n_{complete}}{n_{gross} - n_{ineligible}}$$

with n_{gross} the total number of issued sample units, $n_{ineligible}$ the total number of ineligible sample units, identified by the final outcome codes 43 'Deceased', 51 'Moved out of country', 61 'Derelict or demolished house', 62 'House not yet built, not ready for occupation', 63 'House not occupied', 64 'Address not residential: business', 65 'Address not residential: institution', and 67 'Other ineligible', and $n_{complete}$ the number of complete and valid interviews, identified by the final outcome code 10 'Complete and valid interview'

The non-contact rate and refusal rate are similarly defined as the relative number of non-contacts and refusals, respectively.

$$NCON = \frac{n_{non-contact}}{n_{gross} - n_{ineligible}}$$

$$REF = \frac{n_{refusal}}{n_{gross} - n_{ineligible}}$$

with $n_{non-contact}$ the number of non-contacts, identified by the final outcome code 20 'Non-contact', and $n_{refusal}$ the total number of refusals, identified by the final outcome codes 30 'Refusal because of opt-out list', 32 'Respondent refusal', 33 'Proxy refusal', 34 'Household refusal, before selection'

These outcome rates are in line with the AAPOR (2016) definitions $RR1$, $CON1$ and $REF1$. Although rarely formally assessed, residual nonresponse, which cannot be attributed to either non-contact or refusal, can be considerable. It is therefore useful to consider both its magnitude and its diverse composition. We therefore define the 'other-nonresponse rate', in line with the other outcome rates, as the relative number of other nonrespondents.

$$OTH = \frac{n_{other}}{n_{gross} - n_{ineligible}}$$

with n_{other} the number of sample units not elsewhere categorised: those that could not be contacted (52 'Moved to unknown destination', 53 'Moved, still in country', and 54 'Address not traceable'), those that were contacted but were unable to participate (41 'Not available, away', 42 'Mentally/physically unable/ill/sick, short term', 46 'Mentally/physically unable/ill/sick, long term', 44 'Language barrier') or otherwise did not participate (31 'Broken appointment' and 45 'Contact but no interview, other'), those for which an interview was administered that either was not complete or was invalidated (11 'Partial interview' and 12 'Invalid interview'), and those for which no final outcome code could be derived (0 'No contact form' and 99 'Undefined')

6.4.2 Causes of nonresponse

Nonresponse is mainly caused by people (target respondents or other household members on behalf of target respondents) refusing to participate. In all countries except Portugal and Spain, the relative number of refusals exceeds both the relative number of non-contacts and the relative number of other nonrespondents. The refusal rate ranges between 13.8% (Spain) and 48.0% (Germany), with 13 countries in the 21.3%-35.8% range. The median country had a refusal rate of 28.0%.

'Respondent refusal' is responsible for between about 1 in 4 (France) and (nearly) all final refusals (Iceland), and is the main type of final refusals in 17 countries. In some of the countries where (household) addresses rather than individual persons are issued, 'Household refusal, before selection' dominates (the Czech Republic, France, Israel, Lithuania, Portugal and the Russian Federation). Proxy refusals happen in all participating countries, but are usually relatively rare as final outcome. In 14 countries, fewer than 1 in 10 final refusals are proxy refusals, and only in Spain and Sweden more than 1 in 5 final refusals are proxy refusals. Opt-out lists are a cause of nonresponse only in Estonia, Slovenia and Sweden.

The ESS Specification requires that contact is established with at least 97% of all sample units (European Social Survey, 2015). With the exception of Austria, Iceland, Israel and the Russian Federation, non-contact is the smallest nonresponse component, but it ranges between 0.1% (the Czech Republic) and 13.4% (Iceland) of the eligible sample. The median country achieved a non-contact rate of 4.4%. A non-contact rate of at most 3% was achieved in 8 countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden). It exceeds 10% in France and Iceland.

Residual nonresponse, which cannot be attributed to either non-contact or refusal, ranges between 0.1% (the Czech Republic) and 13.4% (Iceland), and has a diverse composition.

In 6 countries (Austria, Belgium, Iceland, Israel, the Netherlands and Norway), 'Language barrier' is the largest of the other-nonresponse categories. 'Language barrier' is responsible for some nonresponse in all countries except for Poland, and ranges up to about 3 in 5 final other nonrespondents (Iceland). Althouh generally modest in numbers, language barriers have been identified as a particularly concerning source of nonresponse bias in the European Social Survey (Beullens, Loosveldt, & Vandenplas, 2017). Since traditional approaches to response enhancement such as stricter and more tailored contact procedures are of little use when people are not sufficiently fluent in (any of) the available questionnaire language(s), language barriers are also a particularly challenging source of nonresponse to mitigate. One or more additional interview languages would have to be supported. In Round 8, a localised Polish questionnaire was produced in Ireland in an effort to reduce nonresponse related to language barriers, but the efforts were not unambiguously succesful. Although the number of language barriers has decreased compared to the previous Round 7, no interviews were eventually conducted in Polish. It is not unimaginable that some language barriers are hidden refusals.

In 4 countries (Hungary, Italy, Slovenia and Spain), 'Moved to unknown destination' is the largest of the other-nonresponse categories. It is responsible for up to about 5 in 9 final other nonrespondents (Spain). At the same time there are no such cases at all in Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom (countries with address based samples). Relatively large numbers of people who have moved is a challenge. As for language barriers, traditional approaches to response enhancement are of little use if target respondents' new addresses are unknown.

It is not really clear under what kind of circumstances 'Contact but no interview, other' is recorded, but this is the largest of the other-nonresponse categories in 4 countries (Estonia, Finland, France and the United Kingdom).

Table 6.8 Outcome rates, Round 8

Country	Response rate	Non-contact rate	Refusal rate	Other-nonresponse rate	Gross sample size	Eligible sample size
Austria	52.2%	7.2%	38.1%	2.5%	3966	3848
Belgium	56.8%	1.9%	28.5%	12.9%	3204	3110
Czech Republic	68.4%	0.1%	28.0%	3.4%	3390	3315
Estonia	64.5%	2.0%	22.5%	10.9%	3140	3128
Finland	56.8%	6.8%	21.4%	14.1%	3400	3389
France	50.8%	12.2%	23.6%	13.4%	4300	4078
Germany	30.6%	3.3%	48.0%	16.6%	9456	9327
Hungary	42.4%	3.7%	38.6%	13.6%	4006	3804
Iceland	44.0%	13.4%	33.3%	7.3%	2002	1999
Ireland	64.5%	7.3%	17.3%	11.0%	4800	4277
Israel	74.1%	4.0%	18.6%	3.2%	3500	3449
Italy	49.5%	5.3%	32.8%	12.4%	5497	5305
Lithuania	64.0%	2.1%	30.2%	3.7%	3827	3314
Netherlands	53.0%	6.1%	34.6%	6.3%	3370	3172
Norway	52.9%	4.4%	26.5%	15.9%	3000	2922
Poland	69.4%	1.2%	16.0%	13.5%	2675	2434
Portugal	45.1%	8.9%	21.2%	24.8%	3100	2818
Russian Federation	63.4%	8.9%	24.4%	3.3%	3900	3832
Slovenia	55.8%	1.3%	36.0%	6.9%	2400	2339
Spain	67.7%	2.1%	13.8%	16.3%	3038	2893
Sweden	42.1%	2.7%	39.2%	16.0%	3750	3684
Switzerland	52.2%	7.9%	27.3%	12.4%	2946	2924
United Kingdom	43.0%	6.4%	35.4%	13.3%	5000	4561

Note:
Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

Table 6.9 Detailed response breakdown, Round 8

	Non-contact	Refusal				
Country	20	30	32	33	34	N[a]
Austria	7.2%	0.0%	29.3%	2.5%	6.3%	3848
Belgium	1.9%	0.0%	26.8%	1.2%	0.5%	3110
Czech Republic	0.1%	0.0%	10.6%	3.0%	14.3%	3315
Estonia	2.0%	4.7%	16.5%	1.3%	0.0%	3128
Finland	6.8%	0.0%	20.5%	0.9%	0.0%	3389
France	12.2%	0.0%	5.4%	0.7%	17.5%	4078
Germany	3.3%	0.0%	44.2%	3.7%	0.0%	9327
Hungary	3.7%	0.0%	32.5%	5.2%	0.8%	3804
Iceland	13.4%	0.0%	33.1%	0.2%	0.0%	1999
Ireland	7.3%	0.0%	12.6%	1.0%	3.6%	4277
Israel	4.0%	0.0%	7.1%	3.4%	8.1%	3449
Italy	5.3%	0.0%	26.6%	4.4%	1.8%	5305
Lithuania	2.1%	0.0%	8.8%	0.9%	20.5%	3314
Netherlands	6.1%	0.0%	24.7%	2.2%	7.7%	3172
Norway	4.4%	0.0%	24.7%	1.5%	0.2%	2922
Poland	1.2%	0.0%	13.1%	2.8%	0.1%	2434
Portugal	8.9%	0.0%	7.4%	1.6%	12.2%	2818
Russian Federation	8.9%	0.0%	7.8%	0.9%	15.6%	3832
Slovenia	1.3%	16.0%	17.2%	2.8%	0.0%	2339
Spain	2.1%	0.0%	10.2%	3.1%	0.5%	2893
Sweden	2.7%	0.8%	19.2%	18.6%	0.7%	3684
Switzerland	7.9%	0.0%	22.6%	3.7%	1.0%	2924
United Kingdom	6.4%	0.0%	18.1%	4.2%	13.0%	4561

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

20 'Non-contact'; 30 'Refusal because of opt-out list'; 32 'Respondent refusal'; 33 'Proxy refusal'; 34 'Household refusal, before selection'

[a] *N* refers to the total eligible sample size.

Table 6.10 Detailed response breakdown, Round 8 *(continued)*

	Other nonresponse													
Country	11	12	31	41	42	44	45	46	52	53	54	99	0	N[a]
Austria	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3848
Belgium	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	1.7%	0.1%	3.5%	0.2%	3.3%	1.6%	1.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3110
Czech Republic	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	3315
Estonia	0.1%	0.0%	1.3%	2.2%	0.3%	0.4%	2.5%	1.1%	1.7%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3128
Finland	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	1.6%	0.0%	0.9%	9.4%	1.5%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.7%	3389
France	0.4%	0.2%	1.3%	1.0%	0.5%	2.0%	4.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4078
Germany	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	5.6%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	4.4%	4.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	9327
Hungary	0.0%	0.2%	0.8%	1.5%	0.2%	0.6%	3.4%	1.1%	3.7%	1.7%	0.4%	0.0%	1.7%	3804
Iceland	0.0%	0.1%	1.8%	0.8%	0.1%	4.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	1999
Ireland	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	5.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	4277
Israel	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	1.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3449
Italy	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.6%	0.3%	0.4%	1.9%	1.6%	3.8%	0.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	5305
Lithuania	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	3314
Netherlands	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.4%	0.2%	2.6%	0.9%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3172
Norway	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	2.9%	0.9%	3.1%	2.8%	2.9%	0.4%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	2922
Poland	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	1.6%	0.1%	0.0%	1.5%	2.8%	2.4%	4.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2434
Portugal	0.2%	1.1%	1.0%	5.5%	0.2%	0.5%	5.5%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2818
Russian Federation	0.5%	0.0%	0.4%	1.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3832
Slovenia	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%	1.4%	1.7%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2339
Spain	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	2.0%	0.1%	0.5%	0.8%	2.4%	9.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	2893
Sweden	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.7%	0.0%	3.6%	2.6%	2.8%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3684
Switzerland	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	1.2%	0.2%	2.6%	0.3%	2.1%	1.3%	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.2%	2924
United Kingdom	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	3.4%	0.5%	1.2%	3.6%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	1.7%	4561

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

11 'Partial interview'; 12 'Invalid interview'; 31 'Broken appointment'; 41 'Not available, away'; 42 'Mentally/physically unable/ill/sick, short term'; 44 'Language barrier'; 45 'Contact but no interview, other'; 46 'Mentally/physically unable/ill/sick, long term'; 52 'Moved to unknown destination'; 53 'Moved, still in country'; 54 'Address not traceable'; 99 'Undefined'; 0 'No contact form'

[a] *N* refers to the total eligible sample size.

6.5 NONRESPONSE BIAS

Even if nonresponse is random and the (unobserved) response distribution for the substantive items in the ESS questionnaire for nonrespondents would have been similar to the (observed) response distribution for respondents, nonresponse is an issue for data quality in terms of loss of precision in survey estimates. More concerning is nonresponse introducing systematic differences between nonrespondents and respondents, and the resulting bias in survey estimates. Given that survey data for nonrespondents are naturally missing, auxiliary data, available for nonrespondents as well as respondents, can be leveraged to assess the risk of nonresponse bias.

A first source of auxiliary data in the European Social Survey is the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form that has been part of the standard ESS Contact Form since Round 1. The current Neighbourhood Characteristics Form contains five questions on the type of dwelling, its physicial condition, barriers to access (entry phone system and/or locked gate or door), and litter and rubbish and vandalism and graffiti in the immediate vicinity. The form has to be completed by the interviewer visiting the address for all eligible sample units, with three obvious exceptions: target respondents on an opt-out list, target respondents who have moved to an unknown destination, and untraceable addresses.

The key advantage of this source is that auxiliary, case-level data on all eligible sample units, (most) nonrespondents as well as respondents, should be easily available across participating countries. The other side of the coin is that the auxiliary information is limited in scope, to characteristics that actually may be observed directly and reliably by the interviewers in the field for all nonrespondents (including those with whom no contact was even established) as well as for respondents.

For countries with register-based samples, a second source of auxiliary data is the population register from which the sample is drawn. Since Round 6, the age and gender of each individual person in the gross sample is to be appended to the Contact Form data set for ESS countries with register-based samples. For these countries, auxiliary data that is expected to be both highly reliable and comparable is thus directly available for all sample units. The key disadvantage is that this auxiliary information is available only for countries with register-based samples, and limited in scope, to characteristics that are typically recorded in the register.

The risk of nonresponse bias is assessed on the basis of both sources of auxiliary data in the following subsections.[12]

6.5.1 Nonresponse bias assessment on the basis of the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form

The first assessment of nonresponse bias draws on the auxiliary data collected by the interviewers via the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form. In Round 8, this auxiliary data is available for 21 countries (all partici-

[12] For each auxiliary variable x, the absolute standardised contrast and the absolute standardised bias, defined as follows, are computed. The bias is, by definition, equal to the product of the contrast between respondents and nonrespondents, and the nonresponse rate RR.

$$contrast(x) = \left| \frac{\bar{x}_R - \bar{x}_{NR}}{s} \right|$$

with $\bar{x}_R$ the respondent mean, $\bar{x}_{NR}$ the nonrespondent mean and s the full-sample standard error

$$bias(x) = contrast(x).(1 - RR) = \left| \frac{\bar{x}_R - \bar{x}}{s} \right|$$

with $\bar{x}_R$ the respondent mean, $\bar{x}$ the full-sample mean and s the full-sample standard error

pating countries except for Norway and Sweden). The analytic sample consists of all eligible cases (excluding the three aformentioned nonrespondent categories) for which the complete Neighbourhood Characteristics Form was filled out. The following measures were derived from the Form data:

- Whether the dwelling is a **detached house**
- Whether the dwelling is an **apartment** or otherwise in a multi-unit building
- Whether there is an **entry phone system** before reaching the target respondent's individual door
- Whether there is a **locked gate or door** before reaching the target respondent's individual door
- The overall **physical condition** of the building (rated on a five-point scale from 'Very good' to 'Very bad')
- The amount of **litter and rubbish** in the immediate vicinity (rated on a four-point scale from 'Very large amount' to 'None or almost none')
- The amount of **vandalism and graffiti** in the immediate vicinity (rated on a four-point scale from 'Very large amount' to 'None or almost none')

For each of these auxiliary variables, the respondent mean, the nonrespondent mean and the mean for the full analytic eligible gross sample are presented in Table 6.11 and Table 6.12. Especially the proportion of apartment dwellings and the proportion of entry phone systems tend to be strongly divergent between respondents and nonrespondents in many countries. The contrast between respondents and nonrespondents tends to be rather small for the observation of litter and rubbish, and vandalism and graffiti in the immediate vicinity. Still, overall there is considerable cross-national variation in the contrast magnitudes for the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables.

Table 6.11 Respondent, nonrespondent and full-sample mean/proportion for Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables, Round 8

	Detached house			Apartment			Entry phone system			Locked gate or door			
Country	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	N[a]
Austria	32.7%	40.1%	36.2%	54.3%	46.3%	50.5%	59.6%	55.5%	57.7%	42.5%	47.9%	45.1%	3826
Belgium	39.2%	29.2%	35.0%	16.3%	23.9%	19.5%	26.3%	32.2%	28.8%	13.6%	19.7%	16.2%	3041
Czech Republic	37.5%	37.9%	37.6%	45.1%	43.1%	44.5%	50.9%	72.9%	57.8%	50.6%	53.9%	51.6%	3302
Estonia	33.5%	26.2%	31.4%	61.2%	69.7%	63.7%	47.7%	55.9%	50.1%	43.3%	50.8%	45.5%	2873
Finland	47.1%	36.9%	42.9%	33.6%	44.7%	38.1%	11.8%	11.7%	11.8%	24.3%	27.4%	25.6%	3205
France	48.5%	36.4%	42.8%	34.2%	47.3%	40.4%	33.3%	39.8%	36.4%	14.0%	23.1%	18.3%	3955
Germany	36.4%	31.3%	32.9%	43.2%	50.3%	48.2%	51.1%	54.0%	53.1%	52.6%	56.7%	55.5%	7325
Hungary	66.5%	62.5%	64.3%	28.9%	32.0%	30.6%	38.3%	40.2%	39.4%	77.0%	79.1%	78.2%	3529
Iceland	33.6%	29.3%	31.2%	44.1%	56.4%	50.8%	34.9%	41.4%	38.4%	22.2%	29.9%	26.4%	1863
Ireland	47.4%	34.5%	42.8%	9.2%	15.3%	11.3%	8.3%	13.4%	10.1%	12.9%	20.2%	15.4%	4071
Israel	23.2%	23.9%	23.4%	64.1%	60.3%	63.1%	29.6%	38.9%	32.0%	25.4%	32.5%	27.2%	3429
Italy	24.4%	20.9%	22.8%	48.4%	54.3%	51.2%	82.1%	85.5%	83.7%	61.2%	63.9%	62.5%	5024
Lithuania	33.1%	29.2%	31.8%	63.0%	66.4%	64.2%	33.4%	30.8%	32.5%	43.5%	43.0%	43.3%	3210
Netherlands	19.3%	12.2%	16.0%	23.7%	39.9%	31.3%	19.5%	32.1%	25.4%	3.3%	6.2%	4.7%	3145
Norway													
Poland	53.7%	41.1%	50.5%	41.2%	53.2%	44.2%	41.2%	54.5%	44.5%	35.7%	31.5%	34.6%	2171
Portugal	40.5%	34.7%	37.5%	42.3%	51.7%	47.0%	58.3%	65.8%	62.1%	84.2%	88.3%	86.3%	2538
Russian Federation	23.8%	14.3%	20.3%	76.2%	85.5%	79.6%	67.2%	74.7%	69.9%	25.8%	22.7%	24.7%	3820
Slovenia	71.9%	57.6%	67.3%	22.1%	33.3%	25.7%	21.0%	32.1%	24.6%	44.4%	50.7%	46.4%	1917
Spain	14.0%	10.6%	13.2%	61.6%	70.4%	63.8%	73.3%	80.3%	75.1%	21.7%	25.3%	22.6%	2596
Sweden													
Switzerland	34.8%	37.9%	36.2%	49.1%	47.0%	48.1%	38.9%	59.6%	48.6%	65.6%	51.2%	58.9%	2856
United Kingdom	29.2%	23.0%	25.8%	15.1%	21.3%	18.6%	9.4%	16.3%	13.3%	7.6%	12.4%	10.3%	4403

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to all eligible cases not categorised as final 'Refusal because of opt-out list' (code 30), 'Moved to unknown destination' (code 52) or 'Address not traceable' (code 54) and for which the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form was completed.

Table 6.12 Respondent, nonrespondent and full-sample mean/proportion for Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables, Round 8 *(continued)*

	Physical condition			Litter and rubbish			Vandalism and graffiti			
Country	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	N[a]
Austria	1.7	1.9	1.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3826
Belgium	2.0	2.2	2.1	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3041
Czech Republic	2.2	2.2	2.2	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3302
Estonia	2.1	2.2	2.2	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	2873
Finland	1.9	2.1	2.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	3205
France	1.7	1.9	1.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3955
Germany	2.0	2.1	2.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	7325
Hungary	2.2	2.1	2.2	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3529
Iceland	1.7	2.2	2.0	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	1863
Ireland	1.6	1.8	1.7	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	4071
Israel	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.5	3429
Italy	2.3	2.3	2.3	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	5024
Lithuania	2.2	2.2	2.2	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3210
Netherlands	1.9	2.0	1.9	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.9	3145
Norway										
Poland	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	2171
Portugal	2.2	2.2	2.2	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	2538
Russian Federation	2.4	2.5	2.5	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.6	3.6	3.6	3820
Slovenia	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	1917
Spain	2.1	2.3	2.2	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	2596
Sweden										
Switzerland	2.1	1.9	2.0	3.7	3.1	3.4	3.8	3.2	3.5	2856
United Kingdom	2.1	2.3	2.2	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.9	4403

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to all eligible cases not categorised as final 'Refusal because of opt-out list' (code 30), 'Moved to unknown destination' (code 52) or 'Address not traceable' (code 54) and for which the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form was completed.

For ease of comparison across countries, Figure 6.3 shows the country-level average contrasts over the seven Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables, against the achieved response rates. Respondents and nonrespondents appear to differ most strongly on the interviewer-observed characteristics in Switzerland, and also fairly strongly in the Netherlands, Iceland, Ireland, France and the United Kingdom. Respondents and nonrespondents are much more similar to each other in this regard in Italy, Lithuania and Hungary.

We observe large cross-national variation in the average contrast as well as in the achieved response rate, with no clear relationship between the two (r = -0.092, p = 0.692). This suggests that the extent to which respondents and nonrespondents differ is unrelated to the relative number of nonrespondents remaining in the sample. Still, the risk of bias is substantially lower in high-response rate countries (r = -0.510, p = 0.018), because the number of nonrespondents is smaller (Figure 6.4).

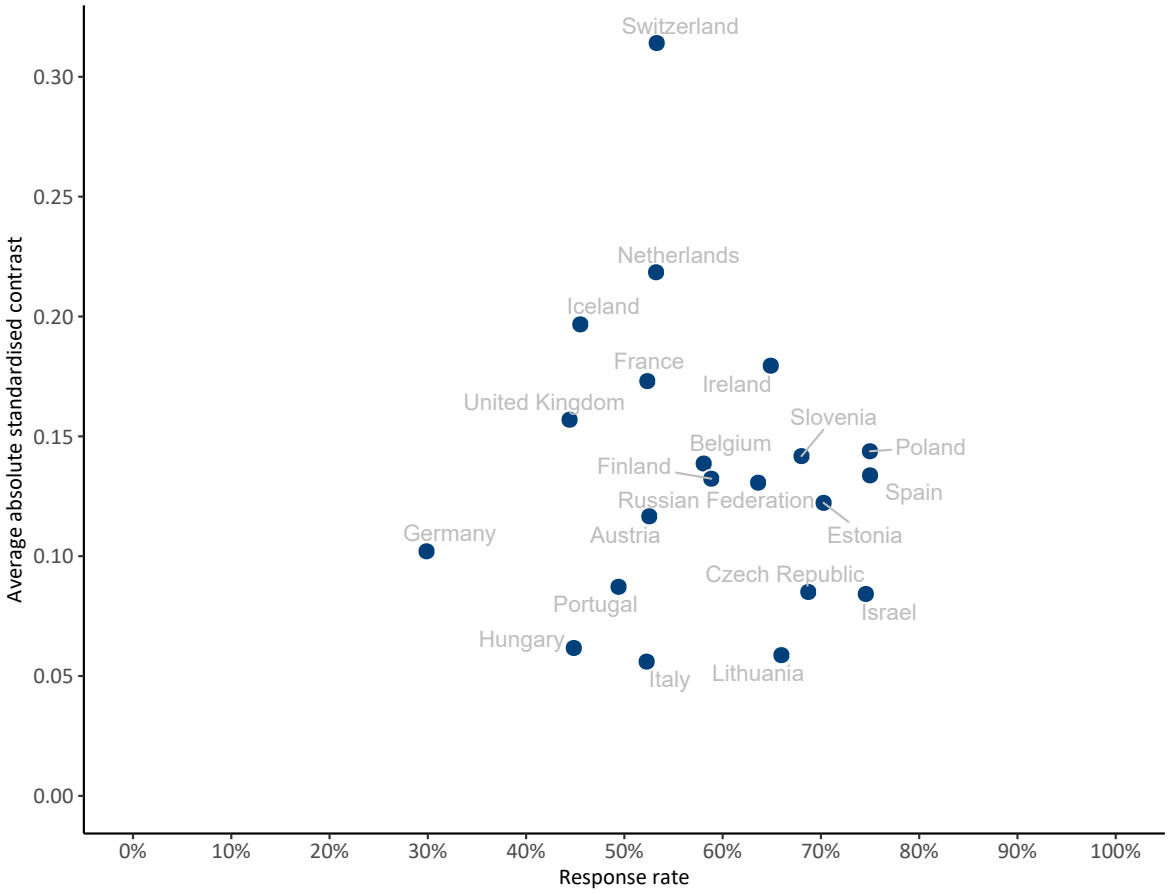


Figure 6.3 Average absolute standardised contrast for Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables versus response rate, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

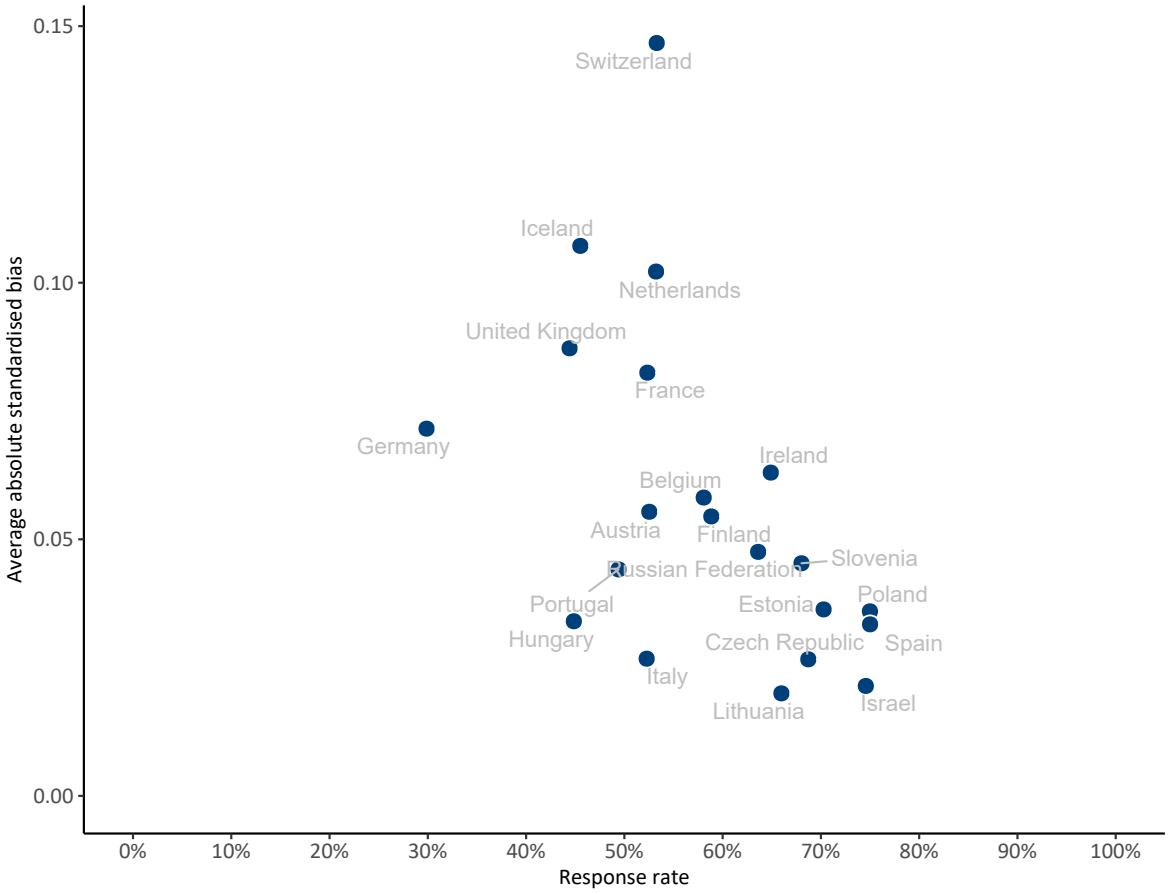


Figure 6.4 Average absolute standardised bias for Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables versus response rate, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

6.5.2 Nonresponse bias assessment on the basis of the register data

The second assessment of nonresponse bias draws on the auxiliary data provided by national teams from the population register. In Round 8, this auxiliary data is available for 12 countries (Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). The analytic sample consists of all eligible cases (excluding target respondents on an opt-out list) for which **age** and **gender** are properly available.

The respondent mean, the nonrespondent mean and the mean for the full analytic eligible gross sample for both auxiliary variables are presented in Table 6.13. The age distribution appears to be somewhat more divergent between respondents and nonrespondents than the gender composition. As for the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables, notable contrasts between respondents and nonrespondents are observed in some countries while respondents and nonrespondents are highly similar in other countries.

Figure 6.5 shows the country-level average contrasts over the two register-based auxiliary variables, against the achieved response rates. Respondents and nonrespondents appear to differ most strongly for age and gender in Sweden, and also fairly strongly in Iceland, Norway, Italy and Germany. Respondents and nonrespondents are much more similar to each other in this regard in Poland and Spain.

There is a strong tendency for smaller contrasts to be observed for countries where response rates are higher (r = -0.718, p = 0.009). As a result, the risk of bias appears to be substantially lower in high-response rate countries (r = -0.869, p < 0.001) both because the number of nonrespondents is smaller and to some extent also because nonrespondents are less dissimilar from respondents (Figure 6.6).

Table 6.13 Respondent, nonrespondent and full-sample mean/proportion for register-based auxiliary variables, Round 8

	Age			Male			
Country	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	Resp.	Nonresp.	All	N[a]
Austria							
Belgium	46.6	48.8	47.6	50.2%	46.8%	48.7%	3110
Czech Republic							
Estonia	49.5	46.8	48.6	45.8%	45.4%	45.7%	2981
Finland	49.9	48.1	49.2	49.9%	46.9%	48.6%	3360
France							
Germany	48.3	50.4	49.7	52.9%	48.1%	49.6%	9088
Hungary							
Iceland	47.8	43.6	45.5	49.9%	52.3%	51.2%	1958
Ireland							
Israel							
Italy	48.7	52.4	50.5	47.0%	48.4%	47.7%	5305
Lithuania							
Netherlands							
Norway	46.8	45.5	46.2	53.7%	45.8%	50.0%	2913
Poland	47.0	46.4	46.8	47.7%	46.8%	47.4%	2434
Portugal							
Russian Federation							
Slovenia	49.0	49.5	49.2	45.9%	52.6%	48.1%	1965
Spain	48.8	50.4	49.3	49.9%	48.6%	49.5%	2891
Sweden	51.5	45.8	48.2	57.2%	54.7%	55.8%	3656
Switzerland	47.8	48.1	47.9	51.7%	45.6%	48.8%	2917
United Kingdom							

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to all eligible cases not categorised as final 'Refusal because of opt-out list' (code 30) and for which age and gender were appended from the population register.

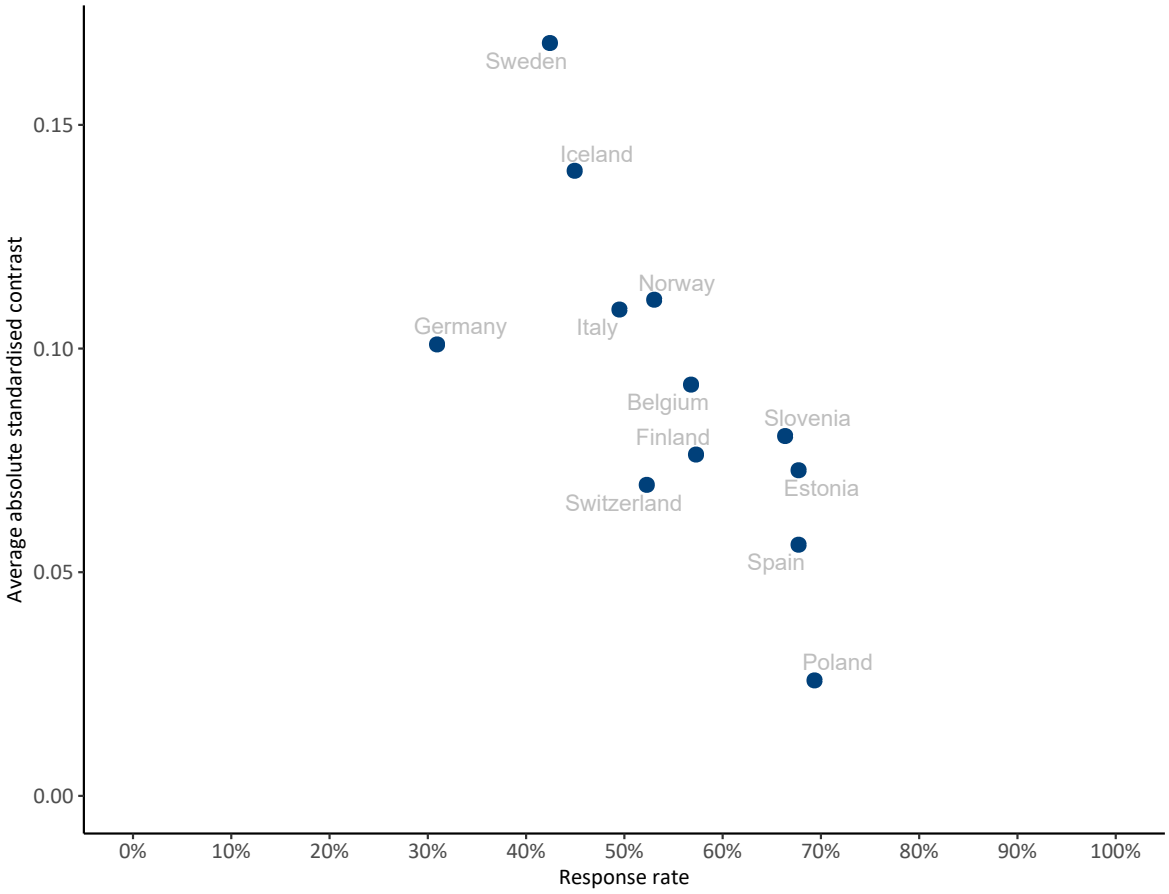


Figure 6.5 Average absolute standardised contrast for register-based auxiliary variables versus response rate, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

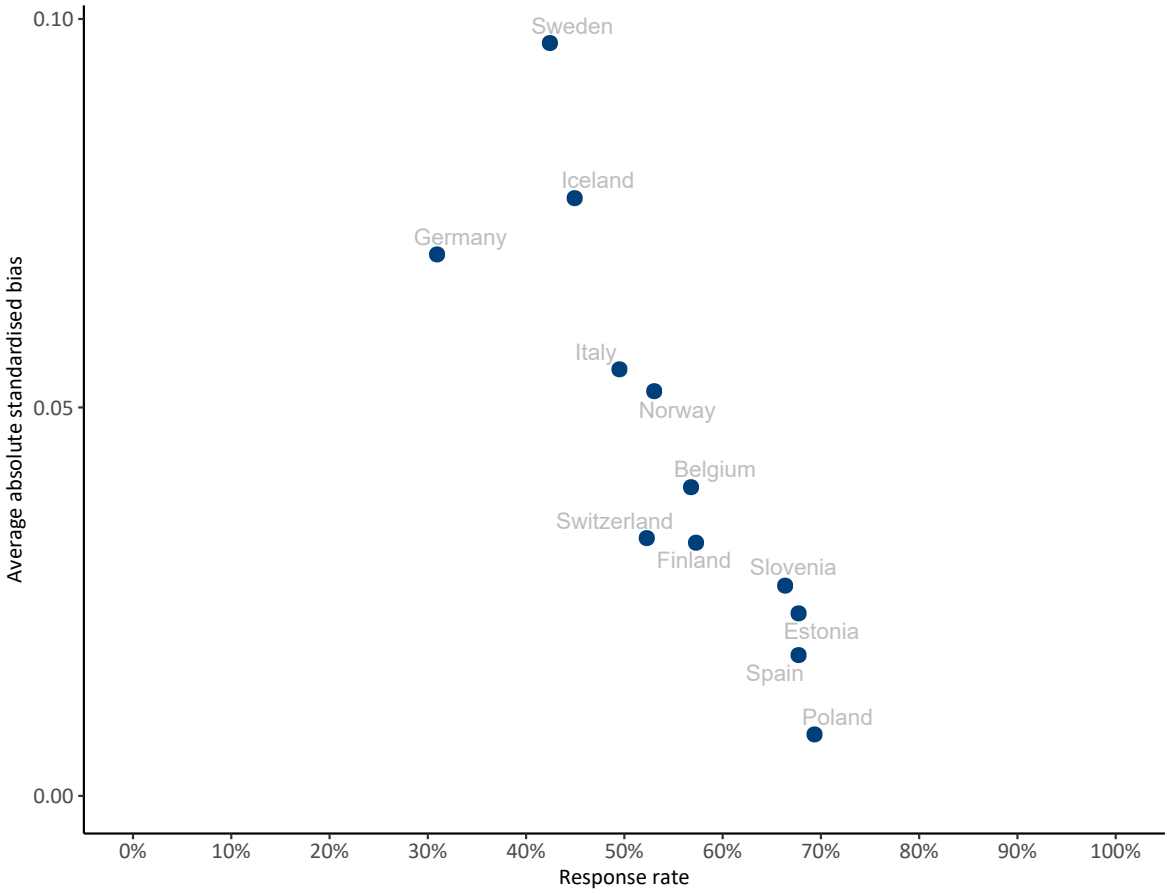


Figure 6.6 Average absolute standardised bias for register-based auxiliary variables versus response rate, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

6.5.3 Combined nonresponse bias assessment on the basis of the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form and the register data

For 10 countries (Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland) both sources of auxiliary data are available and may be combined in the analysis. The analytic sample consists of all eligible cases (excluding the three aforementioned nonrespondent categories) for which the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form was completed *and* age and gender were appended from the population register.

Figure 6.7 shows the country-level average contrasts over the seven Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables and the two register-based auxiliary variables[13], against the achieved response rates. Respondents and nonrespondents appear to differ most strongly across the nine auxiliary variables in Switzerland and appear most similar to each other in Italy.

Taking both sources of auxiliary information into account, we observe no clear relationship between response rates and contrasts (r = -0.083, p = 0.819). Still, the overall risk of bias is considerably reduced in (relatively) high-response rate countries (r = -0.621, p = 0.056; Figure 6.8).

The results with respect to the association between the contrast between respondents and nonrespondents and the response rate are mixed. The assessment on the basis of the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables (type of dwelling, its physicial condition, barriers to access, and disarray in the immediate vicinity) does not suggest that respondents and nonrespondents are more similar if a higher response rate is achieved, while the assessment on the basis of age and gender from the population register auxiliary variables does support this supposition. The inconsistent conclusions illustrate that estimates of contrast (and thus of nonresponse bias) are item-specific. The risk of nonresponse bias nevertheless appears lower in high-response rate countries. On the whole, these findings support the fairly ambitious response rate targets maintained in the ESS.

[13] The standardised contrast and bias is re-computed for each of the auxiliary variables on the basis of the somewhat smaller analytic samples in the combined analysis, but show a high degree of similarity with the corresponding figures in the analysis reported above.

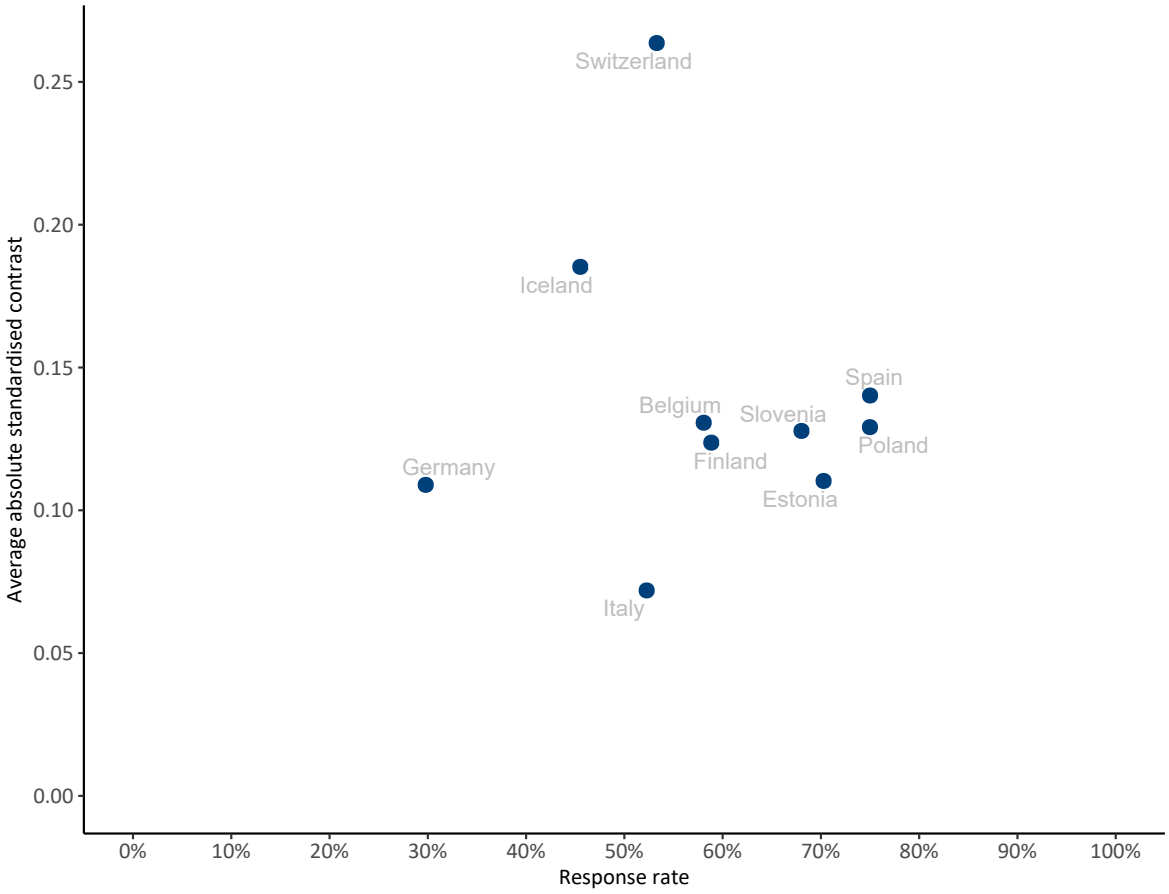


Figure 6.7 Average absolute standardised contrast for Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables and register-based auxiliary variables versus response rate, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

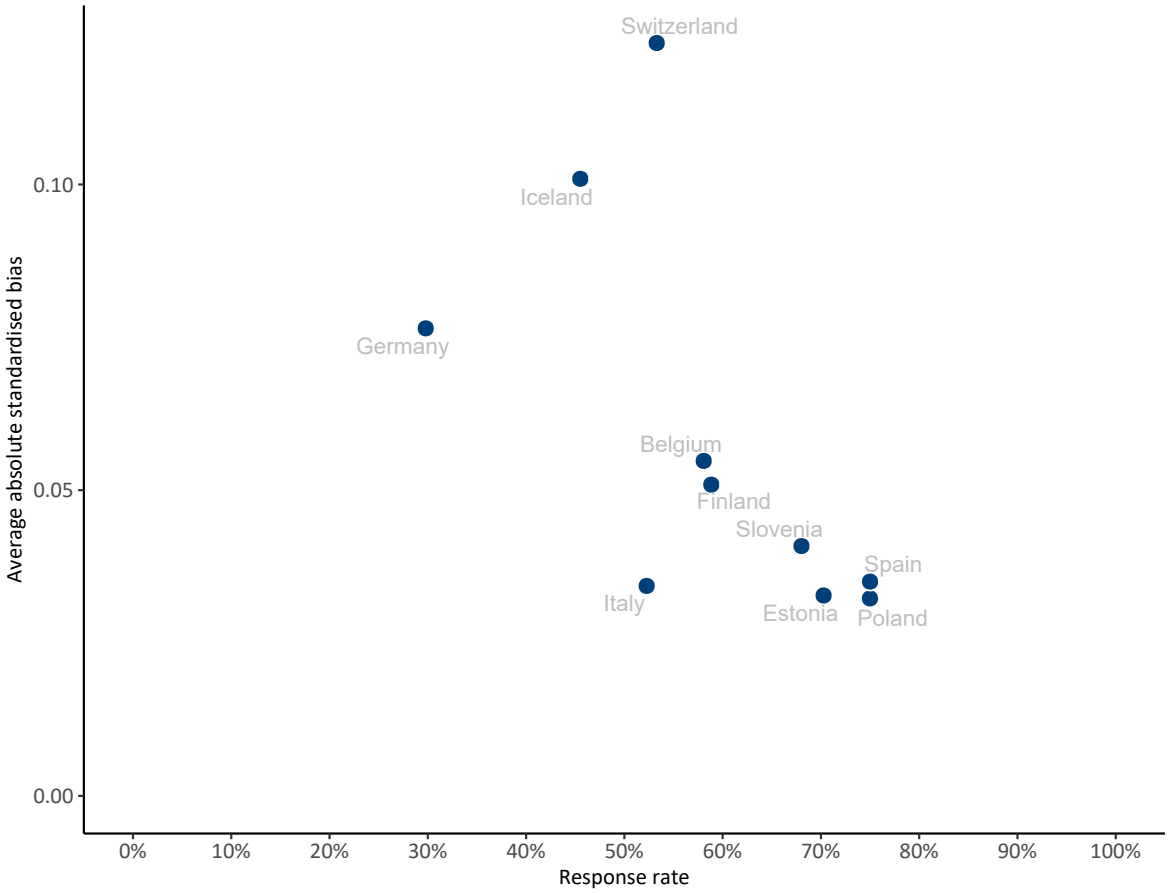


Figure 6.8 Average absolute standardised bias for Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables and register-based auxiliary variables versus response rate, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

6.6 Reassignments

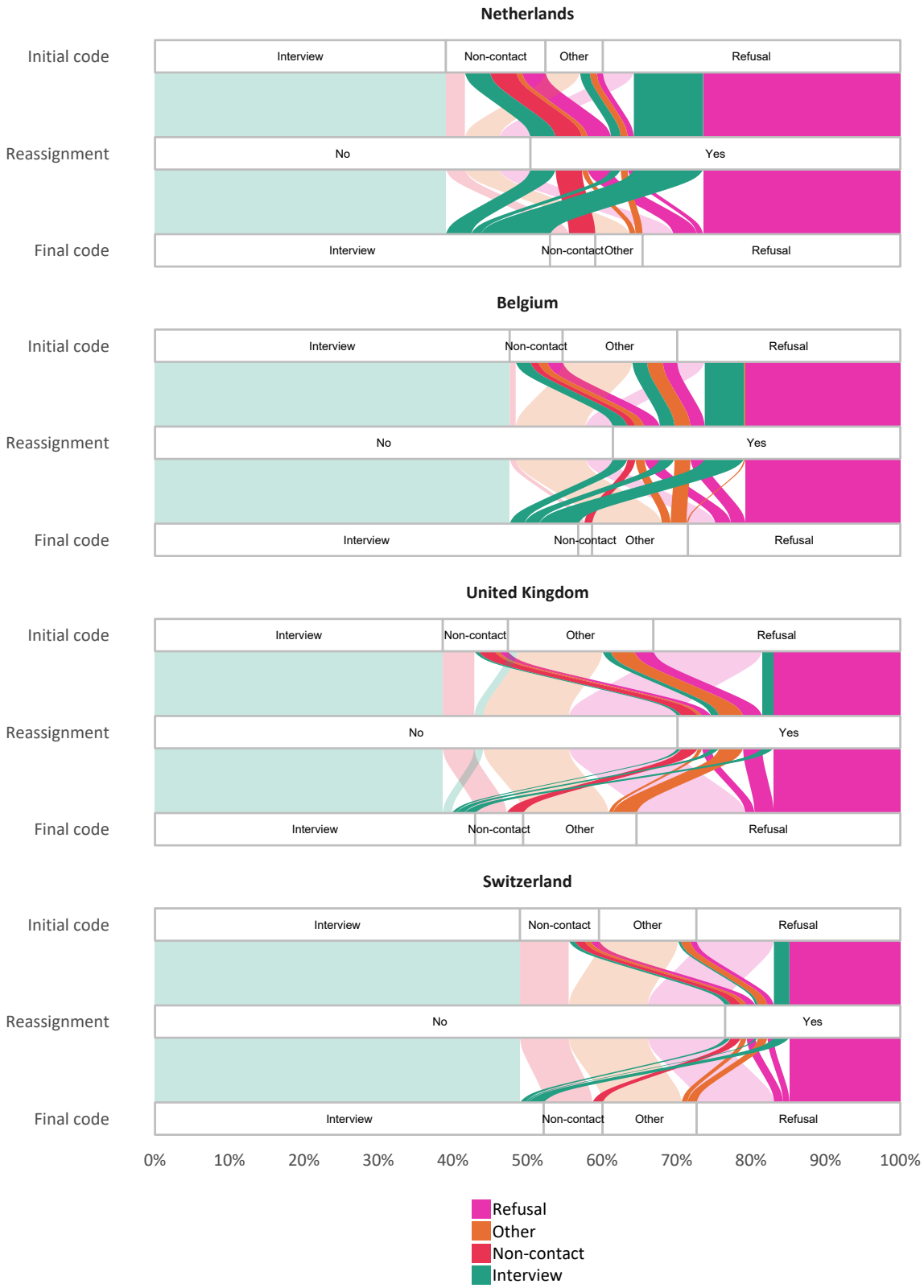
Initial nonrespondent sample units are regularly reassigned to, and reapproached by, other (often more expe-rienced) interviewers in order to reduce nonresponse. This section describes how this particular nonrespondent conversion strategy was employed across countries and its impact on nonresponse.[14]

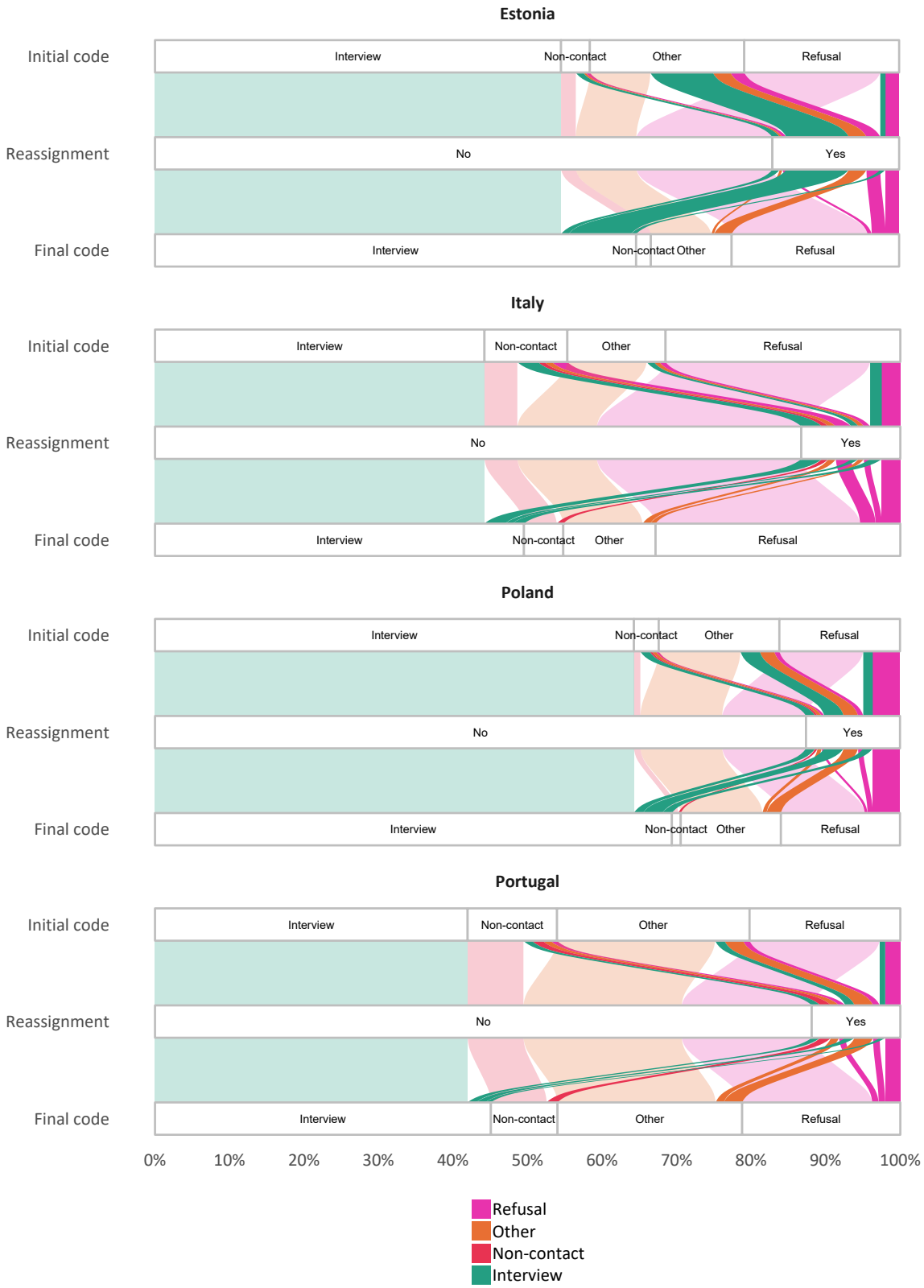
Figure 6.9 visualizes the volume of reassignments and the resulting shifts in outcome codes. The first horizontal bar represents the composition of the eligible sample by initial outcome code. The third horizontal bar represents the composition by final outcome code. The horizontal bar in-between differentiates reassigned sample units from non-reassigned sample units. The flow colour highlights the final outcome code and the shade highlights reassignment. For instance, the (dark) green lines from initial Refusal, Non-contact and Other nonresponse to final Interview (through reassignment) indicates the volume of these initial nonrespondents that are succesfully converted in the reassignment phase of the fieldwork.

Consider the Netherlands by way of example. From the first horizontal bar we observe that, before any reassignments, an interview was completed for about 2 in 5 eligible sample units. We also observe that, before any reassignments, about 1 in 7 eligible sample units were non-contacts and about 2 in 5 eligible sample units were refusals. From the second horizontal bar we observe that about 4 in 5 initial nonrespondents were reassigned to a different interviewer. The flows between the first and second horizontal bar show that about 4 in 5 initial non-contacts and about 8 in 9 initial refusals were reassigned. Or, the other way around: about 1 in 4 reassigned initial nonrespondents were non-contacts and about 3 in 4 reassigned initial nonrespondents were refusals. Only a very small number of other initial nonrespondents were reassigned. From the third horizontal bar we observe that, after reassignments, an interview was completed for about 1 in 2 eligible sample units. We also observe that, after reassignments, about 1 in 16 eligible sample units were non-contacts and about 1 in 3 eligible sample units were refusals. The flows between the second and third horizontal bar show that an interview was eventually completed for about 1 in 4 reassigned initial nonrespondents (for about 1 in 3 reassigned initial non-contacts and about 1 in 4 reassigned initial refusals). Or, the other way around: about 3 in 4 final interviews were completed before reassignments, about 1 in 15 final interviews were completed from reassigned initial non-contacts, and about 1 in 5 final interviews were completed from reassigned initial refusals.

The following subsections describe the initial outcome rates, the volume of reassignments and the impact of reassignments on the outcome rates and on the risk of nonresponse bias across countries.

[14] Initial nonrespondent sample units can also be reapproached in a different way (for example in terms of respondent incentives, or persuasive communication) by the same interviewer. The integrated Contact Form data set allows identifying both contact attempts made by different interviewers, and, at least in theory, contact attempts that were made in the context of 'refusal conversion' activities (which may include but do not necessarily involve the reassignment to a different interviewer). The quality of the 'refusal conversion' indicator, however, is not convincing. 'Conversion efforts' are therefore considered in a narrow sense, taking into account only additional contact attempts by new interviewers. Initial attempts are distinguished from reassignment attempts on the basis of the first attempt by a new interviewer. Note that small numbers of reassignments may be due to interviewers dropping out of the interviewer workforce rather than a deliberate conversion strategy. In some countries, telephone calls are made by interviewers without strict assignment of particular sets of sample units. A first attempt by a new interviewer is therefore only considered as a cut-off point between initial and reassignment attempts once at least one personal visit has been recorded (i.e. not in case of 'reassignment' to the first face-to-face interviewer).


Netherlands
Initial code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Reassignment
No
Yes
Final code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Belgium
Initial code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Reassignment
No
Yes
Final code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
United Kingdom
Initial code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Reassignment
No
Yes
Final code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Switzerland
Initial code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Reassignment
No
Yes
Final code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Refusal
Other
Non-contact
Interview


Estonia
Initial code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Reassignment
No
Yes
Final code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Italy
Initial code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Reassignment
No
Yes
Final code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Poland
Initial code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Reassignment
No
Yes
Final code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Portugal
Initial code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
Reassignment
No
Yes
Final code
Interview
Non-contact
Other
Refusal
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Refusal
Other
Non-contact
Interview

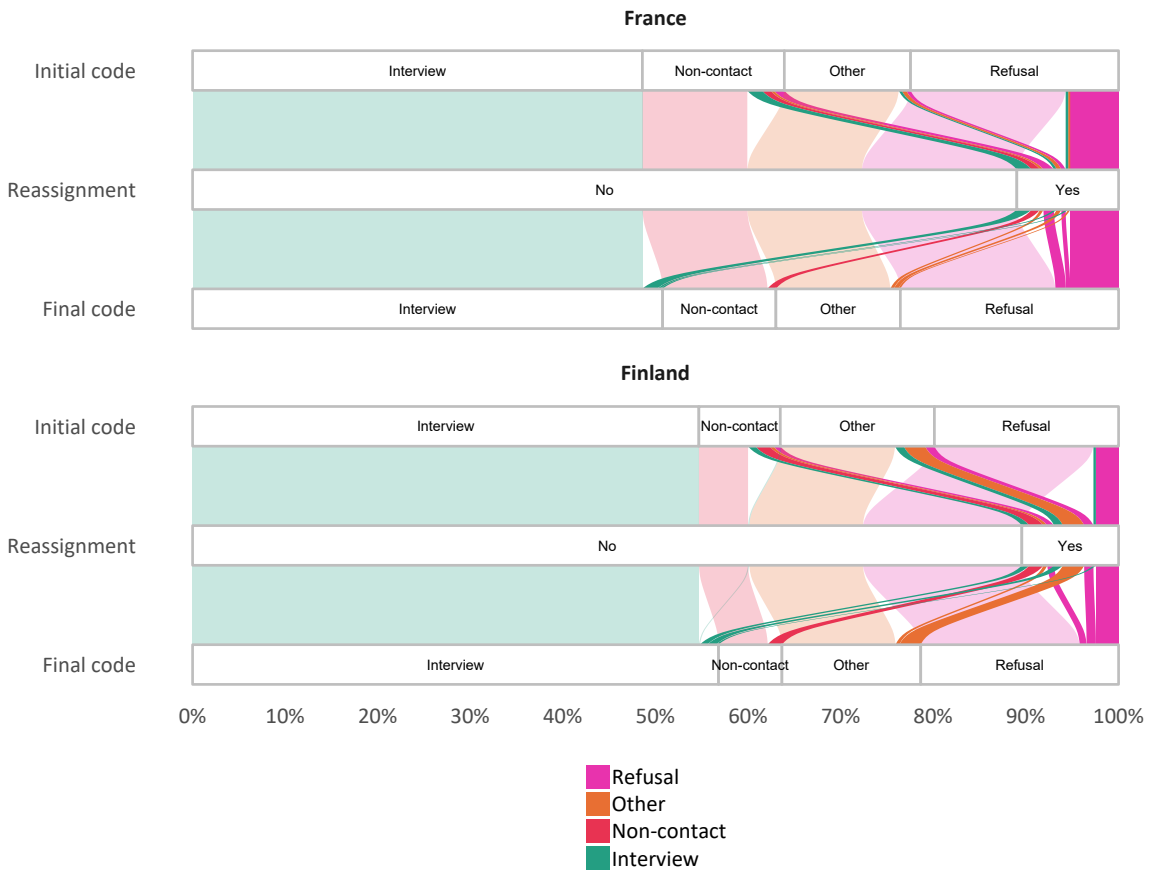


Figure 6.9 Volume, composition and impact of reassignments, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

The first horizontal bar represents the composition of the eligible sample by initial outcome code. The third horizontal bar represents the composition by final outcome code. The horizontal bar in-between differentiates reassigned sample units from non-reassigned sample units. The flow colour highlights the final outcome code and the shade highlights reassignment. Only countries where at least 1 in 10 cases in the initial eligible sample were reassigned are represented (the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, France and Finland), ordered by overall volume of reassignments. Final ineligibles are excluded.

Table 6.14 Initial outcome rates, Round 8

Country	Initial response rate	Initial non-contact rate	Initial refusal rate	Initial other-nonresponse rate	Gross sample size	Initial eligible sample size
Austria	52.2%	7.2%	38.1%	2.5%	3966	3848
Belgium	47.3%	7.4%	29.9%	15.3%	3204	3127
Czech Republic	68.4%	0.1%	28.0%	3.4%	3390	3315
Estonia	54.5%	4.0%	20.8%	20.6%	3140	3129
Finland	54.6%	8.8%	19.9%	15.7%	3400	3391
France	48.5%	15.6%	22.5%	13.4%	4300	4082
Germany	29.1%	5.6%	46.0%	17.8%	9456	9331
Hungary	42.4%	3.7%	38.7%	13.5%	4006	3803
Iceland	44.0%	13.4%	33.3%	7.3%	2002	1999
Ireland	64.0%	7.4%	17.4%	11.2%	4800	4277
Israel	74.1%	4.0%	18.6%	3.2%	3500	3449
Italy	44.0%	11.3%	31.4%	13.2%	5497	5326
Lithuania	64.0%	2.1%	30.2%	3.7%	3827	3314
Netherlands	39.0%	13.4%	39.9%	7.7%	3370	3172
Norway	51.9%	5.1%	26.3%	16.4%	3000	2924
Poland	64.1%	3.6%	16.2%	16.1%	2675	2441
Portugal	41.7%	12.4%	20.1%	25.8%	3100	2834
Russian Federation	61.2%	10.8%	24.2%	3.8%	3900	3832
Slovenia	54.3%	1.3%	35.1%	9.3%	2400	2341
Spain	65.1%	3.0%	13.6%	18.2%	3038	2903
Sweden	41.7%	3.0%	38.9%	16.3%	3750	3684
Switzerland	48.9%	10.6%	27.4%	12.8%	2946	2927
United Kingdom	38.3%	9.0%	33.0%	16.5%	5000	4596

Note:
Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

Table 6.14 presents the outcome rates achieved in the initial fieldwork phase, i.e. before any specific conversion efforts, in Round 8.[15] The median country achieved an initial response rate of 51.9%, an initial non-contact rate of 7.2% and an initial refusal rate of 28.0%. A response rate of at least 50% was achieved in 12 countries (versus 16 countries at the end) and a non-contact rate of at most 3% was achieved only in 4 countries (versus 8 countries at the end).

6.6.1 Volume of reassignments

In 6 countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Israel and Lithuania) no reassignments were recorded at all. There is also a fair number of countries where reassignments were relatively uncommon (Table 6.15). In the remainder of this section we focus on the 10 countries where a reassignment was recorded for at least 1 in 10 cases in the initial eligible sample (the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, France and Finland). Among these countries, between about 1 in 9 (Finland and France) and about 1 in 2 (the Netherlands) cases in the initial eligible sample were reassigned. The reassignment efforts are even more pronounced when considered relative to the initial nonrespondent sample (i.e. excluding initial respondents). In Belgium and the Netherlands, about 3 in 4 and about 4 in 5 initial nonrspondents, respectively, were reassigned. In Estonia, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, more than 1 in 4 initial nonrespondents were reassigned as well.

[15] Detailed, initial outcome codes are derived for all sample units from the sequences of outcome codes for the initial attempts and the case-level interview and contact form indicators. Detailed reassignment outcome codes are similarly derived from the sequences of outcome codes for the reassignment attempts for all reassigned sample units. The response rate, the non-contact rate, the refusal rate and other-nonresponse rate are defined as above (see subsection 6.4, p. 81).

Table 6.15 Volume of reassignments, Round 8

Country	In initial eligible sample		In initial nonrespondent sample	
	N[a]	Reassigned (%)	N[b]	Reassigned (%)
Austria	3848	0.0%	1838	0.0%
Belgium	3127	38.9%	1647	73.8%
Czech Republic	3315	0.0%	1046	0.0%
Estonia	3129	17.1%	1425	37.5%
Finland	3391	10.5%	1538	23.1%
France	4082	11.1%	2101	21.5%
Germany	9331	5.2%	6615	7.3%
Hungary	3803	0.0%	2189	0.0%
Iceland	1999	0.0%	1119	0.0%
Ireland	4277	0.6%	1540	1.6%
Israel	3449	0.0%	892	0.0%
Italy	5326	13.6%	2981	24.4%
Lithuania	3314	0.0%	1193	0.0%
Netherlands	3172	49.6%	1934	81.4%
Norway	2924	3.0%	1406	6.2%
Poland	2441	12.9%	877	35.9%
Portugal	2834	12.4%	1652	21.2%
Russian Federation	3832	5.7%	1486	14.7%
Slovenia	2341	5.6%	1071	12.1%
Spain	2903	9.1%	1012	26.1%
Sweden	3684	2.2%	2146	3.8%
Switzerland	2927	23.6%	1495	46.2%
United Kingdom	4596	30.4%	2835	49.3%

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

Cases initially identified as ineligible (and initial respondents) are excluded, although reassignment-phase attempts have occasionally been recorded.

[a] *N* refers to the initial eligible sample size.

[b] *N* refers to the initial nonrespondent sample size.

6.6.2 Impact on outcome rates

Among the countries where at least 1 in 10 cases in the initial eligible sample were reassigned, the response rate improved by between 2.2 (Finland and France) and 14.0 (the Netherlands) percentage points (Table 6.16). The non-contact rate decreased by between 2.0 (Estonia and Finland) and 7.3 (the Netherlands) percentage points. The refusal rate and the other-nonresponse rate may decrease, as nonrespondent sample units in these categories are converted, or increase, as sample units for which there was no contact initially may move into one of these nonrespondent categories. In 3 countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Poland), the refusal rate decreased, indicating that more initial refusals were successfully converted than initial non-contacts ended up refusing. In 6 countries, the refusal rate *increased*, indicating that more initial non-contacts ended up refusing than initial refusals were converted. The other-nonresponse rate increased in none of the countries.

Table 6.16 Impact of reassignments on outcome rates (percentage point difference), Round 8

Country	Response rate	Non-contact rate	Refusal rate	Other-nonresponse rate
Belgium	9.5	-5.5	-1.4	-2.5
Estonia	10.1	-2.0	1.7	-9.7
Finland	2.2	-2.0	1.5	-1.6
France	2.2	-3.3	1.1	0.0
Italy	5.5	-6.1	1.4	-0.8
Netherlands	14.0	-7.3	-5.3	-1.4
Poland	5.3	-2.5	-0.2	-2.6
Portugal	3.4	-3.4	1.1	-1.0
Switzerland	3.2	-2.7	0.0	-0.4
United Kingdom	4.6	-2.6	2.4	-3.2

Note:
Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.
Only countries where at least 1 in 10 cases in the initial eligible sample were reassigned are represented

6.6.3 Impact on nonresponse bias

Reassignments improve response rates, sometimes considerably, but ideally would also alleviate some of the risk of nonresponse bias. However, an *increase* in nonresponse bias cannot be ruled out a priori. This section examines the extent to which the risk of nonresponse bias is affected by reassignments in the countries where at least 1 in 10 cases in the initial eligible sample were reassigned (the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, France and Finland). To this end, the nonresponse bias assessment on the basis of the Neighbourhood Characteristics Form and population register auxiliary (see subsection 6.5, p. 86) is repeated for the initial sample distribution of respondents and nonrespondents.

Table 6.17 shows the change in the estimated average absolute standardised contrast and average absolute standardised bias. The estimates on the basis of the seven Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables suggest that the contrast between respondents and nonrespondents decreased as a result of the reassignments in all countries except for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (Figure 6.10). The risk of nonresponse bias is reduced in the Netherlands, as well as in the 8 countries where the contrast was compressed. Only in the United Kingdom the reassignments had no overall positive effect on the risk of bias (Figure 6.11). The estimates on the basis of the two population register auxiliary variables suggest that the contrast between respondents and nonrespondents decreased in 4 countries, but increased in Belgium and Italy. The risk of nonresponse bias is reduced in Italy, as well as in those countries where the contrast was compressed. Only in Belgium the reassignments had no overall positive effect on the risk of bias. Taking both sources of auxiliary information into account, we observe a compressed contrast between respondents and nonrespondents in 5 countries but a widened contrast in Poland. Still, the risk of nonresponse bias is reduced in all countries examined. These results suggest that additional fieldwork efforts such as reassignments to other interviewers, not only improve response rates but may also help to alleviate some of the risk of nonresponse bias.

Table 6.17 Impact of reassignments on average absolute standardised contrast and bias, Round 8

	Neighbourhood Characteristics Form		Register-based		Both	
Country	Contrast	Bias	Contrast	Bias	Contrast	Bias
Belgium	-0.029	-0.029	0.041	0.013	-0.012	-0.019
Estonia	-0.005	-0.015	-0.087	-0.045	-0.020	-0.020
Finland	-0.014	-0.009	-0.006	-0.004	-0.012	-0.008
France	-0.006	-0.007				
Italy	-0.016	-0.012	0.007	-0.002	-0.010	-0.010
Netherlands	0.035	-0.010				
Poland	-0.007	-0.010	-0.023	-0.010	0.001	-0.007
Portugal	-0.046	-0.028				
Switzerland	-0.078	-0.049	-0.025	-0.015	-0.067	-0.042
United Kingdom	0.012	0.001				

Note:
Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.
Only countries where at least 1 in 10 cases in the initial eligible sample were reassigned are represented

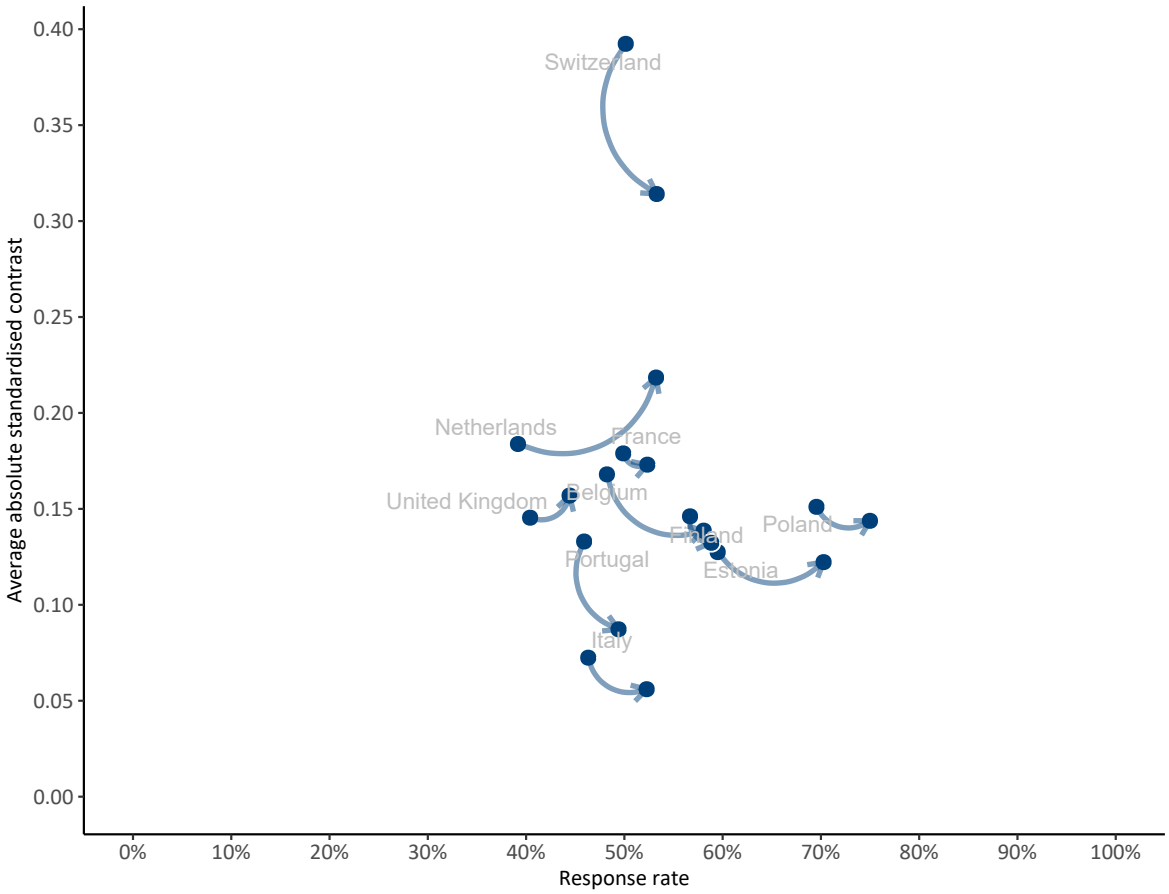


Figure 6.10 Impact of reassignments on average absolute standardised contrast for Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables versus response rate, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

Only countries where at least 1 in 10 cases in the initial eligible sample were reassigned are represented (the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, France and Finland).

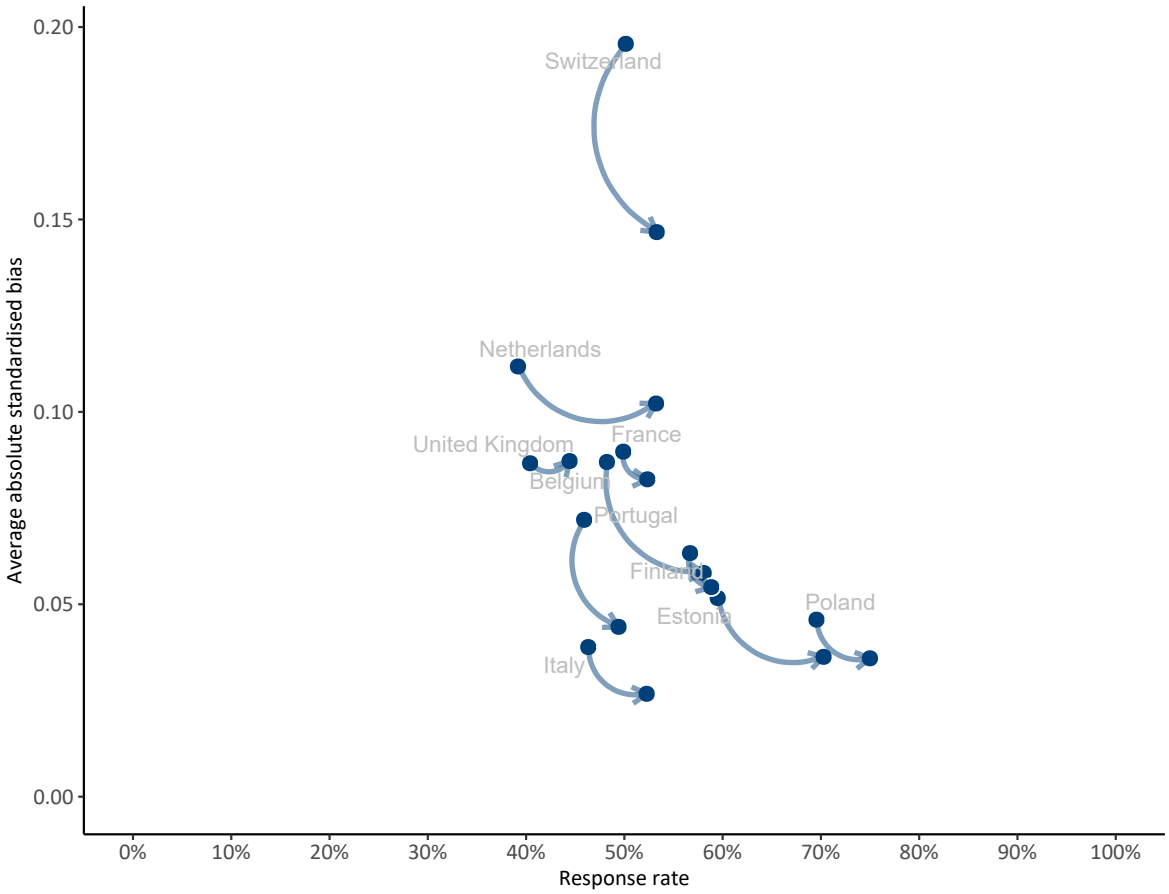


Figure 6.11 Impact of reassignments on average absolute standardised bias for Neighbourhood Characteristics Form auxiliary variables versus response rate, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

Only countries where at least 1 in 10 cases in the initial eligible sample were reassigned are represented (the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, France and Finland).

7 Interview process

7.1 Interview setting

As detailed in the ESS interviewer manual, interviewers have to see to it that interviews take place in an appropriate setting, a quiet environment with as few distractions as possible, and preferably without anyone else present. The presence of another household member, a neighbour or friend can be distracting and can influence the answers given by the respondent, possibly encouraging more socially acceptable responses. Interviewers have to indicate in the Interviewer Questionnaire they complete at the end of each interview whether anyone was present who interfered with the interview.[16]

According to the reports of the interviewers, in most countries there was rarely someone present who interfered with the interview (Table 7.1). In the median country, there was third party interference for about 1 in 13 respondents. Only in Israel, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Spain, there was some interference for at least 1 in 10 respondents.

Interviewers also have to make sure that respondents have all showcards and use the relevant ones to answer questions that require their use. Whether the respondent used all, only some or none of the showcards is also to be signaled via the Interviewer Questionnaire.[17]

In 5 countries (Belgium, Finland, France, Ireland and Norway), (nearly) all respondents used all of the applicable showcards (Table 7.2). In the median country, about 6 in 7 respondents used all of the applicable showcards. In Hungary, Israel, Portugal and Spain, at least 1 in 20 respondents refused or were unable to use the showcards at all, and in Austria, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Spain, at least 1 in 5 respondents did not use all of the applicable showcards.

[16] Whether a third party is merely present or actually *interferes* with the interview may be differently evaluated by the interviewers. At any rate, interviewers should not be discouraged from candidly reporting interferences.

[17] This item was added to the Interviewer questionnaire in Round 8. As for the item on third party interference, the interviewers' report on showcard use may be differently evaluated by the interviewers.

Table 7.1 Third party interference, Round 8

Country	N[a]	Anyone present who interfered with the interview (%)
Austria	2010	6.0%
Belgium	1766	7.9%
Czech Republic	2269	3.8%
Estonia	2019	7.0%
Finland	1923	4.8%
France	2063	7.2%
Germany	2852	5.3%
Hungary	1614	7.0%
Iceland	875	7.2%
Ireland	2757	7.3%
Israel	2557	16.0%
Italy	2626	7.6%
Lithuania	2122	12.1%
Netherlands	1681	4.0%
Norway	1545	4.2%
Poland	1690	9.9%
Portugal	1270	9.7%
Russian Federation	2430	11.7%
Slovenia	1306	7.4%
Spain	1950	15.1%
Sweden	1551	3.5%
Switzerland	1525	6.0%
United Kingdom	1959	5.8%

Note:
Based on ESS8 data from Interviewer Questionnaire, edition 1.0.

[a] *N* refers to the number of respondents for which the Interviewer Questionnaire item was completed.

Table 7.2 Showcard use, Round 8

Country	N[a]	Used all of the applicable showcards (%)	Used only some of the applicable showcards (%)	Refused/was unable to use the showcards at all (%)
Austria	2008	76.4%	20.8%	2.8%
Belgium	1766	98.1%	1.5%	0.3%
Czech Republic	2229	80.1%	17.7%	2.2%
Estonia	2018	86.1%	11.6%	2.3%
Finland	1904	96.6%	3.4%	0.0%
France	2066	96.8%	3.0%	0.2%
Germany[1]	148	85.1%	12.2%	2.7%
Hungary	1612	47.1%	44.2%	8.7%
Iceland	873	95.2%	3.8%	1.0%
Ireland	2757	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Israel	2557	65.3%	22.1%	12.6%
Italy	2618	86.1%	12.1%	1.8%
Lithuania	2093	73.6%	23.0%	3.3%
Netherlands	1679	93.2%	5.8%	1.1%
Norway	1545	97.2%	2.5%	0.4%
Poland	1559	80.4%	14.7%	4.9%
Portugal[1]	123	85.4%	8.9%	5.7%
Russian Federation	2430	71.8%	23.4%	4.8%
Slovenia	1303	85.8%	10.6%	3.6%
Spain	1921	68.5%	24.7%	6.9%
Sweden	1551	95.5%	4.0%	0.5%
Switzerland	1511	93.1%	6.6%	0.4%
United Kingdom	1959	92.7%	5.7%	1.6%

Note:
Based on ESS8 data from Interviewer Questionnaire, edition 1.0.

[a] *N* refers to the number of respondents for which the Interviewer Questionnaire item was completed.

[1] This information was not recorded for most respondents because of an error in the routing of the Interviewer Questionnaire.

7.2 Interview language

Table 7.3 shows the number of respondents interviewed by country-language version of the ESS questionnaire. In all participating countries except for Israel, Spain and Switzerland, more than 9 in 10 respondents were interviewed in their first home language (Table 7.4).

Interview language may constitute a barrier to the proper understanding of survey questions for particular groups of respondents, and thus be a source of measurement error as well as a source of nonresponse error. It may therefore be useful to consider whether any language spoken by a nonnegligible minority could be cost-effectively added as interview language. The reported figures suggest that identifying suitable minority languages would not be straightforward. The group of respondents who are not interviewed in their first home language is a diverse group, with few prominent, large language groups. The small numbers of the various language groups may also fluctuate heavily due to sampling variation. In addition, even if multiple language versions are available, many respondents are interviewed in the country's 'dominant' interview language although it differs from their first home language (e.g. Catalan-speaking respondents in Spain, Russian-speaking respondents in Estonia, Polish-speaking respondents in Ireland). This may be due to the complexities of organising contact and recruitment efforts of interviewers speaking different languages, but it may also be the case that many of these respondents do speak the 'dominant' interview language sufficiently fluently to complete an interview. The latter issue is exemplified by the Polish localisation experiment in Ireland. A localised version of the Polish questionnaire was produced and fielded in an effort to reduce nonresponse related to language barriers, but no interviews were eventually conducted in Polish.

Table 7.3 Interview languages, Round 8

Country	Language	Number of interviews
Austria	German	2010
Belgium	Dutch	1052
	French	714
Czech Republic	Czech	2266
Estonia	Estonian	1552
	Russian	467
Finland	Finnish	1801
	Swedish	122
France	French	2070
Germany	German	2852
Hungary	Hungarian	1614
Iceland	Icelandic	880
Ireland	English	2757
	Polish	0
Israel	Arabic	525
	Hebrew	2008
	Russian	24
Italy	Italian	2626
Lithuania	Lithuanian	1943
	Russian	179
Netherlands	Dutch	1681
Norway	Norwegian	1545
Poland	Polish	1694
Portugal	Portuguese	1270
Russian Federation	Russian	2430
Slovenia	Slovenian	1307
Spain	Catalan	116
	Spanish	1842
Sweden	Swedish	1551
Switzerland	French	385
	German	1078
	Italian	62
United Kingdom	English	1959

Note:
Based on ESS8 data from Interviewer Questionnaire, edition 1.0.

Table 7.4 Interview language different from first home language, Round 8

Country	N[a]	Interview not in first home language (%)	Main first home languages of respondents not interviewed in first home language
Austria	2010	5.3%	Turkish (2.0%) and Bosnian (0.6%)
Belgium	1766	8.6%	Arabic (1.7%), English (1.4%), Turkish (1.0%), Dutch (0.6%), French (0.6%), Polish (0.3%) and Russian (0.3%)
Czech Republic	2268	0.6%	
Estonia	2015	4.3%	Russian (3.1%)
Finland	1916	2.7%	
France	2069	2.5%	
Germany	2841	5.7%	Turkish (1.1%), Arabic (0.7%), Russian (0.7%) and Polish (0.3%)
Hungary	1614	1.4%	
Iceland	876	3.4%	English (1.5%)
Ireland	2690	6.4%	Polish (2.2%), Irish (1.0%) and Hindi (0.5%)
Israel	2557	12.0%	Russian (5.6%), English (2.1%), Arabic (1.3%) and French (0.8%)
Italy	2595	5.2%	Romanian (1.3%), Albanian (0.8%) and Arabic (0.7%)
Lithuania	2107	6.8%	Polish (3.3%) and Russian (2.0%)
Netherlands	1679	8.5%	Northern Frisian (2.8%), Limburgan, Limburger, Limburgish (1.7%), English (0.8%) and Turkish (0.5%)
Norway	1487	3.4%	English (1.6%)
Poland	1692	0.6%	
Portugal	1265	0.6%	
Russian Federation	2430	3.5%	Tatar (1.0%)
Slovenia	1306	2.6%	
Spain	1955	13.8%	Catalan (4.2%), Gallegan (3.6%), Basque (1.3%), Spanish (1.2%) and Romanian (0.9%)
Sweden	1549	7.4%	English (1.0%), Arabic (0.9%), Spanish (0.8%), Persian (0.6%), Bosnian (0.5%), Croatian (0.3%) and Kurdish (0.3%)
Switzerland	1524	15.2%	Portuguese (2.4%), Albanian (1.8%), Italian (1.6%), English (1.5%), Spanish (1.0%), German (1.0%), French (0.9%), Serbian (0.7%), Croatian (0.5%), Turkish (0.5%) and Tamil (0.4%)
United Kingdom	1895	5.1%	Polish (1.4%) and Welsh (0.8%)

Note:

Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0 and ESS8 data from Interviewer Questionnaire, edition 1.0.

[a] *N* refers to the number of respondents for which the interview language and first home language was recorded.

7.3 Interview duration

Table 7.5 presents some descriptive statistics of the interview duration for all participating countries in Round 8. The average interview duration ranges between 53.4 (Ireland) and 88.9 minutes (Portugal). In the median country, an interview took on average 62.0 minutes. Note that interviews in the United Kingdom took on average 58.9 minutes, somewhat longer than the anticipated interview duration in British English of 55 minutes (European Social Survey, 2015).

Language is one of the factors that may affect interview duration. However, previous research has suggested that cross-national differences cannot simply be reduced to language differences (Loosveldt & Beullens, 2013 for Round 5 of the Euopean Social Survey). Table 7.6 shows descriptive statistics of the interview duration by language. The figures clearly show large differences in interview duration across countries with a shared language. For example, the average interview duration ranges between 61.7 (Switzerland) and 84.5 minutes (Germany) for interviews in German, and ranges between 57.3 (Italy) and 71.3 minutes (Switzerland) for interviews in Italian. These figures support the earlier findings on the importance of cross-national differences over and above cross-language differences, and suggest that cross-national differences in interview practice continue to exist.

Table 7.5 Interview duration, Round 8

Country	N[a]	Q1	Q3	Mean	SD
Austria	2010	49.0	72.0	62.8	20.3
Belgium	1765	55.0	76.0	67.0	17.3
Czech Republic	2269	49.0	66.0	58.5	13.7
Estonia	2008	48.0	71.0	61.5	19.9
Finland	1925	50.0	70.0	63.4	20.5
France	2070	52.0	60.0	55.7	6.5
Germany	2660	67.0	94.0	84.5	35.0
Hungary	1608	47.0	67.0	58.1	15.8
Iceland	710	47.0	64.0	57.5	19.8
Ireland	2757	47.0	59.0	53.4	10.0
Israel	2518	40.0	70.0	56.2	24.8
Italy	2583	42.0	69.0	57.3	24.1
Lithuania	2118	62.0	85.8	75.0	19.4
Netherlands	1632	68.0	91.0	85.4	48.0
Norway	1495	55.0	82.0	78.8	55.4
Poland	1685	61.0	88.0	76.8	21.8
Portugal	1201	67.0	100.0	88.9	38.5
Russian Federation	2430	50.0	70.0	62.1	15.6
Slovenia	1267	45.0	63.0	55.9	19.0
Spain	1933	50.0	68.0	61.3	20.1
Sweden	1542	56.0	79.8	70.9	22.6
Switzerland	1524	51.0	70.0	62.0	18.0
United Kingdom	1540	48.0	66.0	58.9	21.2

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to all cases for which the interview duration was recorded.

Table 7.6 Interview duration by interview language, Round 8

Language	Country	N[a]	Q1	Q3	Mean	SD
Arabic	Israel	512	65.0	90.0	75.6	22.6
Catalan	Spain	116	56.8	73.2	66.3	15.5
Czech	Czech Republic	2266	49.0	66.0	58.5	13.7
Dutch	Belgium	1052	54.0	73.0	64.8	15.8
	Netherlands	1632	68.0	91.0	85.4	48.0
English	Ireland	2757	47.0	59.0	53.4	10.0
	United Kingdom	1540	48.0	66.0	58.9	21.2
Estonian	Estonia	1549	49.0	71.0	61.4	19.0
Finnish	Finland	1801	50.0	70.0	62.9	19.8
French	Belgium	713	58.0	80.0	70.2	18.8
	France	2070	52.0	60.0	55.7	6.5
	Switzerland	384	50.0	70.2	61.2	17.3
German	Austria	2010	49.0	72.0	62.8	20.3
	Germany	2660	67.0	94.0	84.5	35.0
	Switzerland	1078	51.0	70.0	61.7	18.0
Hebrew	Israel	1983	38.0	60.0	51.1	23.0
Hungarian	Hungary	1608	47.0	67.0	58.1	15.8
Icelandic	Iceland	710	47.0	64.0	57.5	19.8
Italian	Italy	2583	42.0	69.0	57.3	24.1
	Switzerland	62	59.2	79.0	71.3	20.3
Lithuanian	Lithuania	1939	62.5	86.0	75.3	19.5
Norwegian	Norway	1495	55.0	82.0	78.8	55.4
Polish	Ireland					
	Poland	1685	61.0	88.0	76.8	21.8
Portuguese	Portugal	1201	67.0	100.0	88.9	38.5
Russian	Estonia	459	47.0	72.0	61.5	22.6
	Israel	23	50.0	65.0	58.3	9.8
	Lithuania	179	55.0	85.0	71.9	18.3
	Russian Federation	2430	50.0	70.0	62.1	15.6
Slovenian	Slovenia	1267	45.0	63.0	55.9	19.0
Spanish	Spain	1817	50.0	68.0	61.0	20.3
Swedish	Finland	122	53.2	80.5	70.9	28.1
	Sweden	1542	56.0	79.8	70.9	22.6

Note:

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

[a] *N* refers to all cases for which the interview duration was recorded.

7.4 Interviewer effects

While interviewers can motivate respondents and support them in performing their role adequately, they can also influence responses and thereby introduce error. In order to limit interviewer-induced error in the measurement of attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns, all ESS interviewers are expected to apply the same basic task rules when administering the questionnaire.

The extent to which interviewers affect responses is typically evaluated on the basis of intraclass correlations estimated from multilevel models with respondents clustered within interviewers. Intra-interviewer correlations capture the proportion of item variability which is due to the interviewers' individual systematic differences. High intra-interviewer correlations indicate that responses from respondents interviewed by the same interviewer are more similar than otherwise would be expected, and are suggestive of differences between interviewers in the way they interact with respondents during the interview.

Figure 7.1 visualizes, for each participating country in Round 8, the distribution of intra-interviewer correlations.[18] Table 7.7 presents some descriptive statistics. Interviewer effects appear negligible in several of the countries, but probably should receive priority attention in some other countries. The average intra-interviewer correlation ranges between 0.009 (Iceland) and 0.314 (Lithuania), with 13 countries in the 0.023-0.203 range. For the median country we observe an average intra-interviewer correlation of 0.045. Particularly striking is that while in 11 countries (Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, the United Kingdom, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Slovenia), (almost) none of the intra-interviewer correlations exceed 0.10, more than half the intra-interviewer correlations exceed this threshold in 9 countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and the Russian Federation).

Table 7.8 presents some descriptive statistics by questionnaire module. For the median country we observe an average intra-interviewer correlation of 0.050 for the core modules A, B and C, 0.042 for the rotating module D on Climate change and energy, 0.051 for the rotating module E on Welfare, 0.048 for the core socio-demographic module F, and 0.070 for the core module H on Human values. Thought-provokingly, the average intra-interviewer correlation for the module D items, the module E items, and the module H items exceeds the average for the core modules A, B and C in, respectively, 20 countries (all except Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Iceland), 21 countries (all except Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and 17 countries (all except Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Iceland and Lithuania).

[18] Intra-interviewer correlations were estimated from linear models with an interviewer-level random effect for all numeric items and ordinal items measured on at least a 4-point scale in the Round 8 main questionnaire (N = 180). To control for similarities between respondents arising from area effects rather than interviewer effects, the geographical region and self-reported degree of urbanization of respondents' domicile are included in the models. It should nonetheless be noted that, given the lack of random assinment, interviewer and area effects cannot be fully disentangled, and some (presumably small) portion of the 'intra-interviewer' correlations may be attributable to area effects. Estimates for items administered by fewer than 30 interviewers or from fewer than 5 respondents for each interviewer are suppressed.

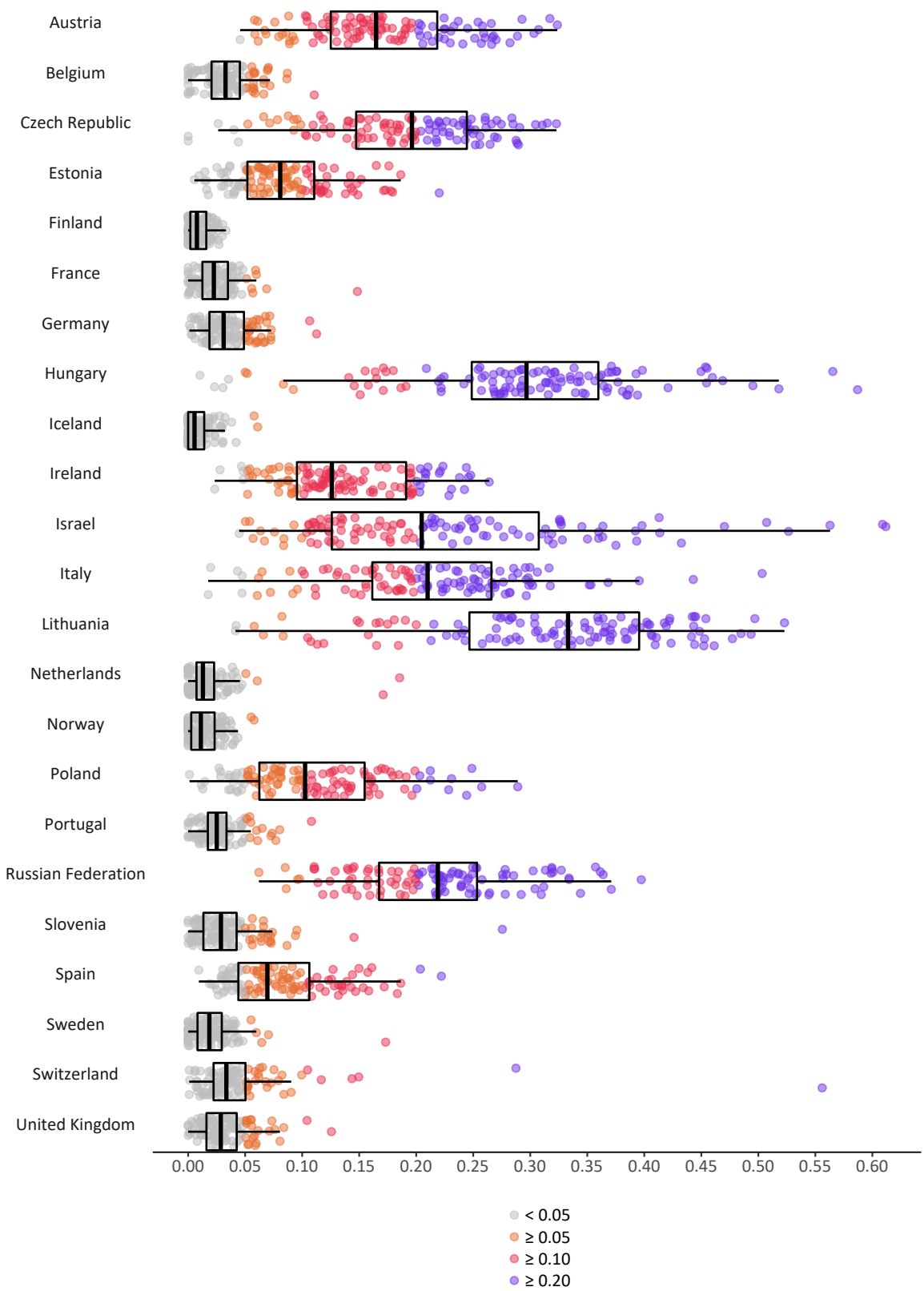


Figure 7.1 Interviewer effects, Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

N = 114 items in modules A to F for which the intra-interviewer correlation could be estimated for all participating countries.

Table 7.7 Interviewer effects, Round 8

Country	Min	Max	Mean	SD	> .05 (%)	> .10 (%)
Austria	0.046	0.324	0.172	0.065	99.1%	86.0%
Belgium	0.000	0.111	0.033	0.021	19.3%	0.9%
Switzerland	0.001	0.556	0.045	0.060	25.4%	5.3%
Czech Republic	0.000	0.323	0.190	0.071	95.6%	87.7%
Germany	0.001	0.113	0.035	0.021	24.6%	1.8%
Estonia	0.005	0.220	0.084	0.044	76.3%	31.6%
Spain	0.009	0.222	0.080	0.045	68.4%	27.2%
Finland	0.000	0.033	0.010	0.009	0.0%	0.0%
France	0.000	0.148	0.025	0.019	6.1%	0.9%
United Kingdom	0.000	0.126	0.032	0.022	18.4%	1.8%
Hungary	0.010	0.587	0.292	0.109	96.5%	93.0%
Ireland	0.023	0.264	0.137	0.056	95.6%	73.7%
Israel	0.045	0.612	0.225	0.123	99.1%	90.4%
Iceland	0.000	0.061	0.009	0.012	1.8%	0.0%
Italy	0.018	0.503	0.212	0.086	95.6%	89.5%
Lithuania	0.041	0.523	0.314	0.112	98.2%	94.7%
Netherlands	0.000	0.185	0.019	0.025	3.5%	1.8%
Norway	0.000	0.058	0.014	0.013	1.8%	0.0%
Poland	0.001	0.289	0.110	0.061	82.5%	50.9%
Portugal	0.000	0.108	0.028	0.019	10.5%	0.9%
Russian Federation	0.062	0.397	0.218	0.071	100.0%	95.6%
Sweden	0.000	0.173	0.021	0.021	4.4%	0.9%
Slovenia	0.000	0.276	0.034	0.033	19.3%	1.8%

Note:

Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

N = 114 items in modules A to F for which the intra-interviewer correlation could be estimated for all participating countries.

Table 7.8 Interviewer effects by module, Round 8

	Modules A, B, C		Module D		Module E		Module F		Module H	
Country	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Austria	0.150	0.054	0.197	0.053	0.223	0.059	0.099	0.032	0.182	0.058
Belgium	0.029	0.022	0.042	0.022	0.033	0.017	0.030	0.016	0.027	0.028
Switzerland	0.050	0.080	0.038	0.022	0.040	0.026	0.054	0.078	0.086	0.070
Czech Republic	0.170	0.060	0.227	0.044	0.230	0.051	0.100	0.084	0.143	0.041
Germany	0.035	0.021	0.036	0.018	0.039	0.025	0.021	0.020	0.029	0.014
Estonia	0.066	0.036	0.106	0.042	0.109	0.041	0.049	0.029	0.070	0.040
Spain	0.055	0.023	0.109	0.037	0.116	0.049	0.040	0.017	0.090	0.040
Finland	0.009	0.009	0.010	0.010	0.009	0.007	0.011	0.009	0.011	0.011
France	0.021	0.025	0.025	0.014	0.027	0.015	0.035	0.012	0.027	0.024
United Kingdom	0.031	0.023	0.031	0.017	0.026	0.019	0.048	0.027	0.036	0.021
Hungary[1]	0.283	0.098	0.338	0.061	0.330	0.078	0.152	0.160	0.227	0.060
Ireland	0.123	0.058	0.169	0.045	0.152	0.043	0.083	0.035	0.138	0.047
Israel	0.178	0.117	0.316	0.115	0.210	0.075	0.203	0.121	0.195	0.044
Iceland	0.009	0.012	0.009	0.010	0.010	0.014	0.011	0.016	0.004	0.009
Italy	0.188	0.073	0.268	0.051	0.241	0.059	0.111	0.111	0.218	0.057
Lithuania	0.286	0.106	0.374	0.071	0.383	0.059	0.151	0.076	0.259	0.089
Netherlands	0.015	0.027	0.026	0.030	0.019	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.024	0.027
Norway	0.011	0.013	0.018	0.012	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.011	0.019	0.013
Poland	0.081	0.045	0.167	0.051	0.126	0.045	0.053	0.036	0.132	0.053
Portugal	0.022	0.015	0.031	0.014	0.038	0.023	0.026	0.023	0.028	0.023
Russian Federation	0.184	0.049	0.272	0.057	0.258	0.057	0.140	0.045	0.186	0.044
Sweden	0.015	0.013	0.025	0.017	0.022	0.015	0.034	0.045	0.040	0.024
Slovenia	0.026	0.019	0.030	0.022	0.051	0.032	0.044	0.072	0.060	0.030

Note:

Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

N = 47 items for the core modules A, B and C, *N* = 31 items for the rotating module D on Climate change and energy, *N* = 23 items for the rotating module E on Welfare, *N* = 13 items for the sociodemoraphic module F, and *N* = 21 items for the core module H on Human values for which the intra-interviewer correlation could be estimated for all participating countries.

[1] The core module H on Human values was self-administered in Hungary.

Table 7.9 presents the top 25 items according to the median intra-interviewer correlation estimate across countries. Supporting the previously expressed concerns about the core module H on Human values, 7 items in the top 25 are from the H module (the module as a whole contains a total of 21 items). The top 25 also contains 3 items from the rotating module D on Climate change and energy (module contains 31 items), and 6 items from the rotating module E on Welfare (module contains 23 items). Two of the 9 remaining top 25 items are from the core module B. This list suggests that going forward, the core module H items and the core module B items of the form 'Allow many/few immigrants …' call for additional attention.

Figure 7.2 shows the intra-interviewer correlations for these 25 items for each participating country in Round 8.

Table 7.9 Interviewer effects (top 25 items), Round 8

Item	Question	
gvcldcr	E8	Child care services for working parents, governments' responsibility
iprspot	Hq	Important to get respect from others
iplylfr	Hr	Important to be loyal to friends and devote to people close
testgi2	I2	Qualification for immigration: good educational qualifications
uemplwk	E3	Of every 100 working age how many unemployed and looking for work
nwspol	A1	News about politics and current affairs, watching, reading or listening
gvsrdcc	D28	How likely, governments enough countries take action to reduce climate change
iphlppl	Hl	Important to help people and care for others well-being
testgc34	C34	Qualification for immigration: christian background
imsmetn	B38	Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority
ubunp	E23	Unemployment benefit if turn down job: refuse unpaid work
testgc33	C33	Qualification for immigration: good educational qualifications
lklmten	D27	How likely, large numbers of people limit energy use
ipbhprp	Hp	Important to behave properly
eudcnbf	E38	More decisions made by EU: level of benefits in [country] become higher or lower
bnlwinc	E33	Social benefits only for people with lowest incomes
basinc	E36	Against or In favour of a basic income scheme
testgc35	C35	Qualification for immigration: work skills needed in country
impcntr	B40	Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe
impsafe	He	Important to live in secure and safe surroundings
ipfrule	Hg	Important to do what is told and follow rules
testgi3	I3	Qualification for immigration: christian background
testgc41	C41	Qualification for immigration: work skills needed in country
imprich	Hb	Important to be rich, have money and expensive things
elgngas	D5	How much electricity in [country] should be generated from natural gas

Note:
Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

Figure 7.2 Interviewer effects (top 25 items), Round 8

Note: Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

7.4.1 Change relative to the previous Round 7 and an exploration of the impact of the ESS briefing materials

In addition to the current magnitude and distribution of interviewer effects in the European Social Survey, any apparent improvement (or possibly, deterioration) of interviewer effects should be critically assessed. The new ESS briefing materials (see subsection 5.3, p. 53) in particular raise the question whether any progress has been made in the interviewers' compliance with the ESS rules for standardised interviewing, and in the mitigation of interviewer-related error in measurement that may be expected therefrom.

Table 7.10 presents, for each participating country that also participated in the previous Round 7, the mean difference in the intra-interviewer correlations estimated for Round 8 relative to those estimated for Round 7 across items repeated between the two rounds. Among the 20 countries for which a comparison with Round 7 is possible, a significant decrease in intra-interviewer correlations is observed for Estonia ($t(44) = -0.031$, $p < 0.001$), Germany ($t(44) = -0.011$, $p < 0.001$), Portugal ($t(44) = -0.041$, $p < 0.001$), Sweden ($t(44) = -0.012$, $p < 0.001$) and the Netherlands ($t(44) = -0.007$, $p = 0.003$). The improvement appears particularly striking in Estonia and Portugal.

At the same time, a significant *increase* in intra-interviewer correlations is observed for Austria ($t(44) = 0.020$, $p = 0.005$), Hungary ($t(44) = 0.038$, $p = 0.006$) and Lithuania ($t(44) = 0.021$, $p = 0.005$). It is also worth noting that of the 6 countries where the strongest interviewer effects are observed (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Lithuania and the Russian Federation), the ESS8 Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire was completed only for Israel. As a result, there is relatively little information on the organisation and content of the interviewer briefings for those countries for which this information is the most pertinent.

We explore here whether the available information provides evidence of the presumed association between (the lack of) rigorous interviewer briefings and the observed interviewer effects. This exploration is based on several cases that are distinctively on either side of the spectrum.

One particularly interesting case is Ireland. In Ireland, the ESS briefing materials were particularly well received by the national team, both the ESS Briefing presentation slides and ESS Interviewer manual were roughly adopted in full, the ESS movie clips on standardised interviewing and the ESS Practice interview were used in the briefing, and the duration of the briefing sessions was expanded to more than 8 hours. The comprehensive deposit of the briefing materials that were used should also be appreciated. Relatively high interviewer effects, and thus some room for improvement, were observed in the previous Round 7. None of the interviewers were 'new hires', lacking any prior face-to-face interviewing experience. The figures nonetheless do not suggest that interviewer effects have been reduced ($t(44) = 0.009$, $p = 0.145$).

Austria, Estonia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom are also identified as closely compliant with the interviewer briefing approach proposed by the CST. The briefing sessions took at least a half day, the ESS Briefing presentation slides and ESS Interviewer manual were roughly adopted in full and the administration of the ESS questionnaire was both discussed in group and practiced via active role-playing. Relatively high interviewer effects were observed in the previous Round 7 for Austria and Estonia. The figures suggest that interviewer effects in Estonia have reduced ($t(44) = -0.031$, $p < 0.001$) while interviewer effects in Austria have *increased* ($t(44) = 0.020$, $p = 0.005$). For Slovenia and the United Kingdom, relatively low interviewer effects were observed in the previous Round 7, and no change is apparent in Round 8 ($t(44) = -0.002$, $p = 0.594$ and $t(44) = -0.001$, $p = 0.746$).

For Portugal, the ESS8 Interviewer briefings evaluation questionnaire was not completed, so that the extent to which the interviewer briefing approach proposed by the CST was adopted is not ascertained. However, the deposited materials are indicative of close compliance, and the duration of the briefing sessions was

expanded to more than 8 hours. Moderate interviewer effects were observed in the previous Round 7, but with the downward shift in Round 8 ($t(44) = -0.041$, $p < 0.001$), Portual is now among the countries with the weakest observed interviewer effects.

On the other end of the spectrum we observe Norway and Sweden, where the ESS briefing materials and activities were not used. These two countries were among the countries with the weakest observed interviewer effects already in the previous Round 7. Less attention to interviewer-related error in measurement in briefings is therefore not totally unjustified. The contact procedure in these countries also diverges from the ESS norm, with respondents recruited by telephone rather than face-to-face (see subsection 6.3, p. 69), so that the ESS Briefing presentation slides and ESS Interviewer manual may have been less directly applicable. The figures suggest that interviewer effects have further reduced in these countries. In Norway, the average change in intra-interviewer correlations is not statistically significant at the 5% significance level ($t(44) = -0.004$, $p = 0.060$), but the change is significant in Sweden ($t(44) = -0.012$, $p < 0.001$).

This exploration is obviously limited because of the observational nature of the data, the inherent difficulty of capturing the rigour and country-specific adequacy of the briefings, and the lack of relevant, reliable and comparable information over subsequent rounds and in particular countries. It should also be emphasized that the extent to which the interviewers comply with the ESS rules for standardised interviewing probably depends on a multitude of factors, such as the interviewers' skill, training and experience, the incentive mechanisms and monitoring processes that are in place, as well as the content and organisation of the interviewer briefing. Identifying causal relationships would therefore be challenging even if more information would be available.

Table 7.10 Change in interviewer effects relative to the previous Round 7, Round 8

	Round 7		Round 8		Change		
Country	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	P-value
Austria	0.122	0.054	0.142	0.056	0.020	0.045	0.005
Belgium	0.027	0.020	0.028	0.022	0.001	0.016	0.668
Czech Republic	0.157	0.069	0.157	0.069	0.001	0.055	0.948
Estonia	0.093	0.043	0.062	0.038	-0.031	0.046	< 0.001
Finland	0.010	0.006	0.009	0.008	0.000	0.011	0.826
France	0.023	0.017	0.022	0.016	-0.001	0.021	0.800
Germany	0.044	0.024	0.033	0.022	-0.011	0.018	< 0.001
Hungary	0.214	0.103	0.252	0.121	0.038	0.087	0.006
Iceland			0.009	0.012			
Ireland	0.104	0.042	0.113	0.061	0.009	0.042	0.145
Israel	0.165	0.099	0.170	0.108	0.005	0.049	0.503
Italy			0.173	0.080			
Lithuania	0.241	0.104	0.262	0.121	0.021	0.048	0.005
Netherlands	0.019	0.014	0.012	0.011	-0.007	0.014	0.003
Norway	0.015	0.013	0.011	0.013	-0.004	0.014	0.060
Poland	0.060	0.031	0.068	0.037	0.008	0.036	0.146
Portugal	0.064	0.036	0.023	0.016	-0.041	0.036	< 0.001
Russian Federation			0.170	0.050			
Slovenia	0.027	0.018	0.025	0.019	-0.002	0.025	0.594
Spain	0.051	0.028	0.052	0.023	0.001	0.022	0.771
Sweden	0.028	0.023	0.016	0.015	-0.012	0.020	< 0.001
Switzerland	0.029	0.024	0.037	0.031	0.008	0.028	0.076
United Kingdom	0.032	0.018	0.031	0.022	-0.001	0.021	0.746

Note:

Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

N = 45 items in modules A to F, repeated in both rounds, for which the intra-interviewer correlation could be estimated for all participating countries.

8 Data deposit and processing

Once the data is collected, the survey data and paradata has to be finalized and, along with the relevant documentation, deposited to the ESS Archive, in principle by the end of February (two months after the end of the targeted fieldwork period). The national teams are also expected to check and edit the data with respect to uniqueness and consistency of identification numbers, wild codes and data consistency, and possible risks to confidentiality before deposit.

A complete deposit has to contain, in addition to the main data file, the raw data file, the parents' occupation data file, the Interviewer Questionnaire data file, the Contact Form data file, the sample design data file, the National Technical Summary, which documents key information on the data collection, and other documents such as advance letters to respondents. The additional data deliverables were deposited for (nearly) all countries. Only for Finland and Norway, the raw data file was not deposited.

As shown in Figure 1.1 (p. 6), and summarised in Table 8.1, complete deposits were made between the end of February 2017 (Norway) and the end of August 2018 (Lithuania). Timely depositing is a challenge for many countries. By the end of February 2017, a complete deposit was made only for Norway, for 10 countries a complete deposit was made between March and May 2017, and for 7 countries a complete deposit was made between June and August 2017. For Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain, a complete deposit was made only after the second week of September 2017.

When the fieldwork starts late and/or is extended beyond four months, it may be difficult or even impossible to make a complete deposit by the specified deposit deadline. However, there are also marked differences between countries in the time between fieldwork completion and deposit. It took between 5 weeks (Ireland and Italy) and 34 weeks (Lithuania) before a complete deposit was made. The median country took 12 weeks.

For most countries, data deliverables were deposited over several occasions (Table 8.2). Only for the Czech Republic, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, the main data file, the parents' occupation data file, the Interviewer Questionnaire data file, the Contact Form data file, the sample design data file and the raw data file were all deposited on the same day. The main data file was part of the first deposit for 16 countries, while the Contact Form data file and the sample design data file were part of the first deposit only for 12 countries and 9 countries, respectively. Among the 19 countries for which multiple deposits were made, the last deposit often consisted of either the Contact Form data file (Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland and the Netherlands; between less than half a week and 13.5 weeks after deposit of the main data file) or the sample design data file (Israel, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden; between less than half a week and 13 weeks after deposit of the main data file). For Belgium and Lithuania, the deposit was only considered complete with the deposit of the raw data (6.5 weeks and 27.5 weeks after deposit of the main data file, respectively). For the median country, the main data file was deposited 7.5 weeks, the Contact Form data file 8.5 weeks, and the sample design data file 9 weeks after the end of fieldwork.

For most countries, the National Technical Summary was submitted around the same time as the main data file. Only for Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania and Portugal there was more than a week between the two.

Table 8.1 Complete deposit, Round 8

Country	Complete deposit	Time between end of fieldwork and complete deposit (weeks)
Austria	8 March 2017	10.0
Belgium	11 May 2017	14.3
Czech Republic	23 May 2017	22.1
Estonia	22 June 2017	20.3
Finland	8 May 2017	8.7
France	23 April 2017	6.1
Germany	13 June 2017	11.3
Hungary	12 January 2018	16.9
Iceland	31 August 2017	12.0
Ireland	12 June 2017	5.0
Israel	26 June 2017	19.7
Italy	22 December 2017	4.7
Lithuania	22 August 2018	33.9
Netherlands	23 March 2017	7.3
Norway	28 February 2017	6.0
Poland	15 May 2017	11.7
Portugal	12 September 2017	12.7
Russian Federation	21 August 2017	22.1
Slovenia	23 May 2017	18.9
Spain	26 December 2017	26.6
Sweden	13 April 2017	8.9
Switzerland	2 June 2017	13.1
United Kingdom	30 May 2017	10.1

Note:
Based on information from the ESS Archive.

Table 8.2 Time between end of fieldwork and deposit (in weeks) of main data and documentation deliverables, Round 8

Country	Main data file	Parents' occupation data file	Interviewer question-naire data file	Contact forms data file	Sample design data file	Raw data file	National Technical Summary
Austria	9.7	9.7	9.7	10.0	9.7	9.7	9.1
Belgium	7.9	6.4	9.3	7.9	7.9	14.3	7.9
Czech Republic	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.6
Estonia	6.9	6.9	6.9	20.3	6.9	6.9	9.6
Finland	7.3	16.0	6.1	8.1	7.9		8.7
France	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Germany	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.3	11.1	11.1	11.3
Hungary	8.1	15.9	8.1	12.4	12.4	8.6	14.7
Iceland	0.7	3.7	0.7	12.0	0.7	3.7	5.1
Ireland	5.0	3.3	3.6	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Israel	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	19.7	11.0	11.0
Italy	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.7
Lithuania	6.6	5.1	5.6	5.7	5.6	33.9	9.1
Netherlands	7.0	6.0	6.0	7.3	6.0	6.0	6.0
Norway	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	6.0		6.0
Poland	6.3	11.7	6.3	6.3	7.0	6.3	6.3
Portugal	0.4	8.6	8.6	0.4	12.7	0.4	12.7
Russian Federation	8.7	22.1	8.7	8.7	10.4	34.7	8.7
Slovenia	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	18.9	6.1	6.1
Spain	26.6	26.0	22.3	26.6	26.0	26.0	26.6
Sweden	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.9	8.4	8.4
Switzerland	13.1	13.0	13.1	13.0	13.1	13.0	13.0
United Kingdom	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	9.6

Note:
Based on information from the ESS Archive.

Once all data files and documentation have been deposited, the ESS Archive processes the data, in collaboration with the national teams. One of the first of the Archive's processing checks is on the consistency of identification numbers of respondents and interviewers across data files. 9 countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden) directly deposited data files without any inconsistencies with respondent or interviewer identification numbers.

As an overall (albeit imperfect) indicator of the intensity of the processing, we can consider the number of edited values in the main data. Between 0.3% (Poland) and 6.8% (Ireland) of values in the main data were edited over the course of processing. In the median country, 1.5% of values were edited.

9 Conclusions and recommendations

The European Social Survey aims for high quality standards and cross-national comparability, and has been successful in many respects. The current ESS Specification addresses various aspects of the survey design and implementation in view of cross-national comparability (input harmonisation). While high quality standards are aimed for and these standards are generally not out of range, they are not necessarily met across the board.

Despite the efforts to standardise the survey design and implementation across countries, considerable varia-tion with regard to different aspects of the national survey life cycle, in terms of timing, emphasis and practical implementation, persists.

Some national teams face tight budget constraints and therefore may have insufficient capacity available to meet the specifications and the related high quality standards of the European Social Survey. One important issue is that for a number of countries, the planned net sample size (and accordingly, as is usual, the realised net 'effective' sample size) is smaller than needed to achieve the targeted level of statistical precision because of budget constraints.

The prolonged national survey lifecycle suggest that a national coordinator has to be available for at least one year in order to prepare, implement and monitor the different stages in the lifecycle. The median deposit period of three months demonstrates that data finalisation and processing activities also require a lot of time. This stage in the survey lifecycle may be relatively underestimated and underresourced. National teams face fluctuating work demands in different knowledge areas of survey data collection, and are thus in need of flexibility and versatility. Little is known about the national teams' time commitments. It may be advisable for the Core Scientific Team to map these time commitments, and to consider time as a constraint on the project alongside scope and cost.

Particularly striking are the asynchronous fieldwork periods, with varying start dates and varying fieldwork durations. Countries do not only vary in terms of the difficulty of reaching sample units that are hard to contact and/or reluctant to participate, but evidently also in the capacity available and the amount of effort devoted to reaching these sample units, and to closely monitoring and managing this process.

Large cross-national differences in interview duration, surpassing cross-language differences, suggest that cross-national differences in interview practice continue to exist. In addition, interviewer effects remain large in some countries, suggesting that interviewing practice is also not adequately standardised across interviewers within countries. Interviewers' adherence to the principles of standardised interviewing depends on many factors. In addition to prior training and experience of the interviewer workforce and interviewer monitoring processes, the content and organisation of the interviewer briefing may be highly relevant. In the absence of an experimental design, and lacking reliable information on these aspects of fieldwork organisation, the evaluation of its causal impact is seriously limited, however. To the extent that interviewer error is random, only the precision of survey estimates is adversely affected. However, although unquantifiable, unstandardized interviewing practice also increases the risk of survey estimates that are on the whole shifted in one direction or the other (pure interviewer bias). This kind of country-specific systematic interviewer effects pose a non-negligible threat to cross-national comparability.

Nonresponse, in particular in terms of the systematic divergence between nonrespondents and respondents, and the resulting nonresponse bias reducing cross-national comparability of survey estimates, also remains a cause of concern. Additional fieldwork efforts such as reassignments to other interviewers can improve re-sponse rates considerably. In some dimensions (depending on the auxiliary variables considered), respondents and nonrespondents may also be less divergent (smaller contrast) when a higher response rate is achieved.

(smaller contrast) when a higher response rate is achieved. Additional fieldwork efforts, by conversion of initial nonrespondents, may help to compress the divergence between the respondent group and the group of nonrespondents. Some of the risk of nonresponse bias, which depends on both the response rate and the contrast between respondents and nonrespondents, can thereby be alleviated. All in all, maintaining high response rate targets appear to remain conducive to nonresponse error mitigation.

As is the case for several stages in the survey lifecycle, the data processing by national teams and survey agencies before deposit to the Archive is not well documented. The data processing by the ESS Archive is thoroughly documented, but not in a way that might facilitate a straightforward evaluation of its impact on the data.The risk of processing error has also not received much attention thus far, either in the European Social Survey or in survey methodologi-cal research more generally. The impact of processing on data quality may be a fruitful avenue for further methodological research directed towards the development of quality standards.

Substantive data users should also remain attentive of remaining data quality issues. Cross-national compar-ative research should take into account the differences in various aspects of the national survey life cycle and possible differences in data quality between countries, both in analysis (considering the possibility to control for interviewer variance for example) and interpretation of results.

The European Social Survey prioritises methodological rigour and cross-national and inter-temporal compara-bility, but this requires an ongoing effort and commitment. This report, outlining an assessment of the data collection process and data quality across all participating countries in Round 8, contributes to this effort. In the context of quality assessment and improvement, there may be additional benefit in applying a case study approach to gain an in-depth and multifaceted understanding of a particular aspect of the survey lifecycle that is in need of improvement (e.g. sampling, briefing, fieldwork and interviewer monitoring) in a particular set of countries. The results presented in this report can be used to select these countries and improvement areas.

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