

The Guide to Eurostat culture statistics

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A common framework for European Union (EU) culture statistics

In 1995, the EU council of Culture Ministers adopted a resolution on the promotion of statistics on culture and economic growth, the first institutional step towards the creation of common culture statistics in Europe. A few years later, Eurostat published the first *European methodological framework for culture statistics*. Its purpose was to provide a harmonised basis of concepts, definitions, key domains and indicators for statistical use in the field of culture. The first edition of the *Guide to Eurostat culture statistics*¹, published in 2018, follows the same original goal and represents a comprehensive and updated source of information about official culture statistics in the EU. The publication describes the conceptual, methodological and technical aspects of all the data published on the Eurostat database section dedicated to culture (Database - Culture - Eurostat (europa.eu)).

A universally accepted definition of ‘culture’ does not exist and probably never will. This is just the first difficulty encountered by statisticians in the field. In the course of more than 20 years spent developing culture statistics, EU statisticians have had to deal with a plethora of theoretical and practical challenges. The results reached in the field are the outcome of the work of the European Statistical System Network on Culture (ESS-net Culture). The voluminous 2012

*ESSnet-Culture final report*² became a central reference for culture statistics in Europe, and it represents the basis for the Guide to Eurostat culture statistics.

Eurostat data on culture (and consequently the Guide) cover the following five statistical areas:

- ▶ cultural employment
- ▶ cultural enterprises
- ▶ international trade in cultural goods and services
- ▶ cultural participation
- ▶ private and public expenditure on culture.

Each chapter of the guide provides a general overview, a description of the data sources, methodological aspects and specific issues related to each of these areas. Additionally, information on culture-related statistics about cities, production of cultural goods and data collected by the European group of museums statistics (EGMUS) is also included.

It should be underlined that there is no single European survey or data collection specifically dedicated to culture. All the data and information used are from various EU data collections, which together constitute Eurostat’s harmonised statistics related to culture.

In the following sections of this article, we will present some of the main aspects related to the data covering the five above-mentioned statistical areas. For additional or more complete information, we invite the reader to consult the *Guide to Eurostat culture statistics*.

¹ EUROSTAT, Guide to Eurostat Culture statistics, Luxembourg, 2018, available on-line at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/9433072/KS-GQ-18-011-EN-N.pdf/72981708-edb7-4007-a298-8b5d9d5a61b5?t=1544174403000>

² ESSnet-CULTURE, European Statistical System Network on Culture, Final Report, Luxembourg, 2012, available on-line at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/341465/3199631/essnet-culture.pdf/a6518128-69b3-4d89-82b8-060a3ad0d1d5>

Cultural employment

Statistics on cultural employment are derived from the European Union Labour Force Survey (EULFS), which is the main source of information on employment and labour market trends in the EU, EFTA (the European Free Trade Association) countries and candidate countries.

The 2012 ESSnet-Culture final report proposed a methodology to be applied to cultural statistics, including the scope of ‘cultural economic activities’ and ‘cultural occupations’, on the basis of two reference classifications:

- ▶ NACE (Nomenclature générale des activités économiques dans les Communautés européennes), which classifies the employer’s main economic activity; and
- ▶ the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO).

The EU-LFS results make it possible to characterise cultural employment by a number of core social characteristics (sex, age and educational attainment), selected labour characteristics (self-employed persons, employed persons working full-time, employees with more than one permanent job and employed persons with one job only), and provides data at regional level.

The statistical concept of cultural employment encompasses situations (see Table 1) where a person:

- ▶ holds a cultural occupation and works in the cultural sector (e.g. a ballet dancer employed by a ballet company or a journalist working for a daily newspaper – field I);

- ▶ holds a cultural occupation outside the cultural sector (e.g. a designer working in the automobile industry – field II); or
- ▶ holds a non-cultural occupation in the cultural sector (e.g. an accountant working in publishing house – field III).

The algorithm calculates cultural employment in countries that provide the most detailed data, i.e. NACE three-digit and ISCO four-digit data. For countries with a different combination of available digits for these two dimensions, estimates are calculated based on available data for other countries.

The first difficulty in calculating cultural employment is dealing with NACE and ISCO codes that are partly cultural at the most detailed level available in the EU-LFS. Due to the lack of information regarding the cultural element, the ISCO four-digit and NACE three-digit codes that are only partly cultural are not considered as cultural in the algorithm.

However, using the cross-tabulation (NACE x ISCO) method, people with a ‘partly cultural’ occupation code are actually included in cultural employment statistics if they are also employed in a fully cultural sector of activity (and conversely, those with a ‘partly cultural’ economic activity are included when they have a fully cultural occupation).

In 2021, with the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/1700, it has become possible to obtain data at the most detailed level for all countries.

Cultural enterprises

Statistics on cultural enterprises show how market-oriented cultural enterprises contribute to the overall economy.

These statistics are based on Structural Business Statistics (SBS) and Business Demography (BD) data. While SBS data focus on input variables (labour, goods and services and their cost, and investments) and output variables (monetary indicators such as turnover and value added at factor cost), BD data provide

TABLE 1. CULTURAL EMPLOYMENT AT THE INTERSECTION OF NACE AND ISCO CLASSIFICATIONS

Occupations (ISCO)		Activities (NACE)	
		Cultural	Non-cultural
	Cultural	I	II
	Non-cultural	III	IV

indicators such as birth, death and survival rates for market-oriented cultural enterprises.

For the purpose of cultural statistics, specific SBS 'cultural enterprises' aggregates are computed and made available in the 'culture' domain in the Eurostat database, enabling the publication of indicators, with different breakdowns available, on:

- ▶ the number of active enterprises;
- ▶ the size of enterprises (number of employed people per enterprise);
- ▶ value added at factor cost;
- ▶ turnover;
- ▶ survival rates after 5 years.

International trade in cultural goods and services

Statistics on international trade in cultural *goods* are part of a set of measures that make it possible to assess and monitor the economic impact of culture. The data are collected according to the Combined Nomenclature (CN) which is the European classification conceived for the purpose of international trade, composed of around 9400 eight-digit codes. Cultural goods in international trade are identified according to the CN that involve 'creation' or 'artistic expression' in the production process and the purpose of which is to transmit aesthetic, symbolic or artistic values. The cultural domains covered include, in particular, heritage, books and press, visual arts, art craft, performing arts, audio-visual and multimedia, and architecture. Within these domains about 150 specific goods codes are collected at eight digit level.

Statistics on international trade in cultural services represent the monetary value of such trade and can be analysed by category of service and by partner country, they concern transactions recorded in a country's balance of payments. The statistics cover cultural services provided by news agencies, performing actors, architects, etc. Many relate to charges for the use of intellectual property (e.g. licences in the domain of audio-visual or performing arts). Data on international trade in cultural services are derived from a specific set of statistics on

'International trade in services', based on balance of payments data, which are used to monitor the economies' external commercial performance.

Cultural participation

The EU statistics on cultural participation come from various sources:

- ▶ the Adult Education Survey (AES historical data 2007 and 2011);
- ▶ the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) with the periodical ad hoc modules on cultural and social participation;
- ▶ the survey on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in households and by individuals;
- ▶ the Harmonised European Time Use Survey (HETUS).

In the EU-SILC, all core indicators are collected and disseminated annually. An ad hoc module on social and cultural participation was included in 2006, and in 2015. The next module is included in the EU-SILC 2022, currently ongoing.

The 2015 ad hoc module included variables on cultural participation such as going to the cinema, going to live performances, visits to cultural sites, practice of artistic activities. The module did not cover reading habits, for which the AES 2011 provides the latest data. For all variables except the practice of artistic activities, the EU-SILC 2015 module included questions on the main reason for non-participation; respondents were asked to select from 'financial reason', 'lack of proximity', 'lack of interest' and 'other'.

A set of statistics on the use of the Internet for cultural purposes, including cultural practices and the purchase of cultural goods, is available from the survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals. The data are available under numerous breakdown variables, including age, sex, educational attainment, country of birth, employment status, etc. Cultural practices via the ICT currently include: consulting the news online, watching TV, movies and videos, listening to music, playing or downloading games, the purchase of cultural goods and

services such as printed books, e-books, video contents, music or tickets to cultural events.

The Harmonised European Time Use Survey (HETUS), run every ten years, measures the amount of time people spend on a wide range of domains. Cultural activities include time spent in the following activities: handicraft, reading books and periodicals, cinema, theatre and concerts, art exhibitions, computer games, listening to radio or recordings. Three waves of HETUS have been run in 2000, 2010 and in 2020.

Cultural expenditure (private and public)

Data on household expenditure on cultural goods are available from the Household budget survey (HBS), run every 5 years. These statistics provide insight about the private financing of culture and cultural participation.

The classification system used for the HBS is the United Nations' Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP). COICOP division 09 ('culture and recreation') specifically relates to expenditure on culture: books, newspapers and services provided by cinemas, theatres, concert halls or museums. Other durable goods such as musical instruments, photo and video cameras, drawing materials and equipment (e.g. IT equipment, TV sets and radios) are also included in the scope of culture-related household expenditure. These items represent 'indirect cultural expenditure', i.e. they are used for artistic expression (e.g. musical instruments) or allow the reception of cultural content or facilitate access to it (e.g. TV sets and computers).

The level and structure of prices of goods and services are one of the key determinants of household expenditure. Information on the harmonised index of consumer prices (HICP) thus complements data on private expenditure on cultural goods and services. While the results of the HBS are available only at five-yearly intervals, the HICP provides monthly information about price changes, thus facilitating regular monitoring. It also gives a comparable measure of inflation in the EU, as it uses a harmonised approach for its calculation and a single set of definitions. The index is calculated for a range of cultural goods and services: books, newspapers,

recording media, audio-video, information processing equipment, and cultural services provided by cinemas and museums.

Eurostat data on the public funding of culture come from government finance statistics

The coverage of culture is determined by the expenditure as identified by the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG), which makes it possible to report figures related to culture for the categories of cultural services (code 08.2) and broadcasting and publishing services (code 08.3). These categories cover the administration of cultural affairs, cultural facilities (such as libraries, museums or theatres), the production of cultural events, subsidies to support individual artists and a wide range of activities related to broadcasting and publishing. Together, these two classes cover a large part of culture-related government expenditure.

Updates and developments

The *Guide to Eurostat culture statistics* is today a solid point of reference for the official statistics on culture in the EU, however, since its publication the domain has further developed and Eurostat has progressed in its work of producing and disseminating harmonised and comparable data. In particular, it is worth mentioning Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households. It provides the legal base for an integrated framework of Eurostat data collections in the social domain, improving timeliness, harmonisation and comparability. As an example, the regulation states that, NACE codes at 3-digit level shall be provided for all the countries, resulting in improved data availability and providing detailed information on the cultural professions.

It should be noted that NACE and CPA are currently under revision, and consultations with experts are being held, which will provide an opportunity to reassess the scope of culture statistics and for further improvement. ●