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An introduction to an integrated survey tool suite for the European Social Survey

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ESRA Conference, 16 July 2021



europeansocialsurvey.org

ESS is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC)

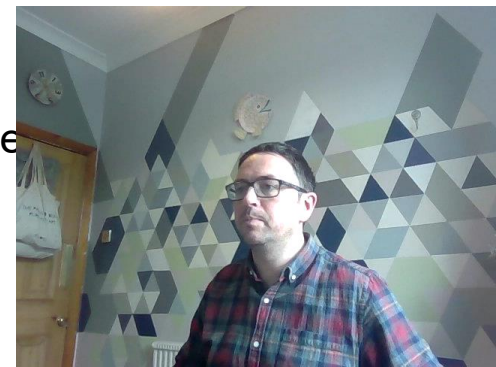


Introduction to ESS



Introduction to the European Social Survey

- Academically-driven cross-national survey measuring attitudes and behaviour across Europe
- Conducted every two years since 2002; nine rounds of fieldwork to date
- 38 countries have participated in total; 30 at Round 9
- Fully face-to-face approach across all participating countries; consistency of methodology important
- **Central fieldwork specification and central planning/oversight – but decentralised fieldwork contracting and delivery**
- Random probability sampling; mix of sample frames across countries (individual/dwelling/address)
- Interview length c. 1 hour
- Alongside core survey methodology, conduct developmental/experimental with online methods (e.g. CRONOS panels)



Participating countries

9 ROUNDS

1. Belgium
2. Finland
3. France
4. Germany
5. Hungary
6. Ireland
7. The Netherlands
8. Norway
9. Poland
10. Portugal
11. Slovenia
12. Spain
13. Sweden
14. Switzerland
15. United Kingdom

8 ROUNDS

16. Austria
17. Czech Republic
18. Denmark
19. Estonia

6 ROUNDS

20. Israel
21. Lithuania
22. Slovakia

5 ROUNDS

23. Bulgaria
24. Cyprus
25. Italy
26. Russia
27. Ukraine

4 ROUNDS

28. Greece
29. Iceland
30. Latvia

3 ROUNDS

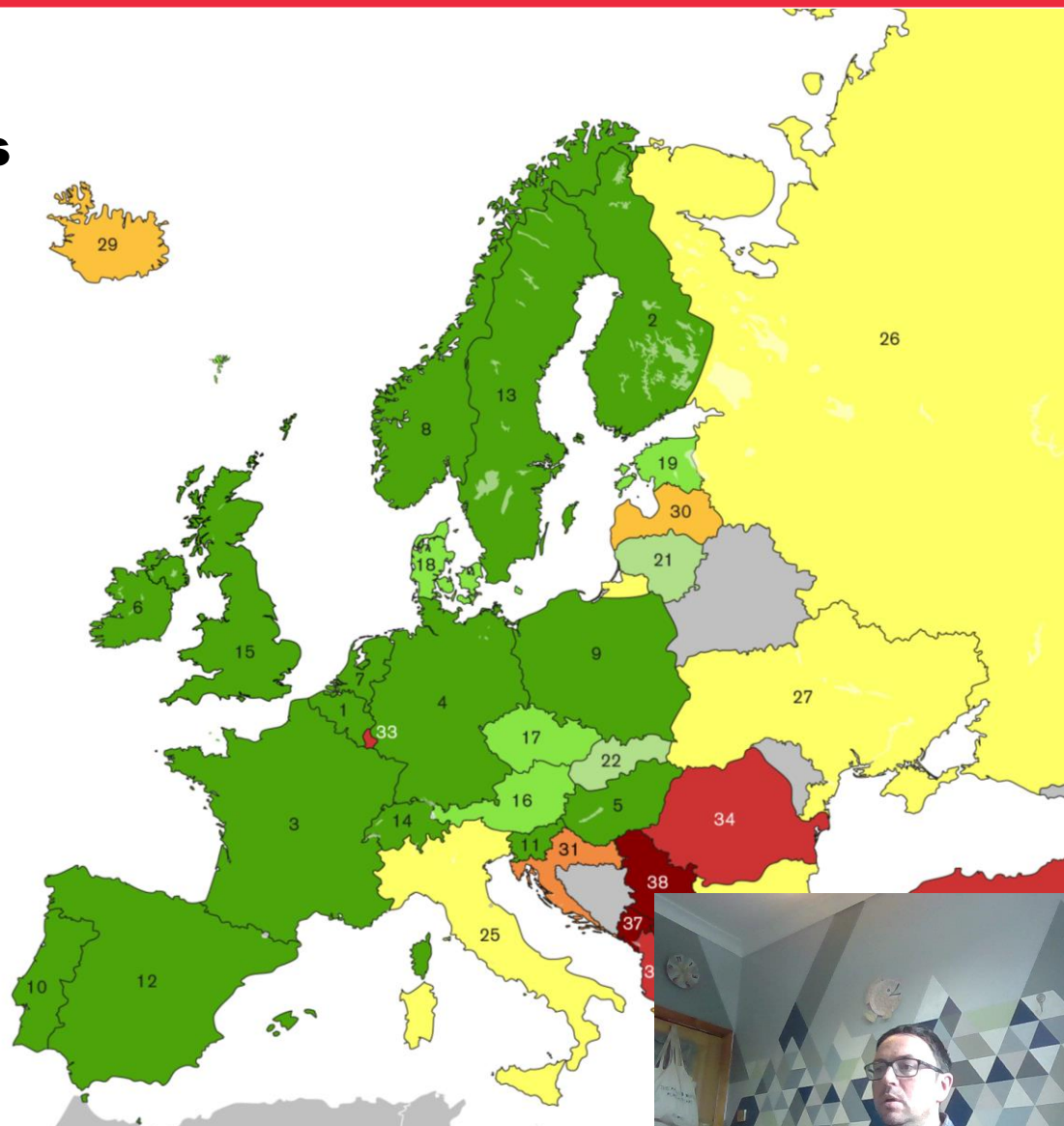
31. Croatia

2 ROUNDS

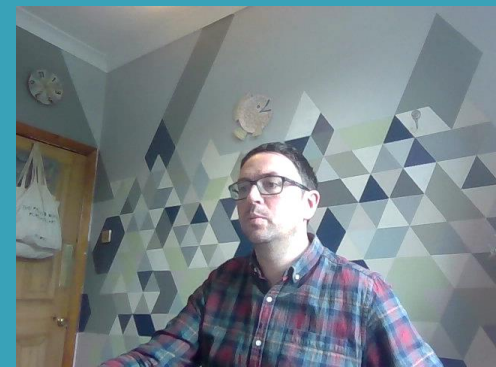
32. Albania
33. Luxembourg
34. Romania
35. Turkey

1 ROUND

36. Kosovo
37. Montenegro
38. Serbia

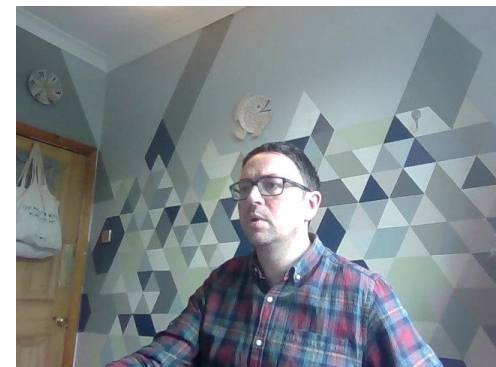


Survey tool suite



Background to the survey tool suite (1)

- Development of the survey tool suite funded through SUSTAIN-2 grant ('Next Steps in Securing the Sustainability of the European Social Survey')
- ***Harnessing technology to reduce local costs*** – “to provide national teams with support in the form of a centrally provided survey software to facilitate data collection”
- Previous process much more localised: national teams were sent paper questionnaires and specifications and needed to program their own CAPI scripts / other tools



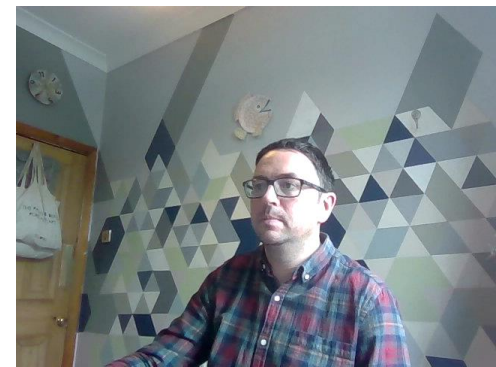
Background to the survey tool suite (2)

- Development and implementation of a centralise data collection tool to be used for ESS Round 10 fieldwork in up to 12 countries; developed by CentERdata. Comprises the following elements:
 - Central CAPI program
 - Central translation management tool (TranslationCTRL)
 - Sample management system for fieldwork agencies (SampleCTRL)
 - Case management application for interviewers (CaseCTRL)
 - Fieldwork monitoring system (FMS)
- Translation tool, fieldwork monitoring system and contact registration app used at Round 9 (updated for Round 10); other tools – and fully integrated tool suite – used for the first time for ESS at Round 10



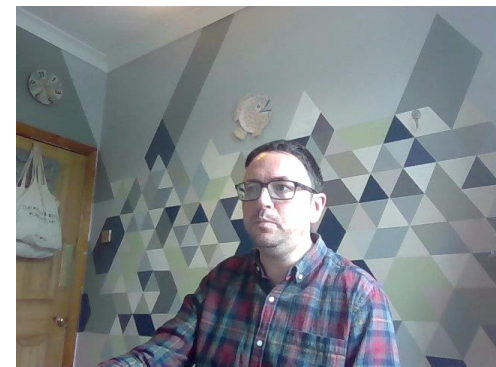
Participating countries for Round 10

- SUSTAIN-2 grant included funding for up to 12 countries to use full tool suite
- Expect final number will be 10-12 countries
- Several other countries using translation tool only, including shared language countries
- CentERdata work closely with national teams and agencies in participating countries on technical set-up and testing



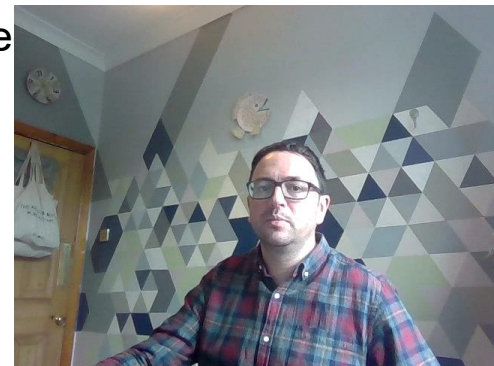
Advantages of a centralised approach

- A number of benefits are expected:
 - Increased cross-national comparability of data collected – e.g. ensuring no country-specific script errors
 - Greater transparency with country processes
 - Allows easier monitoring of fieldwork by national and central teams – automatic daily updates on fieldwork progress
 - Consistent adherence with data protocol / less need to for post-fieldwork editing
 - Reduced burden on national coordinating teams and survey agencies in countries
 - Cost savings for national teams



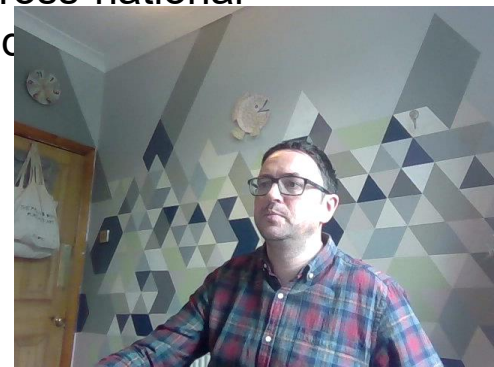
Challenges of a centralised approach

- ESS questionnaire included a number of country-specific items – large share of development time spent focused on these
- Longer timescales needed with centralised approach – need for clear communication and expectation setting with national teams
- Some requests for variation between countries (e.g. to reflect contact procedures)
- Time needed for technical set-up and testing in countries – important not to underestimate this work
- Lots of resource needed for central oversight
- Too early to know extent to which perceived benefits will be realised
planning challenging



Possible future use of the tool suite

- Effectiveness of tool suite to be assessed as Round 10 fieldwork progresses and through data delivery phase
- Have committed to including FMS upload portal and translation tool for Round 11 of ESS – clear benefits of these tools even outside an integrated design
- Undecided at this stage if use of full tool suite will be extended to (and beyond) Round 11
- Review of country-specific content planned in advance of Round 11 – can this be reduced / can the process for incorporating these differences be improved?
- More general thinking around centralisation for ESS (and other cross-national surveys) – e.g. if mode switches to self-completion in future rounds long-term benefits but also short-term challenges





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