

SHARE Compliance Profiles – Wave 7

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Executive Summary

- All countries participating in SHARE wave 7 submitted the required input documentation and deliverables in full.
- Data collection of wave 7 was achieved with a largely synchronous schedule across participating countries. Exceptions were Austria, Greece and Portugal all of which started much later than all other SHARE countries.
- Attendance of survey agency trainers at the TTTs was satisfactory.
- During fieldwork, timeliness of data uploads was sufficient.
- Eight (out of eleven) countries reached the minimum household response rate of 40% in their refreshment sample (72%).
- Half of all countries with a panel sub-sample A1 reached or exceeded the minimum individual-level target retention rate of 85 %. 8 out of 12 countries (67%) reached the goal of 75% in their A2 sub-sample.
- All survey agencies submitted documentation about some kind of back-checks to validate the properness of conducted interviews, although the timely submission of documentation on request could be improved in some countries.
- Six out of 20 countries (30%) performed six or more contacts or contact attempts with panel households that remained un-interviewed. Four out of 11 countries (36%) performed six or more contacts or contact attempts with refreshment households that remained un-interviewed.

1. Introduction

The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) is an ex-ante harmonized, longitudinal and multidisciplinary survey infrastructure aimed at filling the gap of much-needed comparative data on population ageing across Europe. Ex-ante harmonization means that not only the questionnaire design (electronically realized as CAPI instrument) but also fieldwork procedures (most of them realized electronically in form of the SMS) are standardized across countries. This approach fundamentally differs from the Eurostat approach (e.g., in EU-SILC) where survey execution is a national matter. The ex-ante harmonization approach has been chosen by SHARE for scientific reasons as it minimizes those artifacts in cross-national comparisons that are created by country-specific survey design.

While national operations in all participating countries are coordinated by university-based groups of researchers, the actual interviewing is - in most countries - subcontracted to for-profit survey organizations which have the expertise, staff and logistics available to conduct large-scale operations like SHARE with high quantities of face-to-face interviews. It is a major challenge is to ensure proper implementation of ex-ante harmonization within such a decentralized environment. To this effect, SHARE employs three instruments: the SHARE Model Contract provides the legal framework for standards and quality control; the SHARE Survey Specifications (“Appendix 1” of the Model Contract) define the quality standards of the survey; and the SHARE Compliance Profiles report adherence to those standards ex post. This legal and scientific framework is to be adopted by all participating countries without modifications: all for-profit contractors are mandated to comply with the SHARE-specific quality standards laid out in Appendix 1 which are legally framed as an annex to the SHARE Model Contract (survey specifications can be obtained per email request to info@share-project.org).

The SHARE Compliance Profiles consist of a set of quality control indicators based on Appendix 1. All participating countries are evaluated on these indicators uniformly, although the environments for conducting the survey differ among European countries. The combination of ex-ante specifications and ex-post Compliance Profiles levels the playing field for all participating countries and allows for a fair comparison of national survey quality. An ex-ante harmonized endeavor like SHARE cannot afford to set country-specific standards on what qualifies as good performance.

This document reports how SHARE quality standards were adhered to in wave 7. Section 2 describes the data input for this evaluation. Section 3 lists the survey agencies involved from wave 1 to wave 7. Section 4 reports the results in form of the various indicators. Like wave 6, it is important to note that wave 7 of SHARE was conducted under a decentralized funding scheme. As opposed to the first three waves of SHARE, survey costs in each country were covered by national funders and not centrally (i.e. the EU Commission). This puts the ex-ante harmonization approach under pressure, not the least due to the difficulties of some countries to provide the necessary funds in time (or at all). The compliance profiles in this report therefore do not only reflect differences in survey agency performance but also the time pressure and shortage of money in the some participating countries.

2. Input

To assess indicators and compare them to standards, various sources of input were required. For indicators related to interviewer training and interviewer retention and interviewer quality control, we requested documentation in (partly) standardized forms and templates from contracting survey organizations and /or scientific country teams, such as interviewer rosters, sampling design forms, training slides, and interviewer quality back-checks. We applied an “Intent-To-Treat” approach to missing documentation: if a country failed at delivering requested input material, this was equated with failing on the indicator assessed through that missing documentation. The tables 1a and 1b below show that SHARE received all deliverables from all countries.

Table 1a. Input of wave 7 compliance profiles

	Refreshment sample sign-off forms [SA05]	Gross sample file of pretest [SA06a]	Gross sample file of field rehearsal [SA06b]	Gross sample file of main data collection [SA06c]	NTS slides [SA08]	Agency feedback form main survey [SA09c]
Austria (AT)	na	na	na	na	●	●
Belgium (BE-FR)	na	●	●	na	●	●
Belgium (BE-NL)	na	●	na	na	●	●
Bulgaria (BG)	●	na	●	●	●	●
Switzerland (CH)	na	●	na	na	●	●
Cyprus (CY)	●	na	●	●	●	●
Czech Republic (CZ)	na	na	na	na	●	●
Germany (DE)	na	●	●	na	●	●
Denmark (DK)	na	na	na	na	●	●
Estonia (EE)	na	●	na	na	●	●
Spain Girona (EG)	na	●	●	na	●	●
Spain (ES)	na	●	●	na	●	●
Finland (FI)	●	na	●	●	●	●
France (FR)	na	●	na	na	●	●
Greece (GR)	na	na	na	na	●	●
Croatia (HR)	●	●	na	●	●	●
Hungary (HU)	na	na	●	na	●	●
Israel (IL)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Italy (IT)	na	na	na	na	●	●
Lithuania (LT)	●	na	●	●	●	●
Luxembourg (LU)	na	na	na	na	●	●
Latvia (LV)	●	na	●	●	●	●
Malta (MT)	●	na	●	●	●	●
Poland (PL)	●	na	●	●	●	●
Portugal (PT)	na	●	●	na	●	●
Romania (RO)	●	na	●	●	●	●
Sweden (SE)	na	na	na	na	●	●
Slovenia (SI)	na	na	na	na	●	●
Slovakia (SK)	●	na	●	●	●	●

Table 2b. Input of wave 7 compliance profiles (continued)

	NTS report form [SA10]	Interviewer roster [SA11]	Drop-off data [SA13c]	Advance letters [SA14]
Austria (AT)	●	●	●	●
Belgium (BE-FR)	●	●	na	●
Belgium (BE-NL)	●	●	na	●
Bulgaria (BG)	●	●	na	●
Switzerland (CH)	●	●	●	●
Cyprus (CY)	●	●	na	●
Czech Republic (CZ)	●	●	●	●
Germany (DE)	●	●	na	●
Denmark (DK)	●	●	na	●
Estonia (EE)	●	●	●	●
Spain-Girona (EG)	●	●	na	na
Spain (ES)	●	●	na	●
Finland (FI)	●	●	●	●
France (FR)	●	●	na	●
Greece (GR)	●	●	na	●
Croatia (HR)	●	●	na	●
Hungary (HU)	●	●	na	●
Israel (IL)	●	●	●	●
Italy (IT)	●	●	na	●
Lithuania (LT)	●	●	na	●
Luxembourg (LU)	●	●	na	●
Latvia (LV)	●	●	na	●
Malta (MT)	●	●	na	●
Polen (PL)	●	●	●	●
Portugal (PT)	●	●	na	●
Romania (RO)	●	●	na	●
Sweden (SE)	●	●	na	●
Slovenia (SI)	●	●	●	●
Slovakia (SK)	●	●	na	●

3. SHARE Survey Agencies

The organizations in Table 2 below conducted the fieldwork in each wave. There has been high stability of contracted survey agencies over time in most countries.

already conducted their first interviews. Notable exceptions were Austria and Greece which show substantial delay (one month and more) between obtaining their sample software and delivering the first interview. There is one other notable exception: Portugal had issues with securing funding that did not allow them to start on time with the other countries of their group. Delays of this kind make the proper execution of fieldwork quite difficult. Most of the countries in group 2, consisting of all countries that took part in SHARE during wave 7 for the first time, started their fieldwork by the middle of April 2017.

4.2 Timely data uploads

Proper fieldwork monitoring is premised on synchronous availability of fieldwork data from all countries. SHARE specified upload dates for the entire fieldwork period up-front. The table below shows the rate of timely uploads of the countries' Sample Distributor with Centerdata servers. Overall, depending on the start of the fieldwork we had specified 14 and 18 export dates. We rated "on time" any upload received within a three-day period of the specified day (e.g., if an upload was scheduled for the 20th, we rated the receipt of data "on time" if it arrived anywhere between the 17th and 23rd of the month). A rate of less than 80 percent was considered insufficient.

Table 4. Timely data uploads

	Percent
AT	93
BE-FR	94
BE-NL	100
BG	92
CH	100
CY	100
CZ	100
DE	100
DK	100
EE	93
EG	94
ES	100
FI	100
FR	100
GR	100
HR	100
IL	100
IT	100
LT	100
LU	94
LV	100
MT	100
PL	100
RO	92
SE	100
SI	100
SK	92

4.3 Interviewer Training & Quality Control

4.3.1 Attendance at the Train-The-Trainer sessions

SHARE uses a multiplier approach to conduct study-specific training. A centralized train-the-trainer (TTT) event is held before every pretest phase, the field rehearsal and the main survey with the goal of teaching head trainers of each country who then multiply this knowledge in their home country by training the actual field interviewers. Attendance of at least (better two) representatives of the contracted survey organization is crucial to ensure proper relaying of training content at the national level. While it is understood that funding restrictions on the national level may restrict travel budgets to one

person attending, two persons are preferable because this permits specialization according to survey domains and subsequent professionalization. The table below shows the number of survey agency staff attending each TTT. We consider attendance of two agency representative as sufficient, one person attendance as necessary and absence of agency staff from the TTT as posing a serious problem.

Table 5. Survey agency attendance at wave 7 TTTs

	Pretest TTT	Field rehearsal TTT	Main TTT
AT	2	2	2
BE-FR	1	2	2
BE-NL	2	2	2
BG	1	2	2
CH	2	1	1
CY	2	2	2
CZ	2	1	2
DE	4	2	2
DK	2	1	4
EE	1	1	1
EG	2	2	2
ES	2	2	2
FI	3	2	3
FR	2	2	2
GR	1	1	1
HR	3	2	2
HU	1	1	1
IL	2	1	1
IT	3	2	2
LT	1	1	2
LU	3	1	3
LV	2	2	2
MT	2	2	4
PL	2	2	2
PT	3	0	1
RO	2	2	2
SE	3	3	3
SI	6	2	2
SK	2	2	2

4.3.2 Back-Checking Conducted Interviews

SHARE mandates at least 20 percent of all interviewed households are being followed up on to verify that an interview has taken place and that it was done properly. The goal is to make interviewers before the start of fieldwork aware that there will be a good chance their work will be inspected for falsifications and professional standards and to find falsifications early on during fieldwork to enable timely re-interviews. In wave 7 we introduced a more standardized procedure for back checks. First, we asked for a standardized documentation of the back checks within a template provided by the coordinating team. This documentation was requested three to five times during fieldwork, depending on the progress of the fieldwork. Second, in addition to the “random back checks” conducted by the Survey Agencies, the

coordinating SHARE team checked the interview data in a cluster analysis procedure for suspicious interviewers and requested the Survey Agencies to check at least three interviews of these interviewers “at risk”. The results of these “focused back checks” should also be documented in a report and provided on request.

Survey agencies were free to apply their own organization’s procedure to verify conducted interviews (i.e. if responding households were contacted by mail or telephone, etc.). Table 5 gives an overview of the timely delivery of back checks documentation.

Table 5. Timely delivery of back checks reports during fieldwork

	Random back checks report	Focused back checks report
AT	●	●
BE-FR	●	●
BE-NL	●	●
BG	●	●
CH	●	●
CY	●	na
CZ	●	●
DE	●	●
DK	●	●
EE	●	●
EG	●	●
ES	●	●
FI	●	na
FR	●	●
GR	●	●
HR	●	●
HU	●	●
IL	●	na
IT	●	●
LT	●	●
LU	●	●
LV	●	●
MT	●	na
PL	●	●
PT	●	na
RO	●	●
SE	●	●
SI	●	●
SK	●	●

●=all reports delivered

●=one report not delivered

●=more than one report not delivered

4.4 Response & retention rates

A good fieldwork outcome is characterized by high contact rates and high cooperation rates. Together, this results in high response rates for baseline/refreshment samples and high retention rates for panel samples. Due to partner eligibility and recovery of respondents who weren't interviewed in one or more previous waves, the panel samples of SHARE can be split into five sub-samples¹.

Table 6. Response & retention rates in wave 7

	Minimum individual retention rate in panel A1 (85%)	Minimum individual retention rate in panel A2 (75%)	Minimum individual response rate refreshment sample (40%)
AT	●	na	na
BE-FR	●	●	na
BE-NL	●	●	na
BG	na	na	●
CH	●	na	na
CY	na	na	●
CZ	●	na	na
DE	●	na	na
DK	●	●	na
EE	●	●	na
EG	●	na	na
ES	●	na	na
FI	na	na	●
FR	●	●	na
GR	●	●	na
HR	na	●	●
HU	na	●	na
IL	●	na	●
IT	●	●	na
LT	na	na	●
LU	●	●	na
LV	na	na	●
MT	na	na	●
PL	●	●	●
RO	na	na	●
SE	●	na	na
SI	●	●	na
SK	na	na	●

The SHARE Model Contract stipulates that in the panel sub-sample A1 a minimum of 85% of respondents and in the panel sub-sample A2 a minimum of 75% of respondents will be re-interviewed. For baseline samples or refreshment samples, the document stipulates a minimum of 40% of eligible households to be interviewed. Table 6 below shows if

¹ Subsample A1: all respondents who participated in the last SHARE wave and at least one earlier wave.

Subsample A2: all respondents who were newly recruited in the last SHARE wave from a refreshment sample, participated in the last wave, and for whom the current wave is the second wave.

Subsample B: all respondents who participated in any previous SHARE wave, but not in the last SHARE wave, and live in a household where at least one household member participated in the last wave.

Subsample C: all respondents who participated in any previous SHARE wave, but not in the last SHARE wave, and do *not* live in a household where at least one household member participated in the last SHARE wave.

Subsample D: all non-responding spouses/partners and new spouses/partners who have not participated in any previous SHARE wave so far, but now live in a household where at least one household member participated in any previous SHARE wave.

countries passed or failed these contractual standards. It can be seen that half of all countries with a panel sub-sample A1 surpassed the limit, whereas 8 out of 12 countries reached their goal in their A2 sub-sample. Almost all countries reached their goal in their baseline/refreshment samples.

4.5 Average Number of Contact Attempts in Households without Interview

The SHARE Model Contract stipulates six contact attempts before a household can be assumed a final non-interview household not to be followed any further. The table below shows the median number of contact attempts in eligible households where there was no interview at the end of fieldwork. This includes households where a refusal happened. We considered values of six or more contact attempts as acceptable.

We have to assume that SMS data reflect the true state of affairs, i.e. we cannot account for contact codes recorded outside of the SMS (e.g. paper-pencil lists).

Unfortunately, many survey agencies do not contact un-interviewed households as intensively as our guidelines require. We have to assume that this partly explains their underperformance on the key outcome indicators, retention and response rates.

Table 7. Average number of contact attempts in households without interview

	Median in panel sample	Median in refreshment sample
AT	2	na
BE-FR	8	na
BE-NL	1	na
BG	na	2
CH	11	na
CY	na	6
CZ	2	na
DE	10	na
DK	5	na
EE	5	na
EG	4	na
ES	3	na
FI	na	7
FR	6	na
GR	5	na
HR	3	2
HU	3	na
IL	2	1
IT	8	na
LT	na	6
LU	2	na
LV	na	6
MT	na	3
PL	5	4
RO	na	3
SE	10	na
SI	5	na
SK	na	1