

Distributional indicators on households' income, consumption and wealth in a national accounts framework: current status of international work.
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The report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress released in 2009 recommended integrating households inequalities in the national accounts.

To investigate the possibility of producing such measures the OECD and Eurostat created an expert group of 25 countries. It is foreseen that the expert group will finished its work by end 2012.

The first phase of the expert group work consisted in comparing aggregates from existing micro data (household surveys, statistical registers, tax records, etc.) and macro data (National Accounts data on households) on households' economic resources (income, consumption and wealth). National experts made comparison using micro and macro sources available in their countries at a very detailed level sometimes using non published data and adjusting the figures to obtain a more relevant comparison. In parallel, Eurostat performed a similar experiment using the micro information available from the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) at the EU level.

These comparisons gave a clear picture of the extent to which micro sources cover the macro aggregates, and can be used to produce distributional information on household groups consistent with National Accounts across countries. The extent and nature of gaps may vary from country to country. Nevertheless, there are similarities.

While discussing the results of this data confrontation some experts suggested reopening the debate on the extent to which the distributional indicators should stick to the National Accounts totals and framework. Some experts would prefer to depart from the National Accounts definitions to bring them closer to how households perceive and define income and expenditures. They suggested developing a households satellite accounts in which introducing distributional information would make more sense.

The presentation at the Association de Comptabilité Nationale conference will be an opportunity to present preliminary results of the micro-macro comparisons and the nature of the ongoing debate between experts.