Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Federal Department of Home Affairs EDI

Bundesamt für Sozialversicherungen
Geschäftsfeld Mathematik, Analysen, Statistik und Standards

WiSiER fact sheet

Details

The WiSiER dataset was created as a basis for analyses of the economic well-being of the working- and retirement-age population in Switzerland with a focus on issues related to social security. It linked harmonised cantonal tax data with data from the Central Compensation Office (CCO)/Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).

The WiSiER dataset drew on the following sources:

- Tax data of natural persons and, in some cases, withholding tax data from 11 cantons (AG, BE, BL, BS, GE, LU, NE, NW, SG, TI, VS, 2011–2015)
- CCO/FSIO: supplementary benefits (2010–2016), OASI/IV pension registers (2010–2016) and OASI individual accounts (1982–2016)
- SECO: job placement and payment systems (AVAM and ASAL, 2010–2016)
- FSO: Population and Household Statistics (STATPOP: stocks 2010–2016 and flows 2011–2016), Buildings and Dwellings Statistics (GWS), Social Assistance Statistics (SHS), Structural Survey (SE) and Natural Population Change Statistics (BEVNAT) (all 2010–2016)

The FSIO and FSO jointly collated the WiSiER dataset. In compliance with statutory data protection rules, Professor Philippe Wanner from the University of Geneva linked the data on site at the FSO using anonymised OASI numbers.

The FSO hosted the dataset during the period of use until its deletion at the end of 2023. The use and deletion of WiSiER was governed by contracts with the participating cantons and specific data protection and data linkage agreements with the FSO.

Coverage

In 2015 WiSiER contained information on 2.7 million taxpayers and their children. The dataset thereby covered a total of 4.5 million people (3.3 million adults and 1.2 million minors), or 53% of Switzerland's resident population, as well as the country's three main language regions.

Research

Thanks to its extensive collection of tax data, which are more reliable than survey data, WiSiER opened up major opportunities for detailed analyses of income and wealth distributions.

Eight studies published by the Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO), as well as several ad-hoc FSIO internal studies drew on WiSiER. The findings from these studies provided important inputs to reviews of Switzerland's current social and family policies and laid the foundations for reforms. The dataset also formed the basis of three internal studies by the Federal Statistical Office and 11 research projects by third-party institutions.

Further information

More detailed information can be found on the WiSiER website.

All enquiries about WiSiER should be addressed to the Mathematics, Analysis, Statistics and Standards team at the FSIO: sekretariat.mas@bsv.admin.ch.