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(RatSWD)

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No. 145

The German Commission on Improving the
Information Infrastructure between Science
and Statistics (KVI) and their Realization
since 2001

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The *RatSWD Working Papers* series was launched at the end of 2007. Since 2009, the series has been publishing exclusively conceptual and historical works dealing with the organization of the German statistical infrastructure and research infrastructure in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences. Papers that have appeared in the series deal primarily with the organization of Germany's official statistical system, government agency research, and academic research infrastructure, as well as directly with the work of the RatSWD. Papers addressing the aforementioned topics in other countries as well as supranational aspects are particularly welcome.

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In order to make the series more accessible to readers not fluent in German, the English section of the *RatSWD Working Papers* website presents only those papers published in English, while the German section lists the complete contents of all issues in the series in chronological order.

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Information Infrastructure between Science and
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In 1999 the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF, *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*) appointed a commission to examine the information infrastructure in Germany and to make proposals for its improvement. The central objective was to improve the cooperation between the scientific community and official statistical agencies. The German Commission on Improving the Information Infrastructure between Science and Statistics (KVI) presented its final report in 2001 (KVI 2001).

The Commission's report consisted of:

- a stocktaking of deficits and data needs in different fields (e.g., population, employment, income and wealth data, etc.),
- an overview of the major data producers, data providers, and statistical databases (e.g., official statistics, social security statistics, government ministry data, administrative data, scientific data, private market data, and data from social research institutes and commercial providers) and the practice of providing access to anonymized microdata,
- an international comparison of the best statistics and best practices of statistical analysis, and
- recommendations on improving the performance of the information infrastructure for empirical economic and social research in Germany.

The Commission developed 36 recommendations on:

- improving cooperation between the scientific community and official statistical agencies,
- expanding participation of the scientific community in developing survey and data processing programs (by official statistical agencies as well as by ministries and non-statistical institutions conducting surveys),
- priorities for continuing and developing important statistics,
- supporting research on data collection, processing, and archiving,
- higher education and training,
- data access, especially access to microdata,
- confidentiality of research data, and
- implementation and funding.

The following synopsis gives an overview of the Commission's recommendations. The second column lists the objectives of the recommendations,

some of which are formulated explicitly in the Commission's report, and some of which I have deduced from the proposed solutions listed in the third column. The traffic signals in the fourth column illustrate the extent to which results of the recommended action are already evident: green indicates that the objectives have been fully achieved; yellow indicates that work is still in progress; and red indicates that there remains significant further work to be done. Since these conclusions may be in dispute, the fifth column provides additional explanatory comments.

As the traffic signals in the following synopsis show, many of the Commission's recommendations have already been put into effect, some of the most important being:

- the establishment of the German Data Forum (RatSWD) and its predecessor the Founding Committee of the Council for Social and Economic Data,
- the establishment and evaluation of several Research Data Centers and Data Service Centers that are working to improve access to microdata and facilitate data analysis,
- new means of data access. In addition to the distribution of scientific use files and public use files, controlled remote data access is provided. Furthermore, workplaces are being provided for guest researchers in the Research Data Centers,
- improved cooperation and information exchange between the scientific community and official statistics through:
 - the German Data Forum (RatSWD), as a platform for communication,
 - the biennial Conference for Social and Economic Data (KSWD, *Konferenz für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsdaten*),
 - dialog workshops in the fields of media data, crime statistics, household statistics, and globalization,
 - joint research projects on data access, statistical development, and methodological development,
 - the appointment of three working groups by the German Data Forum (RatSWD) dealing with crime statistics, new means of access to microdata for Germany, and preparation of a German National Death Index, and
 - the establishment of the Census Commission,
- access to anonymous firm-level data and opening up longitudinal microdata, and

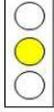
- capacity-building (young scholar workshops, expert report competitions for young researchers, CAMPUS-Files using realistic datasets).

Nevertheless, there is still a substantial need for action, especially when implementing the Commission's recommendations, in terms of:

- legislative action,
- international activities,
- coordination within and between organizations on a voluntary basis and/or without sufficient budget (e.g., facilitating dialog within the scientific community).

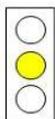
Last but not least, continuous funding of the existing infrastructure remains a problem. This applies both to the permanent institutionalization of the German Data Forum (RatSWD), which has been financed up to now as a pilot project of the BMBF, and to permanent funding for the Research Data Center of the Statistical Offices of the German *Länder*.

Synopsis: Recommendations of the Commission

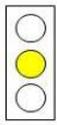
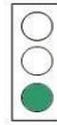
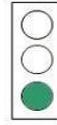
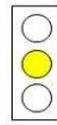
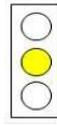
	Task completed or on schedule		Room for improvement		Project structure not yet visible
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Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
<i>Improved cooperation between science and statistics is necessary for data users and data producers</i>			
1	To improve cooperation between the scientific community and official statistical agencies based on the traditional model of a division of labor	Adopt and enforce institutional regulations	
2	To assess and to improve the information infrastructure based on input from data producers and data users To develop a platform for structured dialog between data producers and data users	Establish a Council for Social and Economic Data, whose main functions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assessing and improving the data infrastructure and advising the federal and state governments on programs of science-based statistics and their funding ▪ promoting social and economic reporting ▪ recommending the establishment of Research Data Centers and Data Service Centers and evaluating their activities ▪ suggesting how project funds should be allocated <p>These tasks need coordinators in the group of data producers, in the group of data users, and between the two groups.</p>	

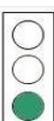
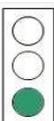
Status
Comment
<p>Several important activities have been carried out, especially the establishment of the German Data Forum (RatSWD), which offers a platform for dialog between data providers and data users (see recommendation 2) and the KSWD, which takes place every two years.</p>
<p><i>Measures</i></p> <p>In 2004 the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) set up the RatSWD. This Council includes empirical researchers from universities, colleges, and other independent research institutions as well as data producers and representatives of service centers.</p> <p>The predecessor of the RatSWD, the Founding Committee of the Council for Social and Economic Data (GA, <i>Gründungsausschuss</i>), was founded in 2001.</p> <p>The GA and the RatSWD have undertaken a great number of activities to improve the research data infrastructure in Germany (Rolf et al. 2008; Solga and Wagner 2007), particularly by offering a platform for dialog between data providers and data users and by advising Germany's federal and state governments on the establishment of Research Data Centers and Data Service Centers and by evaluating their work. Additionally, the GA and the RatSWD have contributed to improving the research data infrastructure by assessing projects in terms of data access and methodological developments in the social and economic sciences.</p> <p>In its first few years of work, the RatSWD's activities have focused on improving data access for empirical research. Now, the need to improve survey development and processing programs has moved to the forefront of the RatSWD's agenda.</p> <p><i>To be done:</i></p> <p>Ensure permanent funding for the RatSWD, which has funding from the BMBF for an initial period.</p> <p>The German Council of Science and Humanities (<i>Wissenschaftsrat</i>) has evaluated the RatSWD positively and recommends its permanent funding (<i>Wissenschaftsrat 2009a</i>).</p>

Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
<i>Participation by the scientific community in developing survey and processing programs</i>			
3	To involve the scientific community both in improving the survey and processing programs of the official statistical agencies and in special hearings by German parliament on this subject	<p>Adopt institutional regulations</p> <p>Improve coordination in the scientific community (in discussions of the Council for Social and Economic Data in cooperation with the relevant scientific associations)</p>	
4	To make survey and processing programs of the official statistical agencies more flexible	Reduce strict legal regulations and expand the scope for statistical offices and their advisory bodies to shape survey programs	
5	To expand the influence of the scientific community in proposing modifications of official statistical programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broaden the definition of the Statistical Advisory Committee's tasks (including medium-term program planning) ▪ Achieve fuller representation of the scientific community in the Statistical Advisory Committee (increase the number of representatives of empirical social and economic research) ▪ Hold mandatory hearings as part of the legislative process on official statistics 	  

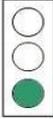
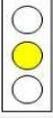
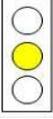
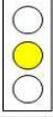
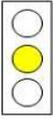
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Comment
<p>Official statistical agencies are open to advice, but the scientific community has still not made sufficient use of this opportunity.</p> <p><i>Measures</i> Appointment of the Census Commission (<i>Zensuskommission</i>), a scientific commission that advises the federal government and official statistical agencies on preparing, processing, and analyzing the 2011 Census.</p> <p>Nomination of the Census Commission's members on recommendation from the RatSWD</p> <p>No institutional regulations are in place, but a number of joint activities are underway, such as a series of workshops "<i>Dialog von Wissenschaft und amtlicher Statistik</i>" dealing with the 2011 register-based census, household surveys, and globalization.</p> <p><i>To be done:</i> Fostering dialog in the social, economic, and behavioral sciences and mobilizing the respective scientific associations to improve their information infrastructure.</p> <p>Holding regular hearings with the scientific community as part of the legislative process.</p>
<p>Not yet visible</p> <p>The Statistical Advisory Committee (<i>Statistischer Beirat</i>), an organization of the users, respondents, and producers of federal statistics, has called for more flexibility in designing the statistical system (Statistisches Bundesamt 2003).</p>
<p>Not yet visible</p> <p>The Statistical Advisory Committee has recommended medium-term program planning (Statistisches Bundesamt 2003).</p> <p>The scientific community has attained greater influence on the Statistical Advisory Committee through an additional representative of empirical social and economic research appointed by the RatSWD.</p> <p>Not yet visible</p>

Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
6	To increase the influence of the scientific community on surveys conducted by ministries and non-statistical authorities (e.g., Deutsche Bundesbank, Federal Employment Agency, and the social security institutions)	Provide structured opportunities for scientific advice	
<i>Priorities in continuing and developing important statistics</i>			
7	To continue collecting important official statistics	Conduct a population census	
8	To enhance and to develop important official statistics	Further develop the German Microcensus by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ introducing a rotating panel ▪ developing an access panel ▪ presenting exact data on gross earned income ▪ providing scientific use files 	
9	To enhance and develop important official statistics	Improve the sample survey of income and consumption (EVS, <i>Einkommens- und Verbrauchsstichprobe</i>) by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reducing the time intervals between the sample surveys ▪ introducing a rotating panel ▪ presenting detailed wealth data 	
10	To bridge serious gaps in business sector statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further develop statistics on the service economy ▪ Achieve better statistical coverage of business modifications 	

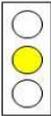
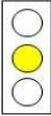
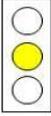
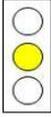
Status
Comment
<p>As of yet there exist no structured opportunities for science to exert greater influence over official surveys, but informal steps have been taken, for example, by including scientific advisory councils in survey planning.</p>
<p>The 2011 Census is on schedule: http://www.destatis.de/jetspeed/portal/cms/Sites/destatis/Internet/DE/Navigation/Zensus/Zensus,templated=renderPrint.psm1__nnn=true</p>
<p>The Microcensuses are available as scientific use files.</p> <p>The joint project "Preparation and Provision of the Microcensus as a Panel Sample" has been carried out with participation of the German Federal Statistical Office, the Research Data Centers of the German Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the German <i>Länder</i>, the Freie Universität Berlin, and the Centre for Survey Research and Methodology (ZUMA) funded by the BMBF and the German Research Foundation (DFG, <i>Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft</i>). Today, the 1996-1999 Microcensus panel and the 2001-2004 Microcensus panel are available for research as scientific use files.</p> <p>As of yet, exact data on gross earned income are not available.</p>
<p>The proposed measures have not been implemented so far. This must be seen within the overall context of household surveys: a discussion is underway between the scientific community and official statistical agencies concerning new concepts of household surveys (both in Germany and abroad). A workshop, entitled "<i>Dialog von Wissenschaft und amtlicher Statistik zum Erhebungsprogramm der amtlichen Haushaltsstichproben in Deutschland</i>," has been organized by the RatSWD and ZUMA: http://www.ratswd.de/ver/mannheimWS.php</p>
<p>The research potential of firm-level data has been improved through data matching (see recommendation 27).</p>

Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
11	To maintain and develop important science-based statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure permanent institutionalization and funding of the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP, <i>Sozio-oekonomisches Panel</i>) ▪ Extend the sample 	
12	To continue important science-based statistics	Continuing the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ German General Social Survey (ALLBUS, <i>Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften</i>) ▪ International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and ▪ Welfare Surveys (<i>Wohlfahrtssurveys</i>) 	
13	To provide stronger support for cohort studies such as longitudinal studies of human development	Continue existing cohort studies and generate new cohort studies that cover early childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood	
<i>Supporting research on data collection, processing, and archiving</i>			
14	To improve university-level teaching on the methodologies of empirical social and economic research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up a special commission for the German Council of Science and Humanities on the current state of affairs in higher education and research regarding the methods of empirical social and economic research (or defining this area as a task of the High Commission on Empirical Economic Research) ▪ Establish professorships or research centers at universities to focus on methodological problems of survey and official statistics 	

Status
Comment
<p>Since 2003 the SOEP has been receiving ongoing funding through the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK, <i>Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung</i>) by Germany's federal and state governments.</p> <p>Several additional subsamples have expanded the possibilities for studying small societal groups.</p> <p>The SOEP has proposed to considerably enlarge the sample. The German Council of Science and Humanities approves of this proposal (Wissenschaftsrat 2009b).</p>
<p>The ALLBUS and the ISSP are conducted regularly: the ALLBUS is a continuous biennial survey, the ISSP a continuous annual program.</p> <p>Welfare Surveys were conducted from 1978 to 1998. Since 2002, the European Social Survey (ESS) has taken place every two years.</p>
<p>Existing cohort studies are continuing, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the SOEP, an annual survey conducted since 1984 (see recommendation 11), and ▪ the IAB Establishment Panel, an annual survey conducted since 1993. <p>Examples of new panel studies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the project "Educational Processes, Competence Development and Selection Decisions in Pre- and Primary School Age" (BiKS, <i>Bildungsprozesse, Kompetenzentwicklung und Selektionsentscheidungen im Vor- und Grundschulalter</i>), which is funded by the DFG, ▪ the National Educational Panel Study (NEPS), measuring competencies of children, adolescents, and adults over an extended period, which is funded by the BMBF, ▪ the Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics (pairfam) funded by the DFG, and ▪ the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE).
<p>In 2002, the German Council of Science and Humanities published the report "<i>Empfehlungen zur Stärkung wirtschaftswissenschaftlicher Forschung an den Hochschulen</i>" (Wissenschaftsrat 2002).</p> <p>The Priority Program of the DFG "Survey Methodology" has been launched: http://www.survey-methodology.de/de/projekte.html</p> <p>Examples of further activities enhancing higher education and research in methods of empirical social and economic research are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ workshops for young researchers dealing with technical and methodological problems with complex datasets provided by the RatSWD in conjunction with official statistics and non-university research institutes, and ▪ the "European Data Watch" section of <i>Schmollers Jahrbuch</i>, which offers descriptions and discussions of micro databases that are of interest to empirical researchers: http://www.ratswd.de/publ/datawatch.php.

Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
15	To support methodological research in official statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the involvement of the scientific community in the further development of methodological instruments 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include sustained methodological research in the tasks and budgets of official statistics 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand joint research projects by scientific and official statistical agencies 	
16	To ensure the long-term preservation of statistical data	Commission the Council for Economic and Social Data to deal with the problem of archiving statistical data	
17	To promote the subject of Empirical Economic Research and to make it more visible	Recommend that the DFG establish the subject of Empirical Economic Research as a sub-discipline (or as an extension of the sub-discipline statistics)	
<i>Higher education and training</i>			
18	To improve education in areas such as statistics, econometrics, applied computer science, empirical methods, data collection, data	Recommend that universities and faculties improve education for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> undergraduates (statistics, econometrics, and applied computer science by using realistic datasets) graduate studies (statistics, econometrics, data collection, data) 	

Status
Comment
<p>See recommendation 14</p> <p>Efforts have been made to assign the task of “research” to official statistics in the Law on Statistics for Federal Purposes (BStatG, <i>Bundesstatistikgesetz</i>) (Hohmann 2007).</p> <p>Several joint research projects have been funded by the BMBF or the DFG (see recommendation 27 for an example).</p>
<p>The problem of archiving primary research data is currently being debated. The issues being discussed include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Rundgespräch “Forschungsprimärdaten”</i> of the DFG, Bonn, January 2008 http://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/programme/lis/forschungsprimaerdaten_0108.pdf ▪ The Priority Initiative “Digital Information” of the Alliance of German Science Organizations, Berlin, June 2008 http://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/programme/lis/allianz_initiative_digital_informati_on_en.pdf <p>There is consensus on not attempting to establish central rules for data archiving. Each discipline should develop its own individual solution to the problem.</p>
<p>The recommendation listed in column 3 has not been taken up by the DFG or the respective scientific associations. But this does not mean that the DFG does not promote empirical economic research, as the Priority Program of the DFG “Flexibility in Heterogeneous Labor Markets” shows http://kooperationen.zew.de/en/dfgflex/home.html</p>
<p>Curriculum development is difficult to assess because of changes in the German educational system (bachelor, master, doctorate).</p> <p>Positive development can be observed in the fields of post-graduate programs and teaching appointments to the staff of Research Data Centers.</p> <p>Measures improving the education for students and young researchers mostly taken by non-university stakeholders include:</p>

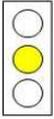
Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
	editing, data protection, and data analysis To improve statistical knowledge transfer to students	editing, data protection, and data analysis) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ post-graduate-programs (new empirical methods and more in-depth study of statistics and econometrics) Increasing teaching posts on the staff of official statistical agencies	
19	To make working in empirical social and economic research, statistics, and econometrics more attractive	Recommend that universities and ministries of science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increase the number of professorships in empirical social and economic research, statistics, and econometrics ▪ upgrade existing associate professorships to full professorships 	
20	To bring together universities, non-university research institutes, and official statistical agencies	Organize seminars, advanced training courses, and interdisciplinary summer schools in cooperation between universities, non-university research institutes, and official statistical agencies	
<i>Economic aspects of data access</i>			
21	To provide low-cost access to aggregated data of official statistics	Enable low-cost access to aggregated data of official statistics via Internet	
22	To provide low-cost access to scientific use files and public use files	Enable low-cost access to scientific use files and public use files Follow the example of the BMBF-funded pilot projects (providing flat-rate financing for the fixed costs of anonymization and covering the marginal costs of data delivery to the researcher)	
<i>Access to aggregated data</i>			
23	To promote convenient access to regionalized data via Internet	Set up a joint database system of official statistics that contains data from all federal statistical sources, broken down by region	

Status
Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supply of CAMPUS-Files (free public use files for teaching purposes) ▪ "European Data Watch" section of <i>Schmollers Jahrbuch</i>, presenting micro databases (see recommendation 14) ▪ Expert report competitions for young researchers announced by the RatSWD ▪ Supplying a teaching module which focuses on data protection in the social sciences http://www.ratswd.de/publ/ratswd_dokumente.php ▪ Organizing young scholars' workshops (see recommendation 20)
<p>In the social, educational, and behavioral sciences, an empirical focus seems to play a major role in professorship appointments.</p>
<p>Workshops on technical and methodological problems in dealing with complex data are being offered to young researchers by the RatSWD in conjunction with official statistical agencies, universities, and non-university research institutes.</p>
<p>Free or low-cost access to aggregated data is being provided by official statistical agencies via Internet.</p>
<p>Low-cost access to a large number of scientific use files for scientific purposes is available; CAMPUS-Files can be downloaded for free.</p> <p>Costs of combining several complex datasets or of analyzing panel data are rather high.</p>
<p>Microdata: recommendation implemented as far as possible Macrodata: GENESIS-Online, room for improvement</p>

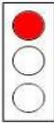
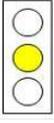
Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
<i>Microdata access and data protection</i>			
24	To ensure respondents' trust in data protection and to enable unlimited re-analyses	Use of different ways of access to micro datasets depending on the kind of data	
25	To guarantee confidentiality of data To ensure data protection and privacy	Periodically revise the list of technical measures developed as part of the German Anonymization Project (University of Mannheim) Develop of a code of conduct describing the obligations of scientists and research institutions under data protection regulations. The code of conduct should be developed jointly by the disciplines concerned. Provide certification of institutions that would benefit from the " <i>Wissenschaftsprivileg</i> " (§ 16 Abs. 6 BStatG) ¹	  
26	To improve access to confidential microdata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance the development of scientific use files ▪ Provide scientific use files of older data to allow analysis of social change ▪ Provide similar files such as regional Microcensus files and Microcensus panel files 	
27	To permit access to business microdata	Develop anonymization strategies for data on businesses and local bodies (joint research project of the scientific and official statistical communities)	

¹ The citations to German legal sources have been left in German to guarantee accuracy.

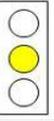
Status
Comment
<p>Various options of data access exist depending on the degree of anonymity of the data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ dissemination of public use files (absolutely anonymous microdata files) ▪ dissemination of scientific use files (factually anonymous microdata files) ▪ workplaces for guest researchers in the Research Data Centers ▪ controlled remote data access
<p>Work is underway in the field of anonymization and data protection, e.g., Wirth (2006) and several anonymization projects (see recommendation 27).</p> <p>Several discipline specific codes of conduct, but no common code of conduct (e.g., <i>Ethik-Kodex der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie (DGS) und des Berufsverbandes Deutscher Soziologen (BDS); Erklärung für das Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zum ICC/ESOMAR Internationalen Kodex für die Markt- und Sozialforschung</i> http://www.sozioologie.de/index.php?id=19 http://www.adm-ev.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDFS/Erklaerung_2008.pdf</p> <p>It has proven difficult to find a common solution for the Research Data Centers (see recommendation 29) because of different legal foundations (BStatG, SGB).</p> <p><i>To be done:</i> Develop a list of criteria for identifying institutions with the task of independent scientific research under § 16 Abs. 6 BStatG</p>
<p>Since their foundation, the first four Research Data Centers (see recommendation 29) have provided a large number of scientific use files. For an overview, see: http://www.forschungsdatenzentrum.de/datenangebot.asp http://fdz.iab.de/de/FDZ_Overview_of_Data.aspx http://forschung.deutscherentenversicherung.de/ForschPortalWeb/contentAction.do?key=main_fdz_forschung</p> <p>The BMBF has financed the creation of scientific use files by other data producers, too, through pilot projects such as the SUF HIS-Absolventenpanel: http://www.his.de/abt2/ab22/archiv/abs12</p>
<p>A number of projects (finished, in progress, or planned) have been supported by the BMBF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Factual Anonymization of business microdata” (FAWE) ▪ “Anonymization of business panel data” (FAWE-Panel: <i>Anonymisierung wirtschaftsstatistischer Paneldaten</i>) <p>Combining data from different surveys (and from different data producers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Official Firm Data for Germany” (AFiD, <i>Amtliche Firmendaten für Deutschland</i>) ▪ “Combined Firm Data for Germany” (KombiFiD, <i>Kombinierte Firmendaten für Deutschland</i>)

Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
28	To improve access to microdata and to learn how to analyze microdata	Develop public use files <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to train students, to meet commercial users' needs, to enable foreign scholars to access German microdata 	
29	To improve and facilitate access to microdata	Establish Research Data Centers with controlled remote data access to enable use of microdata that is difficult to anonymize (i.e., when factual anonymization would impair the information in the data) and in the case of matching various datasets	
30	To improve and facilitate access to microdata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish workplaces for guest researchers in the Research Data Centers Develop transparent procedures for the selection of guest researchers 	
<i>Using international microdata</i>			
31	To improve the situation for research in economic and social sciences at the international level	Here a great number of measures are necessary, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and passing on Eurostat databases to the scientific community in the form of anonymized scientific use files 	

Status
Comment
<p>Absolutely anonymous public use files are provided for teaching purposes (CAMPUS-Files). See: http://www.forschungsdatenzentrum.de/campus-file.asp</p> <p>An internationally integrated microdata-orientated infrastructure for census research has been established: "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series – International" (IPUMS-International). See: https://international.ipums.org/international/</p>
<p><i>Measures</i></p> <p>Four Research Data Centers have been established and evaluated by the RatSWD and its predecessor, the GA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research Data Center of the German Federal Statistical Office ▪ Research Data Center of the Statistical Offices of the German <i>Länder</i> ▪ Research Data Center of the Federal Employment Agency at the Institute for Employment Research ▪ Research Data Center of the German Federal Pension Insurance <p>The Research Data Centers offer different means of data access, including controlled remote access.</p> <p>For the datasets provided, see the relevant homepages (see recommendation 26).</p> <p>To ensure the quality of the Research Data Centers, the RatSWD has developed a list of criteria to be met by Research Data Centers. For example, Research Data Centers should not evaluate the content of research projects applying for data access, and data producers should not maintain exclusive access to their data: http://www.ratswd.de/download/publikationen_rat/RatSWD_FDZKriterien.PDF</p> <p>Meanwhile, nine further Research Data Centers have adopted these standards and further data centers are scheduled to do so: http://www.ratswd.de/eng/dat/fdz.html</p> <p><i>To be done:</i> Funding of the Research Data Center of the Statistical Offices of the German <i>Länder</i> on a permanent basis</p>
<p>Tasks completed.</p>
<p>A network of centers is to be established in Europe that allows access to microdata. At the end of the process, Eurostat will aim to provide remote data access to the statistics community.</p> <p>Examples of international projects harmonizing data from different countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series – International" (IPUMS-International); construction of an internationally integrated microdata-orientated infrastructure for census research https://international.ipums.org/international/

Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ harmonizing data from different countries 	
32	To support data exchange with research institutions in non-EU Member States	Recommend that the federal government implement a "Safe Harbor" mechanism	
<i>Demand for services and service agency for microdata</i>			
33	To enhance the efficiency of using microdata for research purposes	Maintain research service institutions in Germany in the future as part of the information infrastructure	
<i>Data linkage</i>			
34	To reduce the costs of data acquisition and the burden on respondents	Develop legal provisions on the possibility of precisely linking microdata for statistical purposes without the explicit consent of each respondent (matching only in completely shielded research and statistics areas)	

Status
Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)”; cross-national panel database of microdata on health, socio-economic status, and social and family networks http://www.share-project.org/ <p>CESSDA: One of the objectives of the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) is to promote the integration of the European database. http://www.cessda.org/doc/cessdaconstitution20040402.pdf</p> <p>ESFRI: The objective of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) is to support a coherent approach to policy-making on research infrastructure in Europe. http://cordis.europa.eu/esfri/</p> <p>IDF: There is an initiative to establish an International Data Forum (IDF) to facilitate the production and dissemination of social and economic data at the international level. http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/IDF%20Conference%20report%202007_tcm6-21126.pdf</p> <p>Establishing a European Data Forum is in discussion.</p> <p>Not yet visible, but progress has been made below the level of a law.</p>
<p>Two Data Service Centers have been established and evaluated by the RatSWD and its predecessor, the GA, to make data analysis more convenient. These are the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ German Microdata Lab, which is part of the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (GESIS, <i>Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften</i>), and the ▪ International Data Service Center at the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA, <i>Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit</i>) http://www.gesis.org/das-institut/wissenschaftliche-arbeitsbereiche/dauerbeobachtung-der-gesellschaft/german-microdata-lab/ http://www.iza.org/ <p>New developments to be mentioned here are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MISSY “Microdata Information System” http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data/official-microdata/microcensus/missy/ ▪ JoSuA “Job Submission Application” http://idsc.iza.org/metadata/
<p>Not yet visible</p> <p>The project “Biographical data of selected social insurance agencies in Germany” (BASiD: <i>Biografiedaten ausgewählter Sozialversicherungsträger in Deutschland</i>) is in its early stages. The project’s aim is to construct a combined dataset for research purposes based on data from the German Pension Insurance, the Federal Employment Agency, and the Institute for Employment Research.</p> <p>Other approaches (statistical matching) are under discussion or in use.</p>

Recommendation			
No.	Objective	Solution	Traffic signal
<i>Confidentiality of research data</i>			
35	To avoid trade-offs between the freedom of science and the need for data protection	Recommend that legislators introduce the principle of "research data confidentiality": the scientist's privilege to refuse testimony as a witness on research data and prohibition of seizure <i>(Zeugnisverweigerungsrecht und Beschlagnahmeverbot)</i>	
<i>Implementation and funding</i>			
36	To provide sufficient funds to implement the Commission's recommendations	Recommend that the institutions responsible for research and science funding sponsor the activities mentioned above	

Status
Comment
Not yet visible
<p>The BMBF has offered financial support for many of the recommended activities for a starting phase (pilot project financing).</p> <p><i>To be done:</i> Permanent funding of the RatSWD and of the Research Data Center of the Statistical Offices of the German <i>Länder</i></p>

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