

ISER NEWS



World class socio-economic research and surveys

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THE QUEEN'S
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
2017



About half of girls aged 13 are interacting on social media for more than one hour a day

Future wellbeing issues for girls using social media

Ten-year-old girls using SnapChat, WhatsApp and other social media for more than an hour a day are more likely to develop wellbeing issues as older teens

A new study by Dr Cara Booker has found a gender difference in social media use in tweens and teens. The study found girls used social media more than boys and were more likely to have wellbeing problems as they reach later teenage years.

The study found that about half of girls aged 13 were interacting on social media for more than one hour a day, but only a third of boys of the same age. By age 15, both boys and girls had increased the amount of time spent on

social media, but using it for more than one hour a day was still more common among girls (59 per cent) than boys (46 per cent).

The study followed almost 10,000 children and young people taking part in *Understanding Society*, the UK household longitudinal study over a five-year period. The researchers looked at how much time they spent on social media on a 'normal school day'. A few reported no internet access or no time spent at all, but some were on it four hours or more. *Continued overleaf*

University of Essex receives The Queen's Anniversary Prize for ISER research

ISER's world-leading social science research at the University of Essex was recognised with the presentation of a prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education at Buckingham Palace in February.

The Prize is the highest form of national recognition for the work of a UK university and was officially bestowed on the University at Buckingham Palace by Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall. The official commendation states the Prize is for the University of Essex's "authoritative social and economic research to inform the policies of governments for the improvement of people's lives". *Continued overleaf*

Future wellbeing issues for girls using social media

Continued from previous page The researchers also looked at how their emotional and wellbeing scores changed over the years. Both boys and girls saw a decline in wellbeing by age 15 but the decline was greater for girls and especially for the girls using social media the most. Dr Booker suggests the boys' decline in wellbeing could be down to spending more time gaming than on social media.

Dr Booker said: "Our findings suggest that it is important to monitor early interactions with social media, particularly in girls, as this could have an impact on wellbeing later in adolescence and perhaps throughout adulthood. Since we did not observe an association between social media use and wellbeing among boys, other factors, such as the amount of time spent gaming, might be associated with the boys' observed decline in wellbeing. We hope this will be useful evidence for policy makers looking at whether time spent on social media is having an impact on health. There have also been calls for the technology industry to look at in-built time limits. Our study really backs this up – increased time online is strongly associated with a decline in wellbeing in the young, especially for girls. Young people need access to the internet for homework, for watching TV and to keep in touch with their mates of course, but do they really need to spend one, two, three or four hours chatting, sharing and comparing on social media every school day?"

'Gender differences in the association between age trends of social media interaction and wellbeing among 10-15 year olds in the UK', by Dr Cara Booker (University of Essex), Professor Yvonne Kelly (University College London) and Professor Amanda Sacker (University College London) is published in the March issue of the journal, *BMC Public Health*. ●

European Commission report uses EUROMOD to highlight role of fiscal policy in stabilising household incomes during Great Recession

The European Commission has published its annual Report on Public Finance in European Monetary Union which presents a review of key policy developments and analytical findings in the area of public finances

This year's publication presents analyses on the impact of fiscal policy on the income distribution and the influence of institutional factors on public investment in the EU.

Researchers used EUROMOD, the tax benefit microsimulation model developed at the University of Essex, to assess the impact of fiscal policies in reducing income inequality and stabilising households' income in the EU during the period 2004-2014.

The Commission's researchers created a "decomposition framework to isolate the impact of policy changes from changes in market incomes and population characteristics using the EUROMOD microsimulation model. Importantly the use of EUROMOD ensures that this approach is applied consistently across European countries allowing cross-country analysis."

The study found that: "The degree of direct automatic stabilisation is fairly high in the EU in 2014. Around 33% of disposable income is absorbed in the EU on average by the tax and benefit system following a shock to market income, ranging from 20% in Bulgaria to 45% in Austria. Consumption is absorbed by even 70% in the EU on average due to the tax and benefit system and the saving behaviour, ranging from 64% in Bulgaria to 75% in Ireland. The more progressive the tax and benefits system, the higher its stabilisation effect."

European Economy Institutional Papers are important reports analysing the economic situation and economic developments prepared by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, which serve to underpin economic policy-making by the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. ●

University of Essex receives The Queen's Anniversary Prize for ISER research

Continued from previous page Professor Forster said: "Winning our second Queen's Anniversary Prize is a huge honour for the whole of the University of Essex. This highlights the world-renowned social science research taking place here. ISER is a flagship research institute at Essex and its work exemplifies our mission to undertake research which has a real impact on the world. ISER's track record of producing exceptional postgraduate researchers is exemplary. This prize recognises how ISER researchers are delivering influential and authoritative research which has an impact at a regional, national and international level. They push the boundaries, stretch across disciplines and innovate to increase the accuracy and relevance of their research. Thanks to this ISER has become the touchstone for policy makers and those seeking to influence public policy in the UK and across the globe."

Professor Jennifer Rubin, ESRC Chief Executive and Executive Chair Designate, said: "ISER is synonymous with the authoritative evidence and insights which are so vital to developing successful public policy. We've been supporting ISER's ground-breaking and innovative work for 28 years and we're delighted to see this Queen's Anniversary Prize awarded for the rich insights and analysis delivered through flagship ESRC-funded projects such as MiSoC, the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and its successor *Understanding Society*. Through this work ISER has set the international standard for major longitudinal research which allows us to really understand how our societies are changing."



Professor Anthony Forster and Professor Emily Grundy receive the Queen's Anniversary Prize from Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall



Professor Richiardi will be taking over formally as Director of EUROMOD in October 2018

The next Director of EUROMOD is announced

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Matteo Richiardi as the next Director of EUROMOD and Professor of Economics at the University of Essex

Professor Richiardi will join Professor Holly Sutherland, the current Director of EUROMOD, for a four-month transition period from June to take over formally as Director in October 2018. Professor Sutherland, who has led EUROMOD and the pioneering microsimulation work at Essex since its inception 22 years ago, will continue as Research Professor at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex.

Professor Richiardi has been at the Institute for New Economic Thinking at the Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford for the past five years, and before that at the University of Torino in Italy. He has also worked as a consultant on labour market and social protection policies for the World Bank and national

government agencies, and is the Chief Editor of the International Journal of Microsimulation.

EUROMOD is the tax benefit microsimulation model covering 28 countries in the European Union. Developed at Essex and used worldwide, it has become increasingly influential and is heavily used by the European Commission for policy formulation and analysis.

In recent years, the tool's use has extended beyond the EU. EUROMOD's flexibility - of approach and software - means that it can be adapted to shortcut the process of building tax-benefit models with potentially comparable outputs for any country or region. There are now models based on EUROMOD that have been developed for more than a dozen non-EU countries: Russia, Macedonia, Serbia, Australia, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Ghana, Ethiopia, Zambia, Vietnam, Colombia and Ecuador.

Professor Richiardi said: "I am greatly honoured to be joining the EUROMOD team at the Institute for Social and Economic Research. EUROMOD is a terrific achievement, arguably the most successful example of microsimulation modelling for its wide country coverage, attention to model validation and cross-country consistency, institutional and scientific recognition. I'm looking forward to exploring new collaborations with government agencies, think tanks and universities in the UK and abroad, further strengthening the reputation of ISER and Essex as the leading research institution for international microsimulation."

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Methodology of Longitudinal Surveys II international conference

Understanding Society, the UK Household Longitudinal Study led by ISER, will host a major international conference, **Methodology of Longitudinal Surveys II (MoLS2)**, at the University of Essex, on 25-27 July 2018.

The Conference will bring together scholars and research professionals involved in the design, implementation and analysis of longitudinal surveys and to share methodological research findings.

MoLS2 follows on from the highly successful conference held in July 2006. Since then, the advantages of longitudinal data have become better understood, and their use more widespread, prompting keen interest in the best ways to design and implement such surveys.

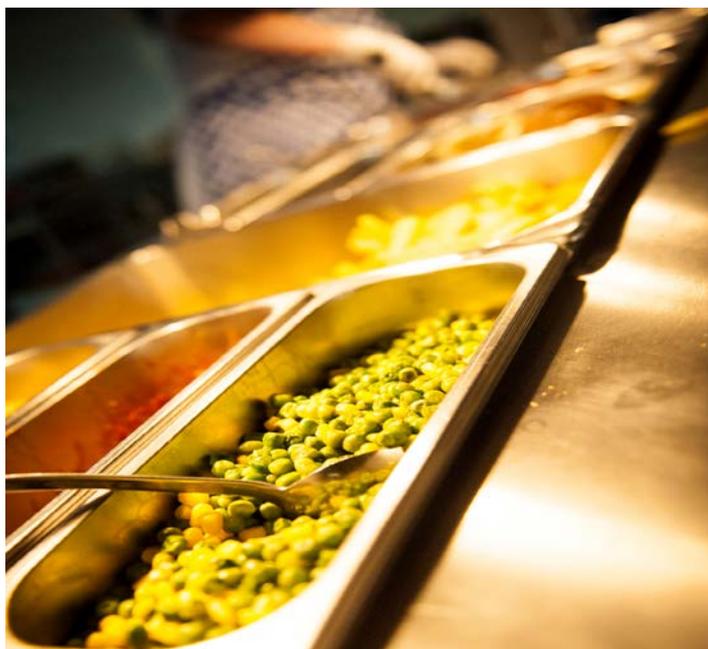
Considerable advances have been made in recent years in areas such as methods to encourage continued participation, ways of utilising multiple data collection modes, improving the measurement of change, obtaining participant consent to data linkage, linking and analysing administrative data longitudinally, and longitudinal methods for cross-disciplinary research including the use of biomarkers in social surveys.

The conference will highlight research relating to all stages of the design and implementation of longitudinal surveys, but with a particular focus on areas in which significant advances have been made in the last 12 years.

Registration and further details can be found at www.mols2.org.uk

Professor Holly Sutherland said: "I am delighted that Matteo will be taking over from me and I am confident that his vision for EUROMOD will ensure its future success. I am looking forward to working with him over the next few months."

Welcoming the news of the appointment, Professor Emily Grundy, Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, said: "We are really pleased to have Matteo joining our senior team to lead ISER's expertise in microsimulation research, at a very exciting time for EUROMOD. It has become an integral part of the policy evaluation process within the European Commission and has a worldwide reputation as an exemplar in microsimulation modelling." ●



ISER will assess the impact of universal free school meals for all Key Stage 1 children

European children's health and wellbeing

Professor Peter Lynn, Professor of Survey Methodology at ISER, and Dr Gundi Knies, Research Fellow, will be working with Manchester Metropolitan University researchers on the design of a survey for the first Europe-wide project to track the wellbeing of children as they grow up

The European Cohort Development Project (ECDP) will establish the design of a European survey called EuroCohort for children and young people from birth until the age of 25 and aims to provide data to aid policy makers across Europe to make better decisions to secure their wellbeing.

The project, funded by the European Commission, will bring much-needed attention to the reality that policy makers are unable to draw upon the type of data that is needed to address complex social problems which often have a negative impact on child and adolescent wellbeing.

Once in operation, the survey will gather large amounts of data on measures of health and wellbeing, such as stress at school and happiness in the home. A comparison across European countries will strengthen the understanding of how context and policy influence such measures.

Professor Peter Lynn will chair the Survey Group which collates the project's development activities in a number of the project's areas related to survey design, survey

management and co-ordination processes. The ISER team are additionally responsible for Work Packages on sample design, non-response, and data collection modes and will contribute to work on questionnaire content, questionnaire translation, data management, and user support.

Professor Lynn said: "We are delighted to have been asked to contribute ISER's expertise in longitudinal survey design and implementation to this important and ground-breaking project. The EuroCohort adds to ISER's substantial portfolio of cross-national survey research and has the potential for huge impact."

The project includes partner universities from Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and The Netherlands. Representatives from UNICEF are also closely involved with the project and are keen to support the initiative.

Dominic Richardson from UNICEF said: "The ECDP is a vital next step in improving child policy, and through this the living standards of all children in Europe." ●

ISER to assess the impact of Government policy of universal free school meals for Key Stage 1 children

ISER has been awarded new funding from the Nuffield Foundation to assess the impact of the policy of universal free school meals for all Key Stage 1 children (ages 4-7) in primary and infant state schools in England.

The policy was introduced in September 2014 by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government with a view to improving the health and educational outcomes of the nation's children, following a government-commissioned independent review of school meals and children's eating habits in schools.

The research team, led by Dr Birgitta Rabe and Dr Angus Holford at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex, will assess the impact of the policy on children's educational performance at age 5 (with supplementary analysis at age 7); children's personal, social and emotional development at age 5; children's Body Mass Index and rates of children being underweight, normal weight, overweight or obese throughout reception year in school (age 4-5); children's school absences due to illness and medical appointments in infant school, between ages 4 and 7 and children's take-up of school lunches, both among newly eligible children and those who were already eligible for free school meals.

Dr Birgitta Rabe, Principal Investigator of the study said: "The policy aims to improve children's educational attainment, social skills and behaviour, to ensure children have access to a healthy meal each day and develop long-term healthy eating habits and to help families with the cost of living, removing disincentives to work. At a running cost of around £400 per pupil per year, this policy is a sizeable investment into children, and it is important to know whether it has delivered its aims."

"The policy aims to improve children's educational attainment, social skills and behaviour, to ensure children have access to a healthy meal each day"



EuroCohort will study children and young people from birth until the age of 25



Are particular ethnic and religious groups more likely to experience harassment and which types of individuals within these groups are more vulnerable?

ISER study finds that racial harassment has damaging impact on mental health

A research team from ISER analysed data from *Understanding Society*, the UK Household Longitudinal Study, to look at who experiences ethnic or racial harassment

The study presents an overview of the prevalence, intensity and persistence of harassment in British society today. Are particular ethnic and religious groups more likely to experience harassment? Which types of individuals within these groups are more vulnerable?

There has been a spike in hate crimes following Brexit, evident in the recent report on hate crimes published by the Home Office and extensively reported in the media. The Home Office publishes annual reports on hate crime statistics based on police reports. However, these sources do not provide information on who experiences the harassment. The last report to provide such information was based on a 1994 survey.

The study looked at whether ethnic minorities living in certain types of areas are at a greater risk of experiencing harassment and look for the causal impact of residential characteristics on harassment.

Researchers also looked to identify protective factors against the negative impact of harassment on mental health and wellbeing,

to uncover factors that make individuals resilient to the negative consequences of harassment on mental health and wellbeing.

The study also looked at the effect of ethnic or racial harassment on health behaviours. What is the effect of ethnic and racial harassment on the health behaviours of the adult foreign-born and what is the effect of exposure to ethnic or racial harassment on the health behaviours of UK-born (or raised) ethnic minorities?

Dr Alita Nandi, Research Fellow at the Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex said: "We hope this evidence will be taken up by law enforcement in identifying high risk places and making public spaces accessible to all, and by mental health professionals by considering ethnic and racial harassment as an additional factor in mental health issues experienced by ethnic minorities in Britain."

Dr Renee Luthra, Director of the Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Essex said: "Our study has found that ethnic and racial harassment is experienced by the broad population of ethnic

minorities, and damages mental health, even among those who do not directly experience it".

They found around 4-10% of men and women of most ethnic minority groups report experiencing ethnic and racial harassment in the past year. This proportion is higher, around 15%, for Chinese men and women, Pakistani men, Indian-Sikh men, Indian-Muslim men and Bangladeshi women.

They are most likely to experience it in the streets, shops and public transport. They are less likely to experience it if they live in areas with a higher proportion of their own ethnic group members

For most ethnic minority groups, twice as many people anticipate or fear harassment than actually experience it, with the exception of black Caribbean and black African groups. Women are more likely than men to feel unsafe and avoid places, but men are more likely to report actually experiencing ethnic and racial harassment.

Individuals reporting ethnic and racial harassment are not necessarily the most disadvantaged. This risk is higher for ethnic minorities who are younger, more

highly educated and male. The reported harassment is predicated on being in public places and possibly having the confidence to identify and report it.

Risk of harassment was positively associated with certain types of places: areas of high white concentration, areas with higher proportion of UKIP or BNP voters, more deprived areas (net of ethnic composition). But surprisingly, this risk is not related to other crime.

There is a substantial association of ethnic and racial harassment with worse mental health. Those experiencing ethnic and racial harassment were more stressed and anxious. There is some evidence that ethnic ties are a resilience factor. Some factors are more effective for UK born ethnic minorities while others more for the foreign-born.

There are widespread ripple effects of ethnic and racial harassment as reflected through its persistence over time and spill-over effects, especially for UK born ethnic minorities.

The study has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council Secondary Data Initiative. ●

New ISER report for Low Pay Commission

The Low Pay Commission has published a new report, *The National Minimum Wage, the National Living Wage and the tax and benefit system* by Professor Mike Brewer and Dr Paola De Agostini, ahead of the launch of its latest recommendations to the Government

The study uses data from the Family Resources Survey and the UK part of the EUROMOD tax and benefit model to create a projection of the circumstances of National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) families that were observed in 2014-15 as if they were facing the policies that the researchers expect to be in effect in 2020-21, as announced on or before the Spring 2017 Budget.

The study found that NMW families (that is, families that contain a worker who is receiving the NMW) are mostly found in the bottom half of the working-age income distribution, and particularly in the poorest 10%. NLW workers are more evenly distributed, and are most likely to be found in the third decile. NLW families tend to be better off than NMW families because they are paid more per hour, and they are more likely to live with a working partner.

NMW workers contribute more to their families' income than do NLW workers. This mostly reflects that NMW workers are more likely to be single than NLW workers. The contribution of NMW and NLW earnings to NMW/NLW families' net income falls as we go up the income distribution. NLW workers in families in decile groups 3 or 4 contribute just over a half of their families' net income, on average.

Forecast increases in the NMW/NLW by 2020-21 will increase net incomes of NMW/NLW families by about 1.5%, on average. Within these families, low-income NMW/NLW families will gain by slightly more than high-income NMW/NLW families, except for the poorest decile group, which contains very few NLW recipients.

The weakest financial incentives to work amongst NMW/NLW workers are found in decile groups 2 to 4, where NMW/NLW workers can pay extra tax and National Insurance

contributions and lose benefit entitlements when earnings rise.

Under current rules for in-work conditionality, when Universal Credit is fully rolled-out, around 21% of NMW/NLW workers will be subject to in-work conditionality.

A 5% hypothetical rise in the NMW/NLW in 2020-21 would increase the net incomes of NMW/NLW families by an average of under 1.2%. This is a lot less than 5% because some of the rise is lost to extra tax liabilities and foregone earnings, and because some NMW/NLW families have other sources of income. Amongst NMW/NLW families, the poorest families would gain a larger fraction of their income, on average.

A rise in NMW/NLW would also look progressive amongst all working-age families where someone is in work, but not amongst all working-age families or the whole population, because it does nothing to directly benefit non-workers. ●



The study uses data from the Family Resources Survey and the UK part of the EUROMOD tax and benefit model to create a financial projection of the circumstances of NMW/NLW families



The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe)

Scottish Parliament uses EUROMOD to predict potential tax revenues

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) has published new estimates of income tax revenue for Scotland, using EUROMOD, the tax-benefit microsimulation model developed at ISER

The briefing *Income Tax in Scotland: 2017 update* provides information on income tax in Scotland, including legislation, recent policy developments, and facts and figures on Scottish taxpayer numbers, their incomes and income tax liabilities.

It also discusses behavioural responses to reforms and includes modelling of illustrative changes to income tax in 2018-19 taking into account all Government announcements before the 2018-19 Scottish draft Budget presented on December 14th 2017.

Following a change in UK law, from April 2016 Scotland has been responsible for setting its own income tax rates. In 2017-18, the Scottish Government opted to leave the higher rate threshold unchanged at £43,000 while the UK Government increased its higher rate threshold to £45,000. All other rates and thresholds remained in line with the rest of the UK (rUK). This means that higher and additional rate non-savings, non-dividend (NSND) taxpayers in Scotland will pay up to £400 more than their counterparts in the rest of the UK during the 2017-18 fiscal year. Moreover, the interaction of the UK and Scottish tax systems creates some anomalies. Most notably, as national

insurance contributions (NICs) are linked to UK Government tax thresholds, those earning between £43,000 and £45,000 in Scotland pay tax at an effective rate of 52%. This is because these earners are subject to both the 40% higher rate of tax and the 12% NIC rate (which falls to only 2% above £45,000).

The distribution of taxpayers in Scotland differs from the UK as a whole, especially at the top end of the income distribution. Across the UK, almost 40% of income tax is paid by those earning more than £100,000. This compares with only 28% in Scotland. The Scottish Government estimates their higher rate policy will generate a boost of £150m. The new research presented by SPICe, using EUROMOD, predicts that an increase of 1p on the basic rate in 2018 would generate a further £380m.

The SPICe estimates of NSND income tax revenues are based on analysis using EUROMOD and a slightly modified version of the Family Resource Survey (FRS) from 2014-15. The latest release of tax and benefit rules in EUROMOD are for 2017-18. For the 2018-19 scenarios modelled by this briefing, SPICe has adjusted the personal allowance and higher rate threshold to reflect anticipated policy parameters for 2018-19. ●

Income redistribution and the role of tax-benefit systems in Latin America

United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), together with the EUROMOD team at the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex, and the Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales (IAEN), will hold an international conference on income redistribution and the role of tax-benefit systems in Latin America, 5-6 July 2018 at IAEN in Quito, Ecuador.

The keynote will be delivered by Professor Olivier Bargain (University of Bordeaux and Institut Universitaire de France).

The conference will also feature a policy round table discussion on 'El rol de los impuestos y las transferencias monetarias en la reducción de la pobreza y desigualdad en Ecuador', and parallel sessions with contributed papers.

ISER gives evidence to Women and Equalities Select Committee Inquiry on Race Disparity Audit

Professor Shamit Saggat, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at ISER, recently gave oral evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Women and Equalities inquiry into the Race Disparity Audit.

The Women and Equalities Committee launched an inquiry to look at the results of the recently published Race Disparity Audit. The audit uses published government data to examine how people of different ethnicities are treated across public services in areas including health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

The inquiry is considering how the audit results should affect future approaches to collecting and analysing data on equalities and outcomes, how the Government should take forward its policy response to the published data and what the data shows about priorities for addressing disparities.



The data will be used by academic researchers and other researchers worldwide

New *Understanding Society* data release: 25 years of harmonised longitudinal household data is now available

For the first time in the Study's history, data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) has been harmonised with *Understanding Society* to create 25 years of longitudinal data

The British Household Panel Survey started in 1991 and followed the same representative sample of individuals over 18 years. In 2009, BHPS participants were asked if they would consider joining the new, larger and more wide-ranging survey *Understanding Society*.

The latest data release features seven waves of *Understanding Society* data, plus 18 waves

of *Understanding Society* harmonised British Household Panel Survey data. All of the data can be downloaded via the UK Data Service. The data will be used by academic researchers worldwide as well as being available to researchers in government departments, third sector and other organisations.

For more information and to access the data visit www.understandingsociety.ac.uk

World Bank uses EUROMOD for flagship report on Europe

The World Bank has published a major new report, *Growing United: Upgrading Europe's Convergence Machine*, looking at inequalities in the labour market, using EUROMOD, the tax benefit microsimulation model, created at the University of Essex.

The report is based on findings of a background paper *Fiscal Redistribution in the European Union* by Gabriela Inchauste and Jonathan Karver, which also uses EUROMOD for analysis of income distribution across the EU states.

The report finds that since its foundation over 60 years ago, the EU has become the modern world's greatest 'convergence machine', propelling poorer, and newer, member states to become high-income economies, and delivering to its citizens some of the highest living standards and lowest levels of income inequality in the world.

However, Europeans are increasingly recognising that convergence is not automatic. Inequality among people has been mounting in many parts of the EU since the 1990s, as low-income Europeans are falling behind in the labour market, and the productivity gap between Southern and Northern member states has been widening since the early 2000s.



The Institute for Social and Economic Research is based at the University of Essex and receives funding from the university and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Established in 1989, the Institute incorporates the ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (MiSOC) and The Microsimulation Unit, which is responsible for the EUROMOD project.

ISER is home to *Understanding Society*, the UK household longitudinal study which collects information annually, providing valuable new evidence about the people of the UK, their lives, experiences, behaviours and beliefs.

If you are interested in finding out any more about the articles in this newsletter or about ISER's work, please contact Louise Clarke Cullen at lcullen@essex.ac.uk

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