

# Upgrading the tender specifications for the European Company Survey: integrating advance translation and cognitive interviewing into the questionnaire design

*Greet Vermeylen*

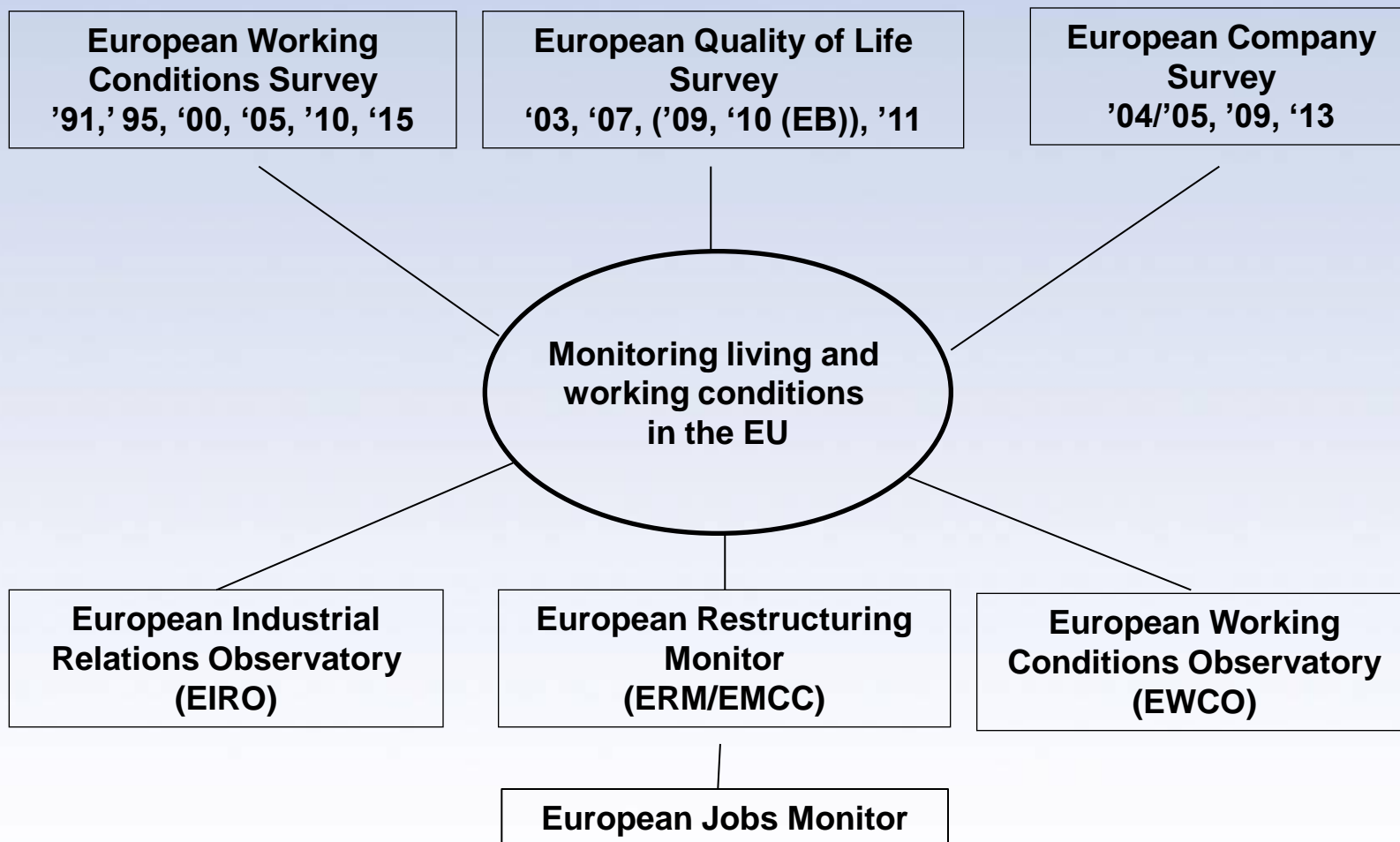
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# European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

- Decentralised agency of the European Union
  - ▶ Budget line of the European Commission (DG EMPL)
  - ▶ Tripartite Governing Board
    - composed of national representatives of the social partners, national governments and the European Commission
- Generates policy-relevant research and findings which contribute to improving the quality of work and life in Europe, through:
  - ▶ Comparative research and analysis of developments affecting living and working conditions (different methodologies)
  - ▶ Monitoring of trends in the working environment





## ECS : some characteristics

- Survey of (HR) managers and employee representatives (ER) in European establishments
  - ▶ Most senior person in charge of HR in the establishment (MM)
  - ▶ Official employee representative (works council/trade union)
- CATI interviews (25/15 min)
- Around 30000 establishments in 32 countries
  - ▶ Between 300 and 1650 interviews per country
- 3 waves:
  - ▶ 2004/5: working time and work-life balance
  - ▶ 2009: flexibility practices and social dialogue
  - ▶ 2013: work organisation, workplace innovation, employee participation and social dialogue



# Quality assurance as a central concern

- Important for Eurofound
  - ▶ Why? specific aim of surveys: support policy makers in their role & credibility of our surveys, given also obvious limitations of our instruments
- Quality assurance framework
  - ▶ Throughout process : planning, consultation, transparency and documentation
  - ▶ based on ESS quality criteria of relevance, accuracy, timeliness, punctuality, accessibility, clarity and comparability
  - ▶ Quality control plan (fieldwork contractor)
  - ▶ External quality assessment
- 2013 ECS: some changes
  - ▶ specific quality assurance plan (and quality control plan) / revision of tender specs / revision of division of tasks

# Fieldwork 3<sup>rd</sup> ECS: some steps

- Towards a questionnaire
  - ▶ Discussions with AC to design priorities for the questionnaire
  - ▶ Concept development : two background papers which helped to formulate questionnaire
    - High performance workplaces
    - Workplace social dialogue
  - ▶ User survey (with users of ECS data)
  - ▶ Collection of relevant survey questionnaires from national and international surveys : ‘mapping of the surveys’
  - ▶ Discussion with questionnaire development group
  - ▶ Questionnaire drafting – draft source questionnaire in English
  - ▶ Advance translation in 2 more languages (to help finalise the questionnaire)
  - ▶ EIRO exercise on ER structures and selected terminology
  - ▶ Pre-test in 3 countries (by Gallup) (F, D, IRL)
  - ▶ Final questionnaire + translation in all the languages (by Gallup)
  - ▶ Pilot
  - ▶ Fieldwork



- Draft source questionnaire (EN):
  - ▶ Advance translation in two more languages (DE/FR)
    - Change in ‘translation process’ (Janet Harkness)
    - EF: specific contract with 2 survey expert translators
  - ▶ Helped to finalise source questionnaire
    - meeting to discuss questionnaire (EF, Janet Harkness, advance translators and the fieldwork contractor, Gallup Europe)
    - Cross-fertilisation
    - These three language versions used in the pre-test
  - ▶ Guidelines for translators
    - Key points to pay attention to (based on experience from advance translators)
    - Including of specific national terminology (EIRO network)
      - Country differences in workplace legal and cultural environment, eg temporary contracts
      - Employee representative structures (trade union, works council, usually different forms/names per country (and sometimes even between private and public sector) (will be used in routing and in questionnaire)

- Pretest by Gallup Europe (fieldwork contractor)
  - Cognitive pretest
    - 15 MM and 15 ER/country
    - Selection of questions
    - Question specific probing : exploration of answer process
    - retrospective verbal probing :scripted and spontaneous probes
  - Structured interviews (20 MM and 20 ER/country)
    - Evaluate survey questionnaire as whole (incl length)
    - Assess questionnaire flow / infrastructure / but also feedback and comments
  - 3 countries with very different IR structures
  - Adaptation of instrument based on pretest report
    - Debriefing (interviewers and moderators)



## Some lessons

- A process to be continued ...
    - ▶ Quality assurance / quality control plan / quality monitoring / quality assessment / documentation / analysis
    - ▶ Division of roles (and tasks) : make it very explicit
      - However sometimes complicated: different layers :  
EF/contractor/local agencies
    - ▶ Time and resource allocation
    - ▶ These 2 elements (advance translation and cognitive pre-test) were very beneficial for the final source questionnaire
      - Part of a bigger package in helping to finalise questionnaire in EN
      - Translation: the importance cannot be underestimated
    - ▶ Will be complemented later by follow-up interviews
      - In-depth follow-up interviews with managers (+ employees ) to deepen findings on certain elements -> better understanding + lessons for next wave of ECS and EWCS ...
- ▶ and feed into next tender specs...

# Thank you

*More information*

[gve@eurofound.europa.eu](mailto:gve@eurofound.europa.eu)

[www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu)





Eurofound

# ECS: a survey of managers and official employee representatives

- Why this survey?
  - ▶ Central theme which feeds into policy debate
    - lack of knowledge about company practices / other side of the coin (workers survey)
  - ▶ Mapping of workplace practices
  - ▶ Getting out of the crisis ...
  - ▶ Competitiveness needed - not always costly:
    - Work organisation and employee participation can play important role in workplace innovation
    - Good for workers' health and motivation
  - ▶ Way things are discussed and implemented at local establishment level
    - Social dialogue is important and Eurofound has special role to play
- For whom is it useful?
  - ▶ Companies, governments, social partners and European Union
    - Competitiveness and workplace innovation on policy agenda
    - Lack of data of what workplace practices are used European-wide

