

the activity status should be taken into account. For instance, if a person has lost their job or has retired recently, or the activity status has otherwise changed in a definitive manner, then the situation at the time of the interview should be reported.

More than one activity status can apply to a person but only the most important activity should be reported. Self-perception means the variable must capture how people perceive themselves, not how they meet certain objective criteria. Where more than one status applies to the person, the respondent should select the category that best describes their situation. No criteria for that are specified but it could be determined by the status/activity with the most time spent.

The main activity status is self-assessed by the respondent and the chosen category should appropriately describe how a person mainly perceives themselves. The relevant categories to choose among are predefined in a list (see categories for the variable). The categories are logically, not mutually exclusive, and do not have a hierarchical order. The variable results are very sensitive to the way of implementation, especially question wording and category wording or order.

The information should not be derived, and it should be collected by using a single question.

The category 'compulsory military or civilian service' may not apply in all countries and in this case, it can be dropped. The category 'other' should only be offered to the respondent if they cannot choose from one of the proposed categories. In PAPI it is unavoidable to offer this category right away.

In cases where respondents cannot spontaneously choose one category, particularly when several categories apply to them, the interviewer can help to clarify the categories. A PAPI questionnaire can give explanations (preferably in an annex). Specific proposals, such as which category should be chosen, should not be given. It can be explained if a category is appropriate to be chosen. There are no wrong categories to choose. The response depends on the self-perception of the respondent:

- Respondents can consider themselves being employed irrespective of their official labour market status, working time or kind of income from employment. They can also be looking for another job in parallel. Also, other categories can apply to them as long as they consider employment to be their main activity. Also, persons who would choose another main activity status can also be in employment. For instance, many people who would regard themselves as full-time students or mainly fulfilling domestic tasks can have a job. In that case they can assign themselves to the corresponding category. Respondents helping in the family business, even if it is unpaid, can consider themselves as employed.
- Respondents can see themselves as being unemployed irrespective of an official status or a registration with the public employment agency. Unemployed persons can also have minor jobs while seeking a main job.
- Respondents who are in various forms of vocational education or training that (partly) takes place at the place of employment can consider themselves as being in employment. This also applies to apprentices, as well as paid trainees or interns, who can consider themselves as being in employment, while persons having an unpaid work-based training may assign themselves to the category student, pupil.
- Respondents who mainly perceive themselves as a housewife or househusband can choose the category 'fulfilling domestic tasks' even if they also have a job, receive a pension or are retired. The category 'fulfilling domestic tasks' includes all activities needed to run a private household including the raising of children and other care responsibilities.
- Respondents can consider themselves as retired if they receive a pension or if they have finally stopped working or given up their business because of their age or age related health condition. Still, they could work e.g. in a minor job. Persons in early retirement that is not connected to health issues can also choose this category.
- Persons can consider themselves unable to work due to long-standing health problems if they are unable to work due to health reasons or disabilities for a longer, undetermined or permanent time or/and are unfit to work. The response is given based on self-assessment and is independent from the benefit they receive.
- Persons who cannot choose one of the activity status categories can select the category 'other'. These can be e. g. volunteers or mainly inactive persons. Also, these persons could e.g. have a job or fulfil domestic tasks. Respondents on maternity or parental leave can consider themselves either as employed or as fulfilling domestic tasks.

The variable refers to the current status, i.e., no reference period should be mentioned.