

IASSIST Regional Report 2010-2011

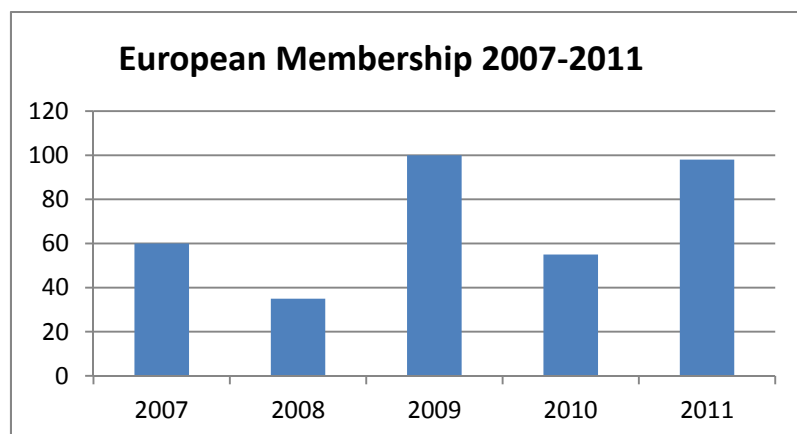
European Region

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The report begins with some observations on the IASSIST European membership. This is followed by information on national collaborations and country-by-country reports of national/institutional/individual activities. Here are included reports for those people/organizations/countries/projects which provided information.

European membership

There are currently 98 active European members (based on the IASSIST membership directory, accessed 27 April 2011). The increase in 2009 reflects the fact that the 2009 conference was held in Europe (Tampere, Finland). The increase in 2011 was due to the fact that IASSIST elections were held.



Cross European Collaborations

European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)

CESSDA-ERIC

Archiving social science data and ensuring access for researchers across national borders is a major challenge. To meet this challenge, CESSDA is shifting into a new organisation, the ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium). Several European countries have signed the Memorandum of Understanding to commit their financial and political support for the setting up of CESSDA-RI. The infrastructure will be hosted by Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). CESSDA Research Infrastructure is one of the 35 projects that were listed on the ESFRI Roadmap in 2006.

SHARE

A major multi-national research databank on population ageing will be the first ever research infrastructure project to enjoy a new European legal status that will make such projects easier to set up and simpler to run, the European Commission decided in March 2011. The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) will become the first European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). This will give it many of the administrative advantages and tax exemptions enjoyed by major international organisations, with much simpler procedures. SHARE-ERIC is hosted by

Tilburg University in the Netherlands, provides open and free of charge access to data, and aims to help researchers understand the impact of population ageing on European societies and thus to help policy makers make decisions on health, social and economic policy. Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany and the Netherlands, with Switzerland as an observer, are the founding members of the new European Research Infrastructure Consortium SHARE-ERIC. Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Sweden, Poland, Ireland, Estonia, Luxembourg, Hungary and Slovenia are the other EU countries (along with Israel) which have so far taken part in the SHARE project and may sign up later to the new legal status.

CESSDA

Reported by Hans Jorgen Marker:

The EU-Bid "Data without Boundaries" successfully completed its negotiations and activities started with a kick-off meeting in Paris May 2010. The project is focused on enhancing the relations between national statistical offices and the data archives. CESSDA takes part in the EU-bid Data Service Initiative for the Social Sciences and the humanities, DASISH. This project is based on the cooperation between the ESFRI infrastructures CESSDA, CLARIN, DARIAH, ESS and SHARE and aims at finding common solutions to common problems. DASISH has entered into negotiations and is scheduled to kick-off January 2012.

The preparations for the establishment of a CESSDA ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium) were carried out in a steering committee which completed its work in the beginning of 2011. The papers are now in place and the future activities are in the hands of the member countries. The CESSDA ERIC will have its statutory seat in Bergen, Norway and will have important activities in Germany as well. This reflects that the majority of the expenses will be paid by those two countries. The memorandum of understanding to commit financial and political support was signed by Norway, Germany, Lithuania, Finland and The Netherlands in June 2010.

The CESSDA expert seminar 2010 took place 16th and 17th September at SND in Gothenburg. The topic was the cooperation between CESSDA archives and National Statistical Institutes. <http://snd.gu.se/en/ces10>.

Annual European DDI Users Group Meeting (EDDI) December 8-9, 2010

"DDI - The Basis of Managing the Data Life Cycle"

http://www.iza.org/conference_files/eddi10/Program_2010-12-04_final3.html

The second annual EDDI was organized jointly by CentERdata – Institute for Data Collection and Research, DANS - Data Archiving and Networked Services, GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, IZA - The Institute for the Study of Labor, SURF (the collaborative organization for IT innovations in higher education in the Netherlands), and Library and IT Services of Tilburg University. The meeting brought together DDI users and professionals from all over Europe.

National Reports

Czech Republic

Jindrich Krejci (SDA) wrote:

The year 2010 was a turning point for social science data archiving in the Czech Republic. In March 2010 after the agreement on the Roadmap for Large Research, Development and Innovation Infrastructures in the Czech Republic the Research Council and the Government of the Czech Republic agreed on funding of several projects from the Roadmap including Czech participation in the CESSDA pan-European infrastructure. Based on these decisions the Czech representative signed the CESSDA Memorandum of Understanding. From October 2010, SDA received funding for a significant extension of its operations and the building of the Czech node of the future CESSDA-ERIC. The work on the new project started immediately. In the first phase SDA's team concentrated on upgrading existing systems and protocols as well as extending the data library. For example a number of data sets from polls fielded before 1989 were archived. SDA has also moved into new offices within premises of the Institute of Sociology ASCR and its office space

has been significantly enlarged. Three new colleagues joined the SDA team. In 2010, SDA also participated in several other projects including two research projects devoted to the organisation of Czech surveys within the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the project of construction of the Laboratory of Social Science Research at the Palacky University of Olomouc. In the latter case SDA provides workshops on data management and survey data quality and participates in the research programme of the laboratory.

Finland

Tuomas J. Alaterä and Helena Laaksonen, FSD wrote:

In Finland there has been a strong move towards building infrastructures for research and improving accessibility and promoting the reuse of public information resources in digital format. In February 2011 the Research Data Project Steering Group, including representatives of the scientific community, ministries, and central research funders, published its final report "Putting Data into Use". The aim of the project was to "steer the work related to national data resources, to form an overall understanding of the situation and to draft a national roadmap for developing the availability and preservation of data resources to be used in research". The report formulates a list of far-sighted but concrete action proposals for improving access to research data.

In March a government resolution was given presenting "policies and measures for making digital information resources administered by the public sector accessible to citizens, enterprises and organisations, authorities, research and education in an easily retrievable and utilisable format".

Finland signed in June 2010 a memorandum of understanding to commit financial and political support for the setting up of CESSDA-ERIC, a European social science data infrastructure. Following a Research Infrastructures call (FIRI 2010), the Academy of Finland awarded in December funding to upgrade Finnish Social Science Data Archive's national services and to meet the requirements of an international research infrastructure (CESSDA-ERIC). "Data Archive 2015" project started in spring 2011. In addition the Ministry of Justice awarded funding for FSD for planning the 2011 election study.

The Finnish Information Centre for Register Research (ReTKi) and CSC - IT Center for Science have concluded a preparatory project on remote use of register data in Finland (MIDRAS). The final report, published in April 2011, suggests that remote use system for register data should be build, to get the research potential in use.

For FSD (www.fsd.uta.fi) the year was successful. The number of archived studies kept growing steadily, and the number of data access applications was on the same high level as in previous years. FSD has put a lot of effort into developing its qualitative data archiving practises, including developing tools for managing qualitative data. In addition, FSD metadata records are now also published as machine-readable DDI XML files. FSD staff has continued lecturing and consulting the Finnish academic community on research ethics and data management issues. FSD participates in the EU-funded Data without Boundaries project, leading one Work Package (Website, dissemination, promotion).

The Ministry of Education and Culture continued the National Digital Library project that aims to advance the availability of the national information collections of libraries, archives and museums. FSD is involved in the project's steering committee and working groups. (www.kdk.fi/en)

Germany

In 2010 GESIS passed an evaluation process with great success and another seven-years-period of funding is now guaranteed. GESIS will continue to provide services along the data life cycle: research, study planning, data collection, data analysis, archiving and registering data.

In addition, GESIS has been in a position to substantially increase the share of external funding. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the German Research Foundation and the EU generally provide external funding, although foundations and sponsors are also involved. GESIS is involved in setting up the cessda ERIC where GESIS together with NSD has a strong lead. It is also partner in the European projects "Data without Boundaries" and DASISH.

The topic of the 40th GESIS Spring Seminar was on "Latent Structures in Multidimensional Tables – Models and Visualization" and was held on 14 March – 1 April, 2011, Cologne, Germany. In 2011 GESIS started to prepare the GESIS-Summer School Survey Methodology. The Summer School offers high quality training in state of the art techniques and methods of survey research. It aims to equip participants with essential skills in the design, planning, execution, documentation and quality assurance of surveys of households, individuals or organisations.

The Data Registration Agency for Social Science Data (da|ra) started its pilot phase in July 2010. Meanwhile about

5000 data sets are registered with doi names. da|ra is expanding its services to economic data by cooperating with the National Library for Economics. GESIS received a grant for upgrading the technical and organizational infrastructure of the DOI registration portal.

Slovenia

Janez Stebe (ADP) wrote:

Major events at ADP:

- We monitor activities and provide consultation for the national representative in a CESSDA ERIC Steering Committee which resulted in signing the Memorandum of Understanding in January 2011.
- Archiving and Re-using Qualitative and QL data in Slovenia preparatory study was finished in cooperation with the researchers from ethnology and social work.
- An English web page transfer into Django environment was prepared to parallel functionality in Slovene language there.
- A review of internal protocols and planning of data management in relation to the digital preservation based on OAIS was prepared, and a report published in cooperation with the National and University Library Digital Library project.

Several workshops and presentations on various occasions were delivered, such as World Statistical Day in November 2011. A special section on a web page is devoted to training material and information on data reuse skills.

A grant for the 3 year research project 'Open data - Proposal for an action plan for national regulation of access to research data according to OECD principles' was received. Activities in first year include an assessment of current situation in the country and a review of international developments.

Sweden

Hans Jørgen Marker wrote:

The Swedish National Data Service is still in the process of expanding and consolidating the organisations. Most notably this was reflected during the last year by the establishment of two new teams directed towards Medicine and the Humanities respectively and each headed by a research coordinator with special responsibilities for that area of scholarship.

SND hosted the 2010 CESSDA Expert Seminar in September 2010. <http://snd.gu.se/en/ces10>.

SND participates in the EU project Data without Boundaries, DwB, it coordinates the EU project Data Service Initiative for Social Science and the Humanities, DASISH and it participates in the EU project Support for Establishment of National/Regional Social Sciences Data Archives, SERCIDA.

SND is an applicant in four Swedish grant applications:

- Digitising the survey reports from Gallup Sweden 1942 -1956
- Swedish membership in CESSDA ERIC
- Swedish membership in CLARIN ERIC
- Establishment of a research infrastructure for personal data

UK

Louise Corti (UKDA)wrote:

Autumn 2010 marked a time of transition and renewed focus as the Archive set its strategy under a new director. In August, Matthew Woollard formally stepped into post as Director of both the Archive and the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) with a solid strategic plan in place to guide decisions until 2015. The plan reinforces the Archive's mission to maintain its role as a leading centre of expertise, and to continuously improve the number and quality of data products and services in response to changing user needs and technology improvements. The organisation now has five strategic goals, each underpinned with specific objectives designed to guide decisions and plans for the next five years.

- The first visible sign of the renewed focus can be seen on the new UK Data Archive website, launched in July with a bold new brand and a more user-friendly interface. Behind the visible pages lie a host of software improvements, part of the Archive's continuing efforts to refine and improve the way we deliver our data and services to keep pace with new standards and expectations.
- The next new initiative was expanding the Secure Data Service (SDS) into a full service including a public-facing website (see below) and undergoing an extensive audit to meet the rigorous information security standards of the International Organization for Standardization's ISO/IEC 27001 certification. The Secure Data Service team is now collaborating with owners of detailed business and government data to acquire and process data collections. There are currently 21 datasets available through the service, including Understanding Society.
- The inaugural workshop, titled 'How to set up and run a data service: the challenges of social science data', attracted 25 delegates from across Europe who are either already data service providers, or want to become data service providers in the near future. The event was so successful that it's become an annual event. The next workshop is set for 13-14th October 2011 and open to delegates from around the world.
- A new guide to managing and sharing data was released in May 2011. To support researchers in producing high quality research data for long-term use, the UK Data Archive has revised and expanded its popular and highly cited Managing and Sharing Data: best practice for researchers, first published in 2009.
- In June 2010 the UK Data Archive was certified to meet the rigorous information security requirements of the international ISO 27001 standard. The standard applies to all services carried out by the Archive, including the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS), the SDS and the Census Registration Service.
- The UK Data Archive has recently added several data collections from The Rural Economy and Land Use (Relu) Programme, which funds interdisciplinary research to inform policy and practice in these areas.
- The Archive is using a pilot service in conjunction with DataCite to test the implementation of DOIs for each instance of a study. This will guarantee that with each significant change to a study (such as an amendment or addition to the data or metadata), a new DOI is assigned and researchers can confidently go beyond the study level and cite individual versions of a dataset. During the pilot, the Archive will clearly define 'significant changes', review citation structure and assign DOIs to a subset of our 5,200 catalogued studies. Users accessing a DOI over the web will be taken to a page describing the full history of each version of the study. It will be immediately clear if the DOI resolves to the latest or a past version of a study and what changes have been made over time. These DOI 'jump' pages will provide links to the full Data Catalogue at ESDS. The Archive will also promote its use of DOIs to depositors and researchers as an efficient and coherent means to cite source data or metadata. As the Archive focuses on its commitment to the full data lifecycle -- and adopts more detailed management methods and technologies such as those offered by web services and the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI3) -- we expect to increase our adoption of DOIs and persistent identifiers.
- Sociology undergraduates at the University of Essex are getting an added boost to their studies, thanks to a new project that draws on the rich resources of the UK Data Archive's data collection. The project, funded through the University's Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF), is jointly led by the Archive and the Department of Sociology. The project is planned in three stages: a full evaluation of the pilot project, followed by an extension of the pilot through the development of online assignments for other sociology modules. In the final stage, an online template will be developed for additional assignments in new subject areas.