



EXPOFACTS

Exposure Factors Sourcebook for Europe

GENERAL

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This document describes the general structure of ExpoFacts Sourcebook, as well as the principles according to which data have been collected and included to the database. This document is a part of Expofacts, exposure factors sourcebook for Europe.

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1 Introduction

The European Exposure Factors (ExpoFacts) Sourcebook is a collection of statistics and references. It is primarily aimed at being a tool for environmental exposure analysis and risk assessment but it can also serve as a data source for administration, NGO's and anyone interested in European statistics.

The ExpoFacts Sourcebook has three parts: a database, a reference guide, and a document library. All of these are free to use, and available at the ExpoFacts Internet site.

The ExpoFacts Sourcebook covers 30 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

2 Scope

The actions and the media that bring us in contact with environmental impurities are called exposure factors. Important exposure factors are e.g. housing conditions, consumption of food and beverages, and time use in different microenvironments.

The European exposure factor data have traditionally been scattered around national and international institutes, in scientific articles and reports. European exposure researchers have often used the more easily accessible American data, from e.g. U.S. EPA Handbooks, making different assumptions for applying them for the varying European conditions. There has therefore been a strong need to get also the European data into one central and accessible site. These data have now been compiled, to the extent possible, into ExpoFacts database, so that it would be easily accessible for all of those who need it.

In addition to the exposure factor data, ExpoFacts database contains a large selection of population data, to make the database a better tool for exposure and risk analysis. The age pyramids, socio-economic distributions etc. enable the exposure analyst to extrapolate the results of e.g. concentration or exposure surveys to wider populations.

The ECETOC Exposure Factors Sourcebook for European Populations, with Focus on UK Data, (Zaleski and Gephart, 2000) was the first broader compilation of European exposure factors. It contains a lot of methodological information, which is not found in the ExpoFacts database. Therefore ExpoFacts does not replace the ECETOC document, but adds new information and Internet accessibility.

3 Data content

The ExpoFacts database has been compiled during 2003-2006. ExpoFacts contains data that have been available at that time. New data, that would only exist in the ExpoFacts database, haven't been produced.

The ExpoFacts database contains no derived values. No computations have been made by the project to combine datasets, create distributions, or otherwise produce new figures. The data presented in the database are what have been published in official statistics, survey reports, etc., or what have been obtained by request from the original survey databases.

To maximize the data comparability within the ExpoFacts database, the data have been, whenever possible, collected from international sources like the WHO, ILO

and UNECE. These organisations perform an extensive expert review and quality control of the data they receive from national sources. Since the review processes take time, however, more recent data may be available at national level. The national data sources can be found in the Complete References section, and their latest data can be located by using the available links.

If the searched data have not been found from international data sources, then national sources have been used to either fill in the data gaps or to provide separate data tables for a particular subject.

The ExpoFacts database contains data regarding the 30 European countries within its scope. If data have not been available, no international data or “generally accepted values” have been quoted in stead. The exposure factor data from other European countries, the U.S.A, Canada, or any other country have thus not been quoted. The identified references and web links to these other data sources are, however, available in the Complete References.

Each data set in the database is not nationally representative but may represent only certain geographic areas or population groups. It is important for the user to check from the available information, what part of the population the data represent.

The populations of interest for ExpoFacts are adults and children. Statistics or surveys focusing exclusively on the elderly have not been included. Instead, there has been emphasis on children and therefore, in the lack of more recent and comprehensive data, also fairly old child survey results with small sample populations have been included.

4 Sourcebook Structure

4.1 Database

The ExpoFacts database can be accessed in two different ways. First way is to use the *Database access*-screen where user needs to select desired country, category, table and data time period for the search. Second way is to use the *Phrase search*-screen which can be used for searching phrases from table names, field descriptions and table sources.

The data table received as a result of data search (or selected from the phrase search) can be viewed in a printer friendly format or downloaded as a CSV or Excel -file. If the data outcome is not satisfactory, it is possible to return to modify the data search or to modify the data view (sorting, filtering, visible fields).

The data is presented with at least the basic data quality information: the data years, the data reference and possible copyright statements. Quality information is collected in the data tables, References & Info pages and the Data Sources and Quality document. All the data quality information can be downloaded from the website and should be consulted before using the data.

4.2 Complete References

The ExpoFacts Complete References contains two reference list documents. The ‘Database References’ contains all references regarding the data that is included in the ExpoFacts database. This document is generated automatically when opened and is therefore always up-to-date. The ‘Additional exposure factor references’ contains references to other exposure factor data sources, which can be consulted e.g. for more recent national datasets or non-European exposure factor data. Links to the Internet pages are provided when they have been available.

4.3 Document Library

The ExpoFacts Document Library contains informative documentary related to the database and its use. The documents describe the use and contents of the database, data quality issues, and the technical details of the database. Some of the documents are generated automatically by using the actual database and are therefore always up-to-date. Static documents can be downloaded in a pdf-format.

5 The Future

The ExpoFacts database demonstrates clearly the fields in which European exposure factor data are still missing, or cannot presently be made public, and contrarily the fields where uniform European procedures have been developed and comparable data have been made publicly available. Hopefully the ExpoFacts database will not only serve as a source of information, but also a motivation to start new research projects and surveys, and to harmonise and release more European data which have been collected using public EU or national resources for free access, and to further develop the European exposure factor data coverage and quality.

One important source of European statistical information is Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities. Until recently, the availability of Eurostat collected information has been rather restricted. Therefore ExpoFacts has collected the demographic and socio-economic information from other sources. The Eurostat data publicity policy, however, is currently opening up, which is encouraging for a multitude of applications for better research and decision making, including exposure modelling.

There is a process going on for harmonization of European dietary and time use survey data. In contrast, the limited availability of exposure factor information on European children strongly underlines the need of European level focused efforts to collect and generate such data.

ExpoFacts database and related documentation will be regularly updated.

6 Copyright

Information presented on ExpoFacts Web site is considered public information and may be downloaded or copied freely, unless identified as being subject to copyright protection.

When data are subject to copyright protection, their reproduction and dissemination are prohibited without consent from the copyright owner.

All data can, however, be downloaded and used freely as part of data analysis, and the subsequent results can be freely published at the User's own responsibility.

It is strongly recommended that the original data sources are consulted before using the data. In that case, the original data source should be quoted as the reference.

If data are used without consulting the original reference, e.g. in case of a language barrier, data can be used, provided that ExpoFacts is clearly indicated as the source.

7. Disclaimer

ExpoFacts Web site contains links to information created and maintained by public and private organizations. These links are provided for visitors' convenience. ExpoFacts project does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any linked information. Once you link to another site, you are subject to the disclaimers and security and privacy policies of the new site.

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