

EUROMOD NEWS

The tax-benefit microsimulation model for the European Union

EUROMOD is a tax-benefit microsimulation model for the European Union (EU) that enables researchers and policy analysts to calculate, in a comparable manner, the effects of taxes and benefits on household incomes and work incentives for the population of each country and for the EU as a whole.

As well as calculating the effects of actual policies it is also used to evaluate the effects of tax-benefit policy reforms and other changes on poverty, inequality, incentives and government budgets.

EUROMOD is a unique resource for cross-national research, designed to produce results that are comparable across countries and meaningful when aggregated to the EU level.

EUROMOD is managed, maintained, developed and updated by a [team of researchers in ISER](#). This is done in collaboration with national experts. The current version of EUROMOD represents the accumulation of technical developments and expertise over a number of years and involving a large team of people. For more information on the design and development of EUROMOD [click here](#).

www.euromod.ac.uk



University of Essex



The study looked to improve health and reduce health inequalities in Scotland

Improving benefit systems most effective in reducing inequalities in Scotland

A new *The Lancet – Public Health* article suggests that reforms to income-based policies, rather than changes to the taxation system, are most likely to be effective in reducing health inequalities in Scotland

Using EUROMOD to estimate the effects of a set of hypothetical fiscal policies on incomes for Scottish households, findings from a new *The Lancet – Public Health* article suggest that reforms to the benefits system should be prioritised over changes to the tax system if the goal is improving health and reducing health inequalities.

The research used an estimate of the relationship between income change and all-cause mortality to assess the effects of 12 income-based policies on years of

life lost (YLL) and inequalities in YLL for Scotland. The most effective policies for reducing health inequalities appeared to be those that disproportionately increased incomes in the most deprived areas. Among these policies, more generous means-tested benefits performed best in the modelling, with basic income schemes also narrowing inequalities and leading to modest reductions in YLL.

To read the full article, see [The effect of income-based policies on mortality inequalities in Scotland: a modelling study](#).



The delegate line-up pause for a photograph on the roof of the Universidad Externado in Colombia

Essex Global Challenges Research Fund visit to Colombia

In early March, EUROMOD's Dr H. Xavier Jara (third from left above) joined a delegation of Essex academics visiting Colombia for the Essex Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) event, which was organised as part of University of Essex Vice Chancellor Anthony Forster's overseas visits

Supported by the UK GCRF, Essex researchers have been collaborating with academics and third sector organisations in Colombia in a wide range of research projects covering a variety of fields in social sciences such as human rights and transitional justice, international relations and conflict resolution, criminology, social policy analysis and legislative politics.

The aim of the visit was to showcase the different projects and to identify interdisciplinary opportunities for future collaboration.

During the visit, Dr Jara presented results of his work on Rethinking Social Protection and Fiscal Policy in Colombia and the Region. The project was a collaboration between researchers from Essex and from the Universidad Externado in Colombia, which resulted in the successful development and improvement of the open access tax-benefit microsimulation model for Colombia, COLMOD.

An afternoon panel discussion on peacebuilding and transitional justice

issues in relation to Colombia was held at the Universidad del Rosario, covering the political, economic, historical and cultural factors around peacebuilding, reparations and transitional justice issues.

Professor Forster chaired the panel discussion, which attracted a wide range of academics, legal experts and NGO

representatives, with a keynote speech delivered by Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. The other expert panellists included Professor Clara Sandoval-Villalba, from the School of Law at Essex and Co-Director of the Essex Transitional Justice Network; Adam Forbes, First Secretary Peace and Security, Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, at the British Embassy in Colombia and Professor Han Dorussen, from the Department of Government at Essex, who is an expert in international relations and conflict resolution.

The development of tax-benefit microsimulation models for Latin American countries is part of a broader academic initiative lead by Dr Jara in collaboration with international institutions, such as UNU-WIDER, the Inter-American Development Bank, and local teams with the aim to provide tools for economic and social policy analysis related to social protection and fiscal policy in the region.



The panel discussion included the Vice Chancellor, academics, legal experts and NGO representatives

Meet the EUROMOD national teams

In this edition of *EUROMOD NEWS*, we introduce you to the three members of the Czech EUROMOD team

The three members of the Czech national team have been with EUROMOD since the Czech Republic joined the EUROMOD family in 2010.

The team's work is coordinated and institutionally supported under the auspices of the CERGE-EI in Prague, the joint academic workplace of the Centre for Economic Research and Graduate Education (CERGE) at Charles University and the Economic Institute at the Czech Academy of Sciences. CERGE-EI is one of the few academic workplaces within the newer EU Member States carrying out world class economic research and offering graduate education in economics.

Daniel Münich is a Senior Researcher and Professor of Professional Practice at CERGE-EI. He has held a PhD in economics from the Charles University since 2009, and an engineering degree in technical sciences since 1991. His microeconomic-empirical-policy-oriented research interests include the economics of education and schooling, labour economics, taxation, welfare and pension policy as well as poverty and income distribution analysis. Beyond research and PhD programme teaching, he has served as an executive director of the academic think-tank IDEA within CERGE-EI since 2014. He has shared his expertise, among others, with the World Bank, OECD, EBRD, EENEE, the European Commission and various Czech governmental and NGO institutions. Closely related to EUROMOD work is his expert advisory on the regulatory impact assessment for the Czech Legislative Council.

Klára Kalíšková is an Assistant Professor at the University of Economics Prague, researcher at the IDEA think tank at CERGE-EI, and a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Czech Academy of Sciences' Economics Institute. She has a PhD in economics from CERGE-EI, Prague, and her main research interests lie in empirical and policy-oriented research in the fields of labour



Daniel Münich



Klára Kalíšková



Jan Pavel

economics and applied econometrics. For years she has also been a member of the Government Committee for Reconciliation of Work and Family Life, and she actively participates in an evaluation of policy-making processes in the Czech Republic with a focus on employment and social impacts.

Jan Pavel is a full Professor at the University of Economics in Prague and since 2018 he has also been a member of the national Czech Fiscal Council. In his research, he focuses on tax policies, microsimulations, public procurement and fiscal policies with a strong overlap with actual policy-making processes. Jan's work is regularly published in academic journals.

How the team use EUROMOD

Czech team members have been using the EUROMOD model jointly with the TaxBen model developed at CERGE-EI to carry out assessments of proposed and implemented tax-benefit changes in the Czech Republic. Needless to say, the last five years or so have seen several ambitious tax-benefit reform proposals, but a lack of implementation. While EUROMOD allows for rich international comparisons, the more detailed TaxBen model enables in-depth investigation of the Czech system and the country-specific features of the SILC data.

Klára: "For me, the work on the EUROMOD model gave me first valuable insights into the world of microsimulation. I have been using microsimulation exercises in my academic work as well as teaching ever since. What is also great about EUROMOD is that the model is still improving so this allows us to keep up with new developments." She has used EUROMOD in her academic papers studying the effects of tax-benefit policies on women's labour supply from a cross-country perspective published recently in *Empirical Economics*.

Jan: "I have used EUROMOD especially for the evaluation of the fiscal and distribution impacts of the proposed changes in tax and benefit systems. EUROMOD is used by the recently established Czech Fiscal Council. I also recommend EUROMOD to colleagues at my University of Economics. For me, working with EUROMOD has been a new stage in my microsimulation research. I followed up on

my previous work, when I created a simplified microsimulation model for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The great advantage of EUROMOD is that it is continuously updated and provides a comparative dimension."

Daniel: "For historical reasons, newer EU Member States from central and eastern Europe such as the Czech Republic are still lagging behind the older members in terms of scope and the quality of social sciences. This weakens local policy-making, i.e. evidence-informed policy-making and the quality of regulatory impact assessment. Therefore, EUROMOD helps in this respect representing not only an example of good practice but also a valuable option for local researchers, policy-makers and students."

Imagine that you had the power to propose a major policy reform for your country – what would it be?

Historically, the Czech Republic inherited a rather particular taxation mix. Direct taxes are dominated by two quasi insurance-payroll deductions – social and health insurance – with largely flat rate only weakly related to earnings imposing high taxation even on low earners. It is complemented by a relatively minor and also rather flat income tax. Altogether, the three constitute almost a 50% marginal tax rate imposed on a high proportion of employees across the earning distribution. On the other hand, real estate taxes remain negligibly low, not being linked to the value of the real estate. This mix makes it difficult to increase desirable progressivity into the direct taxation and it also represents an obstacle to reforming the pension scheme funding structure. At the same time, given that the real estate tax is the only tax-based revenue for municipalities, it also hinders municipal development. Thus, our major policy reform proposal would be to shift the taxation burden from quasi insurance to income tax and from direct taxes to real estate taxes. This regime change would allow for more progressive taxation, better alignment of the taxes paid by employees and self-employed, and for direct taxes to better reward working parents with smaller children – mothers in particular.

EUROMOD training opportunities: we're going online in April!

Our planned training sessions on using UKMOD, the UK component of the EUROMOD model, planned for April 2020 will go ahead as online events. You can sign up for either of these events now at <https://www.euromod.ac.uk/events>

Introduction to UKMOD (27-28 April 2020)

The first two days of the UKMOD course are aimed at novice users.

The content covers:

- the basics of tax-benefit microsimulation
- the logic and structure behind UKMOD
- working with UKMOD: the policy rules, FRS micro-data and the EUROMOD software
- using the EUROMOD tools (Statistics Presenter) for distributional analysis
- the EUROMOD tax-benefit modelling language
- documentation

The course combines lectures with hands-on exercises to test and improve the participants' understanding of the model.

Working with UKMOD: advanced uses (29 April 2020)

The last day of the UKMOD course is aimed at participants with prior knowledge of UKMOD.

This means people who have attended the first two days of the training – either on this occasion or on any previous UKMOD course – or for those who have followed the online course materials themselves in their own time and are therefore comfortable using UKMOD.

The following topics will be covered:

- Universal Credit implementation in UKMOD
- benefit take-up adjustment and transition from the legacy benefits to Universal Credit
- forecasting/projecting policy systems
- calculating work incentives with the Marginal Effective Tax Rates (MTR) add-on
- creating your own hypothetical households data to analyse with UKMOD: the Hypothetical Households Tool (HHoT)

The course combines lectures with hands-on exercises to test and improve the participants' understanding of the model.



2020 European Semester Country Reports: Analysis done by JRC.B2 using EUROMOD

During the 2019-2020 European Semester, and in collaboration with policy DGs ECFIN and EMPL, the JRC.B2 'Fiscal Policy Analysis' unit in Seville conducted in-depth assessments of tax-benefit reforms in a number of Member States.

Some of the key budgetary, distributional and work-incentive results of reforms simulated by the JRC.B2 unit were presented in 14 of the 2020 Country Reports published on 26 February 2020.

The analyses draw on EUROMOD, including some of its extensions (i.e. the indirect tax tool was used for AT and DE and the hypothetical household tool for EL and AT). In some cases, EUROMOD was also used in combination with a labour

supply model to analyse work incentive effects of simulated reforms (IT, BE) or with DG ECFIN's QUEST model to assess macroeconomic impacts (IT). Most simulations used input data from the 2017 EU-SILC.

As in past years, the focus of the modelling support varied across countries. Simulations have ranged from reforms of personal income taxes (e.g., BE, DK, EE, IT, LV) to the more novel introduction of a CO2 tax (AT, DE). In other cases, the analyses assessed social benefits in Member States: e.g. changes/coverage of minimum income schemes (EL, ES), child benefits (ES) or the indexation of social benefits (RO). Packages including both tax and benefit measures were also

simulated for FR and LT, whereas for IT a budget-neutral tax shift away from labour to property taxation was analysed. For EE, the effects of narrowing the gender pay gap were examined, and for MT, statistical analysis focused on the 'informal care' sector.

All these simulations support the Reports' key policy messages on the Member States' tax-benefit systems. For example, the role of taxes in achieving environmental targets and the need for the green transition to be fair and socially acceptable (AT, DE), the need to provide adequate social protection in a rapidly changing world (e.g. EL, ES and RO), the rebalancing of the tax burden away from labour in order to boost growth and employment (IT) and the importance of the tax-benefit systems in supporting work incentives (BE, IT, MT) and distributional goals (FR, DK).

EUROMOD: introducing the team

In this edition of *EUROMOD NEWS*, Patryk Bronka, EUROMOD Senior Research Officer, describes his work

What is your background?

I have been at Essex for a while, although not as part of the EUROMOD team. I arrived in 2011 to study for a bachelor's degree in Economics, and subsequently decided to enrol in a Master of Research and a PhD in Economics.

I have been a PhD student in the Department of Economics since 2016, and my research focuses on labour markets and use of large-scale microdata to answer questions about unemployment, inequalities in the labour market and job search. Over the years, I have also worked on several projects as a Research Assistant and taught classes in economics, econometrics, and policy analysis at undergraduate and postgraduate level as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.

I also had an opportunity to help with the work of the *Understanding Society* team as a Research Officer at ISER immediately prior to joining the EUROMOD team.

What are your research interests?

As mentioned above, my research interests are primarily in the field of labour economics, focusing on unemployment, economic inequality and insecurity.

As part of my PhD, I am working on projects quantifying the effects of human capital on workers' unemployment losses and labour market trajectories. I investigate the impact of job search strategies on workers' unemployment durations and wage penalties by linking administrative micro-data with survey data, researching the gender gap in wages of workers experiencing unemployment using administrative data, and disentangling different mechanisms underlying the empirically observed wage gap between immigrants and natives.

I am also interested in computational methods and (dynamic) microsimulation and how they can work with standard econometric techniques to capture complex interactions between different macroeconomic conditions and changing policies.



Patryk Bronka

'Getting settled as part of the EUROMOD team, getting to know EUROMOD and JAS-mine in detail, and working with them in research projects has been great'

How long have you been part of the ISER EUROMOD team? What are your main responsibilities?

I joined the EUROMOD team in September 2019. I am responsible for the development of a dynamic microsimulation model for a project aiming to define and quantify economic insecurity over the course of a lifetime.

I also contribute more generally to the development of JAS-mine, our Java platform for dynamic microsimulation and agent-based modelling, and to the maintenance of its documentation and website. While not strictly a EUROMOD project, I help in the publication process of the *International Journal of Microsimulation* as an Assistant Editor.

What are you working on at the moment?

At the moment, I am primarily working on a project investigating economic insecurity through microsimulation.

Economic insecurity is a concept referring to the uncertainty surrounding individual trajectories over time, associated with the hazard of unemployment, illness, widowhood, disability, or old age. There is a growing perception that economic insecurity is a major concern for individuals, possibly more so than inequality, but there exist only a few measures

of it – and they are not perfect. I work on developing a dynamic microsimulation model that will allow us to characterise the level of economic insecurity by simulating future individual trajectories over the long term, taking, for example, demographic changes into account. In the process we also aim to combine the dynamic model with EUROMOD.

Furthermore, I continue working on two of my PhD papers and hopefully will be able to complete them soon.

Would you like to share any work in progress or recent highlights?

From my personal point of view, getting settled as part of the EUROMOD team, getting to know EUROMOD and JAS-mine in detail, and working with them in research projects has been great, and definitely a highlight of the last few months.

In terms of research, I am implementing a new procedure to match individuals in the simulation into couples, which follows recent literature and uses a matching method based on the distribution of matches observed in the data instead of parametric methods based on calculating a matching score. I hope to be able to generalise the current prototype and release it as part of the standard matching library provided with JAS-mine soon.

I am also reading quite a bit about techniques used in machine learning and computer science that could potentially be applied to economic problems – most recently tensors and tensor decompositions. It is not always straightforward to combine them with the usual toolbox, but if you like new things, give it a go – many concepts are fascinating!

EUROMOD-related research presented at conferences

[XXVII Encuentro de Economía Pública, 23-24 January 2020, Barcelona](#)

- Nuria Badenes presented '¿Qué efectos genera el sistema tax-benefit en las distintas CCAA en España? Un análisis utilizando el modelo de microsimulación EUROMOD' (co-author Maria Navas)
- Chrysa Leventi presented 'The Tax Structure of an Economy in Crisis: Greece 2009-2019' (co-author Fidel Picos)

[JRC Fiscal Policy Modelling Workshop, 12-14 February 2020, Sevilla](#)

- Vanda Almeida presented 'The role of automatic stabilisers in the European Union business cycle' (co-authors Salvador Barrios, Francesca D'Auria, Alberto Tumino, Janos Varga)
- M. Fink presented 'Gender Dimension of Tax-Benefit Systems (co-authors J. Janová, D. Nerudová, J. Pavel, M. Schratzenstaller, F. Sindermann-Sienkiewicz, M. Spielauer)

[LSE Hellenic Observatory Seminar, 10 March, 2020, London](#)

- Panos Tsakloglou presented 'Distributional Changes in Turbulent Times: Greece 2007-2016

[Expert workshop: Non-take-up and coverage of social benefits, 11 March, Brussels](#)

- Michael Fuchs presented 'Non-take-up of benefits of last resort in Austria'

Where they turned up

Since the last edition of *EUROMOD NEWS*, newly-published journal articles using EUROMOD include:

Richardson, L., L. Fenton, J. Parkinson, A. Pulford, M. Taulbut, G. McCartney and M. Robinson (2020) The effect of income-based policies on mortality inequalities in Scotland: a modelling study, *The Lancet – Public Health* 5:3, e150-e156 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(20\)30011-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30011-6)

Paulus, A. and I. Tasseva (2020) Europe through the crisis: discretionary policy changes and automatic stabilisers, *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* <https://doi.org/10.1111/obes.12354>

Fuchs, M., K. Gasior, T. Premrov, K. Hollan and A. Scoppetta (2020) Falling through the social safety net? Analysing non-take-up of minimum income benefit and monetary social assistance in Austria, *Social Policy & Administration* <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/spol.12581>

Let us know of your journal publications using EUROMOD, and don't forget to submit your articles to the EUROMOD working paper series!

EUROMOD working paper series

[Reducing the income tax burden for households with children: An assessment of the child tax credit reform in Austria](#)

[EUROMOD Working Paper Series EM1/20](#)

Authors [Michael Christl](#), [Silvia De Poli](#) and [Janos Varga](#)

Publication date 27 February 2020

Abstract This paper analyses the impact of the implementation of a child tax credit in Austria in 2019, both on micro and macro level. First, we assess the fiscal and distributional impact of this reform using EUROMOD. Second, we estimate labour supply impacts of the reform based on a structural discrete choice framework. Third, we evaluate the macroeconomic impacts, by calibrating and shocking the DSGE model QUEST, with the micro-based results. We show that the reform reduces inequality, lowers the poverty rate for households with children. Overall the reform has a positive impact on labour supply, especially for women. On the macro-level (and in the long-run), our model suggests a small but positive impact on employment, investment, consumption and GDP. Additionally, using the macro impact of the reform, we show that accounting for those behavioural responses at the micro level is important to assess the long-run impact

of tax reforms, especially on the income distribution.

[The anti-poverty marginal benefit of public funds](#)

[EUROMOD Working Paper Series EM2/20](#)

Authors [Diego Collado](#)

Publication date 28 February 2020

Abstract Policy makers are generally interested in both the anti-poverty impact and the efficiency of reforms. To connect these two dimensions, I measure the poverty gap change per unit of net revenue that tax-benefit reforms produce. To isolate the impact of reforms and account for labour supply responses, I apply a microsimulation decomposition framework to poverty gap and net revenue changes. Labour supply responses are accounted for using reduced-form models, partly exploiting variation over time that reforms produce. I measure this indicator in Belgium between 2005 and 2014, focusing on revenue changes at the bottom half of the income distribution. Without considering labour supply reactions, reforms reduced the poverty gap among the poor by €0.6 for each euro of net revenue decline. However, this drops to €0.4 when negative labour supply reactions are included, which were caused by unemployment benefits growing

faster than in-work compensations. These results highlight the importance of looking simultaneously at reforms to in- and out-of-work benefits.

[The effect of income-based policies on mortality inequalities in Scotland: a modelling study](#)

[EUROMOD Working Paper Series](#)

Authors [Elizabeth Richardson](#), [Lynda Fenton](#), [Jane Parkinson](#), [Andrew Pulford](#), [Martin Taulbut](#), [Gerry McCartney](#) and [Mark Robinson](#)

Publication date 30 March 2020

Abstract The unequal distribution of income is a fundamental determinant of health inequalities. Decision making around economic policies could be enhanced by showing their potential health effects. We used scenario modelling to assess the effects of 12 income-based policies on Years of Life Lost (YLL) and inequalities in YLL in Scotland. EUROMOD, a tax-benefit microsimulation model, was used to estimate the effects of hypothetical fiscal policies on income for Scottish households (n=2871; 2014/15 Family Resources Survey). Income change was estimated for each quintile of the 2016 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. 'Triple I', a health inequalities scenario modelling [Continued on next page](#)

Continued from previous page

tool, was used to estimate policy effects on YLL and government spending after five years. The best policy for improving health and narrowing health inequalities was a 50% increase to means-tested benefits rates (approximately 105,177 or 4.7% YLL fewer than the baseline scenario, and a 7.9% reduction in relative index of inequality (RII)). Citizen's Basic Income (CBI) schemes also substantially narrowed inequalities (3.7% RII for basic scheme, 5.9% for CBI with additional payments for disabled individuals), and modestly reduced YLL (0.7% and 1.4%, respectively). The most effective policies for reducing health inequalities appeared to be those that disproportionately increased incomes in the most deprived areas.

Singling out the truly needy: the role of asset testing in European minimum income schemes

EUROMOD Working Paper Series EM4/20

Authors [Sarah Marchal](#), [Sarah Kuypers](#), [Ive Marx](#) and [Gerlinde Verbist](#)

Publication date 15 April 2020

Abstract Means-tested transfer schemes in Europe and elsewhere tend to include not only income tests but also asset tests of various sorts. The role of asset tests in minimum income protection provisions has been extensively researched in the Anglo-Saxon context. Far fewer authors have assessed the role of asset tests on social policy in a continental European context. Although asset tests may be useful in singling out the more deserving of the poor, we know relatively little of their actual

impact on eligibility and social outcomes in European welfare states. This paper looks at the prevalence and design of asset tests in European minimum income protection schemes. We distinguish between two main types of asset tests: outright disqualification when assets reach a certain value, versus a more gradual tapering at a fictional rate of return. We then analyse in greater detail how asset tests in Belgium and Germany, as representatives of these two types, affect minimum income protection eligibility and poverty outcomes. We use the EUROMOD microsimulation model on the Household Finance and Consumption Survey data in order to assess the effects of asset tests. This survey was explicitly designed to more realistically reflect assets and capital incomes.

Introducing Daria Popova, the new EUROMOD Working Paper series editor

Daria Popova is a social scientist with a background in sociology, political science and social policy.

Her research interests centre on the analysis of social and economic policies and distributional issues. Some questions that are central to her research are:

- How do family policy packages in Europe and the UK differ in terms of their policy goals, designs and outcomes?
- What is the role of the tax-benefit system in reducing/enhancing within couple gender income inequality?
- What is the impact of the tax-benefit system on secondary earners and in-work poverty?
- How do family dynamics and life course events, such as childbirth and divorce, affect individual wellbeing

outcomes and social and economic inequality?

Her findings on these topics have been published in journals such as *Journal of Social Policy*, *Journal of European Social Policy*, *Social Indicators Research* and *Social Science Research*.

For the past five years Daria has been a developer for EUROMOD. Using the EUROMOD platform, she has developed the first full-scale model for the Russian tax-benefit system allowing for the analysis of policies at the federal and regional level and in a cross-country setting.

Daria has extensive editorial experience, having acted as a managing editor of the ISER Working Paper Series and refereeing for top academic journals dealing with issues of social policy and redistribution in Europe



Daria Popova

and beyond. She received her doctorate from the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence and previously worked as postdoctoral fellow at EUI and as lecturer at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

She takes over from Alari Paulus as editor of the EUROMOD working paper series, reviewing submissions and working with authors to ensure that they adhere to publication requirements.



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Institute for Social
and Economic Research
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
Colchester CO4 3SQ
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0) 1206 872957
Fax: +44 (0) 1206 873151
Email: iser@essex.ac.uk
www.iser.essex.ac.uk

