

Understanding the EU Civil Service: GSC

DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Datasets to be produced

Quantitative data: Responses to an online survey administered to the population of Council Secretariat staff. The purpose of the survey, the use to which the data collected will be put, and the identity of the researchers will be explained to respondents before they complete the survey. Questions will cover: backgrounds, beliefs, views on today's EU, the Council Secretariat as an organization, and experience of work and the working environment. The survey will be conducted using Qualtrics and the responses analysed in SPSS v22. The raw survey data will be anonymised and stored (and backed-up) by Qualtrics in their EU data centres in Ireland for the duration of the data collection. All data held by Qualtrics will be destroyed at the end of this phase of the project. Anonymised data which is downloaded for analysis will be password protected and encrypted. Data will be stored on the University centrally managed facilities backed up on a 24hr basis with access restricted to authorised individuals only.

Qualitative data: A short round of reflective interviews with a small self-selected sample, which will enable an initial exploration of responses to the online survey, will be followed by a structured programme of follow-up interviews with senior managers, members of the Secretary General's private office, members of the private office of the President of the European Council, and a random sample of managers, other AD staff members, and AST staff, and focus groups with non-management administrators, assistants, translators, lawyer linguists, logistics. These will address the internal operation of the Council Secretariat, the Council Secretariat as a workplace, personnel policy, networking, and performance management. Interviews will be conducted in pairs. The purpose of the interview, and privacy/anonymity protection will be explained to interviewees or focus group participants in a letter of invitation, and repeated before the interview begins, which will allow respondents to decline.

Where respondents permit the interviews will be digitally audio recorded (MP3). Otherwise written notes will be taken. In the case of focus groups, participants will be offered the opportunity to protect their anonymity by using a name that they choose. Focus group sessions will be digitally recorded (MP3). Digital recordings will be transcribed in MS Word and analysed using ATLAS. All versions of the data will be anonymised, password protected and encrypted. Data will be stored on the University centrally managed facilities backed up on a 24hr basis with access restricted to authorised individuals. Transcription will be undertaken by a third party based in the UK who will be required to undertake a data processing agreement (either standalone or within the contract), in which they will undertake a commitment to store the data in a secure manner within the EU and to destroy the recordings once the transcription is completed. The research team will retain securely stored recordings for a year after collection, to provide verification and quality checks of the transcriptions, and will thereafter destroy the recordings.

2. Data back-up procedures

All collected data will be anonymised, stored securely and regularly backed-up. The online survey will be administered using Qualtrics, the raw data collected through the online survey will be stored and backed-up (within the EU) for the duration of the data collection by Qualtrics. All digital data - the SPSS data files downloaded from the survey, the GIF digital audio recordings and the MS Word transcripts – will be password protected and encrypted.

All project data will be stored on UEA's secure Research Storage Infrastructure, based on IBM enterprise grade Storage Area Network (SAN) hardware housed in secure, environmentally controlled and monitored data centres. Data will be regularly backed up to tape with copies in both data centers at UEA.

3. Data protection, anonymity and confidentiality

The data from the online survey will be cleaned and prepared for analysis by Professor Sara Connolly, UEA. The preparation for analysis will involve aggregation across some personal and professional variables. For example, staff will be categorized by cohort rather than the particular year in which they joined the GSC. Analysis will proceed on the basis of the aggregated data which ensures a minimum cell size of 5 in any reported tables or crosstabulations.

Data from the online survey will be presented or reported in aggregate form only. It will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in the published work produced by members of the research team. Nor will it be possible to identify any interviewee from comments cited in any written or published work. Where quotations from interviews are included in any text, the attribution will be no more specific than the following formulations: 'according to a senior manager in a policy DG', 'a head of unit commented . . .', 'an assistant remarked that . . .', etc.

Data will be collected, stored and used in compliance with the UK Data Protection Act, which implements the EU Data Protection Directive. The totality of the online survey data will be viewed by three parties only: Qualtrics, the company that supply the proprietary software used to administer the online survey; the research team at the University of East Anglia; and the University of Edinburgh. Qualtrics has published a statement of assurance concerning the technical security of the data. UEA and the University of Edinburgh will do the same. UEA and the University of Edinburgh will also establish a data processing agreement, which specifies the terms of which data will be shared by and transmitted between the two organizations.

All members of the research team, including research assistants will sign a formal agreement, drawn up at the University of East Anglia, by which, they will acknowledge their obligations under the UK Data Protection Act, and will commit themselves to respect the anonymity of all respondents and interviewees, and to the use of the data for the purposes specified by this project only. In practice, only Professor Sara Connolly, UEA and Professor



Andrew Thompson, University of Edinburgh, will see the unprocessed data.

All information gathered is subject to a request submitted pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Any party receiving such a request will inform all other parties and exemptions will be applied where appropriate.

Interviewees will be able to request transcripts of their own interviews conducted with the research team

4. Data availability

Access to the dataset will be restricted to authorised individuals and their researchers only: PI Professor Hussein Kassim and main CI Professor Sara Connolly, UEA, and Co-Is Professor Michael Bauer, German University of Administrative Sciences, Speyer, Professor Renaud Dehousse, Centre d'Études Européennes, Sciences Po. Paris, Professor Brigid Laffan, European University Institute Florence and Professor Andrew Thompson, University of Edinburgh.

5. Data management

The PI will have overall responsibility for implementing the data management plan. The University of East Anglia (HUM Faculty) IT Manager will be responsible for advising on all aspects of data storage and security. Staff involved in the project at participating institutions will be responsible for following the same data management procedures.

6. Ethical issues

Approval for this project has already been sought and granted by the General Research Ethics Committee (<http://www.uea.ac.uk/research/research-integrity>) at UEA. All University Research Ethics Committees comply with the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics. The team has significant experience in undertaking research involving personal data that must comply with relevant ethical rules. We will address all ethical, legal, social, and safety issues raised by the research activity in an appropriate manner. The main ethical issues will be safeguarding subjects' privacy and the confidentiality of the data collected. Therefore all data collection, storage and processing will be conducted in alignment with FP7 guidelines, Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive 97/66/EC6. All data will be anonymised, encrypted and password protected, no identifying information will be available and tracking down individuals is impossible. Publications or presentations on the results will only report analyses on an aggregated level.

Hussein Kassim and Sara Connolly
University of East Anglia

This is an abridged version, produced for the website. Full version is available on request:
gsc.ppl@uea.ac.uk