

The Language Management Utility (LMU)

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The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) is a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks of more than 30,000 individuals aged 50 or over. SHARE is coordinated centrally at the Mannheim Research Institute for the Economics of Aging (MEA). The first wave of data collection was in 2004 (Denmark, Sweden, Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy and Greece), Further data have been collected in 2005-2006 in Israel. Two 'new' EU member states - the Czech Republic and Poland - as well as Ireland have joined SHARE in 2006 and participated in the second wave of data collection in 2006-2007. The survey's third wave of data collection, SHARELIFE, will collect detailed retrospective life-histories in sixteen countries in 2008-2009, with Slovenia joining in as a new member.

The process for translating the questionnaires and creating the various country-specific versions is aided by several tools. The CAPI instruments are implemented in Blaise and the generic texts (English) of the questionnaires are stored in an internal database (MySQL). The different countries translate their version of the instruments over the internet (using a web browser), and the Language Management Utility (LMU), a web application developed by CentERdata. All translated texts such as question texts, interviewer instructions, answer categories, fill texts, error messages and so on can be converted into country specific survey instruments, based on the blueprint of the generic version. When some texts change during the developing process of the questionnaire and the pilots, flags are added so that translators immediately see what work has to be done. The translated texts are then automatically inserted into the Blaise questionnaire using the Blaise Generator application, also developed by CentERdata.