

Given this information, the co-ordinator was able to identify possible problems in the field and their reasons very early in the process. Strategies how to cope with such problems could be discussed with the country teams and survey agencies and implemented without unnecessary delay.

7.7 Survey Response

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Survey participation may be viewed as the result of a sequential process involving eligibility, contact of the eligible units and response by the contacted units. For SHARE, the analysis of survey participation depends crucially on whether or not the sampling frame contains preliminary information on the eligibility status of the sample units. Countries that use telephone directories as sampling frames (namely Austria, Greece and Switzerland) have a higher probability of selecting ineligible sample units. However, once the effects of the different frames on eligibility rates are taken into account, one can compare response rates across all countries involved in the project.

Overall, the SHARE data release on which all results presented in the present volume are based (“Release 0”) contains 18,169 individuals in 12,512 households. The unweighted country-average of household response rates is 55.4% (57.4% among the countries under EU-contract), see Table 2. France and the Netherlands have the highest response rates (69.4% and 61.6%, respectively), Switzerland the lowest (37.6%). Focusing attention on the reasons for household non-response, refusal to participate to the survey is the main reason (28.9%), although in some countries a non negligible fraction of non-response is also due to non-contact (12.4% in Spain) and other non-interview reasons (17.1% and 14.2% in Sweden and Germany respectively). An analysis of individual response rates and within-household response rates suggests that most of non-response in SHARE occurs at the household level, and that the response behaviour of individuals within a household is strongly and positively related. The unweighted country-average of within-household individual response rates is 86.3%. Preliminary response analysis by subgroup of the target population reveals only small differences in the patterns of survey participation by gender and age group.

Country	Household Response Rate	Individual Response Rate (within household)
Sweden	42.1 %	83.8 %
Denmark	61.1 %	93.0 %
Netherlands	61.6 %	87.9 %
Germany	60.2 %	86.5 %
France	69.4 %	91.7 %
Switzerland	37.6 %	86.9 %
Austria	57.3 %	87.4 %
Italy	54.1 %	79.7 %
Spain	50.2 %	73.8 %
Greece	60.2 %	91.8 %
Total	55.4 %	86.3 %
Total (EU-funded)	57.4 %	86.0 %