

**EUROSTAT WORKSHOP ON MICRODATA ACCESS
NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND A WAY FORWARD
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STATISTICS PORTUGAL CONTRIBUTION

ANA DULCE PINTO
PEDRO CAMPOS

4.4 WHAT, TODAY, ARE THE BARRIERS IN ACCESS TO MICRODATA IN NSIS

The main problems of researchers, concerning the access to anonymized microdata for scientific use, can be summarized in the following topics:

A – General

- 1) Juridical – at the present this is not a major issue. Since May 2008 the Portuguese Law, explicitly contains dispositions about researcher's access.
- 2) Geographical – Portugal is a small country and this can affect microdata for researchers when the anonymization procedure is taken. Some variables could be suppressed or aggregated in a way that is no longer useful to the purpose the researcher intends.
- 3) Duration of the process (request/dissemination) – It depends on several variables: the request (vg. if the information is already prepared or if it should be subject to additional procedures), the amount of information, if cross-files are necessary.

B – Specific

Anonymization¹ is a security procedure that preserves disclosure risks but is also a barrier and disturbed data can, ultimately, affect researcher's analysis.

Short list of procedures concerning anonymization of information for scientific uses:

- 1 - ASSIGNING identifying variables
- 2 – SUBDIVIDING into 3 categories indirect variables
- 3 - DESCRIBING sensitive variables
- 4 - VERIFYING identifiable variables combinations

¹ μ- ARGUS is used in microdata anonymization