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Title of paper:
Comparability of EU-SILC survey and register data: The relationship of employment, earnings and poverty

With the implementation of the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) there is an up-to-date micro data source available for 26 countries which allows for comparative analyses of income, material deprivation and poverty. At EU level the data have become a standard source for social reporting. Country-specific data collection approaches in EU-SILC differ widely. One of the major differences is that some countries fully rely on household surveys while other countries use administrative, so-called register data for a larger range of variables which are combined with additional information from survey interviews. There is broad literature which shows that there are relevant differences between register and survey data. This paper addresses the question how the relationship between employment, earnings and poverty is altered when different data collection approaches are used. The paper uses the fact that earnings and employment information in EU-SILC register countries come from different sources while this is not the case in survey countries. Employment as well as earnings can be used to define the working and the non-working population. But while the latter approach is based on the same data source as the income information this is not the case in the register countries when the standard employment variable is used. The paper shows that there is a mismatch between earnings and employment in register countries. This does not necessarily imply that income and poverty data based on survey data are more accurate. But it alludes to the fact that differences in substantial results – e.g., the share of working and non-working poor, the structure of these groups and the correlation of poverty rates with indicators such as welfare generosity - are partly driven by different data collection approaches.