

## **SOCIAL GRADE. A STANDARD DEMOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION**

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As more and more countries show their interest in joining the European Union the need to standardize certain procedures used in market research has arisen. Precisely, standard classification tools ensuring comparability between different countries need to be identified.

For this reason, in 1980, ESOMAR has started investigating the possibility to produce a consistent social-demographic classification system. Many research teams in different countries were committed to solving this problem up to 1996; their work eventually resulted in the standard "Social Grade Scale". The scale was initially tested and validated on representative samples in 12 EU countries, in seven waves of the *Eurobarometer*, between September/October 1992 – April/May 1995. It is nowadays a standard used in most opinion and market research surveys in Europe.

The scale enables a standard social-demographic classification, respectively, a composite variable. This new variable enables creating comparable sub-samples for different markets and ensures that, in each country, the resulting sub-groups are defined in the same manner.

### **The definition of categories of the social grade (SG)**

<Social Grade> is a composite variable built on the parameters below:

- occupation of the main income provider of the household;