Abstract

In the year 2002 a monitoring system for the response burden of Austrian businesses (the so called “response burden barometer”) was established covering the response burden induced by all compulsory surveys performed by Statistics Austria. This indicator system shows the total response burden for each of the surveys over time and by the factors influencing a change of the response burden. The response burden is defined as the time necessary for filling in the respective questionnaires, whether on paper or electronically. Data are currently available for the years 2001 – 2013.

The basis for the calculation of response burden is the business register on the one hand and information on time needed for completing the respective questionnaires on the other hand. The business register provides information for each survey about which enterprises, establishments or local units have reporting obligations. Information on completion time comes from the respective questions included in each (electronic) questionnaire.

This allows calculating the reporting obligations and the response burden for each survey, for each enterprise, as well as the distribution of the burden over the various activities and size classes. It is also distinguished whether the reporting was done on paper or electronically. The response burden barometer is thus an indispensable instrument for the monitoring and analysis of the response burden over time and can thus show the effects of the changes of the burden induced by the various efforts of Statistics Austria to collect business data with minimal response burden.

The paper gives an overview of the concepts and basic methodology of the Austrian response burden barometer and describes the role of the business register providing an important data basis for these calculations.