

International data

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Farm subsidy data

First European data got out in Denmark in 2004. The 30th of April this year all EU member states are forced to publish data on farm subsidies to every single recipient. Also other subsidy-payments are published. Under the new legislation the first publications of beneficiaries had to be made by 30 September 2008 on rural development for payments made in the period 1 January to 15 October 2007. And then 30 April 2009 we shall have it all.

Farmsubsidy.org has requested data, downloaded data from different sources from 2005. Normally it's much easier to search for payments on the farm subsidy website.

From UK, Sweden and Denmark we have got a lot more detailed files – the crossfiles – which are extracts of the files the country has to handle over to the Commission.

All these data are structured in Access databases with documentation. If you need you can from me get a link to download such databases. Journalists in Europe and US has used this possibility for more in-depth analysis.

We hope for medias to go for the next level of stories - for instance concrete misuse of public money.

The EU-Commissions websites for farm subsidies:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/funding/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/funding/index4_en.htm

Farmsubsidy.org

<http://www.farmsubsidy.org>

Fish subsidy data

The Pew Charitable Trusts is doing a similar project on fish subsidies. The website will open later this spring and also contain a lot of data on subsidies from 1994 and to now.

The EU-Commissions websites for fish subsidies with links to member states data on subsidies from 2007 and forward:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/structural_measures/transparency_en.htm

The Fleet Register, where events and basic information has been checked:

<http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.ListSearchSimple>

The Greenpeace list of outlaw vessels:
<http://blacklist.greenpeace.org/>

Lobbyism register in EU is not good enough

In 2008 the Commission launched a voluntary lobby transparency register, which in many ways are not good. The compliance rate is alarmingly low and the overall quality of information disclosed is very poor. But still it's the beginning. The organization Alter-EU extract the register every day and publish blogs and reports on the basis of this extraction. Later it might publish it as a database on the web.

The Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU) is a coalition of over 160 public interest groups, trade unions, academics and public affairs firms concerned with the increasing influence exerted by corporate lobbyists on the political agenda in Europe

Link to the register:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin/welcome.do?locale=en>

Link to the first report on the register:

<http://www.alter-eu.org/en/publications/commission-lobby-register-fails-transparency-test>

Business data

A Digital Guide for Tracking Corruption contains good links to get business information in a lot of different countries. This report from November 2008 was written by Stefan Candea from Romanian Center for Investigative Journalism.

<http://crji.org/downloadfile.php?id=17>

Status of possibilities to get European data

A growing numbers of NGO's and journalists are working to get data and use them for analysis and stories – very practical. They use national regulation on access, EU-regulation, and specific regulation on access to environmental data.

Some politicians and authorities are open to this development, others try to fight it. So it's a rather hard battle and not possible to point out a clear picture.

If you need data the best advice is to cooperate with a colleague in this country – and to be sure to get one with experience in crossing through getting data. Try for instance to look on this site to find somebody to work with:

<http://www.wobbing.eu/>

On the author

Kaas & Mulvad do research and analysis for medias and others. Based in Denmark we are specialists in data from Europe. We have been working on data on European farm subsidies, fish subsidies, lobbyism, voting records for European Parliament, etc.

Kaas & Mulvad was founded by Tommy Kaas and Nils Mulvad in January 2007. Our expertise is based on years of practical work with computer assisted reporting. We are involved in Danish and international organizations for investigative and computer assisted journalism and we were co-founders of DICAR - Danish International Center for Analytical Reporting, which closed down in 2006.

Nils Mulvad was awarded European Journalist of the Year 2006 and got IRE Award for Freedom of Information in 2007.