



ENSURING HIGH QUALITY STATISTICS IN RESPONSE TO COVID- 19: OECD INITIATIVES

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Background and outline

Quality of data = accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, relevance

In times of Covid-19:

- big premium on **timeliness**
- but also desire for **accuracy/reliability** - authoritative sources needed
- and **granularity**, a key ingredient for relevance

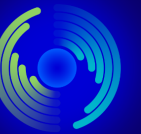
OECD Initiatives

1. Exchange – digital workspace
2. Timeliness and existing sources
3. Timeliness and new sources
4. Granularity and existing sources
5. Granularity and new sources
6. Communication
7. Tracking policy responses for impact assesement

Lessons, conclusions



TACKLING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
CONTRIBUTING TO A GLOBAL EFFORT





OECD Initiatives



Tackling COVID-19: OECD's response



OECD Covid-19 Hub (www.oecd.org/coronavirus), includes:

- OECD data to help understand the Covid crisis
- Key policy responses from the OECD
- Key country policy responses
- And more...



1. *Exchange*: digital workspace for statistical agencies (1)



- **Collaborative effort**
- **Space to exchange experiences and discuss issues** related to surveying, measurement, methodology and communication
- Currently close to **300 registered participants** from approximately 50 countries and 10 international organisations
- <https://community.oecd.org/community/official-stats-workspace-covid19/overview>



1. *Exchange*: digital workspace for statistical agencies (2)

- Guidance on the recording of certain phenomena, e.g. :
 - recording of government support to employers and self-employed (ISWGNA)
 - recording of non-market output (Eurostat)
 - business continuation notes (IMF, Eurostat) on CPI
 -
- Gives rise to some basic methodology questions, e.g.:
 - CPI weights: is a Lowe/Laspeyres index plausible?
 - Quality adjustment for home schooling



2. Timeliness and existing sources (1)

On Trade: bringing together timely data on trade – the *Trade Pulse*.

More timely estimates are possible > daily customs clearances in some countries.
These could be mainstreamed.

On LFS: OECD special data request of monthly estimates on key labour market variables

e.g., employed people not at work;
average earnings in all jobs

Monthly data now for 17 out 37 OECD countries



International Trade Pulse – April 2020

Posted by David BRACKFIELD in OECD Statistics & Data Community on Apr 23, 2020 6:50:00 PM

<https://community.oecd.org/community/statsdata/blog/2020/04/23/international-trade-pulse-april-2020>

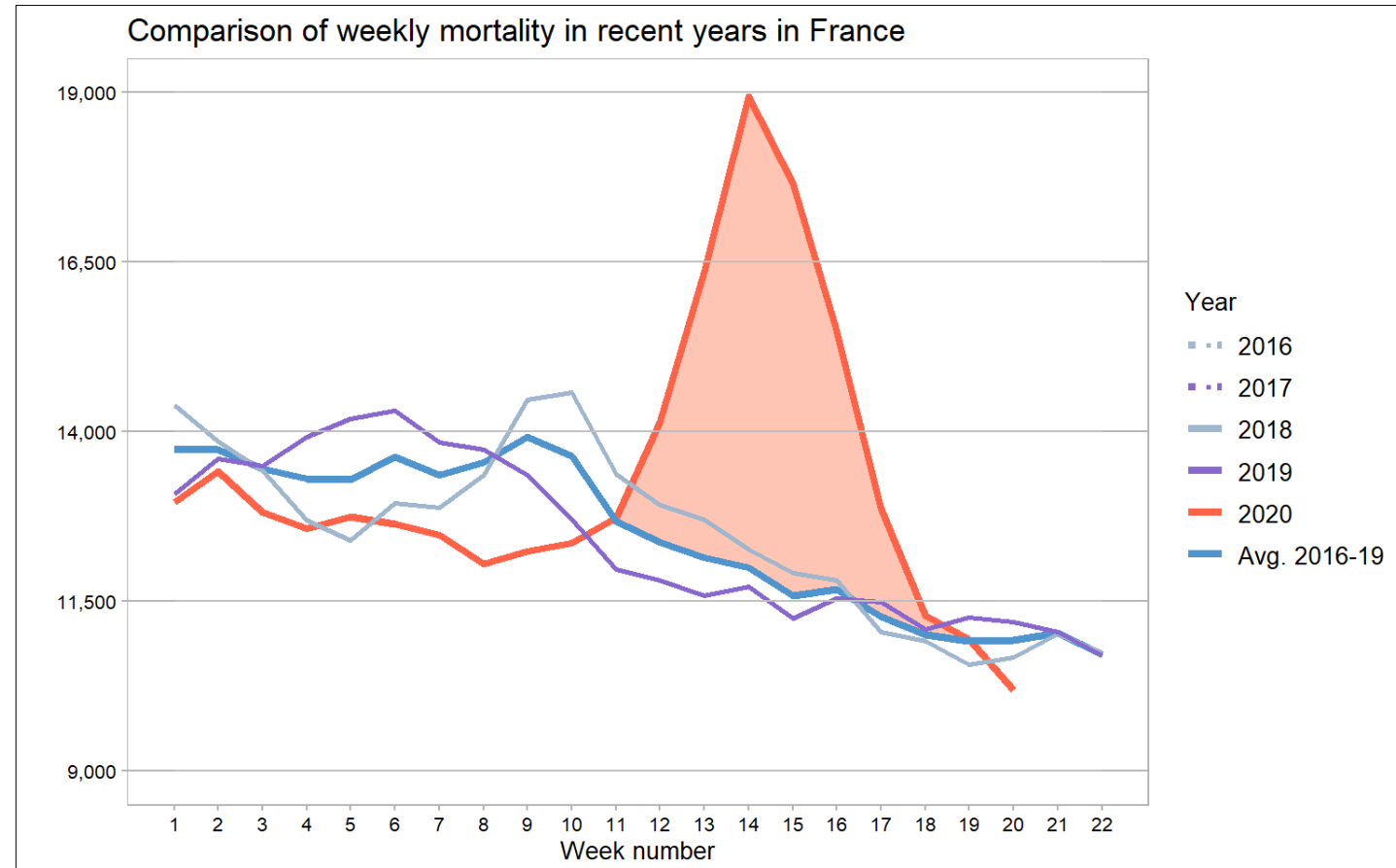


<https://data.oecd.org/unemp/unemployment-rate.htm>



2. Timeliness and existing sources (2)

- **Building an international database on weekly (excess) mortality**
- Joint project with OECD ELS in coordination with Human Mortality Database (Berkeley U.)
- Gathering data from Eurostat, HMD and national sources
- Breakdown by age, gender and possibly regions
- 26 countries so far
- Ongoing work on statistical issues such as delay in reporting (storing data by date of registration)
- Reflects **enhanced interest in NSOs to manage (all cause) mortality data**





3. Timeliness and new sources (1)

On MNEs: ADIMA (Analytical Database on Individual Multinationals and Affiliates) – uses open big data sources that can provide new insights on individual MNEs and their global profiles

Allows for timely information

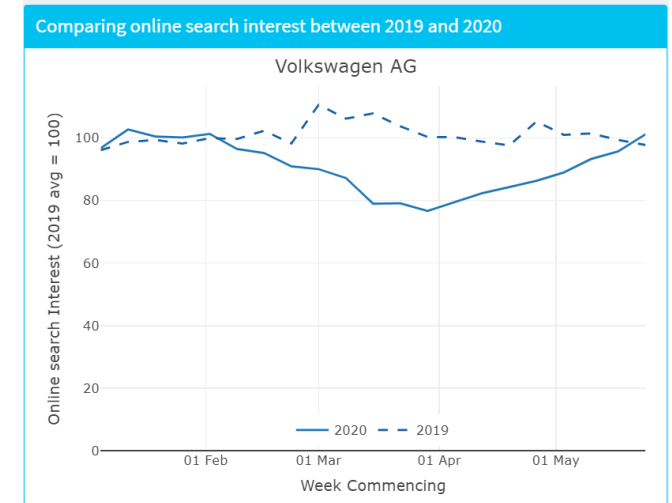
ADIMA Explorer: shows search interest in largest MNEs during the crisis using Google Trends

<http://www.oecd.org/sdd/its/measuring-multinational-enterprises.htm>

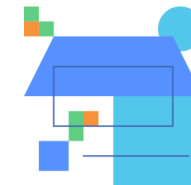
On SMEs: Future of Business Survey (World Bank , OECD, and Facebook survey millions of small businesses on Facebook biannually

Quick and detailed
Not representative but indicative

<https://dataforgood.fb.com/tools/future-of-business-survey/>



FACEBOOK Data for Good



Future of Business Survey

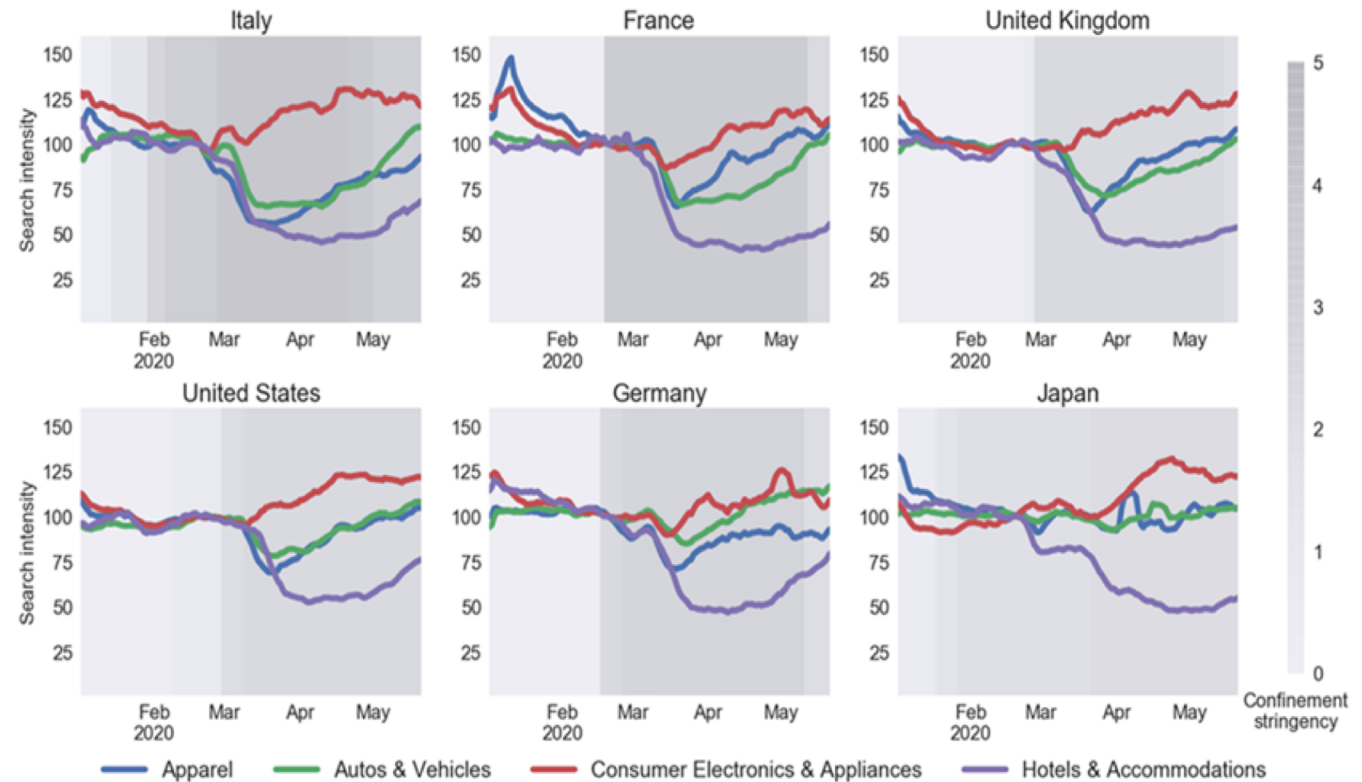
In partnership with the World Bank and OECD, the Future of Business surveys millions of small businesses on Facebook biannually, more frequently than most business surveys. We share country level data from this survey openly, providing policymakers, research institutions, and nonprofits with an up-to-date, global view of online small businesses' challenges and expectations.



3. Timeliness and new sources (2)

Nowcasting consumer expenditure and modelling policy effects (OECD Economics Department):

search volumes for 4 categories of consumption using daily Google Trends; 1 week lag



-Darkness of background =strictness of confinement measures (OECD COVID-19 tracker).

- Search Intensity Indices = searches for selected categories / total searches, with 20 February = 100.

Source: Google Trends and OECD COVID-19 Policy Tracker.

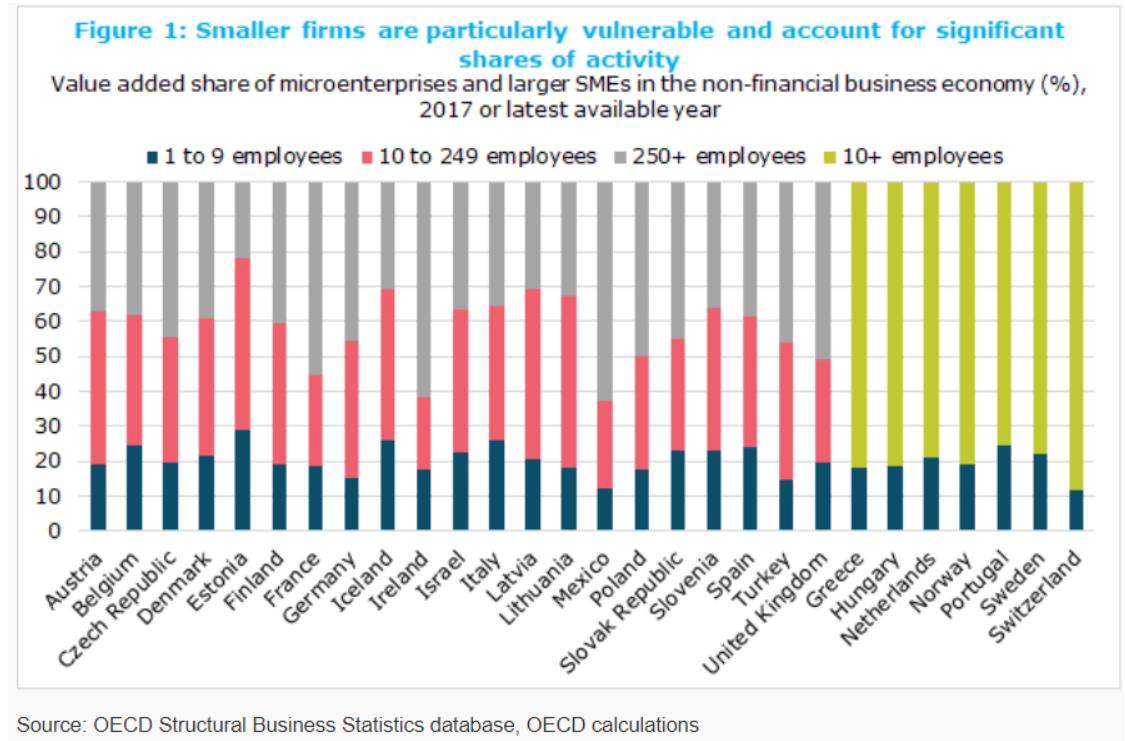


4. Granularity and existing sources

Granularity. Impacts of Covid are not uniform :

- **SMEs and large enterprises**
- **Young and old** parts of the population
- **Minorities** (ethnic, religious,)
- **Women and men**
- **Low and high-skilled**
- **Different regions**

Important evidence gaps in economic and social statistics



<http://www.oecd.org/sdd/business-stats/statistical-insights-small-medium-and-vulnerable.htm>



5. Granularity and new sources

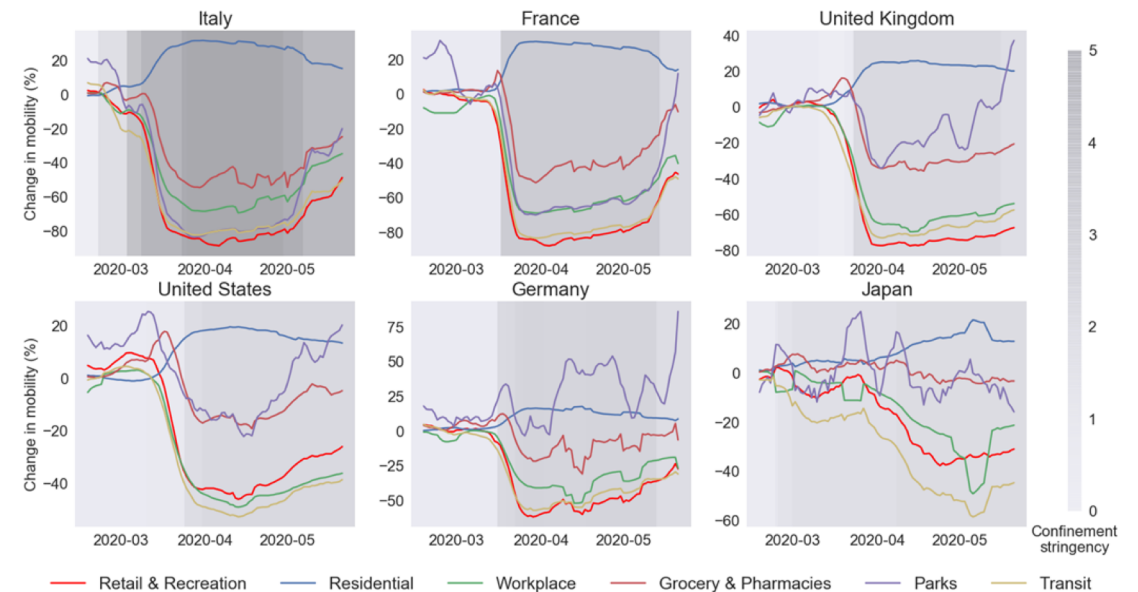
Granularity.

Often trade off : granularity vs timeliness

But not always:

Evolution of mobility patterns by
location, selected countries
Linked to patterns of confinement severity

Visits to public places as reported in Google's COVID-19 Community Mobility Report.



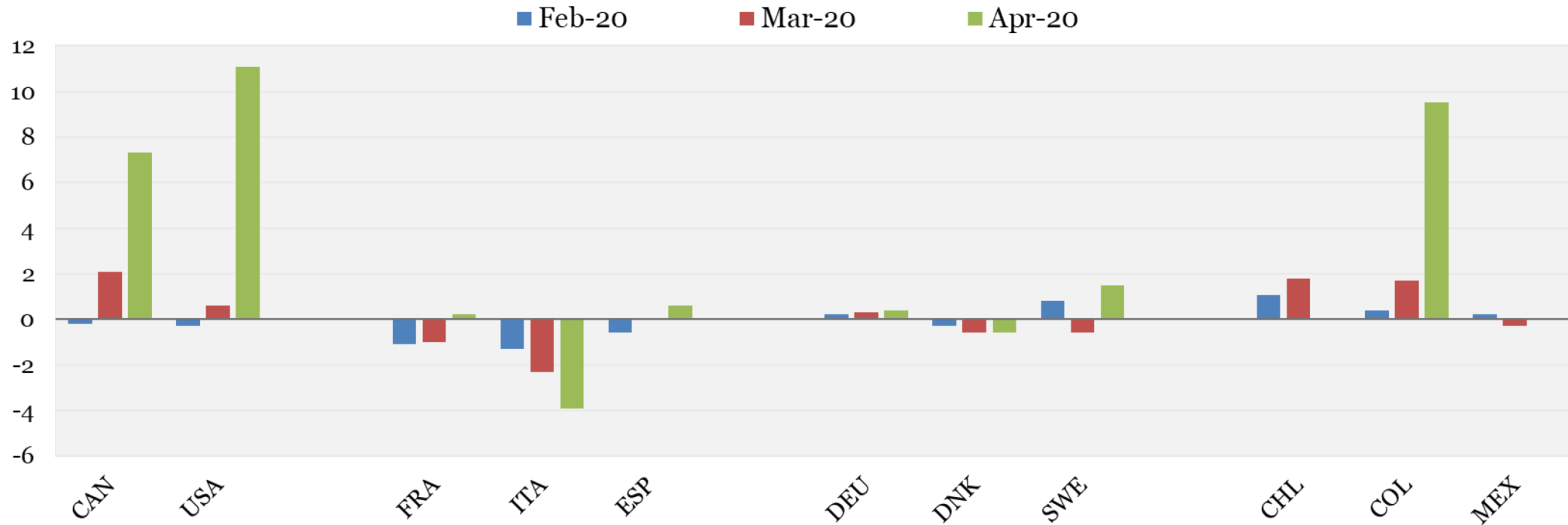
Source: Google's COVID-19 Community Reports.



6. Communication. Sudden rise of unemployment in North America driven by temporary layoffs

Year-on-year change in monthly unemployment rates

Selection of countries - Percentage points



... but smaller raises (or declines) in some OECD countries as people losing their jobs leave the labour market



6. Communication. Methodological differences affect this differential evolution of unemployment

- In North America, persons on temporary layoff are counted as **unemployed** because they are all deemed to have a **weak job attachment**
- In other OECD countries, persons on temporary layoff are counted as **unemployed** only if, in addition to filling the criteria of ‘active job search’ and ‘availability to take up a job in the near future’, they:
 - Don’t have an assurance of return to work within 3 months, and
 - Are not in continuous receipt of a remuneration from their employers (even partial)
- Minor issue in ‘normal times’
- An issue of **international comparability** or 2 realities accurately reflected?





7. Tracking policy responses for impact assessment

Qualitative data (OECD policy directorates):

Identifying causal impacts of confinement measures looking at behavior changes around policy announcements (data crossed with OECD Covid [Policy Tracker](https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-tracker/))

See [http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en/](https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en/)

— **Key country policy responses**

Country Policy Tracker

What are countries doing to contain the spread of the coronavirus? How are countries helping people, small businesses and the economy to weather the crisis and beyond? This **Country Policy Tracker** helps you to navigate the global response.

Country Policy Tracker



Select a country:

Beta version - last database update on 6/2/2020

Download underlying data

FISCAL AND MONETARY

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL

DOWNLOAD MORE POLICY RESPONSES

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Conclusions



Covid 19 has...



- ...put massive premium on **timeliness and granularity**
- ...been a **catalyst and accelerator for use of new sources – will they stay?**
 - some new sources not easy to use (seasonality, noise, structural breaks etc) and steep learning curve in employing them
 - but potential for developing timely messages is large, esp combination of old and new
 - new collaboration experiences with private sector to be pursued more broadly, e.g., using Google APIs and other alternative sources for nowcasting models
- ...reminded us of weaknesses in our evidence base on gender, young, low-skilled, minorities, informal sector, regions
- ...put a spotlight on
 - issues of **international comparability** (unemployment, mortality data,...)
 - **methodological questions** (CPI weights,...)

Note: further discussion at **joint OECD/UN-ECE seminar** 24 June 2020



Thank you!



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