

## **European Data Watch**

This section will offer descriptions as well as discussions of data sources that may be of interest to social scientists engaged in empirical research or teaching courses that include empirical investigations performed by students. The purpose is to describe the information in the data source, to give examples of questions tackled with the data and to tell how to access the data for research and teaching. We will start with data from German speaking countries that allow international comparative research. While most of the data will be at the micro level (individuals, households, or firms), more aggregate data and meta data (for regions, industries, or nations) will be included, too. Suggestions for data sources to be described in future columns (or comments on past columns) should be send to: Joachim Wagner, University of Lueneburg, Institute of Economics, Campus 4.210, 21332 Lueneburg, Germany, or e-mailed to (wagner@uni-lueneburg.de).

### **The Research Data Centre of the German Statutory Pension Insurance (FDZ-RV)**

By Uwe G. Rehfeld and Tatjana Mika

#### **1. Introduction: Administrative process data from public pension institutes as a basis for the Statistical Information System**

Participation in the statutory pension insurance scheme is mandatory in Germany for all persons employed in the private or public sector. Additionally, contributions are paid out of unemployment insurance in the case of the unemployed, out of health insurance in the event of long-term illness, and from the state for people in military or civilian national service. The majority of the population thus comes into contact with the pensions insurance system at some point or another in life, and the pension insurance system has data on about 90 % of the entire population. The statutory old age and disability pension – due to its income replacement tasks and broad social basis – provides