European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Second European Quality of Life Survey
Overview

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Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2009

ISBN 978-92-897-0847-0

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions is an autonomous body of the European Union, created to assist in the formulation of future policy on social and work-related matters. Further information can be found on the Foundation website at www.eurofound.europa.eu.

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Printed in Denmark

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Foreword

The second European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) from September 2007 to February 2008, represents a unique attempt to explore quality of life throughout Europe. With information gathered from 35,000 interviews conducted in 31 countries, it is a major source of information, highlighting for policymakers and other interested groups the social and economic challenges facing the EU in the wake of the two recent rounds of enlargement.

Notable differences in terms of life satisfaction and attitudes towards the future underline the significant inequalities in living conditions and in daily life experiences for Europeans. In particular, well-being in the post-communist countries varies greatly between social and demographic groups. There are also marked disadvantages associated with low income, and some associations with demographics: for instance, older people in the 12 New Member States (NMS12) are more likely to report dissatisfaction with their situation. Standards of living and reported well-being of Europeans are closely related to the economy of the country in which they live.

For four out of five Europeans, health is key to quality of life. Access to and quality of healthcare services are important factors for social protection; however, a substantial number of EU citizens report difficulty in accessing these services. The EQLS also assesses the quality of public services, environment and society – for example, measuring trust in other people and institutions.

Enabling citizens to develop a balance between family life, personal commitments and working time has become central to the social policy debate. In recent years, policy interest in the quality of family life has increased, reflecting growing concern about the challenges for the maintenance of family ties and the difficulties that families face in raising children as well as caring for adult dependants. In the face of of ongoing demographic, societal and economic change, this report offers a timely insight into the overall quality of life in Europe.

Jorma Karppinen
Director

Contents

Country codes

EU15	15 EU Member States prior to enlargement in 2004 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom)
NMS12	12 New Member States, 10 of which joined the EU in 2004 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and the remaining two in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania)
EU27	27 EU Member States
CC3	3 candidate countries – Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey

EU27

AT	Austria	LV	Latvia
BE	Belgium	LT	Lithuania
BG	Bulgaria	LU	Luxembourg
CY	Cyprus	MT	Malta
CZ	Czech Republic	NL	Netherlands
DK	Denmark	PL	Poland
EE	Estonia	PT	Portugal
FI	Finland	RO	Romania
FR	France	SK	Slovakia
DE	Germany	SI	Slovenia
EL	Greece	ES	Spain
HU	Hungary	SE	Sweden
IE	Ireland	UK	United Kingdom
IT	Italy		

Candidate countries

HR	Croatia
MK	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)
TR	Turkey

Other

NO	Norway

Introduction

The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) has developed as a tool to inform the social policy debate in Europe. There is clearly a need to establish the main social challenges facing Europeans in Member States and to better understand the situation of different socioeconomic groups. However, it is also evident that data on living conditions should be complemented by information from another perspective, 'where people's feelings are treated as paramount' (Layard, 2005). This viewpoint is critical to assessing the European social model, which emphasises values of trust and tolerance, solidarity and justice.

To support debate on the social issues and challenges facing Europe, the Bureau of European Policy Advisers – a Directorate General of the European Commission – issued a consultation paper (Liddle and Lerais, 2007), which begins:

> *How can the social well-being of all Europe's citizens be best advanced within a globalising world? This question should be at the heart of everything the EU and its Member States do. Public policy imperatives, such as 'Growth and Jobs', the Lisbon strategy, and the drive for greater competitiveness are not ends in themselves – but means to an end – the well-being of European citizens.*

The challenges arising from social exclusion, unemployment, an ageing population, changing family structures and new gender roles – and now EU enlargement – have pushed quality of life issues to the fore in the EU policy debate. They have a direct impact on people's everyday lives, families, communities and society. 'Well-being' is an issue that can be addressed at many levels, from the individual to the society. The European Commission's Renewed Social Agenda (European Commission, 2008a) aims to reflect priority social needs; it explicitly seeks to enhance European citizens' well-being and quality of life through a broad repertoire of measures to support people in dealing with rapidly changing social realities.

The enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007 to incorporate a further 12 Member States has increased not only its size and population, but also the diversity of people, lifestyles and cultures in Europe. This diversity is undoubtedly enriching daily lives but, as with other developments in the economy and employment, not for all European citizens. The flipside of diversity is inequality, which is evident between Member States and often more so within countries and regions.

The European institutions have a range of policies, programmes and coordination processes that affect key 'quality of life' issues – employment conditions, job skills, social inclusion, mobility, equal opportunities and public health. The development of policy responses to established and emerging social challenges will depend on information, and even more so on insight into and understanding of the living conditions and daily experiences of people in the EU. Appropriate measures will demand intelligence not only on objective conditions or the social situation, but also regarding how people feel about these conditions, their concerns and priorities.

Measuring and monitoring quality of life

The EQLS approach to analysis and reporting has been based on a specific conceptual framework outlined in *Monitoring quality of life in Europe* (Fahey, Nolan and Whelan, 2003). This framework sets out the objectives and characteristics of a monitoring tool compatible with the mission of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) to provide timely and relevant information to policymakers in both public authorities and among the social partners, especially at EU level.

Quality of life clearly embraces a wide area of policy interest, with a particular need to map and understand disparities associated with age, sex, income, health, occupation and region. Eurofound's four-year work programme also emphasises the need to link the assessment of quality of life to the changing nature of employment, work–life balance and social cohesion, and to the modernisation of social protection and social welfare services.

Eurofound's approach therefore focuses broadly on quality of life rather than narrowly on living conditions – and sees quality of life primarily in terms of the scope that individuals have to achieve their own goals. The survey measures resources and living conditions through objective and descriptive indicators, but also incorporates subjective information: an important part of the analysis focuses on the relationship between reported views and attitudes on one side, and resources and living conditions on the other.

In concrete terms, the survey's core focus is on the domains of employment, economic resources, family life, community life, health, and housing and local environment. This report presents basic analyses of quality of life in these main domains, looking particularly at similarities and differences associated with country, gender, age and income. The analysis begins to explore some of the links between more objective and subjective indicators and examines the

inter-relationships between domains, especially between work and family life.

Second European Quality of Life Survey

The survey was carried out by TNS-Opinion in all 27 EU Member States, comprising the 15 countries that became Member States before 2004 (EU15) and the 12 countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 (NMS12). The three current candidate countries (CC3) – Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey – are also included in the survey, together with Norway. About 1,000 persons aged 18 years and over were interviewed face to face in each country. However, in the countries with a larger population – France, Italy, Poland and the UK – about 1,500 interviews were completed, and approximately 2,000 in both Germany and Turkey. The questionnaire, developed by a research consortium, covers a broad spectrum of life domains as well as quality of society and subjective well-being (see Annex 1).

The EQLS represents a unique attempt to explore quality of life in a wide range of countries. It is a major source of information, highlighting problems and prospects for the EU following the two recent rounds of enlargement. The survey enables an accurate picture of the social situation in the enlarged EU to be drawn, a picture that includes both objective and subjective elements. At the same time, it should be noted that there are some limitations to the data. While the national samples provide a representative picture for each country, they are too small to allow detailed analysis of some subgroups – such as immigrants, unemployed people or single-parent families – within individual countries. Furthermore, although the wide range of topics covered by the survey is a clear advantage, it also means that none of the topics is analysed in great depth. Some of the dimensions of quality of life are measured with a narrower set of indicators than would be used in specialised surveys. However, the strength of the survey is that it provides a synthesis of information on the main aspects of quality of life, both objective and subjective, and encourages an examination of the relationships and interplay between different aspects of life.

Methodology

The data collection was organised by TNS-Opinion, which assigned national institutes to draw the random samples and conduct the interviews in each country. The overall response rate of 58% was satisfactory. However, there was a large variation in national response rates, ranging from less than 40% in France, Greece, the Netherlands and the UK to more than 80% in Bulgaria, Ireland and Romania (see Annex 2). After fieldwork was completed, the data were edited by TNS and then checked thoroughly by the Eurofound research team. (The methodological and fieldwork reports are available on the Eurofound website).

Use of EQLS data and presentation in the report

The report presents results for all 31 participating countries. Where appropriate, results are displayed for all countries separately, although figures are only presented in the report if based on at least 30 survey observations.

To highlight any differences between the recently joined Member States, the three candidate countries and the longer-standing 15 EU Member States, the complexity and volume of data need to be reduced. For this purpose, the following four cross-country averages are provided.

- The EU15 average refers to the former 15 EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK.
- The NMS12 average refers to the 10 countries that joined the EU in May 2004 – Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – and the two countries that joined the EU in January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania.
- The CC3 average refers to those countries that are currently candidates to join the EU at a later date – Croatia, FYROM and Turkey.
- The EU27 average refers to the 27 EU Member States following the 2007 enlargement phase, combining the EU15 and NMS12.

All of the averages are population weighted. This means that the averages for the four country groupings reflect the size of the population of individual countries. Therefore, Poland and Romania dominate the cross-country averages for the NMS12, while Turkey dominates the CC3 average. For this reason, the reader should bear in mind that a specific cross-country average is not necessarily shared by the majority of countries in the respective group, since the average reflects the very different population sizes of the respective countries.

All analyses in the report are descriptive. This means that the tables and figures show how European countries differ and how the results are related to other characteristics of social groups. No extensive attempts are made to explain why such differences arise. A descriptive report of many variables for 31 countries necessarily has to highlight core results while neglecting many other findings. In this report,

the main criterion for selecting core results was their coherence. This means either that single countries stand out clearly from all other values and can be related to empirical findings in recent literature; or that clear-cut country groups are visible that reveal consistent social patterns – even if for one country in the group the significant relation did not exist. Often, the differences between countries will call for attention; sometimes, however, it is the similarities that are striking and noteworthy.

This overview report is a first step to bring some of the main results of the EQLS 2007 into the policy debate and is organised around seven main issues in the following chapters.

Income, living standards and deprivation 1

Material conditions and standard of living are among the key aspects of quality of life. In the survey, 47% of respondents rated a 'good standard of living' as very important to their quality of life and a further 46% regarded it as important. This chapter examines material resources from both the macroeconomic and individual perspective. It looks at the capacities of countries to generate income and the way that these resources are allocated and distributed to individuals. However, the main focus is on the level of income, financial difficulties and lifestyle deprivation of households, and the differences that exist in this respect both between and within Member States. The level and availability of other resources fundamental for quality of life, such as social provision – in healthcare, housing, education and social services – will be discussed in later chapters.

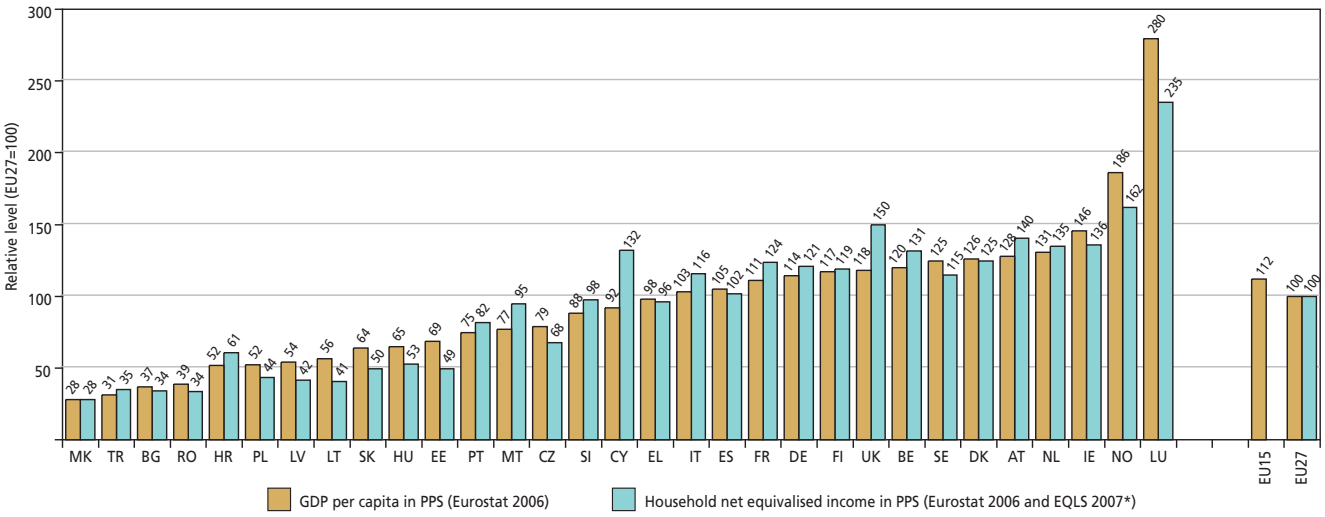
The analysis of material resources and living conditions is set in the context of the current European social policy agenda (European Commission, 2005a, 2008a). Economic and social differences between Member States – which have become even more pronounced following the two recent rounds of enlargement – call for new, more integrated policies and actions that will foster economic and social cohesion. While the EU strategy for growth and jobs has shown good results, Europe needs to do more to realise its full potential and achieve greater social justice and economic cohesion. For this reason, the European Commission has recently called for a renewed commitment to social justice and has proposed a more holistic approach to tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion (European Commission, 2007b).

Economic wealth and income distribution

People's material conditions, standard of living and well-being strongly depend on the economic wealth of the country in which they live, particularly on the level of national income and the way it has been allocated and distributed. Macroeconomic output measured by the level of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita or head of population and expressed in terms of purchasing power standard (PPS)[1] allows for comparative analysis of the capacities of individual countries to generate income.

The most recent figures from Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, date from 2006 and show that large differences exist in the level of per capita output among countries and country groups. The volume of per capita GDP relative to the average for the EU ranges from 28 in FYROM to 280 in Luxembourg, indicating that per capita output in the former country is less than one-third of the EU average and 10 times lower than that in Luxembourg (Figure 1). However, it should be noted that

Figure 1: Per capita GDP and mean equivalised household income, by country, 2006



The data represent the relative level in 2006 (EU27 = 100).

Household income data for BG, HR, MK and RO from EQLS 2007 (all country codes are listed at the start of the report).

Source: Eurostat 2006, EQLS 2007.

[1] Purchasing power standard (PPS) is an artificial common currency that equalises the purchasing power of different national currencies and enables meaningful volume comparisons between country incomes. For example, if the GDP per capita expressed in the national currency of each country is divided by its purchasing power parity (PPP), the resulting figures neutralise the effect of different price levels and thus indicate the real volume of GDP at a common price level.

the particularly high figure for Luxembourg is influenced by the country's large share of cross-border workers, who – while contributing to GDP – are not considered part of the resident population.

Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EU in 2007, have the lowest per capita GDP in the EU: in Bulgaria, it is only 37% of the EU average and in Romania 39%. The 10 countries that became Member States in 2004 score better on this indicator, but none of them have reached the EU average. Latvia's and Poland's GDP per capita is about half of the EU average, while Slovenia (at 88) and Cyprus (at 92) – the highest scoring among the NMS12 – are still below the EU average and significantly below the EU15 average. This demonstrates that the two latest rounds of enlargement have contributed to disparities in the level of economic development within the EU, which are now larger than before. However, many of the post-communist countries belonging to the NMS12 have experienced rapid economic growth in recent years. This rapid economic development has been seen in particular in countries such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the three Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.[2]

The CC3 group is not homogeneous with regard to the level of per capita output. Two countries from the group – FYROM and Turkey, with per capita GDP below one-third of the EU average – rank the lowest among all 31 countries considered in this survey. The third candidate country, Croatia, has higher GDP per capita, comparable with two of the NMS12 – Latvia and Poland.

The highest level of per capita output in 2006 was in the EU15, where, with the exception of Greece and Portugal, all countries in the group were above the EU average. Nevertheless, differences emerge within the group: Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden have a comparatively high GDP per head of population, while Italy and Spain had per capita output just above the EU average.

The level of the country's macroeconomic output strongly determines the general level of people's income and consumption. This can be seen from the indicator of household net equivalised income, which shows similar cross-country patterns and country ranking as that for GDP.[3] With a household income of only one-third of the EU average, Bulgaria and Romania are again the lowest among all EU Member States. The Baltic States and Poland rank better on this indicator, but still their average household income is less than half the EU average. Cyprus is the only country of the NMS12 with household income above the EU average.

The average household income in most EU15 Member States is relatively high. With the exception of Greece and Portugal, all of these countries have average income above the EU average. Some of them, such as Austria, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the UK, have an average income that is more than a third higher than the EU average, indicating the scale of the income gap between these countries and many of the NMS12. However, the largest gap in the level of household income is that between the EU15 and the CC3: FYROM and Turkey have a very low level of income that is only between a quarter and a third of the average EU household income.

Income disparities within countries

In addition to large cross-country differences in the average level of household income, considerable income disparities emerge within countries. The S80/S20 index, which is a commonly used measure of income distribution in a country, shows that FYROM (10.2) and Turkey (9.9) stand out as countries with the highest income inequality (Figure 2).[4] These high levels for the index indicate that the total income received by the 20% most affluent people in these two countries is about 10 times higher than that received by the 20% of the population with the lowest income. The average value of the S80/S20 index for the whole EU is 4.9 and for the EU15 it stands at 4.7, which is about half of the level for the two candidate countries mentioned above.

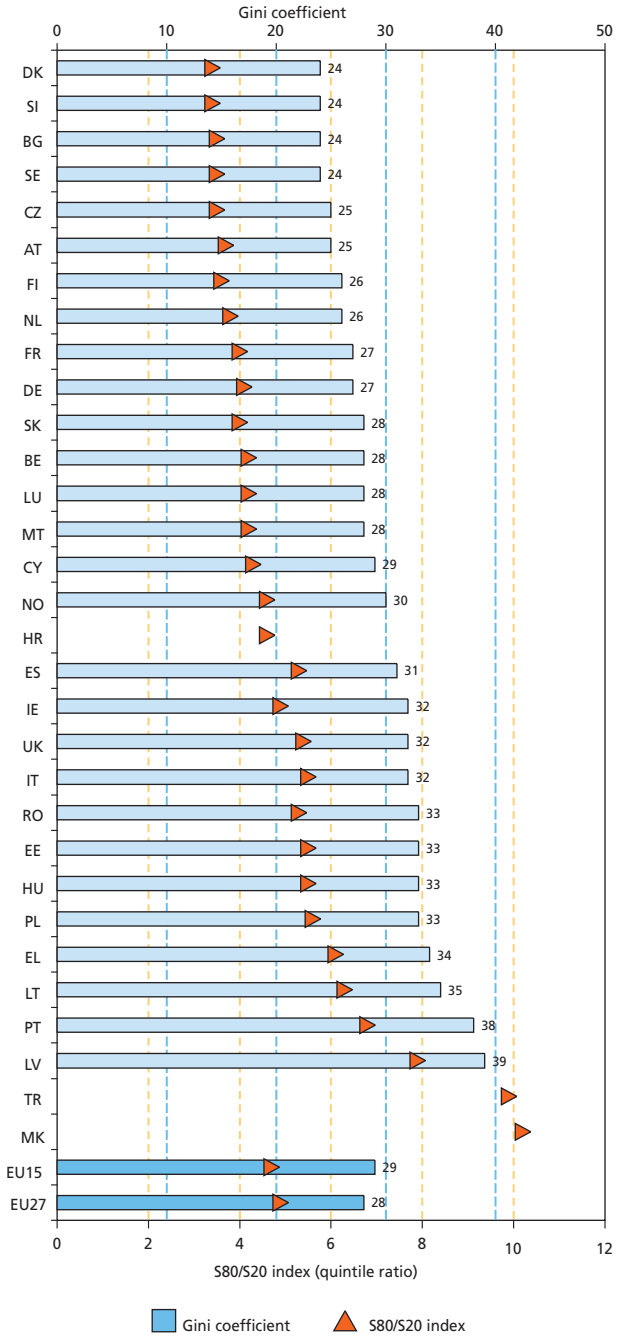
Within the EU15, countries with a relatively high income inequality are Portugal (S80/S20 index 6.8) and Greece (6.1); Ireland, Italy, Spain and the UK are also above average. Meanwhile, Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden have the least income inequality

[2] More specifically, in the period 2005–2007, rapid economic growth took place in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The annual GDP growth rate ranges between 6% (Slovakia in 2005, Romania in 2007) and over 10% (Slovakia with 10.4% in 2007, Estonia with 11.2% in 2006 and Latvia with 12.2% in 2006), which is several times greater than the average annual growth rate of the EU15 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2008; European Central Bank, 2008).

[3] Household incomes are equivalised in order to make them comparable for households of different size and composition. The equivalisation takes into account economies of scale in consumption: larger households can achieve the same standard of living with smaller per capita household income because of relatively lower costs of collective goods such as housing, utilities and consumer durables. It also takes into account differences in consumption patterns: expenditure on children's consumption might typically be less than expenditure on an adult's consumption. The analysis uses the so-called modified OECD scale, which assigns a value of one to the first adult member in the household, 0.5 to an additional member aged 14 years and over and 0.3 to children aged under 14 years.

[4] The S80/S20 index is the ratio of total income received by the 20% of the population with the highest income (the highest quintile) to that received by the 20% of the population with the lowest income (the lowest quintile). Income is understood as equivalised disposable household income.

Figure 2: Income inequality, by country, 2006



Data on S80/S20 index for HR and TR refer to 2003; data for MK refer to 2007.

Source: EU Survey of Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) 2006 (Eurostat New Cronos database) and EQLS 2007 (only for MK).

in this cluster: all of these countries report an S80/S20 index below 4.

Some low-income NMS12 countries, such as Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, are characterised by an unequal income distribution, with their S80/S20 index ranging between 5.3 and 7.9. The value of the Gini coefficient, another measure of income inequality, is also very high for all of these countries (between 33 and 39).[5] This indicates that the economic transition in these post-communist and relatively egalitarian societies has resulted in significant social polarisation (Mikhalev, 2003). Although these countries have been experiencing rapid economic growth, not all parts of the population are sharing the benefits. Nevertheless, large inequalities do not characterise all transition countries; in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, inequality is relatively low, with the Gini coefficient below 26 and the S80/S20 index below 4.0.

Factors influencing income

Many individual and household characteristics are related to the level of people's income. Employment status, education level, health status, age, gender, family size and composition are all relevant factors, and this is reflected in the EQLS. The survey data show that unemployed people in the EU have equivalised household income amounting to only about half of that of employed and self-employed persons. In the NMS12, jobless people receive on average about 60% of the average income of employed persons; in the CC3, this proportion is about two-thirds.

Less education is also associated with a lower level of equivalised income and this is found for all countries in the survey. In the EU, people with less than an upper level of secondary education have a household income amounting to about two-thirds of the income of those who have completed at least an upper secondary education; this figure does not vary much in the different country clusters. The EQLS data also show that health status might have an impact on the level of income. Looking at the EU27, respondents reporting very poor or poor health have a household income that is about 35% lower than the income of people reporting very good or good health.

Next to unemployment and poor health, losing a partner due to divorce or death is also associated with lower income. According to EQLS data, people who are widowed or divorced have on average about 20% less income than those who are married or live with a partner. This figure holds for the EU27, as well as for both the EU15 and the NMS12. Among the candidate countries, Croatia and FYROM generally share the EU patterns, while in Turkey, the group comprising those who are separated, divorced or widowed is found to have a somewhat higher income than people who are married or living with a partner.

[5] The Gini coefficient can range between 0 and 100, with 0 expressing perfect equality (all persons in the country enjoy the same income) and 100 representing complete inequality (one person holds all of the income of the country).

Living in a rural area is associated with lower household income, particularly in low-income countries. Respondents from rural areas in the NMS12 and CC3 report an average income that is about 20% lower than that of people from urban areas. In the EU15, there is no significant difference in the average income between those living in urban and rural areas.

Women have lower incomes than men. In the EU15 and CC3, women report income amounting to on average 15%–20% less than that for men; in the NMS12, the difference is smaller, with women having an income that is on average 8% lower than that of men. EQLS data show that age also matters: in the majority of EU15 Member States, the lowest income is found among people aged 18–24 years. Considerable variation exists in the age at which income peaks, although in most EU15 countries this happens between the ages of 50 and 64 years. Uniformity is restored as income declines sharply at retirement age (65 years and over). The general pattern in the NMS12 is quite different. In these countries as a whole, the 25–34 years age group reports the highest average income. After the age of 35 years, income gradually decreases, with a sharp decline after the age of 65 years. This may be explained by major social and economic changes in the transition countries, which put younger and older groups on different opportunity tracks.

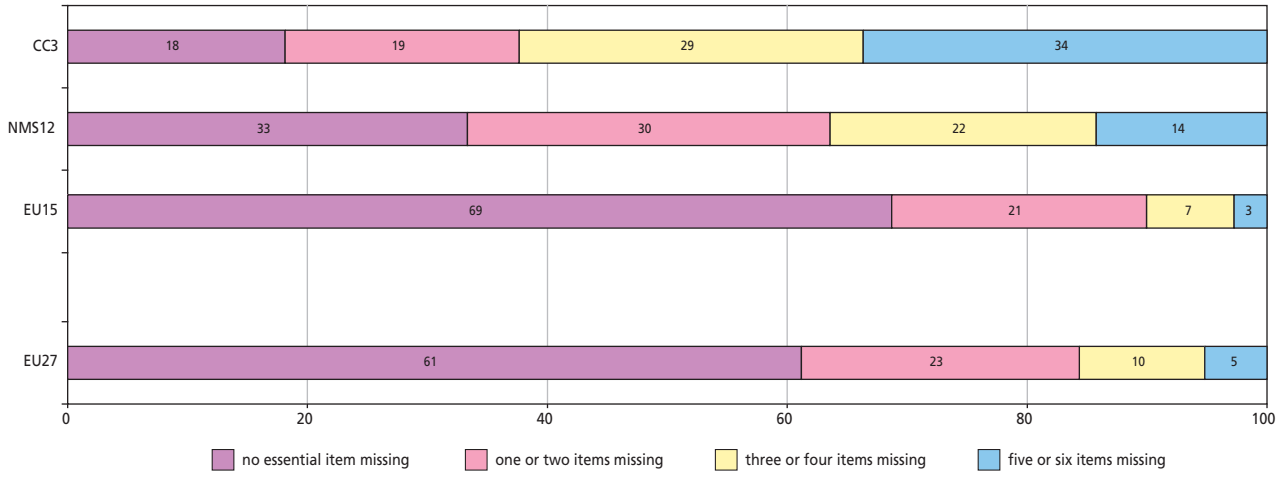
Household income and deprivation

Focusing on disposable income is crucial for assessing the level of current financial resources of individuals and households. However, information on the level of household income alone is not sufficient for understanding the economic situation of households and levels of poverty or well-being. For this purpose, a number of additional indicators are informative, revealing more about the circumstances in which people live, how they use their resources, how they manage to meet different needs, whether they experience material deprivation and how economic strain confronts them. The EQLS offers a large number of monetary and non-monetary indicators on the economic situation of individuals and households, as well as a good selection of subjective indicators of well-being and quality of life.

This section focuses on material deprivation, defined here as the enforced lack of items that are widely considered as basic requirements and essentials. For each of six items, the survey respondent was asked whether the household could afford it, if it was wanted. The intention is to measure involuntary or enforced deprivation regarding each of the items and the total number of items that households cannot afford. The average number of items people are deprived of is recorded as an index of deprivation.

Lack of basic necessities is not a major problem for most people in the high-income countries of the EU15: a large

Figure 3: Extent of deprivation of essential items, by country group (%)

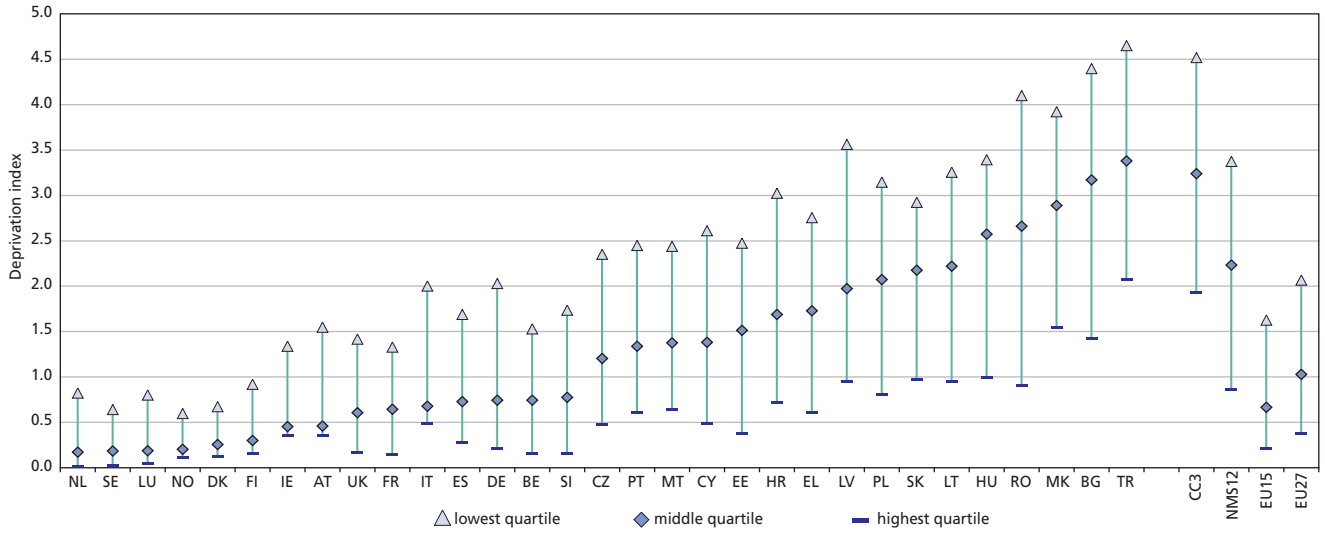


The figure refers to the mean number of six essential items people are deprived of (in the sense that they cannot afford them).

Question 19: There are some things that many people cannot afford, even if they would like them. For each of the following things on this card, can I just check whether your household can afford it if you want it? 1) Keeping your home adequately warm; 2) Paying for a week's annual holiday away from home (not staying with relatives); 3) Replacing any worn-out furniture; 4) Meals with meat, chicken or fish every second day if you wanted it; 5) Buying new, rather than second-hand, clothes; 6) Having friends or family for a drink or meal at least once a month.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Figure 4: Mean deprivation index, by income quartile and country



Data derived from Question 19 (see Figure 3). The deprivation index runs from zero (for no item missing) to six (for all six items missing).

Source: EQLS 2007.

majority (69%) of households can afford all six items considered; the rest (31%) cannot afford one or two items, very seldom three or more items. In other country clusters, the picture is much less favourable: two-thirds of households in the NMS12 and 82% in the CC3 cannot afford one or more items (Figure 3).

The largest differences between country clusters are found among people facing multiple deprivation. This situation is rare in the EU15, particularly so in its most serious form, when people lack all or almost all of the essential items considered. According to the EQLS, about 3% of households in the EU15 could not afford to have five or all six of the necessities listed. In the NMS12 the proportion is almost five times greater, and in the CC3, more than 11 times greater than that for the EU15.

Within the EU15, Greece and Portugal are sharply differentiated from the remaining countries. The proportion of households deprived of at least one item is 58% and 52% respectively, which is considerably above the average for the cluster (31%). A relatively low general level of income, combined with high inequality in income distribution, are significant explanatory variables for the high incidence of lifestyle deprivation in these two countries.

In the NMS12, the proportion of households experiencing deprivation of at least one item ranges from 82% in Bulgaria and 75% in Hungary and Romania to 34% in Slovenia. The level of deprivation in Slovenia is comparable with that of the EU15, due to a relatively high average income and low income inequality. The highest incidence of deprivation is found in the CC3, particularly in FYROM (where 85% of households report one or more missing essentials) and Turkey (83%). The deprivation figure for Croatia (64%) shows more similarity with the average for the NMS12 than with the CC3. Thus, no country cluster constitutes an entirely homogeneous block.

The extent of deprivation varies markedly across social groups within individual countries, as Figure 4 shows. Evidently, the lowest income quartile – the 25% of people with the lowest income in the country – lacks more essentials than the highest income quartile in all countries. However, the gap between income groups varies considerably. In FYROM and Turkey, people in the lowest income quartile on average lack 2.5 more items than people in the highest quartile. The gap in Bulgaria and Romania is even higher (3.0 and 3.2 respectively). Some other countries in the NMS12, such as the Baltic States, Cyprus, Hungary and Poland, also display a large gap between income groups in the level of deprivation. In each of these countries, the lowest income quartile is on average lacking at least two items more than the top income quartile. In the EU15 countries, which experience a low level of deprivation, the gap between income groups is generally much lower. Exceptions are Greece and, to some extent, Portugal, which are more like the NMS12 than the other EU15 countries.

Clearly, low-income people in the CC3 and NMS12 live in more serious deprivation than the corresponding income group in the EU15. The deprivation index shows that

people in the lowest income quartile of the income distribution in the NMS12 and CC3 on average lack 3.4 and 4.5 of the six basic items respectively, which is two or three times the average for the corresponding income group in the EU15. Deprivation among the highest income quartile populations in the CC3 and NMS12 is also relatively high. In many of these countries, the highest income quartile experiences more deprivation than the lowest quartile in some of the EU15 Member States. As Figure 4 shows, people in the highest income quartile in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, FYROM, Slovakia and Turkey experience a level of deprivation that is higher than that of the lowest quartile in Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden. These figures illustrate the pervasive disparities in the standard of living between different income groups across different countries and, at the same time, indicate that macroeconomic conditions – particularly the level of national economic output and the extent of inequality of income distribution – are key factors contributing to the disparities.

Table 1: Household debts and financial vulnerability, by country group (%)

	Households in arrears for utility bills					
	Total	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Single parent	(Very) bad health	Un-employed
CC3	23	45	11	45	38	39
NMS12	19	33	11	34	30	39
EU15	11	20	6	23	18	17
EU27	12	23	7	25	22	22
	Households with nobody to help out in emergency					
	Total	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Single parent	(Very) bad health	Un-employed
CC3	17	25	12	31	29	20
NMS12	14	25	7	19	29	22
EU15	11	18	8	17	20	22
EU27	12	20	8	17	23	22

Question 58b: Has your household been in arrears at any time during the past 12 months, that is, unable to pay as scheduled utility bills, such as electricity, water, gas?

Question 35e: From whom would you get support if you needed to urgently raise €1,000 (in the EU15) or €500 (in the NMS12 and CC3) to face an emergency? Categories: 1) Partner/spouse; 2) Other family member; 3) Work colleague; 4) Friend; 5) Neighbour; 6) Someone else; 7) Nobody; 8) Don't know.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Household debts and financial vulnerability

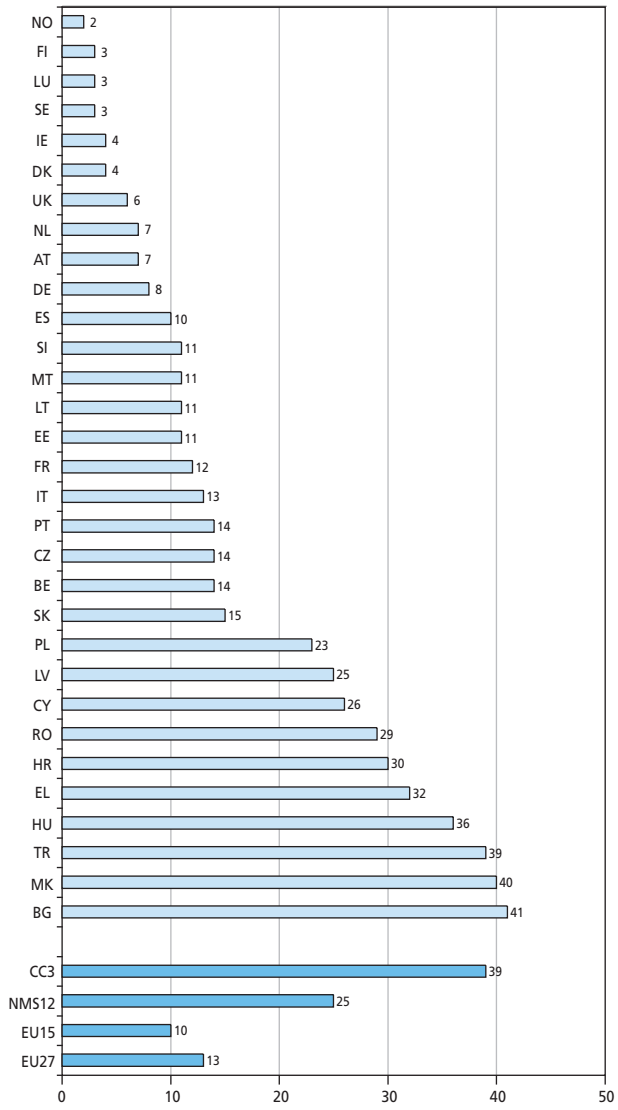
Some additional non-monetary indicators for the financial situation of households offer the possibility of further examining problems that people face and the disadvantages they experience. According to the EQLS, about one in four households in the CC3 and one in five in the NMS12 were unable to pay their utility bills on time. These figures are considerably higher than for the EU15, where about one in 10 households were unable to pay their bills on time. In some countries, the proportion of households in arrears with utility bills is much higher than the average for their country cluster; this is the case in particular for FYROM (35%), Bulgaria (25%), Romania (24%), Hungary (24%), Cyprus (23%), Italy (18%), Belgium (16%) and Greece (15%).

Households in the lowest quartile of the income distribution report problems with paying utility bills three times more often than households in the highest quartile; this applies in all three country clusters and many of the individual countries. As Table 1 shows, single-parent households, households with unemployed members and people with health problems are more likely to be in arrears for utility bills. This in all probability is related to their household income, which is found to be significantly below average.

In the EU27, about one in eight households seems to be in a very vulnerable financial position, having nobody who would lend them the equivalent of €500 or €1,000 when urgently needed to face an emergency.[6] The highest country figures are found for Hungary (23%), Latvia (18%), Turkey (17%) and Bulgaria, Estonia and Lithuania (all 16%). Some individual observations seem puzzling: for instance, in the relatively low-income countries of Croatia and Greece, few respondents report a lack of support when raising money to face an emergency (6% and 4% respectively). On the other hand, in Belgium, France and Germany, a relatively high proportion of households (between 13% and 14%) report not having anybody to help them when this sum of money is urgently needed. Financial vulnerability is much

[6] In the CC3 and NMS12, the survey asked for the amount in the national currency equivalent to €500; in the remaining countries, the amount in question was €1,000 or its equivalent.

Figure 5: Households having difficulty in making ends meet, by country (%)



Question 57: A household may have different sources of income and more than one household member may contribute to it. Thinking of your household's total monthly income, is your household able to make ends meet? Categories: 1) Very easily; 2) Easily; 3) Fairly easily; 4) With some difficulty; 5) With difficulty; 6) With great difficulty; 7) Don't know. Categories 5 and 6 are grouped together and presented in the figure.

Source: EQLS 2007.

higher for specific groups such as people on a low income, unemployed persons and those with poor health.

Subjective economic strain

Subjective economic strain is a widely used indicator reflecting the respondent's evaluation of the household's ability to make ends meet. If the respondent perceives that the household has difficulty or great difficulty in managing financially, then the household is categorised as being under economic strain.

Major differences arise between the country clusters in reporting economic strain (Figure 5). In the EU15 on average, one in 10 households reports difficulties in making ends meet; however, in the NMS12, the rate is 2.5 times that for the EU15 and in the CC3 it is four times higher. National figures vary considerably and, in general, reflect the level of income and income inequality in the country. In the EU15, the highest proportion of households with economic strain is found in Greece (32%) and the lowest in Finland, Luxembourg and Sweden (all 3%). Bulgaria (41%), Hungary (36%) and Romania (29%) display the highest rates of economic strain among the NMS12.

Not surprisingly, subjective strain is strongly associated with income. In the CC3, 70% of low-income households report difficulties in making ends meet, compared with 16% in the highest income quartile. In the NMS12, 54% of the poorest quartile report economic strain, compared with 7% of the most affluent quartile; the corresponding averages for the EU15 are 26% and 2%. The highest levels of economic strain are reported in Bulgaria, where 79% of the lowest income quartile report difficulty or great difficulty in making ends meet; 17% of people in the top income quartile report the same difficulty.

Coping with economic strain and lack of income

Households may use different strategies to cope with economic strain and financial difficulties. In this respect, producing food for one's own consumption might be very important, particularly for households in income poverty. To explore this possibility, respondents were asked whether in the past year their household had helped to meet their needs for food by growing vegetables or fruit, or keeping poultry or livestock. Although the question does not distinguish between production out of necessity and by choice, the information illuminates differences in food production across income and social groups.

With the exception of Cyprus and Malta, domestic food production is widely used in all of the NMS12, where on average about one in two households reports meeting at least a part of its nutrition needs in this way. A similar proportion of households in Croatia and FYROM produce some of their own food, while in Turkey only about one in five households reported producing food for their own consumption. In general, as Table 2 shows, this practice is much less common in the EU15, albeit with some differences between the countries: in Ireland and the Netherlands, it happens only exceptionally, while in

Table 2: Domestic food production and help from outside the household, by country group (%)

	Households producing food for own consumption				
	Total	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Rural	Urban
CC3	25	35	17	46	9
NMS12	46	56	36	70	21
EU15	15	16	13	21	9
EU27	22	26	19	31	12
	Households receiving money or food from others				
	Total	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Rural	Urban
CC3	14	18	8	10	17
NMS12	18	23	16	17	19
EU15	9	19	7	8	11
EU27	11	20	9	10	13

Question 61: In the past year, has your household helped meet its need for food by growing vegetables or fruits or keeping poultry or livestock? Categories: 1) No, not at all; 2) Yes, for up to one-tenth of the household's food needs; 3)Yes, for between one-tenth and half of household's food needs; 4) Yes, for half or more of the household's needs; 5) Don't know. The 'yes' categories are grouped together in the table.

Question 63: In the past year, did your household receive regular help in the form of either money or food from a person not living in your household (e.g. parents, grown-up children, other relatives, or someone not related)? (Percentages are for those answering 'yes'.)

Source: EQLS 2007.

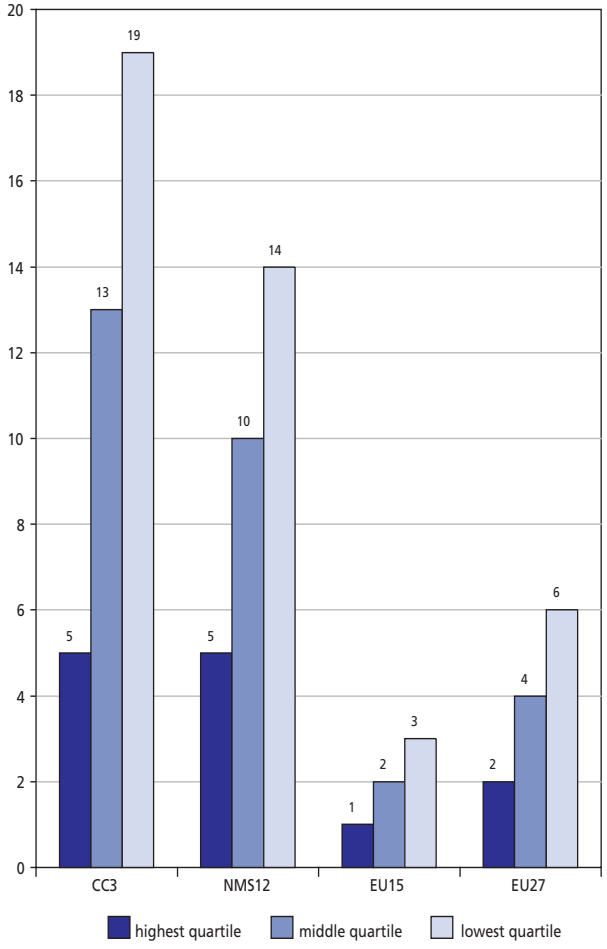
Austria, Belgium, Germany and Greece, about one in five households meet part of their food needs by producing it themselves.

As expected, food production is more common in rural areas than urban and this is the case in all country groupings. Furthermore, people on low incomes use this practice much more often than people in the highest income quartile. The gap is large in the NMS12 and CC3, but small in the EU15, suggesting that in high-income countries producing one's own food might more often be a matter of choice than necessity.

Solidarity also often comes into play when households face financial difficulties. As Table 2 shows, about 10% or more of households receive regular support from outside the household – from family members not living in the household or from friends. Such support, in the form of either money or food, is most common in the NMS12, where on average 18% of all households report receiving money or food from outside. The country figures differ considerably, ranging from 6% in Malta and 9% in Cyprus to 25% in Lithuania and 27% in Latvia. Regular help from other households is, in general, less common in the CC3 (14%) and EU15 (9%). However, a large proportion of low-income households – about one in five – receives regular help with money or food from family or friends. This proportion applies to all country clusters, including the EU15.

Living in a multigenerational household might also be seen as a strategy to cope with financial strain and lack of income. Benefits from economies of scale are obvious when

Figure 6: Extent of multigenerational households, by income quartile and country group (%)



Question HH3 to HH10 on the age of the household members and their relation to the reference person: households with three or more generations living together.

Source: EQLS 2007.

more household members share food and collective goods such as housing, utilities and consumer durables. In addition, childcare and elder care tasks may be shared at lower costs in households where several generations are living together and supporting each other.

Figure 6 shows that living in multigenerational households is a relatively widespread practice, particularly in the CC3 and NMS12. The practice is most common among low-income households in these countries. In FYROM, children, parents and grandparents live together in 30% of all low-income households. The corresponding figure for Croatia is 21% and 19% for Turkey. The figure is also quite high for some of the NMS12, in particular for Poland (17%), Bulgaria (16%) and Romania (15%). Among people on low incomes in the EU15, the proportion who live in a multigenerational household ranges from less than 1% in the Nordic countries to 18% in Greece.

Conclusions

The EU shows large disparities in the level of economic development, which – with the latest accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 – have become wider than before.

- Eight of the NMS12 have lower per capita GDP than that of Portugal, the least developed EU15 country.
- None of the NMS12 have reached the average of the EU27.
- Household net income reveals substantial inequalities between the NMS12 and EU15.
- When the group of low-income candidate countries is taken into consideration, then pan-European discrepancies in GDP and income become even larger.[7]

Patterns of income inequalities map onto inequalities as measured by other indicators such as deprivation and perceived economic strain.

- The low-income CC3 country cluster has the highest rates of economic disadvantage by far.
- By contrast, the economically most prosperous EU15 group has low scores on both of these disadvantage indicators.
- In general, the NMS12 group stands in between the CC3 and EU15, both in terms of level of income and in relation to the level and incidence of deprivation and economic strain.[8]

One of the striking findings is the significant heterogeneity within country clusters. On a number of indicators, Greece and Portugal are sharply differentiated from the remaining EU15 Member States: income is much lower, while the incidence of deprivation and economic strain is higher than the average. In the NMS12, Bulgaria and Romania often score very low on various indicators in a way that is more like the CC3 countries than the other countries of the NMS12. On the other hand, many of the indicators for Slovenia are comparable with those of the EU15. The CC3 group is not a homogeneous block of countries either: FYROM and Turkey are often at the bottom of the pan-European rankings on income and deprivation indicators, while Croatia shows more similarity with the countries of the NMS12.

The other consistent finding is that large disparities in resources and standard of living exist within most countries. For instance, considerable inequalities in income are found in FYROM and Turkey, and in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. In these countries, the people at the bottom of the income distribution are coping with very limited financial resources and often experience serious deprivation and economic strain. Income inequalities are also rather large in Greece and Portugal, which is associated with a relatively high level of deprivation in these countries, especially in the lowest income quartile.

Low income is strongly related to the employment status of individuals and members of their household, as well as to their education level, health, age, family size and household type. Those who are unemployed, less educated, have serious health problems, live in rural areas or live as a single parent have, in general, lower income and are more likely to be in a vulnerable material and financial situation. However, differences in the level of vulnerability of these groups are significant across countries, even when comparing countries with similar levels of income and similar patterns of income distribution. The analysis clearly shows that inequalities in Europe appear quite different depending on the particular dimension, group of countries or population group, suggesting that differentiated policy responses are necessary.

Households use various ways to cope with low income, economic strain and deprivation. The EQLS shows that household production of food is important in the NMS12 and that people on low incomes are more likely to employ this strategy. However, although it is true that – for most of

[7] The analysis shows that the average per capita GDP for each of the three country clusters – EU15, NMS12 and CC3 – form a ratio which is close to 3:2:1.
[8] The disparities between the three country clusters (CC3, NM12 and EU15) in the level of disadvantages measured by indicators of deprivation and economic strain seem to form a ratio of about 3:2:1, which is the reverse of that indicated for income disparities among the country clusters.

the countries – such production varies depending on income quartile, it might not only express an economic need; this is an issue that warrants further exploration.

Another strategy often observed in low-income households is that of regular help with food or money from the social network, in particular friends and family. Furthermore, living in large, multigenerational households, sharing costs of food and collective goods and services, may be seen as a way to ease economic strain. Relying on these practices might be a necessary and logical response to disadvantageous economic conditions and the absence of adequate social protection measures. This is reflected in the finding that the incidence of domestic food production, interhousehold solidarity and living in multigenerational households is much more common in the NMS12 and CC3 than in the economically and socially more prosperous EU15. However, it should be noted that the country clusters are not totally homogenous blocks. For each of the indicators considered, substantial variation arises between and within clusters. This raises different policy concerns and calls for differentiated, fine-tuned and properly targeted policy responses.

Subjective well-being 2

While concepts of quality of life vary greatly, many include a concern for people's subjective assessments, that is, for how people feel about themselves and their situation in life. These subjective assessments can be about specific domains such as health or economic resources, but can also concern an individual's overall sense of well-being. This chapter will focus on different approaches to assessing general well-being.

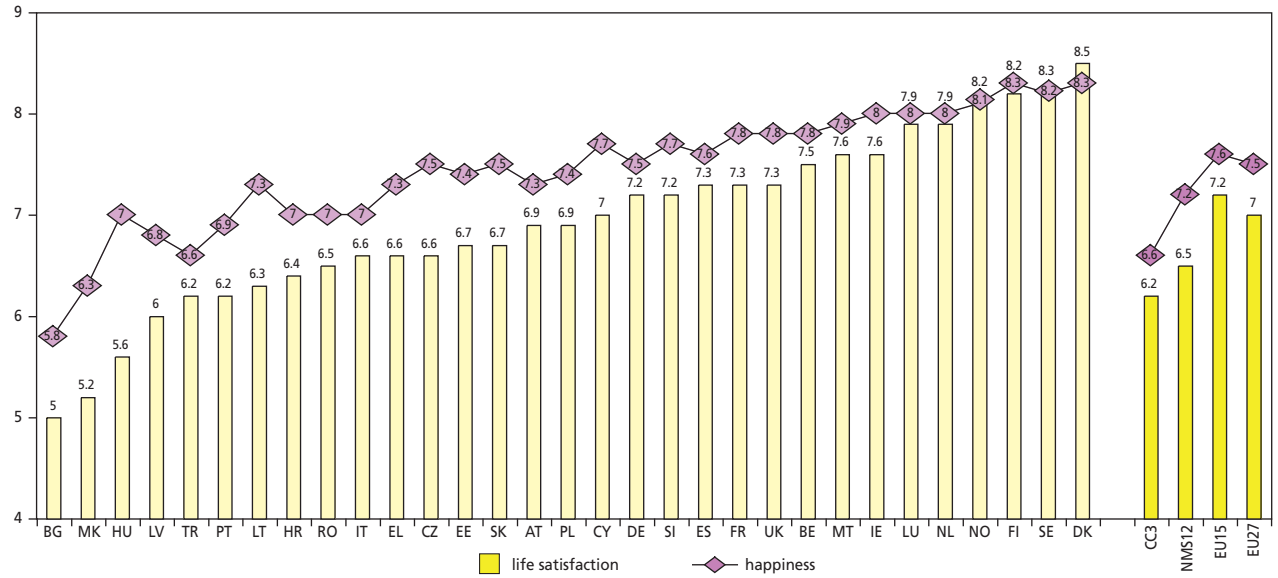
Subjective well-being varies across European countries and across social groups within Member States. This chapter aims to shed some light on subjective well-being in the enlarged Europe by examining how citizens evaluate their living conditions, achievements and expectations in terms of 'good' and 'bad', 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'. Although indicators on subjective well-being are often considered as 'soft' ones, the information they provide is highly relevant to policymakers for at least two reasons. First, a number of accurate, objective measures exist regarding a person's income situation, assets, possessions, employment, health status and social contacts, for example, but no guiding rule applies about how to combine these pieces of information into a global measure. Only subjective indicators permit comprehensive and meaningful assessments of an individual's quality of life. Secondly, measures of subjective well-being – especially overall life satisfaction – are the best available indicators of the degree to which the expectations and needs of the population are met (Fahey et al, 2004, p. 64). In this chapter, overall subjective well-being is measured using two main indicators – life satisfaction, which gives a more cognitive-driven evaluation of one's life as a whole, and happiness, which provides a more focused assessment of current emotional state (Böhnke, 2005, p. 13).

General levels of life satisfaction and happiness

The hallmark of measures of subjective well-being is that they are obtained through reporting by the individual. In the EQLS, respondents are asked not only to evaluate diverse dimensions of their lives, but also to assess their lives as a whole. Two widely used, relatively straightforward questions were asked – one on life satisfaction and the other on happiness. The first (Question 29) is 'All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days?' and the second (Question 42) is 'Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?' Both items are measured on a 10-point scale, in which 1 means very dissatisfied or very unhappy and 10 means very satisfied or very happy.

As Figure 7 shows, both the level of life satisfaction and level of happiness vary considerably across countries, with the level of happiness being generally higher than that of life satisfaction; many countries have an average score of between 7 and 8 for happiness. The gap between the two indicators appears to be in an inverse relation to the level

Figure 7: Life satisfaction and happiness index, by country



Question 29: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very dissatisfied and 10 means very satisfied.

Question 42: Taking all things together on a scale of 1 to 10, how happy would you say you are? Here 1 means you are very unhappy and 10 means you are very happy.

Source: EQLS 2007.

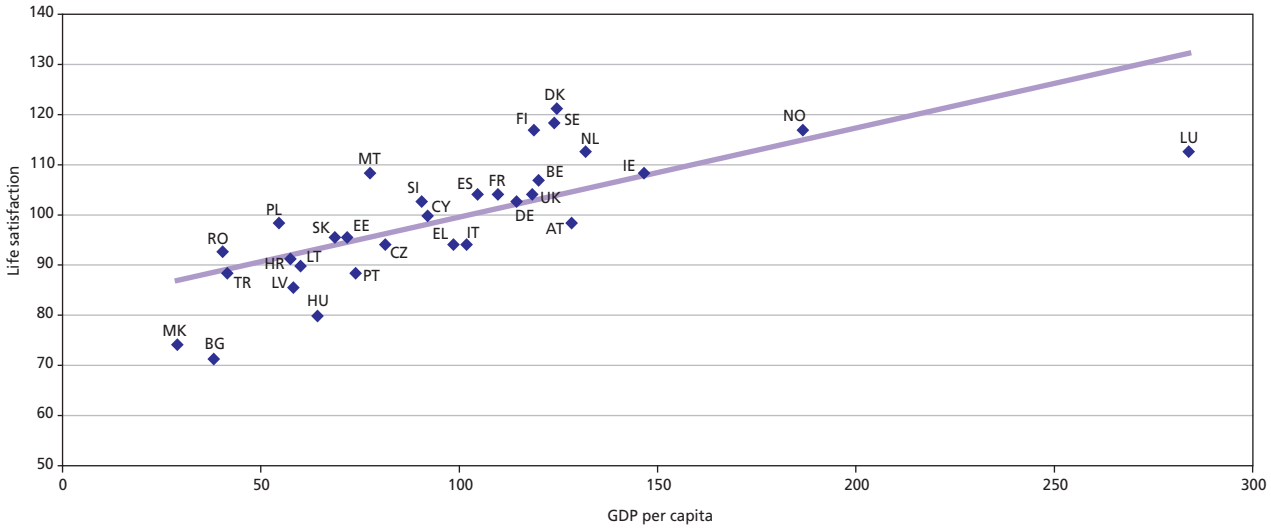
of life satisfaction: at lower levels of life satisfaction, the gap tends to be wider. The gap is particularly wide in many of the low-income CC3 and NMS12. In a way, this finding highlights the different nature of the indicators, with happiness being more emotionally driven and less determined by the standard of living, while the satisfaction indicator is more strongly influenced by socioeconomic circumstances. Nevertheless, the relationship between happiness and life satisfaction is strong and therefore this section will focus on only one of these indicators – life satisfaction, as this seems to be somewhat more closely tied to objective living conditions, such as income and employment status.[9]

The results indicate that, on average, Europeans are fairly satisfied with life. In all countries except Bulgaria and FYROM, the average rating of life satisfaction is above the middle of the scale (5.5). However, when looking above this threshold it becomes apparent that life satisfaction is rather unequally distributed across the EU. The striking result of the analysis is a considerably lower level of subjective well-being in the NMS12, compared with the economically more prosperous EU15 countries. Exceptions to this broad distinction are Malta and Slovenia, both with an average level of life satisfaction which equals or surpasses that of the EU15. On the other hand, people in Greece, Italy and Portugal score relatively low on life satisfaction and in this respect are closer to the NMS12 group than to their own cluster.

A closer look at individual countries shows that differences in general life satisfaction are notable, covering more than three scale points when comparing Bulgaria (5.0) at the bottom of the ranking, and Finland (8.2), Sweden (8.3) and Denmark (8.5) at the top. Freely interpreted, these results may indicate an overall feeling close to 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' in Bulgaria and an overall feeling of being close to 'very satisfied' in the Nordic countries.

In Figure 8, the relationship between GDP and average life satisfaction is displayed for each of the 31 countries in the survey. The correlation between these two indicators is rather strong and seems to confirm findings from earlier research that a high level of national output is associated with a high level of subjective well-being (Hagerty and Veenhoven, 2003, p. 1).[10] Hence, part of the country differences in the level of life satisfaction can be attributed to differences in the general level of wealth in the country. While this is true when all 31 countries are taken into consideration, the EU15 Member States present a weaker link between national wealth and subjective well-being. In fact, the correlation between per capita GDP and the

Figure 8: GDP per capita and life satisfaction, by country



Question 29: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very dissatisfied and 10 means very satisfied. Both the GDP and life satisfaction data represent the relative level (EU27 = 100).

Source: GDP, Eurostat; life satisfaction, EQLS 2007.

[9] Measured for all 35,600 respondents in 31 countries, the 2007 EQLS shows that the relationship between happiness and life satisfaction is strong, with the statistical Pearson correlation coefficient at 0.666. Regarding the individual country samples, this coefficient ranges from 0.539 in Estonia and 0.543 in Italy to 0.722 in the Netherlands and 0.747 in Norway.

[10] The correlation between per capita GDP and the average level of life satisfaction in a country is rather strong (at a coefficient of determination of $r^2 = 0.511$ in statistical terms) when all 31 countries are considered. If Luxembourg, which is an obvious outlier in terms of GDP, is excluded from the analysis, then the correlation between GDP and life satisfaction is higher (0.663).

national average level of life satisfaction for the richest group of countries in the survey (EU15 plus Norway) is relatively weak.[11] This is in line with the broadly accepted theory that subjective well-being at a national level does not increase with income once a certain income threshold level has been reached (Easterlin, 1974).

Life satisfaction and social groups

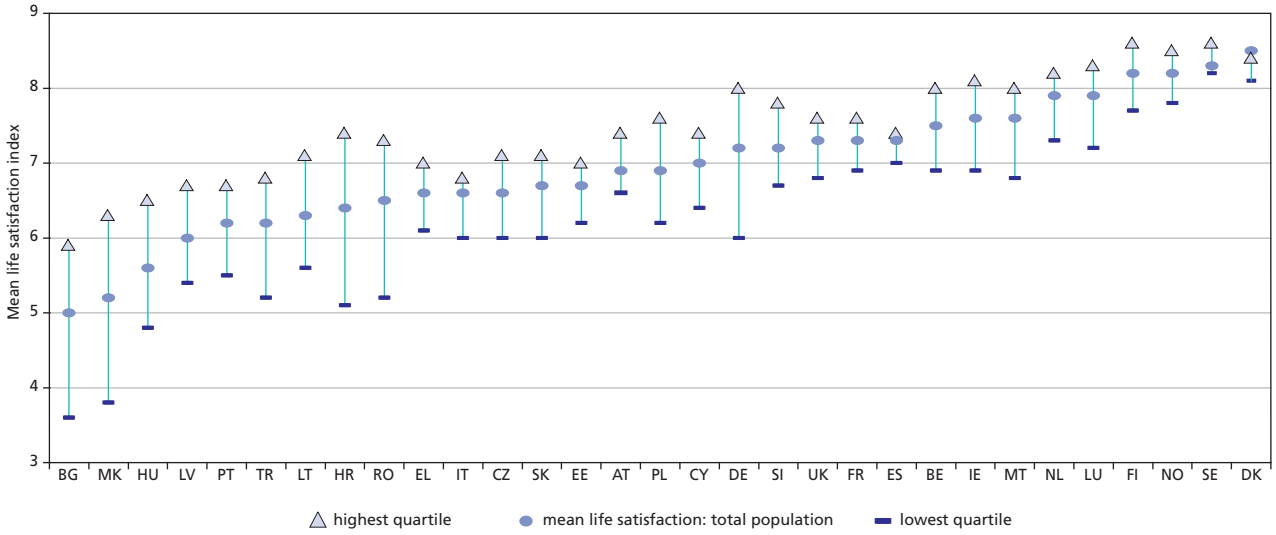
Many other socioeconomic, demographic, situational, contextual, environmental, institutional and personal factors influence quality of life and consequently are related to people's rating of their life satisfaction. Deeper insight into these factors can contribute to a better understanding of disparities in quality of life between different social groups within a country. This is essential for national social policies since it enables identification of the most disadvantaged groups in society and helps to create selective and targeted policy measures to enhance life chances for those who are in such an unfavourable position.

The survey offers a large number of indicators in fields that are commonly considered as being important for life satisfaction, such as household income, health, education, employment status, age, and marital and family status. This section provides a brief overview of the background characteristics associated with differences in life satisfaction and discusses how they influence the level of life satisfaction in different social groups.

Household income has a significant impact on life satisfaction. As Figure 9 shows, all over Europe, people in the bottom income quartile express on average a lower level of life satisfaction than those in the highest quartile. The gap is particularly wide in the NMS12 and CC3, where the average level of both income and life satisfaction is relatively low. The largest differences between income quartiles are found in Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM and Romania. In these countries, people in the lowest income quartile on average score at least two points lower on the life satisfaction scale than those in the highest quartile. In contrast, the wealthy Nordic countries, which have well-developed systems of social protection and are characterised by a relatively low level of income inequality, are found to be rather egalitarian with regard to life satisfaction. In Denmark and Sweden, little difference emerges in the high levels of life satisfaction expressed by people in the richest and poorest income quartiles.

Generally speaking, being unemployed reduces a person's level of life satisfaction; in the EU15, the level of satisfaction for jobless persons is 1.4 points lower than the average for employed people (Table 3). However, this gap is smaller in the NMS12, possibly because unemployment and job insecurity have been more common in the NMS12 and

Figure 9: Average life satisfaction, by income quartile and country



Question 29: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very dissatisfied and 10 means very satisfied.

Income quartiles are determined for each country separately by using the country data on equivalent net household income (Questions 67 and 68).

Source: EQLS 2007.

[11] Correlation for this group of countries is at $r^2 = 0.181$.

more people have experienced a spell of unemployment. At national level, the largest differences for unemployed people are found in Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Germany. Retired people in the NMS12 are also found to have a below-average level of life satisfaction, particularly in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Romania. This might partly be explained by the low level of pensions in many countries of the NMS12 and the lack of social facilities for this group of the population.

The survey results also show a link between health and life satisfaction in the sense that poor health diminishes life satisfaction. As presented in Table 3, people in the EU reporting poor health score 1.5 points lower on the life satisfaction scale than the average and almost two points lower than those who reported good or very good health. The largest gap is found in the NMS12, although it does not differ considerably from the gap measured in the other two country clusters (CC3 and EU15). This underlines how important health is for the subjective well-being of Europeans.

In general, a higher level of education also seems to be associated with a higher level of life satisfaction. This pattern can be seen in all country clusters, although it is somewhat more visible for the NMS12. A particularly strong relationship between education and life satisfaction is found in Bulgaria, Hungary, FYROM and Romania.

As far as relationship status is concerned, people living alone (never married, widowed, separated or divorced) are less satisfied with their lives than those living with a partner or with a partner and children. This pattern holds for all clusters and countries. This suggests that the emotional and social aspects of living in a partnership might be important for quality of life. The lowest level of life satisfaction is found for single parents. Regarding this group, some additional variables might explain such a low level of life satisfaction – for instance, income. As shown in the previous chapter, the single-parent group as a whole has a low income and often experiences greater economic strain, both of which may have a negative impact on quality of life and life satisfaction. Moreover, the burden of bringing up and caring for children might be one reason for the diminished life satisfaction of lone parents; overall, the number of potential factors calls for more detailed multivariate analysis.

Demographic characteristics, such as gender and age, generally have little effect on the level of life satisfaction. However, the NMS12 are to some extent the exceptions to the rule at least with regard to age, as young people in the NMS12 have an above-average level of life satisfaction. The differences according to age are particularly large in Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland. Part of this finding might be explained by the rapid socioeconomic changes during the transition years, which young people could adjust more easily to than their parents' generation

Table 3: Life satisfaction and deviation from the average, by social characteristics and country group

		Income		Education		Employment status			Health status	
	Average total	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Low	High	Employed/ self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Good	Bad
CC3	6.2	-1.1	0.6	-0.1	0.3	0.1	-1.3	0.1	0.4	-1.3
NMS12	6.5	-0.9	0.7	-0.2	0.6	0.2	-0.9	-0.5	0.5	-1.5
EU15	7.2	-0.6	0.5	-0.2	0.4	0.1	-1.4	0.1	0.3	-1.5
EU27	7.0	-0.6	0.6	-0.1	0.5	0.2	-1.2	0.0	0.4	-1.5

		Sex		Household type				Age		
	Average total	Women	Men	Living alone	Single parent	Couple	Couple + children	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years
CC3	6.2	0.0	0.0	-0.3	-0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.0
NMS12	6.5	-0.1	0.1	-0.5	-0.7	0.0	0.2	0.5	-0.1	-0.3
EU15	7.2	0.0	0.0	-0.4	-1.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.1
EU27	7.0	0.0	0.1	-0.4	-0.9	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1

Question 29: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very dissatisfied and 10 means very satisfied.

Source: EQLS 2007.

who had grown up under communism; the latter group was living and working under a totally different system for many years. Now, in the changed society, many older people have difficulties adjusting.[12]

Sense of fulfilment in life

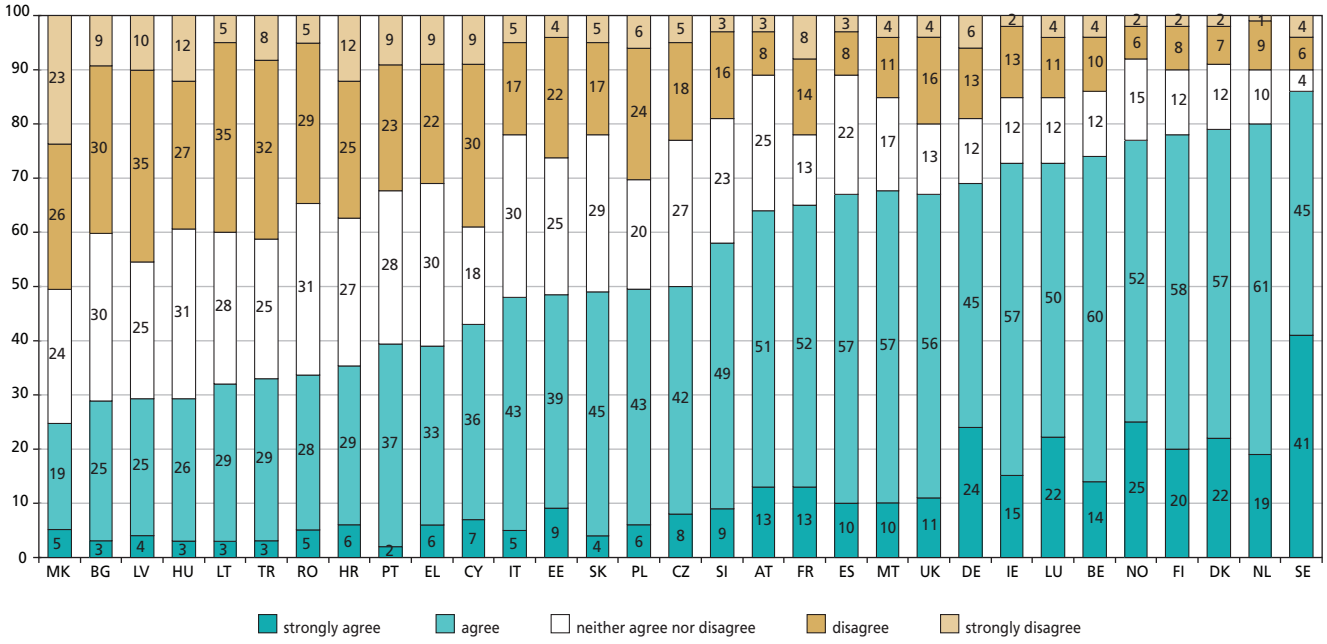
A central element in improving quality of life is the creation of conditions that will help people to achieve their own goals. The more opportunities people have to realise their ambitions, the closer they will come to fulfilment in their lives; this should contribute to their life satisfaction, happiness and ultimately quality of life.

In the EQLS, one question in particular tries to capture the sense of fulfilment in life by asking respondents to what extent they agree with the following statement: 'On the whole, my life is close to how I would like it to be.' With the choice of five response categories, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', the results presented in Figure 10 indicate that large differences exist between countries in the proportion of people who believe that their life is close to their ideal.

The top positions are occupied by people in the Nordic countries and the Benelux countries (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), with more than 70% reporting that they have life as they want it to be. At the other end of the scale are Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and FYROM, with fewer than 30% of respondents sharing this opinion. It is notable that two of the NMS12 – Malta and Slovenia – have responses similar to the EU15. On the other hand, in three of the EU15 – Greece, Italy and Portugal – less than half of the respondents report that their life is close to what they want it to be. In this respect, they are closer to the NMS12 than to the EU15. Altogether, as Table 4 shows, while almost two-thirds of respondents in the EU15 reported having a (strong) sense of fulfilment in life, the corresponding figures for the NMS12 and CC3 are considerably lower (at 41% and 32% respectively).

Poor health, unemployment and low income diminish the probability of having life close to the ideal. Furthermore, not having a partner reduces the likelihood of having life as a person would like it to be, particularly for single parents. The average impact of these factors is strong in all country clusters – except for those living alone in the CC3 –

Figure 10: Matching of life circumstances to aspirations, by country (%)



Question 28b: Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: 'On the whole, my life is close to how I would like it to be.'

Source: EQLS 2007.

[12] This is to a certain extent confirmed by another question in the EQLS. When asked to reflect on the statement 'Life has become so complicated today that I almost can't find my way' (Question 28e), many of the respondents aged 65 years and over in the NMS12 (35%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. For the 18–34 years age group, the figure is much lower (20%). The corresponding proportions in the EU15 are 21% for those aged 65 years and over and 17% for those aged 18–34 years.

Table 4: Sense of fulfilment and deviation from the average, by social characteristics and country group

		Income		Education		Employment status			Health status	
	Average total	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Low	High	Employed/ self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Good	Bad
CC3	32%	-16	12	-1	8	-1	-12	5	4	-11
NMS12	41%	-15	17	-3	14	5	-11	-7	9	-23
EU15	64%	-11	13	-5	12	2	-28	4	6	-28
EU27	59%	-13	13	-5	14	3	-25	1	8	-29
		Sex		Household type				Age		
	Average total	Women	Men	Living alone	Single parent	Couple	Couple + children	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years
CC3	32%	-1	1	1	-10	4	2	2	0	4
NMS12	41%	-2	3	-6	-14	3	3	8	-2	-5
EU15	64%	0	1	-7	-20	9	2	0	-1	4
EU27	59%	-1	1	-5	-20	9	1	2	-1	3

Question 28b: Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: 'On the whole, my life is close to how I would like it to be.' The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree.'

Source: EQLS 2007.

although considerable differences arise between the groupings. In general, the impact of income is more marked in the NMS12 and CC3 than in the EU15. Meanwhile, unemployment, poor health and lacking a partner have a stronger relationship to fulfilment in life in the EU15 than in the other two country clusters.

Age is associated with a sense of fulfilment in life, generally following the pattern of a slightly U-shaped curve: the proportion of people having life as they want it to be is relatively high among young people, declines in the middle-aged group and recovers in old age. However, this pattern does not hold for the NMS12, where the sense of fulfilment in life diminishes for middle-aged people and continues to fall among older people. The decline with age in sense of fulfilment is particularly strong in Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

Finally, women tend to report less of a sense of fulfilment in life than men. The widest gap (five percentage points) is found in the NMS12, but large differences emerge between countries. In Poland, the difference between women and men in agreement with the survey statement is nine percentage points, whereas in Cyprus and Estonia, 3% more women than men believe that their life is close to how they would like it to be.

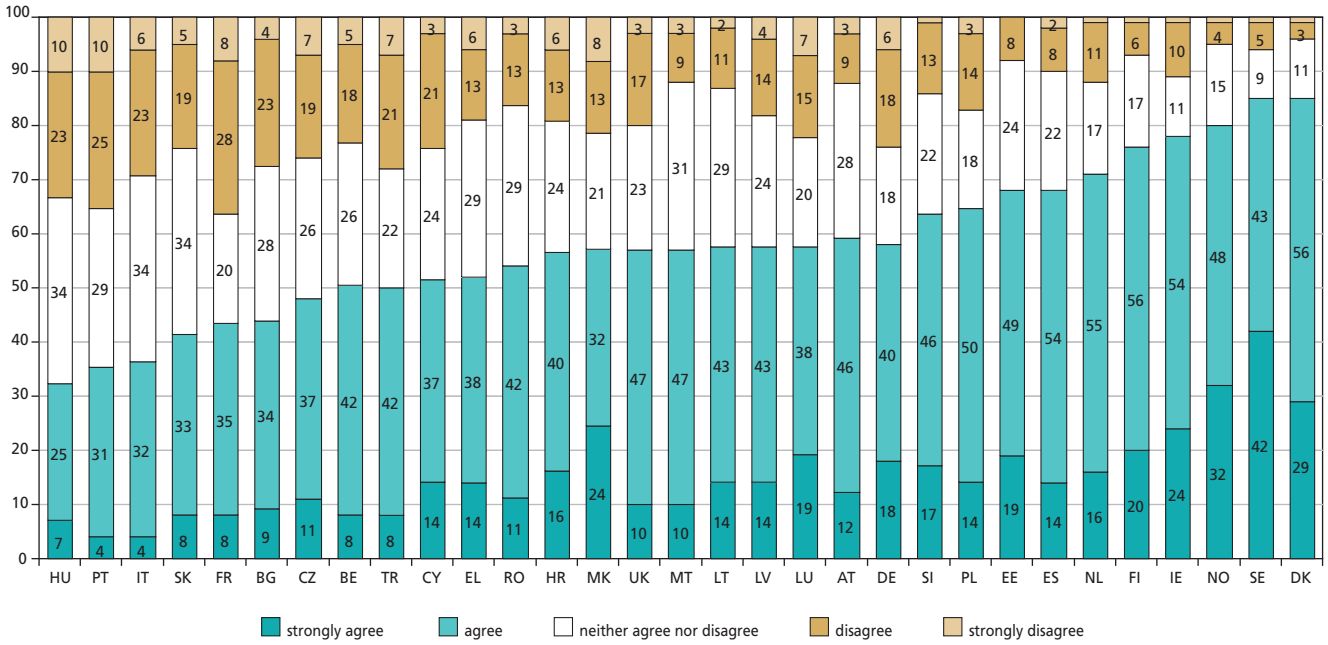
Optimism about the future

In the EQLS (Question 28a), respondents were asked to what extent they agree with the statement: 'I am optimistic about the future.' A total of five response categories were offered, two expressing positive feelings and expectations about the future (agree completely and agree somewhat), one expressing neutral feelings and two expressing negative expectations about the future (disagree completely and disagree somewhat).

Altogether, 54% of adults in the EU stated at the end of 2007 that they were optimistic about the future, with little difference between the overall averages in the EU15 and NMS12. However, the differences between countries are large. In the four Nordic countries, which score the highest on the indicator – together with Ireland – more than three-quarters of the respondents reported being optimistic about the future (Figure 11). In a further 19 countries, half or more of respondents have positive expectations about the future. This group consists of countries from all three clusters. Among them are some NMS12 countries, including Estonia (68%), Poland (64%), Slovenia (63%), and Latvia, Lithuania and Malta (all 57%). It is striking that in FYROM – the country with the lowest income, highest inequality and low life satisfaction – 56% of people are nevertheless optimistic about the future. This optimism might be explained by positive political developments in the country at the time of the survey, such as the country's candidacy for joining the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and by a lessening of internal political tensions.

In three EU15 Member States (France, Italy and Portugal), less than half of respondents were optimistic about the

Figure 11: Optimism about the future, by country (%)



Question 28a: Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: 'I am optimistic about the future.' 'Don't know' answers have been included in the category 'neither agree nor disagree'.

Source: EQLS 2007.

future. The same is true for four of the NMS12 – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. In fact, Hungary has the lowest proportion of optimists (32%) among all 31 participating countries and is the only country where more pessimists than optimists were found among respondents. Possible explanations may lie in a turbulent political situation, economic stagnation, increased unemployment, inflation and related social problems in Hungary at the time of and before the survey.

Large differences emerge in terms of optimism about the future in different population groups (Table 5). In particular,

Table 5: Optimism about the future and deviation from the average, by social characteristics and country group

		Income		Education		Employment status			Health status	
	Average total	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Low	High	Employed/ self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Good	Bad
CC3	50%	-10	10	1	1	2	-4	1	6	-14
NMS12	54%	-12	13	-3	13	6	-5	-2	9	-25
EU15	55%	-4	8	-5	10	3	-5	-7	5	-21
EU27	54%	-5	10	-4	11	5	-4	-6	6	-22

		Gender		Household type				Age		
	Average total	Women	Men	Living alone	Single parent	Couple	Couple + children	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years
CC3	50%	-2	3	-8	-11	2	2	4	2	-4
NMS12	54%	-4	4	-13	-12	-5	3	13	-3	-15
EU15	55%	-3	2	-5	-6	-2	1	11	-3	-8
EU27	54%	-2	3	-6	-7	-2	2	13	-2	-9

Question 28a: Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: 'I am optimistic about the future.' The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

Source: EQLS 2007.

responses in the former socialist countries vary significantly in relation to social and demographic variables. This is especially true for age, underlining again that the transformation of the economic and political system has given younger and older cohorts different perspectives; the result is that younger generations are much more optimistic than their older fellow citizens.

Health, income and education also seem to be associated with people's views and expectations about the future. Table 5 shows that Europeans with good health, a high level of education and relatively good income are more likely to be optimistic than those who are disadvantaged in these aspects. As far as household type is concerned, single persons and single parents are not only less satisfied with their present life situation than the others, but they are also less optimistic about the future. In contrast, couples with children living in the household tend to be more optimistic. As in previous analyses, the gap between social groups is much more evident for the NMS12 than for the EU15 and CC3.

Conclusions

Subjective well-being – measured by life satisfaction, happiness and fulfilment in life – is rather unequally distributed across Europe. The most striking result of the analysis is the lower level of subjective well-being in most of the NMS12 and CC3 in comparison with the EU15. Much diversity is also found within country clusters:

- In the EU15, a strong north–south divide emerges, with the Nordic countries having the highest level of subjective well-being, followed by the Benelux countries.
- People in the southern European countries of Greece, Italy and Portugal have a relatively low level of life satisfaction and happiness and a lower sense of life fulfilment; indeed, with regard to the level and patterns of subjective well-being, these countries are much closer to the NMS12 group than to the EU15 average.
- Among the NMS12, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania are the countries in which people report particularly low life satisfaction, happiness and life fulfilment – at levels comparable with the CC3; in terms of these well-being indicators, Malta and Slovenia are often closer to the EU15 than the NMS12.

The second important finding is the large differences in subjective well-being across social groups. In general, subjective well-being is much higher for people characterised by good health and higher income, labour market position and level of education than for those who are disadvantaged in these aspects. Household size and composition are also related to subjective well-being in so far as those living with a partner and children report, on average, a higher level of life satisfaction and are more likely to feel fulfilled in life than single people and single parents in particular. Age also plays a role, specifically in the NMS12, where the major transformation of the economic and political system appears to have put younger and older cohorts on different opportunity tracks. The result is that younger generations have higher levels of subjective well-being than their older fellow citizens.

The third main finding is the much higher degree of inequality in subjective well-being between social groups within the NMS12 than in the EU15. The gaps in satisfaction levels between employed and unemployed persons, between those earning higher and lower income and between those in good and poor health are considerably wider in the NMS12 than in the EU15. Given the generally lower level of life satisfaction in the NMS12, the consistent inequalities in well-being between social groups are even more notable.

The results of the analysis on subjective well-being – especially on indicators of life satisfaction and life fulfilment – underline the large disparities in the extent to which the expectations and needs of EU citizens are met. Clearly, the latest two rounds of enlargement have contributed to increased diversity within the EU, both between countries and between social groups within individual Member States. This has reinforced the need to focus more attention on social cohesion and social inclusion in EU policies due to disparities in income, living and working conditions, social infrastructure and provisions, subjective well-being and outlook of EU citizens. Reducing inequalities in life chances and quality of life in the enlarged Europe has become a major challenge. Since the challenge appears to manifest in a varying scale and diverse patterns in different Member States, differentiated policy responses will be necessary at both national and EU level.

Work–life balance 3

Quality of work is an important aspect of quality of life. As emphasised in the Lisbon Strategy, being in employment is a fundamental element for social inclusion from an individual perspective. Moreover, for the individual Member States, it is essential to have more people in employment, in part because demographic changes such as an ageing population put increasing demands on pension and healthcare systems. As Europeans are encouraged to take a greater part in working life, and as work takes up a considerable part of their life, good quality of work is very important – as is a balance between work and time for other personal activities, particularly with regard to family.

Eurofound has developed a framework for quality of work and employment based on four main pillars: career and employment status, health and well-being at work, career development and work–life balance (Eurofound, 2002). The latter issue of reconciling professional and private life has become a focal point for a range of EU policy initiatives around childcare, working time and leave arrangements (European Commission, 2008b).

This chapter draws special attention to the relationship between working and non-working life. It starts by looking at the employment of Europeans, as well as the paid and unpaid working time of male and female workers. These findings provide the context in which workers' perceptions of their work–life balance are embedded.

Employment situation

In general, employment rates have been rising in the EU in recent years. According to Labour Force Survey data, the employment rate in the EU27 is 66% for people aged 15–64 years (73% for men and 59% for women). However, significant differences arise between the EU Member States, ranging from 56% in Malta to 77% in Denmark and the Netherlands (Table 6). For men, the employment rate varies between 64% in Poland and 83% in the Netherlands. For women, it ranges between 38% in Malta and 73% in Denmark and Sweden.

About 17% of workers in the EU27 are in a part-time job. The proportions of workers who work part time differ markedly between men (7% of the male workforce) and women (30% of the female workforce). Equally large differences emerge between countries in this regard – from 46% of Dutch workers (23% of male workers and 75% of female workers) to 1% of Bulgarian workers (1% of male workers and 2% of female workers).

Working time

According to the Eurostat Labour Force Survey, in the EU the average number of working hours in a paid job is 38.5 hours a week. On average and in every country, men work longer hours than women: average weekly working hours are 41.7 for men and 34.3 for women (Eurostat, 2008). The difference is partially explained by the higher number of women working part time.

However, working time varies considerably in different parts of Europe, as Figure 12 shows. When all of the participating European countries are considered, Turkey has the longest working week, with men working on average 55 hours a week. In Greece, FYROM and Poland, the average working

Table 6: Employment rates and part-time employment, 15–64-year-olds, by country (%)

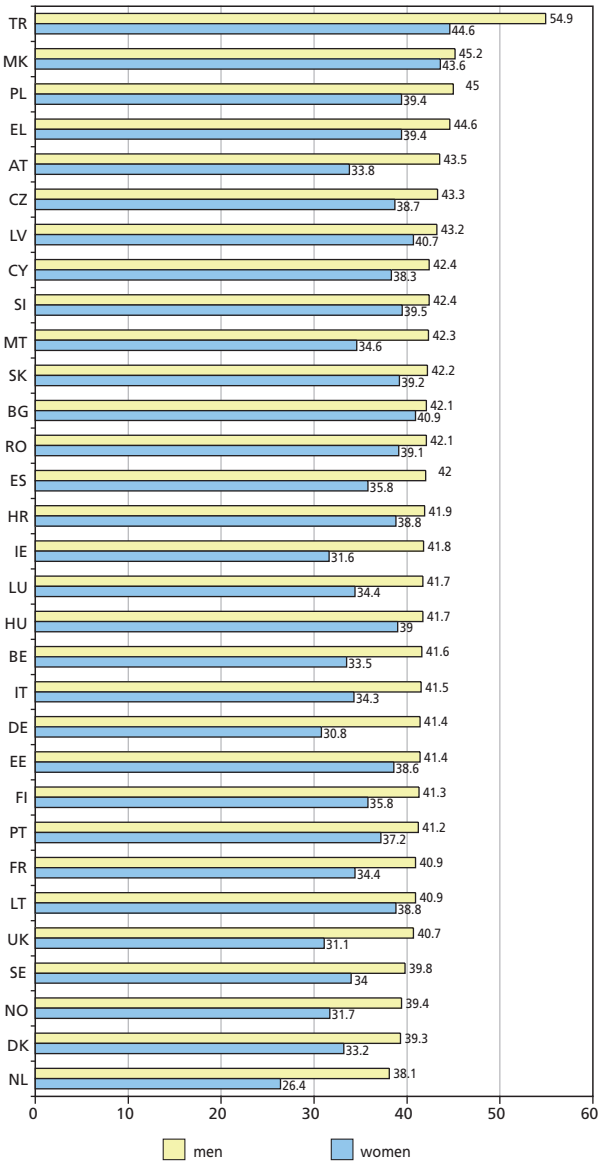
	Employment rate	Part-time employment	Employment rate, men	Part-time employment, men	Employment rate, women	Part-time employment, women
EU27	66	17	73	7	59	30
AT	73	22	80	6	65	40
BE	62	22	69	7	55	40
BG	63	1	67	1	59	2
CY	71	6	81	3	62	10
CZ	66	4	75	2	57	8
DE	70	25	75	9	64	45
DK	77	23	81	12	73	35
EE	70	7	74	4	67	11
EL	62	5	75	2	48	10
ES	66	11	77	4	55	22
FI	72	12	74	7	69	18
FR	65	17	70	5	60	30
HU	58	4	65	3	51	6
IE	70	18	78	7	62	32
IT	59	14	71	5	47	27
LT	66	8	69	6	63	10
LU	65	18	73	3	56	37
LV	69	5	74	4	65	6
MT	56	12	75	4	38	26
NL	77	46	83	23	70	75
PL	58	8	64	6	52	11
PT	68	9	74	5	62	14
RO	61	10	67	9	55	11
SE	76	24	78	10	73	39
SI	69	8	74	6	64	9
SK	61	2	69	1	53	4
UK	71	24	78	9	66	41
HR	59	7	67	6	51	9
TR	48	7	70	4	25	17
NO	77	26	80	12	74	42

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey 3/2007.

hours for men are also long, at 45 hours a week. Meanwhile, men in Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden work on average fewer than 40 hours a week. The biggest gender gaps are found in Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Turkey, where men work about 10 hours more a week than women. In Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands, many women work part time, whereas in Turkey the average working week is long for women too – about 45 hours.

Caring responsibilities, housework and voluntary activities also add to working time even if this work is unpaid. The

Figure 12: Average weekly working hours, by gender and country



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey 3/2007; data for MK from EQLS 2007

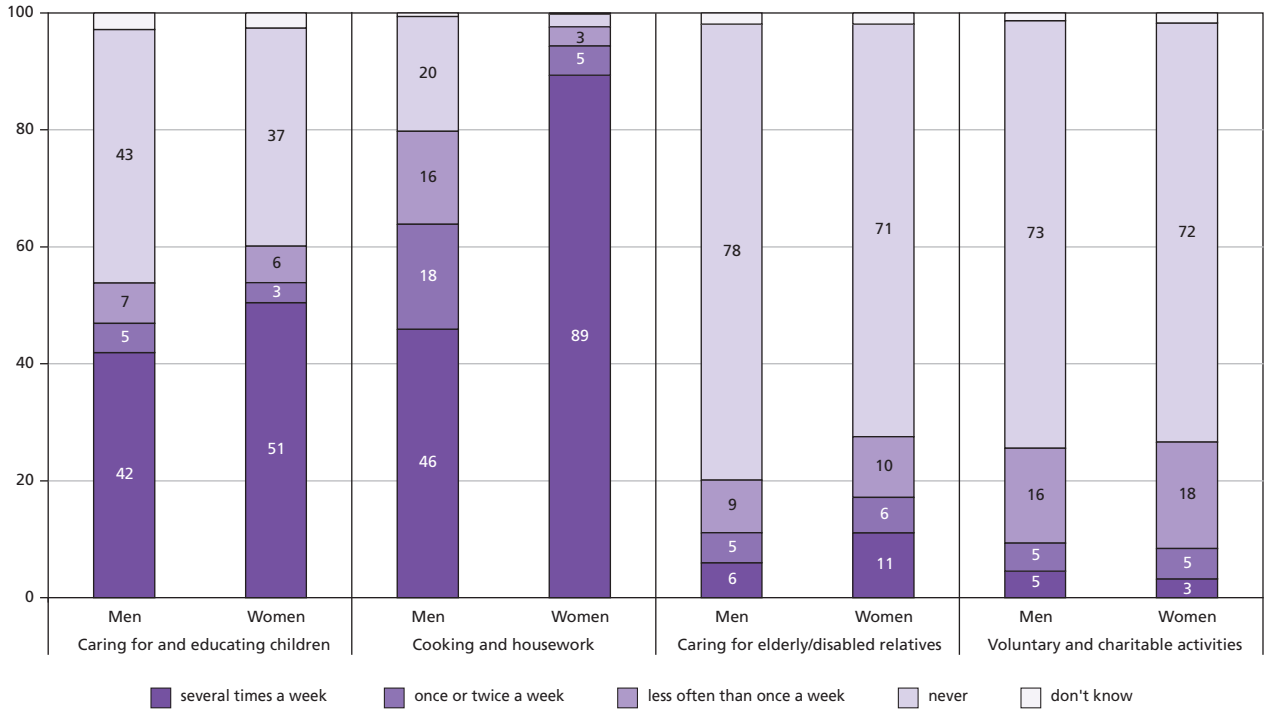
EQLS asks people how often they undertake these tasks outside of paid work, and – if so – how many hours a week, on average, they spend on these activities. As Figure 13 shows, caring for and educating children as well as cooking and housework are the most common activities; the majority of this unpaid work is done by women. In the EU27, on average 51% of women and 42% of men report spending time on caring for children, while 89% of women and 46% of men do cooking and housework every day or several times a week. Women are also more likely than men to take care of elderly or disabled relatives: 11% of women and 6% of men do this at least several times a week. However, men and women take part in voluntary and charitable activities to about the same extent.

In terms of the hours spent on the different activities, women spend much more time than men on caring for and educating children and on cooking and housework (see Table 7 on p. 26). Among people in employment in the EU27, women report spending on average 30 hours a week and men 18 hours on caring for and educating children; meanwhile, women cook and do housework 16 hours a week compared with eight hours a week for men. The majority of workers care for elderly and disabled relatives and participate in voluntary and charitable activities less than once a week. In the EU27, among those involved in care for elderly or disabled relatives, employed men spend on average eight hours a week and employed women 11 hours a week. Employed men who participate in voluntary and charitable activities report doing this on average six hours a week and employed women five hours a week.

It is noteworthy that working men and women in the CC3 dedicate fewer hours to caring for and educating children and to cooking and housework in comparison with the EU15 and NMS12. For FYROM and Turkey, hours spent in paid work are high, which leaves little free time for this unpaid work. Remarkably little difference is found in the average number of hours a week spent by workers from the NMS12 and EU15 in the various unpaid activities.

Employed men in Estonia, Norway, Poland and Sweden report spending the most time on caring for and educating children (23–26 hours a week), compared with men in other countries, while men in Austria, Slovakia and Turkey spend the least time (10–11 hours a week) on this activity. In Estonia, the Netherlands and Norway, women spend the most time (40–48 hours a week) and women in Romania and Finland the least time (17–19 hours a week) in caring for and educating children. Thus, generally both working men and women in Estonia and Norway are very involved in caring for their offspring – more than workers in any other countries in Europe. When men and women are compared,

Figure 13: Extent of unpaid work by those in employment, by gender, EU27 (%)



Question 36: How often are you involved in any of the following activities outside of paid work? a) Caring for and educating children; b) Cooking and housework; c) Caring for elderly/disabled relatives; d) Voluntary and charitable activities. Categories: Every day, Several times a week, Once or twice a week, Less often than once a week, Never, Don't know.

Source: EQLS 2007.

the biggest gender gaps (from 18 to 26 hours) in terms of time dedicated to this caring work are in Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia and the Netherlands. In Austria and the Netherlands, women commonly work part time, whereas part-time work is not as common for women in the two eastern European countries.

Factors affecting work–life balance

In the European Employment Strategy, Guideline 18 of the Employment Guidelines seeks to 'promote a lifecycle approach to work through [among others] better reconciliation of work and private life' (Council of the European Union, 2008).

In Eurofound surveys, two different sets of questions address the issue of work–life balance. In the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), the work–life balance question asks respondents if working hours fit in with family or social commitments outside work, and over 80% of the workers reply that they are satisfied with the fit. Despite the fact that women continue to be disproportionally more involved in unpaid domestic and caring activities, men report slightly more dissatisfaction with work–life balance.

One probable explanation is the volume of working hours and the way these hours are organised between men and women, with women often opting for predictable working hours and/or part-time work (Parent-Thirion et al, 2007).

The EQLS approaches work–life balance from a slightly different angle, through a threefold question concerning the following elements: how often the respondent has come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done; how often it has been difficult for the respondent to fulfil family responsibilities because of the amount of time spent on the job; and how often they have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of family responsibilities. This approach widens the scope of work–life balance to include not only working time but also other aspects of work that might cause tiredness and thus affect family life. Furthermore, it is possible to look not only at the impact of work on private life but also the other way around – at the impact of family responsibilities on work.

Almost half (48%) of the workers in the EU27 consider that they are too tired from work to do household jobs at least several times a month, and nearly a quarter of the workers

Table 7: Hours a week spent doing unpaid work, those in employment, by country and gender

	Caring for and educating children		Cooking and housework	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
AT	11	29	8	18
BE	15	23	9	17
BG	13	20	9	16
CY	17	27	10	21
CZ	17	35	9	16
DE	19	35	8	17
DK	19	23	8	12
EE	23	44	11	15
EL	14	25	7	18
ES	16	28	9	18
FI	15	17	8	12
FR	17	29	8	14
HU	16	22	9	17
IE	20	32	12	19
IT	15	20	7	17
LT	18	29	9	15
LU	20	32	10	17
LV	16	22	10	15
MT	12	23	7	17
NL	22	48	7	14
PL	23	37	10	17
PT	16	23	7	17
RO	13	19	13	15
SE	26	33	8	13
SI	19	26	9	16
SK	11	22	9	17
UK	19	35	8	15
HR	15	26	7	19
MK	14	24	9	21
TR	10	21	7	11
NO	23	40	7	13
CC3	11	23	7	14
NMS12	18	29	10	16
EU15	18	31	8	16
EU27	18	30	8	16

Question 37: On average, how many hours in a week do you spend on these activities? a) Caring for and educating children; b) Cooking and housework; c) Caring for elderly/disabled relatives; d) Voluntary and charitable activities. This question on hours a week spent on the different activities is asked only to those respondents who have said that they are involved in these activities.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 8: Difficulties in balancing work and family life at least several times a month, by country (%)

	Too tired to do household jobs because of work	Difficulties in fulfilling family responsibilities because of work	Difficulties in concentrating at work because of family responsibilities
AT	45	31	14
BE	37	28	8
BG	63	44	17
CY	69	42	8
CZ	58	38	9
DE	39	24	9
DK	40	21	7
EE	61	33	12
EL	72	46	20
ES	57	38	16
FI	44	19	7
FR	47	17	7
HU	62	40	17
IE	40	22	11
IT	36	24	12
LT	53	39	15
LU	43	21	13
LV	59	47	22
MT	58	31	8
NL	37	29	6
PL	56	42	18
PT	46	29	15
RO	65	45	17
SE	46	18	5
SI	54	42	11
SK	45	31	10
UK	52	28	13
HR	72	52	23
MK	64	50	22
TR	63	49	32
NO	40	23	4
CC3	64	50	31
NMS12	59	41	16
EU15	45	26	11
EU27	48	29	12

Question 11: How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year? a) I have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done; b) It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend on the job; c) I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of my family responsibilities. Categories: Several times a week, Several times a month, Several times a year, Less often/rarely, Never, Don't know.

Source: EQLS 2007.

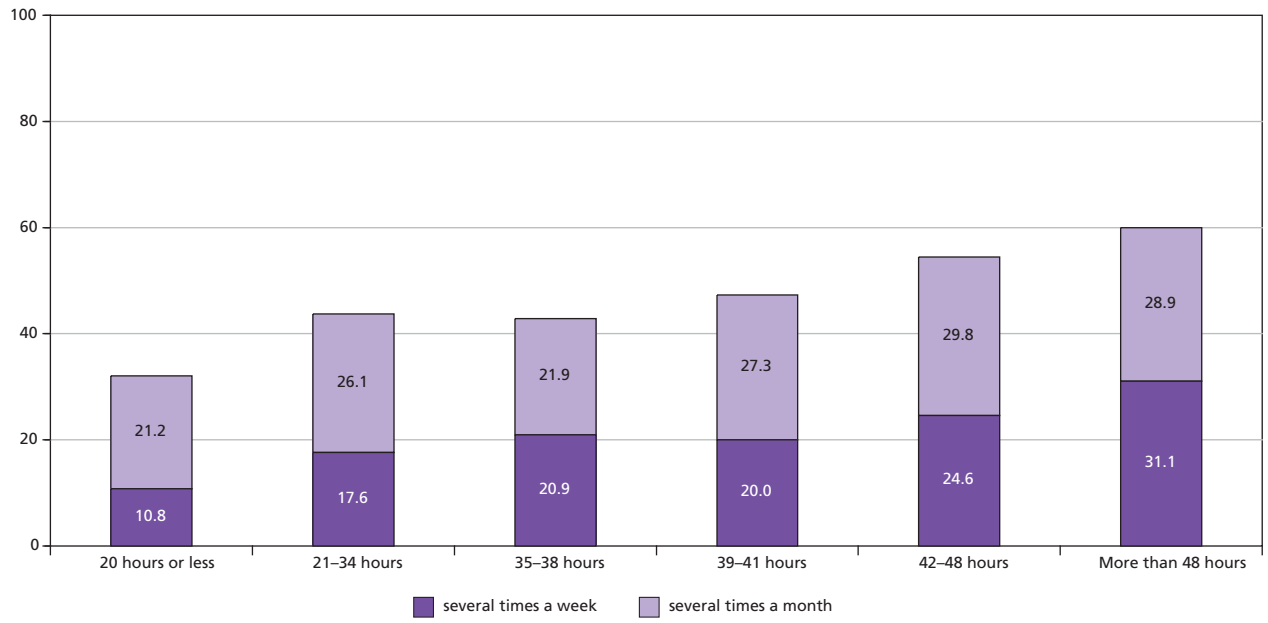
(22%) are too tired from work to do the household chores several times a week. Similar, albeit somewhat lower, proportions of workers state that they had difficulties in fulfilling their family responsibilities because of the amount of time they spend on the job: 29% of workers indicate that this happened at least several times a month, while, for 10% of the workers, this situation arose several times a week.

As Table 8 shows, work–life balance problems prove to be most common in south-eastern Europe. In Croatia and Greece, a little over 70% of workers respond that they are too tired to do household jobs at least several times a month because of work, and about half of the workers in the CC3 report difficulties in fulfilling family responsibilities because work takes up so much of their time. Reports of negative effects of work on private life are least prevalent in Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, where fewer than 40% of workers are too tired to do household jobs at least several times a month. Such negative effects of work are also less common in Finland, France and Sweden, where less than a fifth of workers have difficulties in fulfilling family responsibilities at least several times a month because of the time they spend working.

Changing the perspective to look at the negative effects of family life on paid work, it seems that relatively fewer workers report these effects. Some 3% of workers in the EU27 have found it difficult to concentrate at work several times a week because of family responsibilities and another 8% report that this happened several times a month. Nevertheless, significant country differences arise. Workers in Turkey are the most likely to feel that family responsibilities interfere with their work: 15% report that this happens several times a week and a further 17% cite such interference several times a month. At the other end of the spectrum, in Sweden, this effect is rarely reported; less than 5% of workers stated that they have difficulties in concentrating at work at least several times a month because of family responsibilities.

Considering the three work–life balance indicators overall, this issue seems to mainly be a problem of work disturbing family and home life, with the most common effect being that the worker is too tired after work to do household jobs. Men and women in the EU27 struggle with work–life balance almost to the same extent. Some 22% of working men state that they are too tired several times a week to do household jobs, while 21% of women report the same problem. Meanwhile, 11% of men find it difficult several times a week to fulfil family responsibilities because of work, as do 10% of women. Likewise, similar proportions of men (3%) and women (4%) report that they have

Figure 14: Extent to which work affects ability to do housework, by working hours, EU27 (%)



Question 11a: How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year? I have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done. Categories: Several times a week, Several times a month, Several times a year, Less often/rarely, Never, Don't know.

Question 6: How many hours do you normally work per week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime?

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 9: Too little time for activities of daily life, by gender and couple composition of household, EU27 (%)

Couple composition of household	Contact with family members		Other social contact		Own hobbies/interests		Voluntary work/political activities*	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Both working	32	28	37	39	49	59	46	52
Respondent working, partner not working	29	23	35	42	52	51	48	49
Respondent working, no partner	24	24	28	35	41	50	51	56
Both not working	13	13	17	20	20	29	35	39
Respondent not working, partner working	18	14	27	27	29	48	42	51
Respondent not working, no partner	20	17	18	22	24	31	47	46
Total	24	20	28	30	37	44	45	48

Question 39: I am going to read out some areas of daily life in which you can spend your time. Could you tell me if you think you spend too much, too little or just about the right amount of time in each area. a) My job/paid work; b) Contact with family members living in this household or elsewhere; c) Other social contact (not family); d) Own hobbies/interests; e) Taking part in voluntary work or political activities. * Since a quarter of men and women answered 'Don't know' to the question about taking part in voluntary work or political activities, these answers are excluded from the figures. The couple composition variable is based on the household grid at the start of the questionnaire.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 10: Too little time for activities of daily life among those in employment, by country (%)

	Contact with family members		Other social contact		Own hobbies/ interests		Voluntary work/political activities*	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
AT	40	30	28	32	52	56	32	25
BE	28	32	36	39	43	59	38	46
BG	29	23	42	45	53	64	61	69
CY	13	8	27	27	40	64	86	90
CZ	19	14	26	36	44	59	59	69
DE	21	21	26	27	41	48	28	34
DK	39	36	32	41	37	52	35	44
EE	32	23	24	32	40	50	54	50
EL	14	12	30	40	57	67	77	86
ES	22	25	25	38	44	56	52	63
FI	33	35	45	52	51	52	39	45
FR	45	38	40	43	49	63	55	64
HU	28	34	34	42	49	57	33	42
IE	20	13	25	29	40	50	54	63
IT	30	24	34	33	56	62	60	69
LT	38	37	28	30	50	48	39	34
LU	25	33	33	40	44	50	57	75
LV	36	40	34	32	48	61	52	50
MT	33	25	50	50	44	67	57	67
NL	37	36	46	42	44	51	35	43
PL	24	25	36	42	47	54	28	39
PT	34	36	33	35	46	57	61	60
RO	36	27	41	52	57	64	66	73
SE	33	31	56	52	49	55	38	44
SI	43	36	40	45	53	59	50	55
SK	28	14	44	47	45	59	69	74
UK	31	25	36	43	45	51	60	57
HR	42	38	44	56	55	64	68	68
MK	23	19	36	40	41	44	65	71
TR	23	31	28	38	51	59	55	67
NO	33	35	54	52	53	55	42	52
CC3	25	32	29	42	51	58	55	67
NMS12	28	25	36	43	49	58	46	55
EU15	30	27	33	37	47	55	48	52
EU27	29	27	34	38	47	56	48	53

Question 39: I am going to read out some areas of daily life in which you can spend your time. Could you tell me if you think you spend too much, too little or just about the right amount of time in each area. a) My job/paid work; b) Contact with family members living in this household or elsewhere; c) Other social contact (not family); d) Own hobbies/interests; e) Taking part in voluntary work or political activities. * Since a quarter of men and women answered 'Don't know' to the question about taking part in voluntary work or political activities, these answers are excluded from the figures.

Source: EQLS 2007.

problems several times a week in concentrating at work because of family responsibilities.

A clear relationship emerges between work–life balance and the number of hours worked. Looking at those responding that they are too tired after work to do household jobs, Figure 14 on facing page shows a steady increase in problems as working hours increase; ultimately, 60% of those working more than 48 hours a week declare that they

have difficulties in this regard at least several times a month.

Activities of daily life

More than a quarter (27%) of workers in the EU27 feel that they spend too much time in work; more men than women are of this opinion (29% of men and 24% of women). Only 5% of workers think they spend too little time working. As Table 9 shows, finding a balance appears to be most difficult for workers who have a partner who is not working, with 29% of workers in this category reporting that they spend too much time in paid work.

Altogether, workers in Turkey (44%), Slovenia (38%) and Greece (37%) are most likely to perceive that they work too much, which is in line with these countries' long average working hours especially in Greece and Turkey. In comparison, in Belgium only 18% and in Luxembourg only 20% of workers believe they spend too much time working.

Work has a negative impact on the amount of time available to spend with family; Table 9 outlines this effect for men and women by couple composition. Overall, the proportion of people responding that they spend too little time in contact with their family stands at 30% when both partners work, 28% when one partner (the respondent) is working and 32% for workers without a partner. With regard to other social contacts, the picture is similar: about one worker in three indicates that they spend too little time on other social contacts.

Concerning hobbies, a little more than half of those who work and who have a partner say that they have too little time to pursue these personal interests. At the same time, a significant proportion of those workers who do not have a partner (45%) and those who do not work but whose partner is working (44%) report having too little time for hobbies. The particular work situation appears to have less of an impact on views regarding voluntary activities; altogether, nearly half of the respondents indicate having too little time for these activities.

For workers in all countries, women are generally more likely than men to reply that they have too little time for activities of daily life, except for contact with family members; the highest proportions of women reporting not having enough time are found in the NMS12 and CC3. As Table 10 shows, workers in Croatia, France and Slovenia are most likely to reply that they have too little time for family. Meanwhile, workers in the Nordic countries of Finland, Norway and Sweden – and also those in Croatia, Malta, Romania and Slovakia – respond most often that they have too little time for other social contacts. The highest proportions of workers reporting that they have too little time for personal hobbies or interests and/or for political or voluntary activities are mostly found among southern and eastern European countries.

Conclusions

Most people in employment spend a considerable number of hours at work; therefore, difficulties in reconciling work and private life are commonplace. Work–life balance for men and women is indeed an important element of quality of life. Half of the workers in the EU indicate that after work they are sometimes too tired to do the household chores, while for almost a quarter of workers, this happens several times a week.

Considering the employment situation and working time arrangements of men and women, it is clear that women in particular adapt their professional choices to their personal circumstances. The European Commission's *Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006–2010* (European Commission, 2006a) emphasises that contemporary working life, which demands a flexible and mobile labour force, treats men and women differently. Women often have to choose between having children or a career due to lack of flexible work arrangements and care services, gender stereotypes and an unequal share of family responsibilities.

In general, women more often choose to work part time and men more often work long hours. Eurofound's surveys show that people working a higher number of paid hours cite more problems regarding work–life balance compared with those who work fewer hours. More than a quarter of workers in the EU Member States indicate that they spend too much time in work, and this is more often the case for men than women.

Instead of a tendency towards men working long hours and women working part time, other possibilities should be made available to achieve a better work–life balance. This would mean encouraging fathers to take parental leave and to offer childcare facilities in order to encourage full-time work without excessive hours for both men and women, thus balancing the paid working hours between the sexes. In addition, hours of unpaid work could be more equally shared between the members of the household. Such time arrangements would relieve some of the 'breadwinner' burden from men and offer more career possibilities for women.

Family life 4

Family life is at the core of daily experiences for the majority of people and, not surprisingly, the quality of family relationships is regarded as most important for quality of life (Alber and Fahey, 2004). In recent years, policy interest in the quality of family life – and factors influencing this sphere – has increased. This interest reflects mounting concern about the challenges for the maintenance of family ties and the difficulties that families face in raising children as well as caring for adult family members. Attention to family issues has also intensified with growing awareness of demographic trends that point to a rapidly changing age profile of Europe's population, due to declining fertility and increasing life expectancy (European Commission, 2006b).

The general ageing of the population has important implications for families in relation to both childcare and elder care – roles that are becoming increasingly emphasised in EU debate (European Commission, 2007a), where attention is now being paid to the burdens and needs of family caregivers. Alongside the changing demography of the general population and the workforce, related changes are apparent in the labour market – specifically the growing participation of women at all ages. These changes have been influenced by policy initiatives such as the Lisbon Strategy and are explicit elements of both employment and social protection policy areas. The links between employment and care in terms of work–life balance were addressed in the previous chapter; here, the focus will be on the roles of family members and the sharing of family responsibilities. Clearly, the gender division of labour within the household and families is a central concern of policies for equal opportunities.

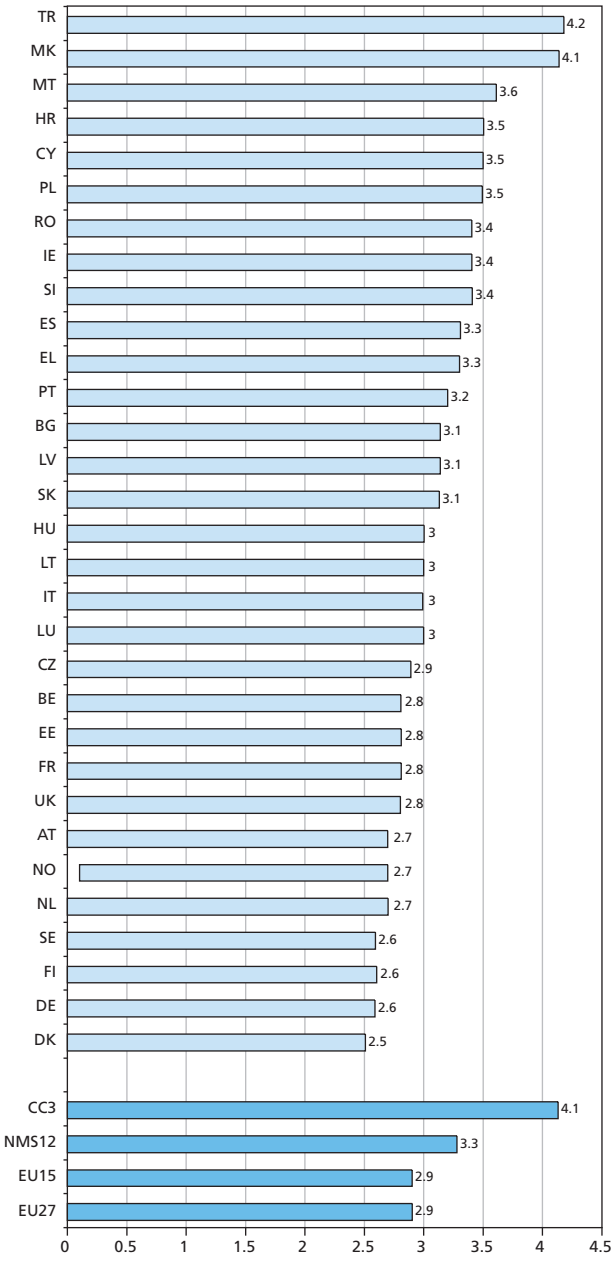
The EQLS data offer an opportunity to examine the role and contribution of the family in the different Member States. The survey also provides an insight into patterns of family interaction among different social groups. Social integration is based on contacts with family and friends; this will be examined along with the relative contribution of family and friends in coping with difficulties in everyday life.

Households and families

The average household size in Member States is related to the age structure and patterns of household formation (Fahey et al, 2004). The picture in the EQLS shows marked differences between countries, from an average household size of 2.5 persons in Denmark to 4.2 persons in Turkey (Figure 15). Overall, the largest households are in the CC3 and the smallest are in the northern EU15 Member States; the Mediterranean countries in the EU15 as well as Ireland have larger household sizes, much the same as in the NMS12.

Great diversity emerges in household composition across and within countries. Altogether, 37% of households in the EU27 consist of a couple with children, and a quarter of households consist of a couple only. One-person households comprise about one in six of all households and the proportion is higher in the EU15 (16%) than in the NMS12 (11%) or CC3 (5%). This is also true of childless couple households, which comprise 27% of EU15 households, but only 18% of those in the NMS12 and 12% in the CC3. Fahey et al (2004) argue that EU15 households

Figure 15: Household size, by country (persons)



Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 11: Family composition, by age of respondent and country group (%)

	EU27			EU15			NMS12			CC3		
	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years
Single	18	11	34	20	12	34	12	9	34	11	4	17
Single parent	6	7	7	6	6	5	6	8	15	2	6	18
Couple	26	24	49	27	25	52	19	19	36	18	12	41
Couple with child under 16 years of age	50	31	-	47	33	-	63	27	-	69	42	1
Couple with all children over 16 years of age	-	27	10	-	24	9	-	37	15	-	36	23

The data are based on information from the household grid at the start of the survey questionnaire, excluding multigenerational and other households.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 12: Marital status, by age of respondent and country group (%)

	EU27			EU15			NMS12			CC3		
	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years
Married or living with partner	47	80	59	46	80	61	49	81	51	41	88	65
Separated/divorced and not living with partner	3	10	4	3	10	5	4	8	4	1	3	1
Widowed and not living with partner	-	3	33	-	3	30	-	5	42	-	6	33
Never married and not living with partner	50	7	4	51	7	4	47	6	3	58	3	1

Question 30: Could I ask you about your current marital status? Which of the following descriptions best applies to you? Are you …? 1) Married or living with partner; 2) Separated or divorced and not living with partner; 3) Widowed and not living with partner; 4) Never married and not living with partner; 5) Don't know / No answer.

Source: EQLS 2007.

become childless earlier, in the sense that the adult children move away from home at a younger age, and thus that losing a partner results more often in a one-person household. Nonetheless, the data presented in Table 11 show that in both the EU15 and NMS12, one-third of people aged 65 years and over are living alone; the proportion is higher for women than for men. The policy implications in terms of social inclusion and long-term care are well known, but the sheer numbers of older people living alone is striking.

The prevalence of widowhood among people aged 65 years and over is higher in the NMS12, in part reflecting lower life expectancy, particularly for men. As Table 12 shows, one-third of older people in the EU27 are widowed; relatively few are separated or divorced. However, almost 10% of the EU27 population aged between 35 and 64 years is separated or divorced, and relatively little difference emerges between the proportions in the EU15 and NMS12. The presence of marital breakdown is less visible in the CC3, as well as in Greece, Italy, Malta and Poland; the highest proportions of people who are separated or divorced and not living with their partner were found in Belgium, Estonia, Latvia and Sweden.

The EQLS is by no means a dedicated tool for analysing household and family composition; nevertheless, it may be noted that the data on marital breakdown broadly reflect

the European population statistics, as do the numbers of children in the household, which are highest in Ireland and lowest in Italy.

Contact with family and friends

Family contacts are extensive for most people, although frequent contact with friends is reported by an even higher proportion of people in most age groups. Among people who have children or parents living outside their household, a majority report face-to-face contact with one or more of them at least once a week. Altogether, half of those in the EU27 report contact with some of their children at least every day or almost every day, and a quarter indicate contact more than once a day. No general differences in frequency of direct contact arise between the EU15 and NMS12; however, significant country differences emerge, with the highest rates of parents' direct contact with their children in Hungary, Italy and Spain, and the lowest reported frequencies in Sweden.

With the exception of FYROM, a consistent pattern is found in all countries in which women are more likely than men to report frequent direct contact with their children; this may be related in part to their lower levels of labour market participation. Curiously, people with higher education and income were less likely to report seeing their children frequently; for example, the proportion reporting at least weekly contact was 77% among people with education up to secondary level but only 69% among people with higher qualifications. This difference may reflect a higher level of geographical mobility among people with more education, as distance must be a factor in face-to-face contacts; a similar finding was apparent with regard to contact with parents in the NMS12, but not in the EU15.

Table 13: Frequent contact with family and friends outside the household, by age of respondent (%)

	18–24 years	25–34 years	35–49 years	50–64 years	65+ years
Any of your children	78	85	83	72	73
Your mother or father	77	64	59	57	54
Any brother, sister or other relative	68	54	41	33	31
Any of your friends or neighbours	93	85	81	81	84

Question 32: On average, thinking of people living outside your household, how often do you have direct (face-to-face) contact with … a) Any of your children; b) Your mother or father; c) Any brother, sister or other relative; d) Any of your friends or neighbours? Only those people who have such relatives are considered; responses 'Don't know' or 'Don't have such relatives' were excluded. The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'more than once a day', 'every day or almost every day' or 'at least once a week'.

Source: EQLS 2007.

The high frequency of contact with children was largely maintained across age groups; however, as Table 13 shows, frequent contact with parents, siblings and other relatives tends to decline with age. Nonetheless, at least half of the respondents in all age groups reported seeing their mother or father on at least a weekly basis.

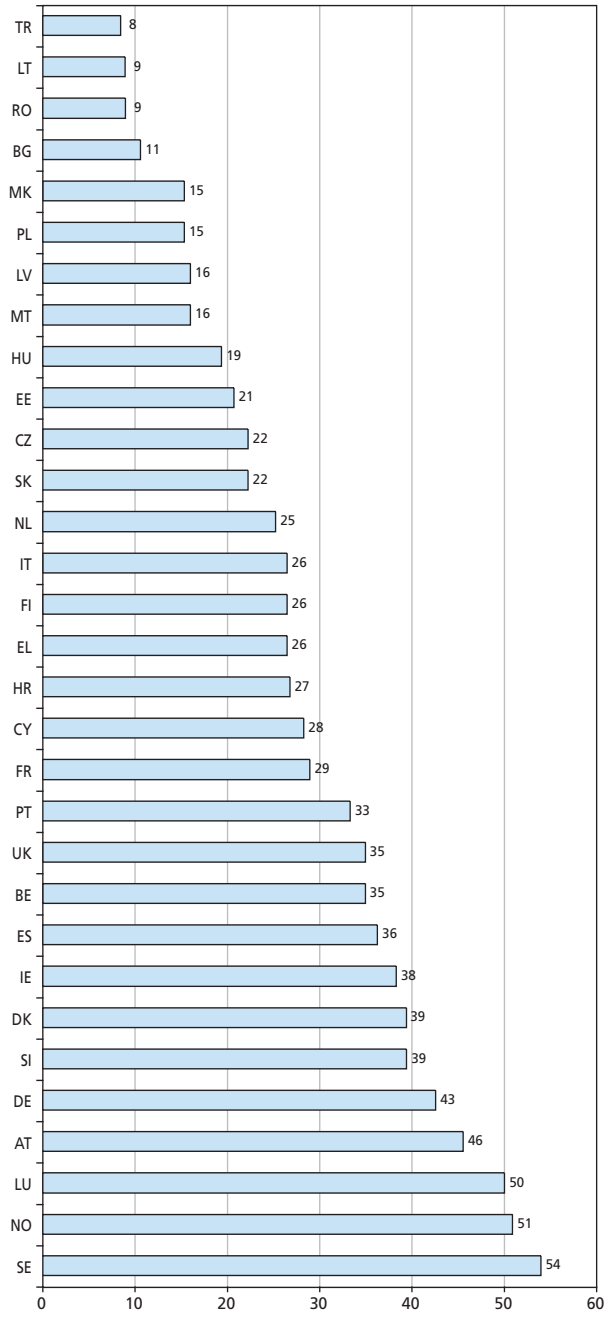
Less than 1% of people in the survey failed to report some contact with friends or neighbours, although about 6% of respondents indicated that such contact occurred, on average, less than once a month; this figure was over 10% in France, Luxembourg, FYROM, Malta and Slovakia. No general differences arose between country groups, although 21% of respondents in Turkey stated that they saw friends or neighbours more than once a day. Overall, half of those in the EU27 reported contact with friends or neighbours at least every day or almost every day. No marked differences arose according to gender or income in reporting frequent (at least weekly) contact with friends. As Table 13 indicates, young people aged between 18 and 24 years report the most frequent contact with friends and neighbours; nevertheless, most older people still maintain a high level of interaction with people who live outside their household.

Today, of course, much regular contact with family and friends is by telephone and email or by post. In the EU27, more than three-quarters of people who have children reported such contact with them at least weekly, and more than half of those respondents who have siblings or other relatives said that they communicated with them at least this often. One-third of people in the EU27 whose parents are still alive stated that they had contact by telephone, email or post with their mother or father at least every day or almost every day; nearly three-quarters were in contact at least every week.

At a time when mobility and migration are on the public and policy agenda, it may be interesting to note how many people report that they have friends who have come from another country to live in their country; the results are presented in Figure 16.

Evidently, country is a significant factor in the responses to this question, reflecting the scale of inward migration as well as the level of interaction. In the majority of countries, less than a third of people report having any friend from

Figure 16: Friends from another country, by country (%)



Question 34: Do you have any friends who have come to live in [country of interview] from another country? The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'yes, a lot' and 'yes, a few'.

Source: EQLS 2007.

another country. Altogether, in the EU27, 6% of people reported having a lot of friends from other countries and 24% reported having a few friends; the proportion of respondents with any friends from another country was twice as high in the EU15 (34%) as in the NMS12 (16%), while the proportion was low in the CC3 (10%). As Figure 16 shows, large differences arise, especially between the EU15 Member States, with the highest proportion of people having friends from another country in Luxembourg and Sweden, as well as Norway. No information is available about the origin or characteristics of the friends; however, such friendships are more common among men and younger people. In the EU15, 38% of men and 31% of women report having a friend from another country. Meanwhile, the proportion decreases with age, from 47% of people in the EU15 aged between 18 and 24 years to 19% of people aged 65 years and over.

Not surprisingly, people who were not born in the country of interview are more likely to report having friends from another country; in the EU27, 72% of those not born in the country of interview have such friends, compared with 27% of people born in that country. Perhaps more surprisingly, people in the highest income quartile were most likely to have friends from another country: 37% compared with 28% for people with a lower income. This is also reflected in the level of education, with 42% of those with an education above secondary level reporting having a friend from another country, compared with 26% of those with less education.

Family responsibilities and sources of support

Care and housework are core activities occupying the time and resources of family members, and are done in most cases by family members, particularly women. Table 14 underlines that these tasks and responsibilities are not shared equally by men and women in the household.

Some 30% of people in the EU27 report that they are involved in childcare on a daily basis, with a higher proportion giving this answer in the NMS12 (33%) than in the EU15 (29%) or the CC3 (28%). These are much higher rates than the proportion of people in these three country groups responding that they are involved in daily caring for an elderly or disabled relative (7%, 6% and 6% respectively). While most people providing childcare do this every day, most people involved in elder care report doing this activity less often: in the EU27, 3% of people state that they care for an elderly or disabled relative several times a week, 4% do it once or twice a week and 8% do so less than once a week. Altogether, a quarter of people report involvement in care for an elderly or disabled relative; the tasks range from personal support with bathing or feeding to less time-bound activities, such as help with finances or leisure activities.

The gendered nature of care work has been extensively discussed elsewhere and is clearly evident in Table 14;

Table 14: Daily care and housework, by gender and country group (%)

	EU27		EU15		NMS12		CC3	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Caring for and educating children	25	35	24	34	27	39	10	45
Cooking and housework	29	79	31	81	21	72	11	78
Caring for elderly/disabled relatives	4	9	3	9	5	8	4	8

Question 36: How often are you involved in any of the following activities outside of paid work? a) Caring for and educating children; b) Cooking and housework; c) Caring for elderly/disabled relatives. The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'every day'.

Source: EQLS 2007.

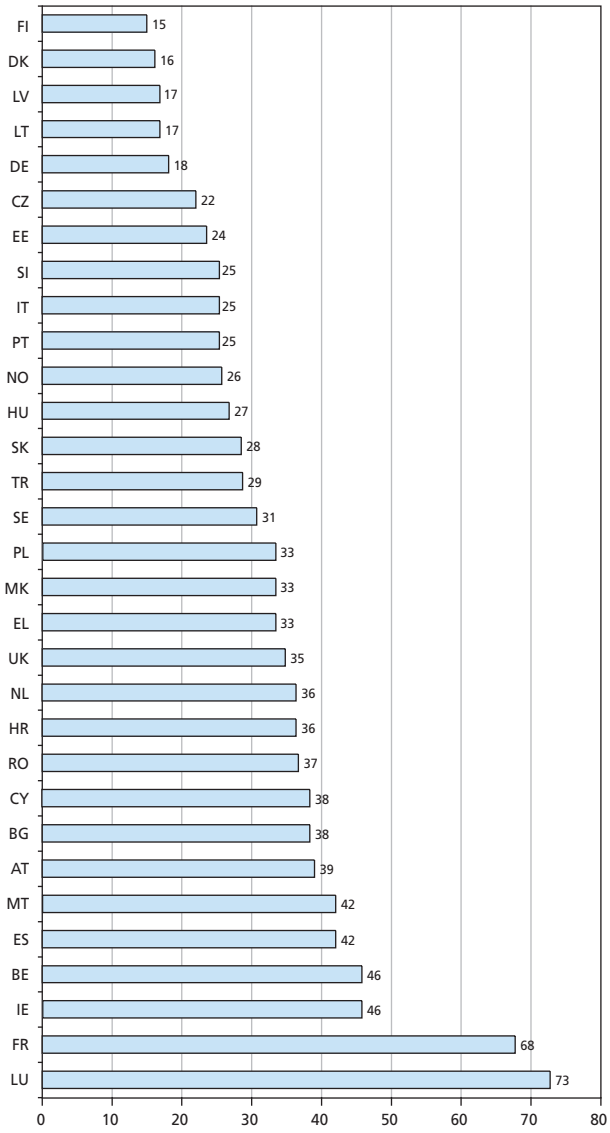
some of the implications have been discussed in the previous chapter. However, care work is also associated with age and income: in the EU27, reporting of daily involvement in childcare is highest among people aged between 35–49 years (55%), followed by people in the 25–34 age group (41%). Meanwhile, reporting daily involvement in elder care is highest for the 50–64 age group (9%), followed by the 35–49 age group (7%). Surprisingly, only 6% of people aged 65 years and over reported daily involvement in caring for a disabled or elderly relative; perhaps care for people in their own home was under-reported. Overall, people – and specifically women – in the middle years of life are often faced with care responsibilities for both children and elderly dependants, and potentially with a third role in paid employment as well. Some relationship between care work and income is also evident, such that people in the lowest income quartile are more likely to be involved in care work than those in the highest quartile, with the proportion decreasing from 33% to 28% for daily childcare, and from 8% to 3% for elder care.

Housework appears to be an almost daily occupation for most women, but engages only a minority of men on a daily basis; indeed, as Table 14 shows, the proportion of men doing daily housework is even lower in the NMS12, and particularly in the CC3, than in the EU15. In Turkey, only 11% of men as against 77% of women report daily involvement in cooking and housework; this difference of more than 60 percentage points is also found in Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, FYROM, Malta and Portugal.

The extent of gender inequality in participation in housework is only partially reflected in responses to a question asking people whether they think the share of the housework that they do is fair (Question 38). The responses suggest that perceptions are associated with traditions and cultural practices regarding the gender division of work in both households and employment (Figure 17).

The proportion of people feeling that they do more than their fair share of housework amounts to 20% in the EU15,

Figure 17: Women who reported doing 'more than their fair share' of housework, by country (%)



Question 38: Do you think that the share of housework you do is … 1) More than your fair share; 2) Just about your fair share; 3) Less than your fair share; 4) Don't know. Category 4 is excluded (this question is asked if the household contains at least two people aged 18 years or over).

Source: EQLS 2007.

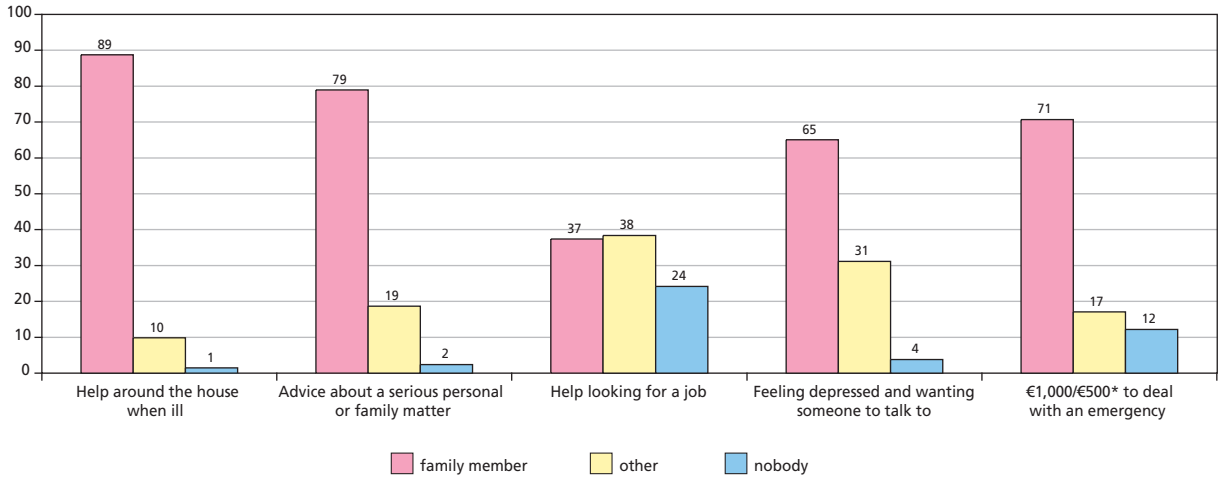
18% in the NMS12 and 17% in the CC3. The most striking differences are between the proportions of men and women who believe that they do more than their fair share: in the EU27, 33% of women report this opinion compared with only 5% of men. The proportions are highest for people who describe their occupation as 'homemaker' (40%), for those in single-parent households and among those aged 35–49 years.

The proportion of people feeling that they do less than their fair share of the housework is 24% in the EU15, 21% in the NMS12 and 14% in the CC3. It is lowest in FYROM and Turkey, where in fact women do most of the housework by far; however, due to cultural traditions, men may consider that they do their fair share of housework. This proportion is also lowest in Finland, where greater equality is found between the sexes. However unfair the distribution of household tasks and responsibilities is, for many needs – practical, emotional and financial – family members are the main source of help and support, as Figure 18 shows.

Nearly all people have someone they feel that they could turn to if they needed help around the house if they were ill. In the EU27, 54% of respondents thought that they would receive support from a partner or spouse and 34% identified another family member. Broadly speaking, the same is true for advice about a serious personal or family matter, although 15% feel that they would approach a friend and 4% would ask someone else. The proportion of people who would expect advice from a friend, work colleague, neighbour or someone else – rather than a family member – was higher in the EU15 (20%) than in the NMS12 (15%); these figures were highest in Denmark, Finland and France. The findings regarding advice on a personal matter are similar to those regarding whom people would go to if they were feeling a little depressed. Again, a majority of respondents in the EU27 and elsewhere would go first to a family member, but a quarter would seek help from a friend and 6% would talk to a work colleague, neighbour or someone else. In both the EU15 and NMS12, women were somewhat more likely than men to identify a friend or colleague to talk to about feeling depressed (33% compared with 28%).

In the practical matters of finding a job or urgently raising €1,000 (€500 in the NMS12 and CC3), more people felt that there was nobody they could approach with such a request. Regarding the urgent raising of money, 14% of people in the NMS12 could identify nobody to approach, compared with 11% in the EU15; only 59% of respondents in the NMS12 felt that they could approach a family member in this regard, compared with 70% in the EU15. Perhaps unsurprisingly, family members are more likely to be approached by people with a higher income, but also by women. In the EU27, 71% of women would ask a family member for money in this case, compared with 64% of men. Finally, it is clear that networks of friends and work colleagues play an important role in helping to look for a job.

Figure 18: Sources of help and support (%)

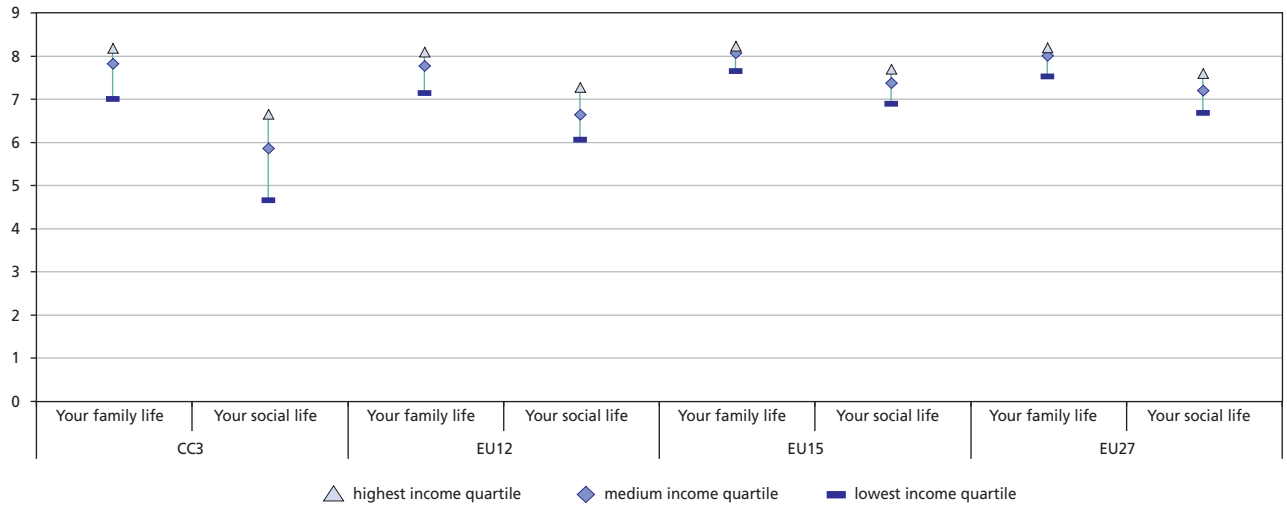


Question 35: From whom would you get support in each of the following situations? For each situation, choose the most important person.

*In the CC3 and NMS12, the survey asked for the amount in the national currency equivalent to €500; in the remaining countries, the amount in question was €1,000 or its equivalent.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Figure 19: Average satisfaction with family and social life, by income quartile and country group



Question 40: Could you please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied you are with each of the following items, where 1 means you are very dissatisfied and 10 means you are very satisfied?

Source: EQLS 2007.

Satisfaction with family and social life

In answering questions about satisfaction with aspects of life, people tend to give rather positive responses to general questions but are less satisfied when asked about more specific details. Thus, on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied), average scores for family life and social life are rather high. People may also be less inclined to declare dissatisfaction with more personal aspects of life over which they feel responsible (Alber and Fahey, 2004).

With regard to family life, the highest satisfaction is expressed by people in the Nordic countries and those in Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta. There are no large differences between the country clusters (Figure 19). In general, men and women express rather similar levels of satisfaction, although scores for women in the NMS12 and specifically in the Baltic States are lower than for men. The most striking and consistent association is between income and satisfaction with family life: as depicted in Figure 19, in almost all countries, people with a higher income are happier with their family life. In relation to family characteristics, the highest satisfaction with family life is reported by couples (with and without children); single parents – particularly those with children aged under 16 years – are less satisfied, with an average score of 7.1 in the EU15 and 5.8 in the NMS12.

Satisfaction with social life tends to be rated highly less consistently than satisfaction with family life. Nevertheless, a strong association with income is again found, particularly in the NMS12 and CC3. Figure 19 shows this relationship, and also shows that satisfaction with social life is higher in the EU15 than in the NMS12, and even more so than in the CC3. Satisfaction with social life may reflect not only having family and friends, but also having the resources, opportunities and facilities for socialising.

Conclusions

Results from the EQLS have underlined the central place of family in people's daily lives. Of course, households are generally composed of other family members, but there are also frequent contacts with family outside the household. Family is the cornerstone of systems for care of both children and elderly dependants, and in many respects other family members are the first people to be approached for help and support.

Differences in the experience of family life are found between countries; however, the similarities are perhaps more striking. It is difficult to generalise about differences between country clusters, and the inequalities associated, for example, with gendered responsibilities for care and housework are spread widely across the European countries. Women in all countries are less happy about the distribution of tasks, although the sense of injustice is relatively muted in, for instance, Mediterranean Europe.

Income plays some role in managing care and housework. However, income is also strikingly related to satisfaction with family life, both between and within countries. It appears that relatively long-standing family values and cultures interact with the economic situation to shape experiences. Policies in relation to the labour market, social protection and equal opportunities also have an important

place. Families, perhaps especially those in mid life, need support to manage the demands of childcare and elder care alongside other needs and demands, such as employment. It is important to consider not only public policies, but also the provision of local services and facilities. In any case, it is clear that much remains to be done in promoting equal opportunities and the sharing of household tasks, as well as extending care services, particularly for the large numbers of older family members.

Housing and local environment 5

The affordability, adequacy and quality of accommodation are major preoccupations for most European citizens. Effective integration into society and employment are dependent on having the basic need of shelter met, while having a good home is important for family life and social relationships. The 2008 global economic crisis has underlined the importance of housing in people's lives and the risks involved in finding secure accommodation. Decent housing is generally high on the list of priorities for a good quality of life (Alber and Fahey, 2004).

Housing is not a basic legal competence of the European institutions; its regulation and funding are prerogatives of the individual Member States, which has resulted in much diversity in the provision of housing across Europe. The significance of adequate housing is recognised in EU documents and declarations and has been underlined as a prerequisite for social inclusion and integration in employment (European Commission, 2007a). Moreover, housing provision is supported as an essential element of the physical infrastructure through the regional development and structural funds.

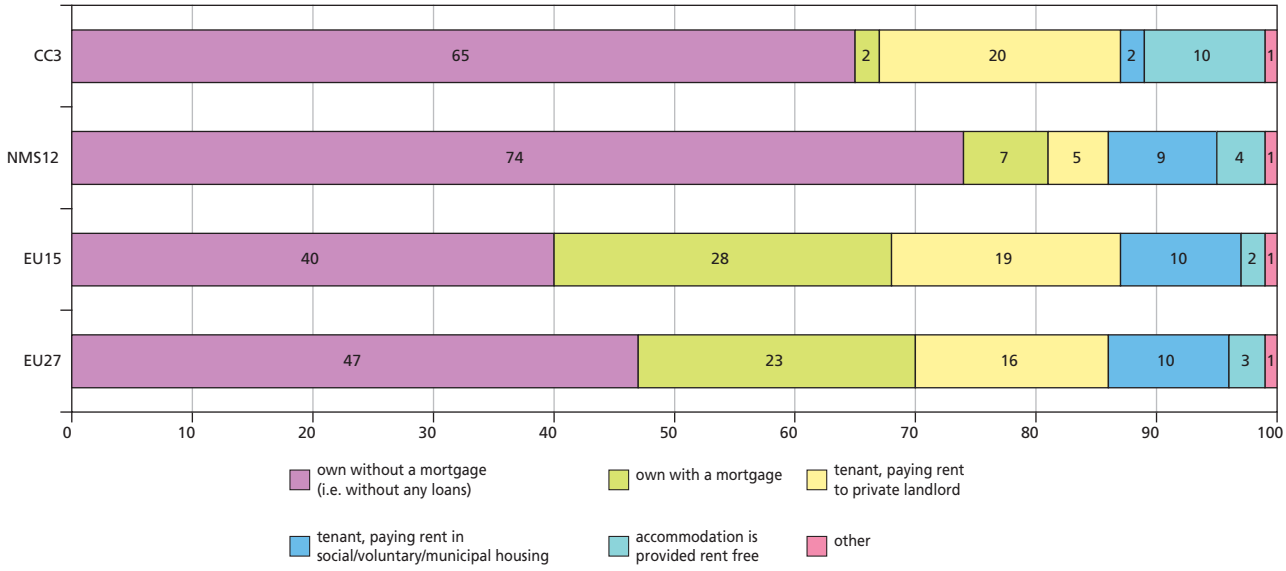
The EQLS surveys people living in households, so it does not capture the views of people living in institutions or who are homeless. As a result, the questions about security of tenure and quality of accommodation will not capture some of the most difficult experiences for people in Europe. Nonetheless, social and economic factors play a major role in influencing the quality of housing and the local environment. This chapter will focus on inequalities in housing and how these relate to the characteristics of the respondent and the country in which they live.

Home ownership

Countries differ markedly in their approaches to the public provision of accommodation and in the financing arrangements for purchasing property. Even in the EU15, there are big differences in relation to people's preoccupation with buying their own home rather than, for example, privately renting accommodation. Furthermore, it should be noted that the central and eastern European countries provided many incentives for outright ownership of housing during the period of economic transition in the early 1990s. These different traditions and opportunities are reflected in Figure 20.

In the EU27 as a whole, 70% of people say that they own their own home, while nearly half own it outright without any mortgage or loan (Figure 20). The proportion of people who own their own home is higher in the NMS12, at 81%. Furthermore, in these countries about three-quarters (74%) of all people own their home outright without any loans or mortgage payments; this proportion is highest in Romania (87%), Bulgaria (86%) and Lithuania (84%). In the EU15, the highest proportions of homeowners without a mortgage are found in Greece (68%) and Italy (62%). The rates of

Figure 20: Housing status, by country group (%)



Question 16: Which of the following best describes your accommodation? 1) Own without mortgage (i.e. without any loans); 2) Own with mortgage; 3) Tenant, paying rent to private landlord; 4) Tenant, paying rent in social/voluntary/municipal housing; 5) Accommodation is provided rent free; 6) Other; 7) Don't know. Category 7 is excluded.

Source: EQLS 2007.

outright home ownership are lowest in the Netherlands and Sweden, where a majority of the population have some form of a mortgage. In general, the use of loans to buy housing is much more common in the EU15 (28%), especially in northern and western countries, than in the NMS12 (7%). This reflects the availability of this form of credit as well as different traditions of property transfer and self-build in other countries.

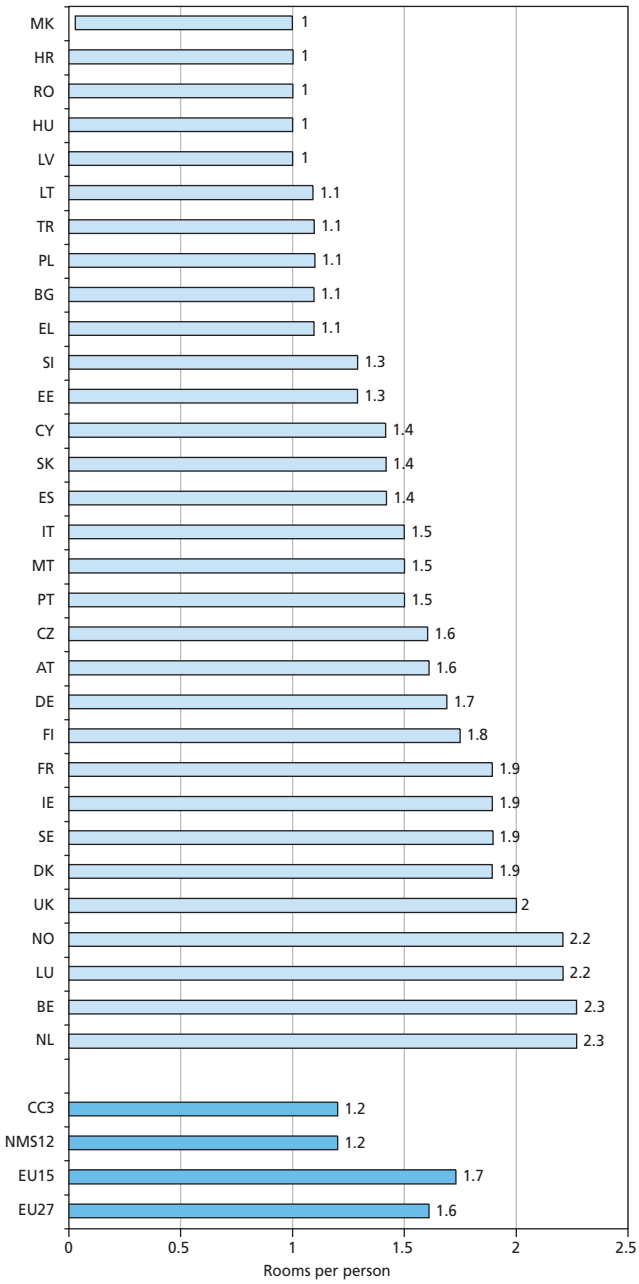
In terms of rented accommodation, about a quarter of people in the EU27 rent their accommodation, among whom a majority rent privately (16%). However, only 5% of people in the NMS12 pay rent to a private landlord, compared with 19% in the EU15. The proportion of people renting privately is highest (over 15%) in Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Sweden, as well as in Turkey, where one in five people rent privately. Social housing, including accommodation rented from a voluntary housing association, appears to play its most significant role (for over 15% of people) in Austria, Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands and Poland. In contrast, such accommodation is rare (below 2%) in the CC3.

Along with the strikingly different home ownership patterns in the various countries, significant socioeconomic differences in home ownership are evident within the Member States. Not surprisingly, there is a relationship between income and owning one's own home, albeit only with regard to those who have a mortgage. In both the EU15 and NMS12, people with higher incomes are more likely to have a mortgage, with 33% of people in the highest income quartile having a loan as against 23% of people in the middle quartile and 14% of those in the lowest income quartile. No marked differences in ownership are evident between men and women. However, older people are more likely to own their home outright: in the EU27, 60% of people aged 50–64 years own their home without any loan, while 71% of those aged 65 years and over do so; the corresponding figures for the EU15 and NMS12 are 54% and 68%, and 83% and 87% respectively. While it is tempting to describe this as an advantage of age, concerns about the quality of this housing start to emerge, particularly in some of the NMS12.

In most countries in the EU27, home ownership without a mortgage is more common in rural than in urban areas: 53% of those living in rural areas own their homes outright, as against 41% of those in urban areas. No consistent urban–rural distinction is evident among mortgage payers. However, rented accommodation – both private and social housing – is more common in urban areas, accounting for a third of urban dwellers as against fewer than one in five people living in rural areas in the EU27. From a country perspective, renting privately is most common among people living in the urban areas of Germany and Turkey, while the proportions of people living in social housing are highest in the urban areas of Austria and the Netherlands.

A clear association emerges between perceived security of tenure and ownership. In the EQLS (Question 18), the respondents were asked how likely they thought it was that

Figure 21: Average number of rooms per person, by country



Question 15: How many rooms does the accommodation in which you live have, excluding the kitchen, bathrooms, hallways, storerooms and rooms used solely for business (average per person in household)?

Source: EQLS 2007.

they might need to leave their accommodation within the next six months because they could no longer afford it. Altogether, the proportion of people who thought that was very likely or quite likely was less than 5%; however, the proportion rose for people living in privately rented housing, to 10% in the EU15 and as high as 19% in the CC3 and 25% in the NMS12.

Adequacy of housing

One element of housing adequacy is the volume of space available to people living in the accommodation, and one indicator of this is the number of rooms in the property. In the EQLS, the respondents were asked how many rooms their accommodation had, excluding the kitchen, bathroom, hallways, storerooms and rooms used solely for business purposes (Question 15). The average number of rooms available per person is presented in Figure 21 on facing page.

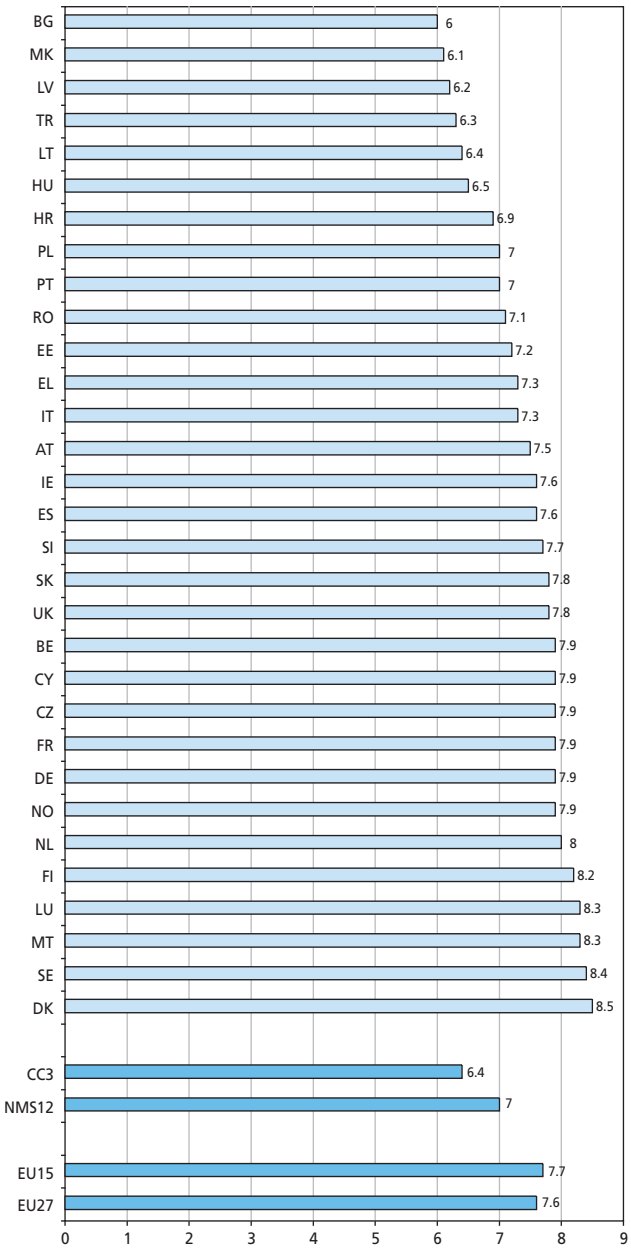
The CC3 and NMS12 share a similar average in terms of the number of rooms per person, although Croatia and FYROM record the least living space. In the EU15, the lowest number of rooms is found in the Mediterranean countries, although these data give no indication of the size of the rooms, while the most space appears to be in the Benelux countries. Not surprisingly, a consistent and marked relationship is evident between income and the average number of rooms per person in all of the country groups: in the EU27, this number increases from an average of 1.46 rooms per person among people in the lowest income quartile to 1.83 rooms among those in the highest quartile. Living space also increases with age, probably associated with falling household size in later years and many older people living alone (see Chapter 4). In the EU27, the average number of rooms per person is 1.35 in the households of people aged 35–49 years compared with 2.2 rooms per person among those aged 65 years and over.

The highest proportion of respondents reporting problems with a shortage of space in their accommodation is found in the CC3, particularly in FYROM and Turkey (see Table 15 on p. 42), but a similar proportion of people report this problem in several of the NMS, especially in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In general, as Table 15 shows, a shortage of space and most other housing problems are less common in the EU15 than in the NMS or CC3.

Altogether, some 37% of people in the CC3 report two or more of the six problems listed, while 21% report three or more such problems; the corresponding proportions in the NMS12 are 26% and 12%, while in the EU15 the respective proportions are 12% and 4%. The clearest concentration of problems is reported in the Baltic States and in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. In the EU15, multiple housing problems are found mainly in Greece and Portugal, particularly in relation to the problem of rot in windows and doors and dampness on walls or in the roof.

In all of the country groups, the proportion of reported housing problems is lowest among homeowners while it is more common among those renting their accommodation.

Figure 22: Satisfaction with accommodation, by country



Question 40.4: Could you please tell me on a scale of one to 10 how satisfied you are with your accommodation, where 1 means you are very dissatisfied and 10 means you are very satisfied?

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 15: Problems with accommodation, by country (%)

	Shortage of space	Rot in windows, doors or floors	Damp or leaks in walls or roof	Lack of indoor flushing toilet	Lack of bath or shower	Lack of place to sit outside	At least two problems
AT	16	3	8	0	0	17	11
BE	13	8	13	2	3	11	13
BG	27	17	13	25	12	5	26
CY	20	13	27	1	1	5	17
CZ	11	5	11	3	2	14	10
DE	12	4	7	2	2	12	9
DK	16	9	17	1	2	5	12
EE	26	26	23	14	17	22	39
EL	21	24	16	2	2	8	21
ES	17	5	12	1	1	25	14
FI	17	6	11	2	2	6	9
FR	17	9	15	1	1	13	14
HU	26	25	16	7	6	14	26
IE	17	4	8	3	4	9	12
IT	17	11	8	1	1	10	11
LT	30	26	18	22	20	18	38
LU	12	11	14	3	3	7	14
LV	33	33	32	19	21	19	43
MT	10	12	11	1	1	5	8
NL	15	7	11	1	1	5	8
PL	28	14	15	7	8	16	22
PT	18	9	22	1	1	17	18
RO	22	14	15	35	34	16	42
SE	14	4	6	6	6	6	6
SI	16	10	11	2	1	17	14
SK	13	11	9	4	2	12	13
UK	21	8	13	2	2	8	12
HR	20	19	18	4	5	13	22
MK	29	24	26	13	9	13	33
TR	33	31	34	10	10	15	38
NO	16	4	8	3	3	26	13
CC3	32	30	33	10	10	15	37
NMS12	24	15	15	15	13	15	26
EU15	16	8	11	1	1	12	12
EU27	18	9	12	4	4	13	15

Question 17: Do you have any of the following problems with your accommodation? a) Shortage of space; b) Rot in windows, doors or floors; c) Damp or leaks in walls or roof; d) Lack of indoor flushing toilet; e) Lack of bath or shower; f) Lack of place to sit outside (e.g. garden, balcony, terrace).

Source: EQLS 2007.

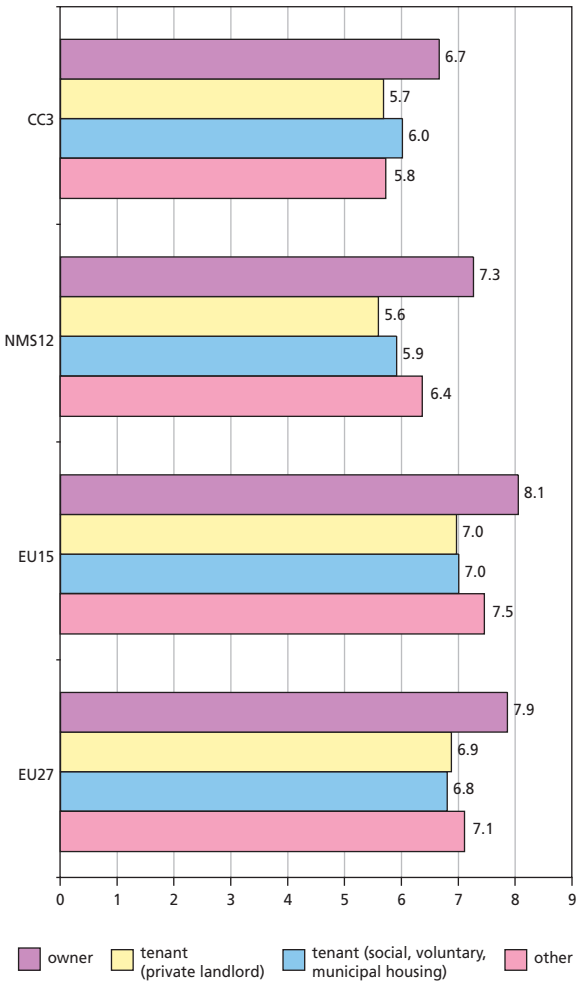
The main exception to this is in the NMS12, where homeowners without a mortgage are more likely to have problems due to a lack of an indoor flushing toilet – a problem reported by 16% of these homeowners compared with only 8% of people living in privately rented accommodation.

It is not surprising that the experience of problems with housing is consistently associated with income, particularly in the NMS12 and CC3. For example, problems with dampness or leaks are reported by 29% of people in the lowest income quartile in the NMS12 compared with only 8% of those in the highest quartile; the corresponding figures for the CC3 are 54% and 15%, while in the EU15 the respective proportions are lower at 18% and, somewhat surprisingly, 9%. In the NMS12, some 27% of people in the lowest income quartile cite a lack of a bath or shower, compared with 4% in the highest quartile; this problem is mainly reported in the Baltic States, Bulgaria and particularly Romania. Reported housing problems are also more evident among those living in rural areas, where respondents are more likely to report the lack of an indoor flushing toilet (Table 16). The lack of indoor toilet facilities is particularly evident among people aged 65 years and over in the NMS12.

In general, levels of overall satisfaction with accommodation reflect the extent of reported problems with housing conditions. The least satisfactory housing is found in the CC3, the Baltic States, Bulgaria and Romania. As Figure 22 on p. 41 shows, relatively low levels of satisfaction with housing quality are also found in Hungary and Poland, while, among the EU15 countries, housing is regarded with least satisfaction in Greece, Italy and Portugal. Overall, clear differences emerge in satisfaction with housing between the main country groups, although housing is rated at levels similar to those found in the EU15 countries in Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia.

No significant differences are evident between men and women in their levels of satisfaction with housing. Differences with age are also small, although the lowest

Figure 23: Satisfaction with accommodation, by housing status and country group



Question 40.4: Could you please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied you are with your accommodation, where 1 means you are very dissatisfied and 10 means you are very satisfied (average)?

Question 16: Which of the following best describes your accommodation?

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 16: Households without an indoor flushing toilet, by age of respondent, area of residence and country group (%)

	Average	18–24 years	25–34 years	35–49 years	50–64 years	65+ years	Rural	Urban
CC3	10	9	10	11	11	10	14	8
NMS12	15	12	13	12	14	23	24	5
EU15	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
EU27	4	4	4	3	4	6	6	2

Question 17d: Do you have any of the following problems with your accommodation – Lack of indoor flushing toilet?

Source: EQLS 2007.

levels of satisfaction with housing are frequently found among those aged 25–34 years, many of whom may have recently moved away from their family home. In nearly all of the countries, households of single parents with children under 16 years of age appear to be the least satisfied with their housing.

From the perspective of tenure status, homeowners are generally more satisfied with their housing than those who rent their accommodation either privately or from a municipal authority (Figure 23). Marked differences also emerge in a number of countries: in Ireland, for example, homeowners give an average score of 8.0 (on the 10-point scale) while tenants have an average score of 6.3; the corresponding figures for Hungary are 6.7 and 4.1, in Lithuania 6.6 and 4.7 and in Bulgaria 6.2 and 3.2.

Local environment

The area in which people live is related to their degree of satisfaction with their housing. For example, people living in rural areas generally give a higher satisfaction rating for their accommodation – 7.7 compared with 7.4 for those living in urban areas. However, other characteristics of rural areas may be perceived as less attractive or convenient: as the findings in Table 17 show, a range of facilities are less likely to be found in the immediate vicinity in rural areas compared with urban areas. It is perhaps more surprising, however, that the differences are not more pronounced in relation to the availability of certain types of facilities – for example, post offices and banking facilities or recycling services; however, it should be noted that most people (over three-quarters) who are classified as living in 'rural areas' reside in a village or small town rather than the open countryside.

In general, there were few differences in the availability of facilities between the EU15 and NMS12, although recycling facilities are clearly more accessible in the EU15 countries. Even so, country differences are evident in the availability of services in the EU15: for example, 80% or more of people living in Austria, Finland, Ireland and the UK report recycling facilities in their immediate neighbourhood compared with less than 60% in Greece, Portugal and Spain. The availability of a local post office was reported the least often in Sweden, while this service appeared to be particularly well catered for in Ireland and the UK, although the loss of this local service has been an issue in these countries.

Finally, it seems clear that many people are less than satisfied with the environmental and social quality of their local area. In the EQLS (Question 54), people were asked if they had any reason to complain about a range of problems associated with the environment in their immediate neighbourhood. Table 18 shows the proportions of people with some reason to complain.

Differences between the countries are marked; in Italy in particular, the respondents expressed a high level of complaints about nearly all of the environmental problems in question. In the NMS12, people in Bulgaria identified more problems than others and, on the whole, a higher proportion of people in this country group than in the EU15 felt there were reasons to complain about the quality of their local environment. It seems that the fewest environmental problems were seen by people in the Nordic countries, while the proportion of complaints is also relatively low in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands.

The problem of litter or rubbish on the street is reported more frequently in the NMS12, particularly in Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland, and also in FYROM. This issue is a particular problemat in urban areas, with 76% of people living in towns and cities of the NMS12 as a whole complaining about litter compared with 47% of people

Table 17: Availability of facilities in immediate neighbourhood in rural and urban areas, by type of facility and country group (%)

	A food store or supermarket		Post office		Banking facilities		Cinema, theatre or cultural centre		Public transport facilities		Recycling facilities	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
CC3	27	75	37	70	18	64	3	42	59	87	11	42
NMS12	87	95	67	83	44	81	26	56	80	92	39	59
EU15	79	91	69	78	63	80	27	50	78	95	68	74
EU27	81	92	68	79	60	80	27	52	79	94	62	70

Question 55: Still thinking about your immediate neighbourhood, are there any of the following facilities available within walking distance?

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 18: Respondents reporting complaints about environmental problems in their area, by country (%)

	Noise	Air pollution	Lack of access to recreational or green areas	Water quality	Crime, violence or vandalism	Litter or rubbish in the street	Two or more environmental problems
AT	40	28	25	14	34	29	41
BE	50	53	39	42	51	57	68
BG	65	67	61	70	68	73	82
CY	41	38	41	50	16	20	57
CZ	39	51	26	19	50	49	63
DE	32	27	16	10	36	31	41
DK	27	23	7	6	31	21	30
EE	44	44	20	41	52	56	64
EL	53	58	56	56	47	58	73
ES	53	48	46	31	38	45	62
FI	26	22	6	9	28	30	34
FR	37	47	30	48	38	42	58
HU	56	62	51	52	64	68	76
IE	32	24	27	29	47	48	50
IT	67	73	67	66	73	65	83
LT	50	57	52	49	61	58	73
LU	41	48	25	41	50	34	62
LV	52	49	36	58	53	54	69
MT	50	58	46	54	42	48	73
NL	30	28	18	2	42	32	42
PL	57	63	53	61	63	72	79
PT	52	56	53	52	56	52	66
RO	39	42	33	43	33	46	54
SE	29	25	8	7	35	38	41
SI	35	37	17	26	32	35	48
SK	45	51	37	29	54	54	65
UK	34	24	15	14	51	51	51
HR	30	31	33	27	29	35	47
MK	46	58	56	54	44	75	77
TR	43	44	52	55	39	46	65
NO	27	20	9	9	26	31	33
CC3	42	43	50	53	39	47	64
NMS12	50	55	44	51	53	61	70
EU15	42	41	32	31	45	45	56
EU27	44	44	34	35	47	48	59

Question 54: Please think about the area where you live now – I mean the immediate neighbourhood of your home. Do you have reasons to complain about each of the following problems? Categories: 1) Very many reasons; 2) Many reasons; 3) A few reasons; 4) No reason at all; 5) Don't know. Categories 1–3 are grouped together in the table.

Source: EQLS 2007.

living in rural areas; the corresponding figures for the EU15's rural and urban areas are 56% and 35% respectively. It might also be expected that crime and vandalism would be a greater concern in urban areas; this is the case, with 61% of people in the EU27's urban areas complaining about it compared with only 37% of those in rural areas. There were no differences observed between men and women in terms of complaints about crime or violence, nor were complaints generally associated with income levels. Perhaps surprisingly, a somewhat lower proportion of people aged 65 years and over (42% in the EU27) cited crime or violence as a problem.

Conclusions

The analysis of housing standards and quality is complex and multifaceted, especially when making comparisons between countries with very different traditions and ways of organising their housing stock. In many ways, the data from the EQLS are also limited – for example, because no information is available on the age or size of the property or even on whether the accommodation is an apartment or detached house. However, the data do underline the importance of tenure, even if the meaning of owning a property outright appears to be somewhat different in some of the central and eastern European countries compared with the EU15 states. Tenure is also likely to make a difference in relation to how people feel about their property, their attachment to it and their standards or expectations.

The EQLS points to a number of housing issues that need further examination, especially regarding the availability of indoor toilet and bathing facilities in several of the NMS12. Concerns about the quality of accommodation are particularly evident for older people and in rural areas of the NMS12.

There appears to be large differences in housing quality between the neighbouring Nordic and Baltic States, a disparity that is also reflected in the quality of the local environment. The indicator of satisfaction with accommodation appears to be a reasonable proxy measure of housing conditions and highlights the extent to which the EU15 and NMS12 overlap in the middle of the housing quality spectrum. The findings also highlight a range of housing-related problems that continue to persist in the Mediterranean countries of the EU15.

Health and healthcare 6

In 2008, the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health of the World Health Organization published its major report (WHO, 2008), emphasising that the social environment, and not simply biology, explains most of the differences in people's health both between and within countries. The report underlines, in particular, the universal significance of income for health differences; for example, adult mortality among people living in the most deprived areas in the UK is 2.5 times higher than it is for those living in the most affluent areas. The focus on addressing social inequalities in health is central to the EU's own public health strategy (European Commission, 2007c) and will frame much of the analysis in this chapter. However, socioeconomic differences are of concern not only with regard to health status, but also for access to and quality of health services. Little comparative data exist on the perceived quality of health and care services, although they are a key strand in the EU's social protection agenda (European Commission, 2008c); some illustrative findings are presented here.

The economic costs of healthcare and long-term care are major issues in the policy debate, with particular concerns arising about the financial sustainability of services in light of ageing and demographic change (European Commission, 2006b; 2008c). The role and contribution of families in the provision of care was highlighted in Chapter 4 of this report; in this chapter, the scale of the care challenges in Member States will be discussed in terms of poor health and severe disability.

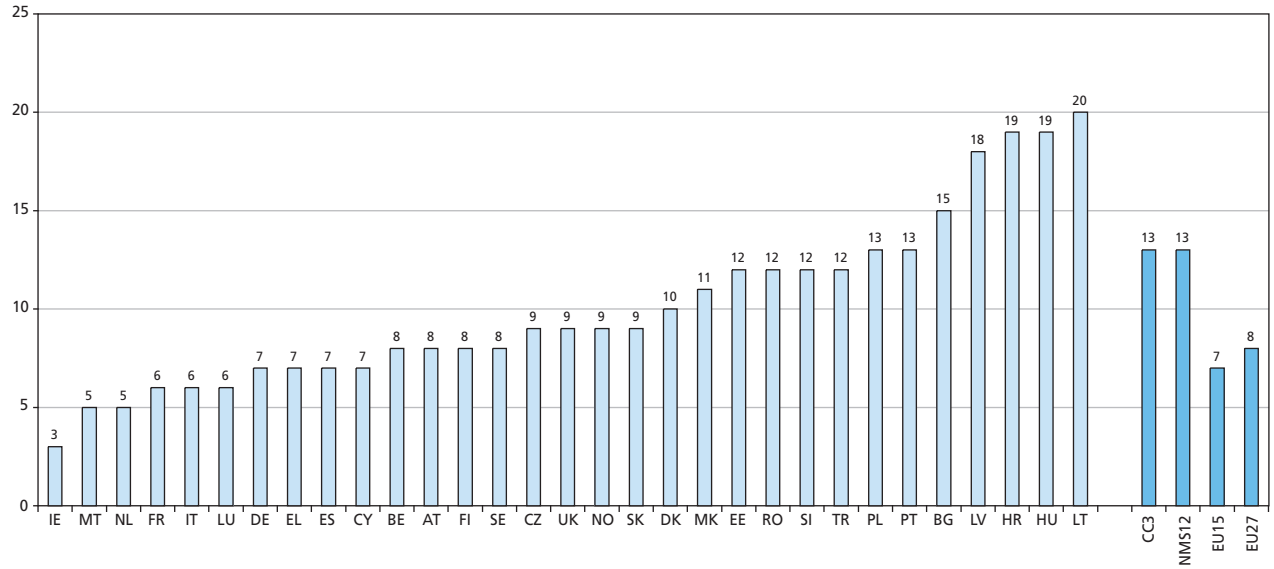
In recent years, the burden of illness associated with poor mental health has received increasing attention. People with mental health problems are among the most likely to be outside employment and to face multiple difficulties in their daily lives (Anderson, Wynne and McDaid, 2007). They are also at high risk of social exclusion and long-term dependency on social benefits. This chapter presents new data on mental health status for all of the EU27 countries using the WHO's five-item Mental Health Index.

Health status

Self-rating of health status is used in many surveys and has proved to be a rather good basis for establishing patterns and differences. In the EQLS (Question 43), altogether, 21% of people rated their health as 'very good', 46% as 'good', 24% as 'fair' and 9% as 'bad or very bad'. The proportion of respondents who rated their health as 'bad or very bad' was associated with a number of personal characteristics, but also varied markedly between the countries. As Figure 24 shows, the proportion of people rating their health as 'bad or very bad' is higher in the CC3 and NMS12 than in the EU15. While significant differences are evident between the countries, all of the countries with higher proportions of people reporting poor health are in the NMS12 and CC3.

In the EU15, no consistent pattern of differences is evident between men and women in reporting bad health; however, in all countries of the NMS12 and CC3, more women report bad health (15% of women compared with 11% of men in the NMS12, and 16% compared with 9% in the CC3).

Figure 24: Respondents reporting poor health, by country (%)



Question 43: In general, would you say your health is very good/good/fair/bad or very bad? The data are based on the proportion of respondents who answered 'bad or very bad.'

Source: EQLS 2007.

Poor health is associated with increasing age: in the EU27, fewer than 2% of people aged 18–34 years reported bad health but this grew to 18% among those aged 65 years and over. In the NMS12, the proportion of people aged 65 years and over reporting bad health is, at 34%, more than twice as high as the corresponding figure in the EU15 (15%). Also in the CC3, more than one-third (35%) of people aged 65 years and over cited bad health, which gives some indication of the widespread challenge associated with poor health among older people. The relationship between health status and income is equally stark. In all of the countries under consideration, people in the lowest income quartile are more likely to have poor health: for example, in the EU27, some 14% of people in the lowest income quartile report bad health compared with 9% of people in the middle quartile and 4% of people in the highest quartile. In some countries – Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia and Portugal – 30% or more of respondents in the lowest income quartile report bad health.

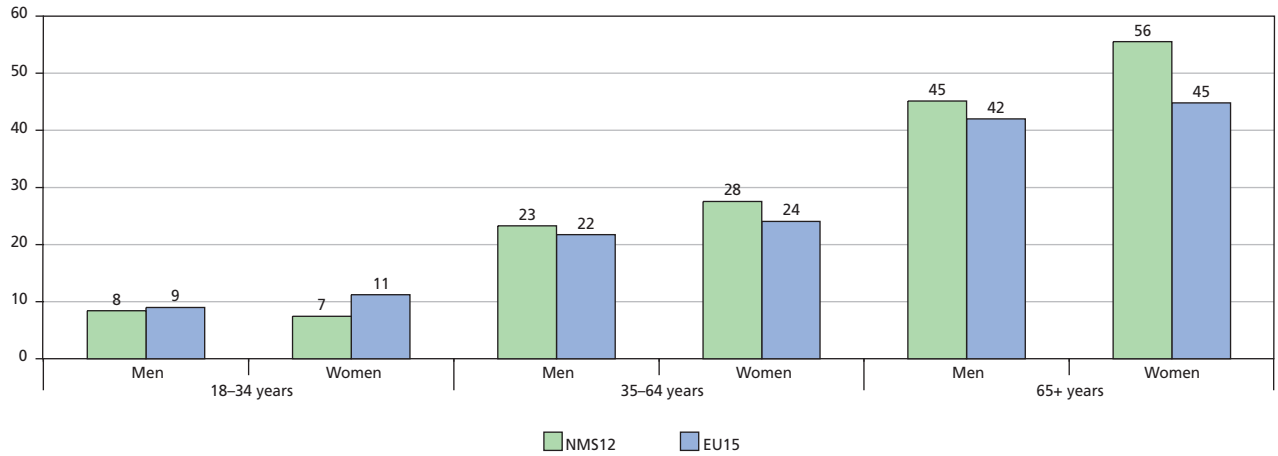
The socioeconomic pattern of responses is largely similar in relation to the question about whether people have long-standing health problems or a disability, although differences between the country groups are not evident. In both the EU15 and NMS12, some 24% of respondents report a chronic illness or health problem. However, there are large differences between individual countries: for example, within the EU15, some 39% of people in Finland report a chronic illness or health problem compared with only 13% of respondents in Italy. These country differences are difficult to explain but have been found in other surveys and may be associated with cultural factors. It is interesting to note that the differences between the EU15 countries are less significant among people aged 65 years and over, but are striking among some of the younger age groups: for instance, chronic illness or disability is reported by 15% or more of people aged 18–24 years in Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands and Sweden, but by fewer than 5% of young people in the Mediterranean countries. Once again, these differences have been reported in other research (Alber and Köhler, 2004; Fahey et al, 2004) but nevertheless demand better understanding. The rates of reported chronic illness increase markedly with age. As Figure 25 shows, this is particularly evident in the NMS12, together with the generally higher prevalence of chronic illness among women in these countries.

People with a long-standing health problem or disability were asked if this hampered their daily activities; altogether, 26% responded that they were hampered 'severely', 54% 'to some extent', and 20% that they were not restricted by their health problem. The reporting of restricted activity not only reflects functional limitations, but also the physical environment, social support and economic resources available. In general, high numbers of people reporting that they were 'severely hampered' were found more frequently in the NMS12. As Table 19 shows, among people with a disability, there was a consistent association between income and the severity of the handicap.

Mental health

In a broad survey such as the EQLS, it is not possible to tackle issues in depth or to use extensive batteries of questions. Therefore, in seeking to document the mental health of the population, a short but validated Mental Health Index was used. This index comprises five questions

Figure 25: Extent of long-standing illness or disability, by gender, age and country group (%)



Question 44: Do you have any chronic (long-standing) physical or mental health problem, illness or disability? The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'yes'.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 19: People with a disability reporting that they were 'severely hampered', by income quartile and country group (%)

	Lowest income quartile	Middle income quartile	Highest income quartile
CC3	55	45	32
NMS12	42	33	17
EU15	21	20	18
EU27	27	23	17

Question 45: Are you hampered in your daily activities by this physical or mental health problem, illness or disability? The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'yes, severely'.

Source: EQLS 2007

Table 20: People reporting positive mental health, by gender and country group (%)

	EU15		NMS12	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
I have felt cheerful and in good spirits	58	56	47	41
I have felt calm and relaxed	52	45	42	35
I have felt active and vigorous	51	45	45	39
I woke up feeling fresh and rested	47	39	40	34
My daily life has been filled with things that interest me	54	49	40	36

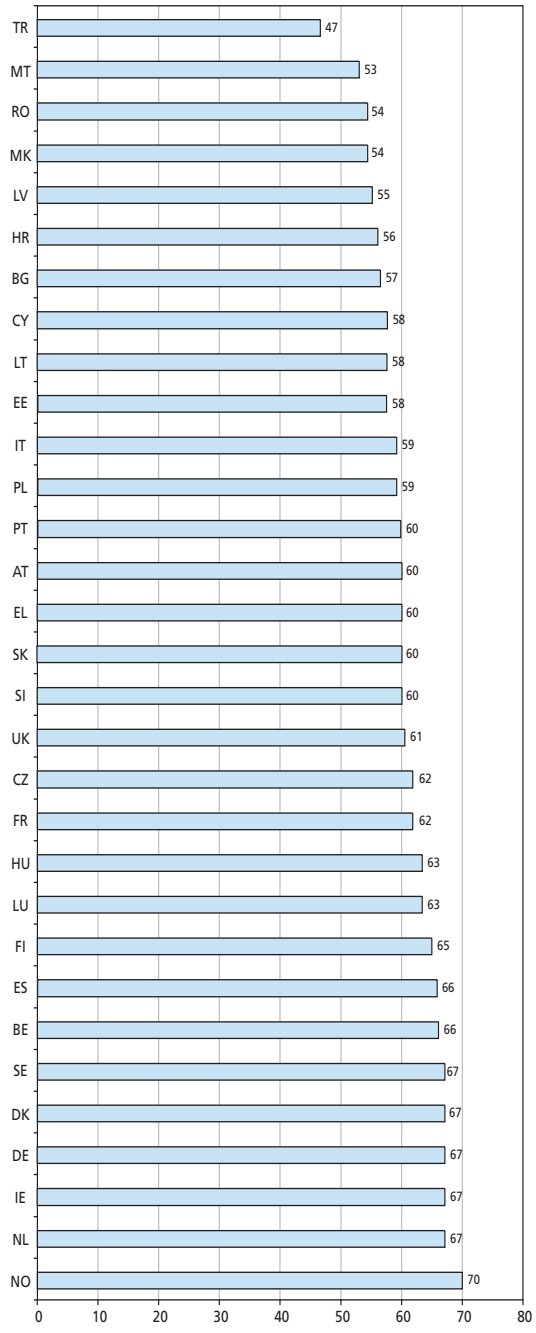
Question 46: Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks. The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'all of the time' or 'most of the time'.

Source: EQLS 2007.

asking respondents how often in the previous two weeks they enjoyed key elements of mental well-being (Government Office for Science, 2008). Table 20 presents the results in terms of the specific statements made and the proportion of people who had felt this way 'all or most of the time' in the previous two weeks.

Overall, few people (1% or fewer) refused to answer individual items or said they did not know how often they had felt a particular way. In general, people in the EU15 were more likely than those in the NMS12 to report feelings

Figure 26: Mean Mental Health Index, by country



Question 46 (Mental Health Index): Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks. 1) I have felt cheerful and in good spirits; 2) I have felt calm and relaxed; 3) I have felt active and vigorous; 4) I woke up feeling fresh and rested; 5) My daily life has been filled with things that interest me. Categories: All of the time; Most of the time; More than half of the time; Less than half of the time; Some of the time; At no time.

Total score on all statements (0–5), amounting to a potential score from zero to 25, multiplied by four to get a score out of 100.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Table 21: Average satisfaction with health in EU27, by gender and income

	Men			Women		
	Lowest income quartile	Middle income quartiles	Highest income quartile	Lowest income quartile	Middle income quartiles	Highest income quartile
EU27	7.1	7.4	7.9	6.8	7.2	7.8

Question 40.6: Could you please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied you are with [your health], where 1 means you are very dissatisfied and 10 means you are very satisfied; the table presents the average score.

Source: EQLS 2007.

of positive mental health. Moreover, men appeared to be more likely to report feeling positive most or all of the time. However, relatively few people (fewer than 10% in relation to each item in the question) indicated that they had felt this way 'all of the time' in the last two weeks.

To obtain a clearer picture of overall differences in mental health, the items contained in the above question were scored on a scale from zero (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time), added to give a potential score from zero to 25, then multiplied by four to give a score up to 100. This provides a clearer picture of the differences between countries and social groups in terms of the Mental Health Index.

As Figure 26 shows, the highest scores were found in the EU15 and in Norway. Among the NMS12, it is surprising to see relatively low scores in Cyprus and Malta, at least compared with the results for self-rated health status (Figure 24). It is equally surprising to see the rather high score for respondents in Hungary, considering the high levels of reported 'bad' health. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these scores are based on questions about emotions, engagement and energy, and are therefore examining something different from general health status.

In other respects, the Mental Health Index reflects the pattern seen previously: that is, it falls with age and rises with income – most clearly in the CC3 and NMS12. The more favourable responses among men to the individual items are reflected in the average mental health score: in the CC3, the score is 50 for men as against 45 for women, in the NMS12 it is 61 for men and 56 for women, and in the EU15 it is 65 for men and 62 for women.

Satisfaction with health

The survey literature demonstrates that 'good health' is regarded by most people as a key element, if not the most important element, for good quality of life (Delhey, 2004). In the EQLS, people were asked how important 'good health' was for their quality of life. The results show that 81% of respondents in the EU27 rated good health as being very important, while 89% in the CC3 agreed with this statement. No consistent difference was evident within the country groups on the basis of age or gender or even with income, although the rating of 'very important' was lower by between eight and 10 percentage points for people in the bottom income quartile in some countries – Croatia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Slovakia and Sweden.

Satisfaction with health was rated on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'very dissatisfied' and 10 means 'very satisfied'. In the EU15, the average score was 7.4, while it was 7.0 in both the NMS12 and CC3. Satisfaction with health is clearly related to the respondent's rating of their own health: in the EU27, the score fell from 8.3 among those rating their health as 'good' to 6.0 among those who described their health as 'fair' and to just 3.3 among people who reported that their health was 'bad'. Associated with this, the rating of satisfaction with health fell with age; as Table 21 shows, ratings were also clearly related to income and were also somewhat lower for women than for men. The gender difference is apparent among the Mediterranean countries in the EU15, but is most striking in the CC3 and Baltic States.

Access to and quality of services

In 2005, the European Commission launched the Open Method of Coordination initiative to improve health and long-term care services. This attention reflects both the large public budget directed at providing these services as well as the challenge of ensuring that quality services are available for all citizens. However, relatively little comparative information is available on the accessibility of services, although such information is essential for the evaluation of provision and policy development.

In the EQLS (Question 47), several potential difficulties in accessing medical care were examined. The proportions of people who found it 'very difficult' or 'a little difficult' to see their doctor for one reason or another are presented in Table 22.

Table 22: Respondents reporting difficulties in accessing medical care, by country group (%)

	CC3	NMS12	EU15	EU27
Distance to doctor's office/hospital/ medical centre	36	29	24	25
Delay in getting appointment	38	38	39	38
Waiting time to see doctor on day of appointment	41	44	42	42
Cost of seeing the doctor	34	34	26	28

Question 47: On the last occasion you needed to see a doctor or medical specialist, to what extent did each of the following factors make it difficult for you to do so? The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'very difficult' or 'a little difficult'.

Source: EQLS 2007.

For each item, the people reporting some difficulty normally said that it was 'a little difficult' – specifically, 20% reporting a little difficulty with distance, 27% with delays, 30% with waiting times and 20% with costs. Nevertheless, the proportions of people reporting difficulty on the last occasion they needed to see a doctor often comprise one-third or more of service users, particularly in the NMS12 and CC3.

The proportion of people reporting that it was 'very difficult' to access services was higher in the Mediterranean countries than in other countries in the EU15. Delay in getting an appointment was a serious problem for 25% of people in Italy, 17% in Portugal, 15% in Greece and 12% in Spain; the corresponding proportions of people in the same countries who had problems with waiting time to see a doctor on the day of the appointment were 25%, 17%, 13% and 11% respectively. The proportion of respondents who said that it was 'very difficult' to access medical care amounted to 10% or more for all four aspects in each of the CC3 countries.

Policymakers are very concerned by social inequalities in access to health services, particularly if low income is a barrier. In practice, people in the lowest income quartile always reported greater difficulty in accessing medical care

Table 23: Average rating of quality of health and care services, by country

	Health services	Childcare services	Care services for elderly people
AT	7.8	7	6.3
BE	7.7	6.9	6.6
BG	4.7	4.6	3.4
CY	5.9	6.2	5.5
CZ	6.4	7.1	5.7
DE	6	6.3	6.1
DK	7	7.4	6.5
EE	6	6.5	5.6
EL	4.9	5	4.2
ES	6.8	6.1	5.6
FI	7.6	7.9	6.7
FR	7.1	6.3	5.6
HU	5.1	5.7	5.4
IE	4.9	5.6	5.6
IT	5.3	5.4	5.1
LT	5.2	6.6	5
LU	7.4	7.1	6.9
LV	5	5.6	4.4
MT	7	7.8	7.6
NL	7.2	6.8	6.4
PL	5	6.4	5.1
PT	4.9	5.6	4.8
RO	5.5	5.3	4.4
SE	7.6	7.6	6.1
SI	5.8	7.1	6.2
SK	5.8	6.6	5.4
UK	6.5	6.3	5.8
HR	5	5.5	4.5
MK	4.8	4.9	4.1
TR	5.9	5.1	4.9
NO	6.9	7	5.7
CC3	5.8	5.2	4.8
NMS12	5.3	6.1	5
EU15	6.4	6.2	5.7
EU27	6.1	6.2	5.6

Question 56: In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following public services in [your country]? a) Health services; d) Childcare services; e) Care services for elderly, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'very poor quality' and 10 means 'very high quality'. The average score is presented in the table.

Source: EQLS 2007.

than those in the highest quartile; this was strikingly the case in the CC3, but clearly also in the NMS12, while the pattern was similar but somewhat weaker in the EU15. For example, the cost of seeing a doctor remained a 'very difficult' barrier for 10% of people in the lowest income quartile in the EU15, compared with 6% of those in the middle quartile and 4% of people in the highest income quartile; the corresponding figures for the NMS12 were 18%, 11% and 7%, and in the CC3, 21%, 11% and 5% respectively.

In the EU27, people living in rural areas were somewhat more likely to report that access to medical care was 'very difficult' in relation to distance to the doctor's surgery or hospital, at 6% compared with 3% in urban areas; this disparity was more evident in the CC3 (18% compared with 11%). However, severe barriers to access were not generally more common in rural than in urban areas.

Not surprisingly, people who report poorer health have more difficulty with distance to medical care: in the EU27, for example, 18% of respondents reporting 'bad' health found distance 'very difficult' on the last occasion they needed to see a doctor or medical specialist compared with 3% of those in 'good' health. It is somewhat paradoxical that these presumably regular service users also reported more often that it was 'very difficult' to get an appointment (23% compared with 9%), as well as citing problems regarding waiting time (20% compared with 10%); perhaps less surprisingly, these respondents also cited greater difficulties regarding the cost of seeing a doctor (17% compared with 6%).

Finally, a set of questions asked people to rate the general quality of several public services in their country. This section focuses on health and care services; other services are examined in the next chapter. The average rating of these services, on a scale from 1 to 10, is presented in Table 23. Globally, it appears that such services receive a higher rating from people living in the EU15, except in relation to childcare.

In the EU15, health services tend to be regarded as lower in quality by people in the Mediterranean countries, except in Spain, while they are also rated poorly in Ireland. The spread of ratings is narrower in the NMS12, with people in Latvia giving the lowest rating and those in Malta the highest. Overall, the ranking by countries is remarkably similar to that of earlier surveys (see, for example, Alber and Köhler, 2004). No consistent differences are evident in the ratings given by men and women, while there is some tendency for people aged 65 years and over to rate the services somewhat more favourably. Although income is clearly related to both health status and problems in access to medical services, no strong relationship emerges with the overall ratings of the quality of the service.

In general, it seems that people regard childcare services as being better developed or of higher quality than care services for elderly people; to a greater or lesser extent, this was the case in all of the countries under consideration (Table 23). No consistent differences were evident in the rating of these services by gender of the respondent or household composition, nor was the pattern of higher satisfaction among older people very pronounced. Neither income nor living in an urban or rural area was clearly related to views on the quality of care services, all of which suggests a need for more detailed research and analysis.

Conclusions

This chapter has underlined not only the diverse experience of health and the volume of poor health and disability in the Member States, but also the persistence of important social inequalities in health. Low income appears to be a common factor in the prevalence of poor physical and mental health and seems to be related to difficulties in accessing medical services; paradoxically, it is only in rating the quality of health services that the visibility of income as a discriminating factor is weak. These socioeconomic differences appear to be at least as important today in the NMS12 and CC3 as they are in the EU15.

The various measures of health status – including satisfaction with health – appear to be related reasonably well to other indicators, such as country differences in morbidity and life expectancy. The results underline the challenge posed by an ageing population and particularly the high prevalence of chronic illness and disability in the NMS12 and CC3. This should be considered alongside the relatively low ratings of care services for older people in these countries.

It is also evident that people in some of the EU15 countries – notably Greece, Italy and Portugal – do not believe that services are meeting their expectations. In particular, they report relatively high levels of difficulty accessing medical care.

Several sets of findings call for further research – for example, regarding the global assessment of service quality and its association with socioeconomic status. There also seems to be a mismatch between the extent of health problems and the accessibility of quality services.

Quality of society 7

The perceived quality of society is one of the fundamental elements of the multidimensional concept of quality of life. The distinctive social and cultural settings that influence quality of life in each society have their origins in, among other things, the perceptions of public services, social capital and the level of social cohesion (Fahey, Nolan and Whelan, 2003).

The dimensions of societal – and not only individual – well-being are emphasised in the Lisbon Strategy and are a focus of EU social policy. This is reflected in the renewed EU Social Policy Agenda, which emphasises: opportunity to participate in society, especially in paid employment; access to education, health care and social services of general interest; and solidarity, that is, social inclusion and integration (European Commission, 2008a).

This chapter looks at several aspects of the quality of European societies, which in different ways are important for the provision of opportunity, access and solidarity. In particular, the analysis seeks to highlight the evaluations of public services, indicators of social capital and social relations in the different countries included in the survey. The analysis will also examine differences in the views and experiences of different social groups in each country.

Public services

The quality of public services is fundamental to people's quality of life. This is acknowledged in the European social model, which underlines provision of services of general interest that involve activities vital for social cohesion and quality of life.

In the EQLS, the respondents were asked to rate their perception of the quality of several core public services, including public transport, education and the state pension system (see Chapter 6 for an analysis of care and health services). The respondents were asked to rate the quality of the services on a scale from 1 to 10; the average scores for each service in the different countries are presented in Table 24.

For all three services there are quite consistent differences between the country groups, but large differences are also evident between countries within each country group. Among the EU15, for instance, ratings of the quality of the three public services in Greece, Italy and Portugal resemble those in the NMS12. Among the latter group, the ratings in Bulgaria are consistently low.

Across the countries, the rating for the quality of the state pension system is generally lower than that for the other services, perhaps reflecting the restructuring of social security and the widespread debate on the sustainability of pension systems (Table 24). This low score for the state pension system is particularly evident among the NMS12, while strikingly low values are also found in Greece and Portugal.

Table 24: Perceived quality of state pension, public transport and education systems, by country

	State pension system	Public transport	Education system
AT	5.8	7.2	7.5
BE	6.1	6.9	7.4
BG	2.7	5.3	4.9
CY	4.8	3.8	6.6
CZ	4.3	6.4	7.2
DE	4.5	6.6	5.8
DK	6.4	6.8	7.6
EE	5.3	6.7	6.8
EL	3.3	6	5.1
ES	5.1	6.5	6.5
FI	7	7.3	8.4
FR	5.2	6.7	6.5
HU	4.2	5.8	5.9
IE	5.7	5.7	7.3
IT	5	5.5	5.5
LT	4.4	6.7	6.1
LU	7.2	7.6	6.4
LV	3.4	6.1	5.9
MT	6.1	6.1	7.8
NL	6.7	6.5	6.9
PL	4.4	6.3	6.4
PT	3.3	5.7	5.4
RO	4.2	6.3	5.9
SE	5.6	6.8	7.4
SI	4.9	5.8	6.8
SK	4.6	6	6.7
UK	4.9	6.3	6.6
HR	3.4	5.6	5.9
MK	4.6	4.7	5.2
TR	4.8	6.1	5.8
NO	6.8	6	7.1
CC3	4.6	6	5.8
NMS12	4.2	6.1	6.2
EU15	5	6.4	6.3
EU27	4.8	6.3	6.3

Question 56: In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following public services in [your country]? b) Education system; c) Public transport; f) State pension system. Please tell me on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'very poor quality' and 10 means 'very high quality'. The average score is presented in the table.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Perceptions of the quality of public transport are slightly more positive in the EU15 countries, with respondents in Austria, Finland and Luxembourg giving the highest rating. Among the NMS12, the ratings in Estonia and Lithuania are on a par with the EU15 countries, while the low rating in Cyprus reflects the lack of public transport infrastructure in that country.

In general, the education system is rated lower by people in the CC3, whereas the average ratings of quality for the EU15 and NMS12 are similar. Altogether, there is a marked range of scores, notably in the EU15 and perception of individual services is, no doubt, informed by a more global view on the quality of public services in each country. Perceptions are also likely to vary depending on the experience and life situation of the respondent.

Table 25 shows the average ratings based on the age and income levels of the respondents. In general, young people aged between 18 and 24 years and those of retirement age of 65 years or older give the highest rating for the quality of the state pension system. The lower perceptions of quality among people of working age and particularly among those due to retire may be an indication of concerns about the adequacy or sustainability of the pension system. Pension system reforms that have recently taken place in many countries may be seen as having the most impact for people now in their main working years.

Individuals are likely to evaluate the pension system according to their own pension or expected pension as well as their overall impression of the system. People with a higher current income tend to regard the pension system more positively. While women are generally in employment less over their lifetime, which tends to result in a lower pension, no difference is evident between the sexes in terms of their rating of the pension system.

Perceptions of the quality of public transport differ between rural and urban areas. In most countries, the public transport system is perceived more favourably by those living in urban areas, particularly in the EU15 (on average 0.6 points higher). In a few of the NMS12, such as Bulgaria and Romania, people in rural areas rated the quality of public transport more positively than those in urban areas.

Views on the public education system are not consistently associated with gender, age or income. Perhaps surprisingly, no clear relationship with educational attainment is evident either, although it might be expected that people with more experience of the education system would rate it more favourably.

Social capital

The concept of social capital reflects the wealth of a society that is derived from the quality of social relations between people. Feelings of trust, cooperation and interconnectedness are thought to generate not only quality of life for members of society, but also a positive spill-over effect for democracy and economic prosperity (Fahey, Nolan and Whelan, 2003).

In this section, social capital is examined in terms of trust between individuals, trust in democratic institutions, and the extent to which respondents believe that people in their country conform to selected societal norms of behaviour.

Respondents were asked to rate the level of trust they feel in other people on a scale from 1 ('you can't be too careful') to 10 ('most people can be trusted'). Figure 27 shows that, in general, people in the EU15 countries expressed higher levels of trust, although the differences between the individual countries are large. Respondents in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands show the highest average levels of trust, whereas in Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy and Portugal, levels are similar to those found in the NMS12. Romania, on the other hand, is among the countries with the highest average levels of trust and ranks in the group just below the Nordic countries.

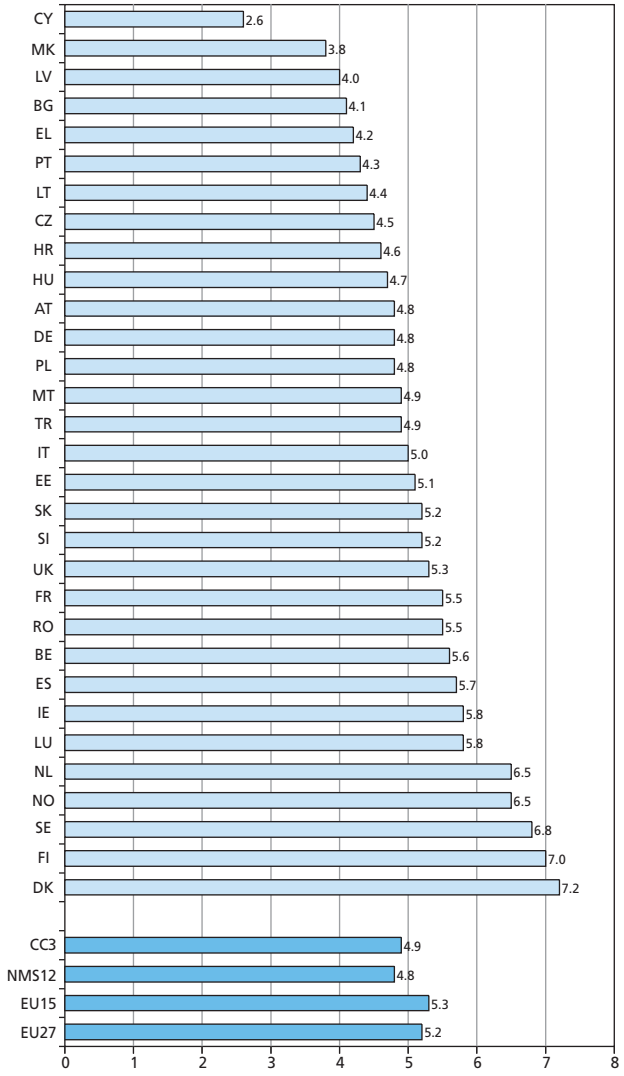
Table 25: Perceived quality of state pension system, by age and income of respondent

		Age group					Income quartile	
	Average total	18–24 years	25–34 years	35–49 years	50–64 years	65+ years	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile
CC3	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.9
NMS12	4.2	4.6	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.4	4	4.3
EU15	5	5	4.8	4.8	5	5.4	4.9	5.2
EU27	4.8	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.8	5.2	4.6	5

Question 56: In general, how would you rate the quality of [the state pension system] in [your country], on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'very poor quality' and 10 means 'very high quality'. The average score is presented in the table.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Figure 27: Trust in people, by country and country group



Question 23: Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means that you can't be too careful and 10 means that most people can be trusted.

Source: EQLS 2007.

A common hypothesis is that people and societies that are better off economically are likely to be more trusting. Likewise, people who live in less corrupt societies as well as those with a stable democratic foundation are likely to express more trust (Newton and Delhey, 2003).

The EQLS results do tend to support the hypothesis that higher income is related to greater levels of trust, both with regard to national GDP and individual income. Table 26 shows the results regarding levels of trust in other people based on a number of personal characteristics. Although neither gender nor age are consistently related to trust in other people, in most of the former socialist NMS, trust in other people is highest among those in the youngest age group (18–24 years); this is not the case, however, in the EU15 or CC3 countries. Unemployed people in all of the country groups are among the least likely to express trust in others.

The overall level of trust between individuals has been found to correspond closely to the level of trust in public institutions. In this context, the focus is on the trust in political institutions; this form of trust is thought to derive from a cultural disposition for trust as well as a cognitive evaluation of the performance of the institutions, and is therefore connected to general feelings of trust in society.

In the EQLS, the respondents were asked to rate their trust in three political institutions: their national parliament, the government and political parties. The respondents rated their trust on a scale from 1 ('Do not trust at all') to 10 ('Trust completely'). The average rating of trust for the three political institutions may be used as an indicator of people's trust in the country's democracy.

The results in Figure 28 show that the level of trust in political institutions is generally lowest in the transition countries of eastern Europe; in the EU15, lack of trust in such institutions is most evident in Italy, Portugal and the UK. In general, the distribution of countries in terms of trust in political institutions is quite similar to that for trust in

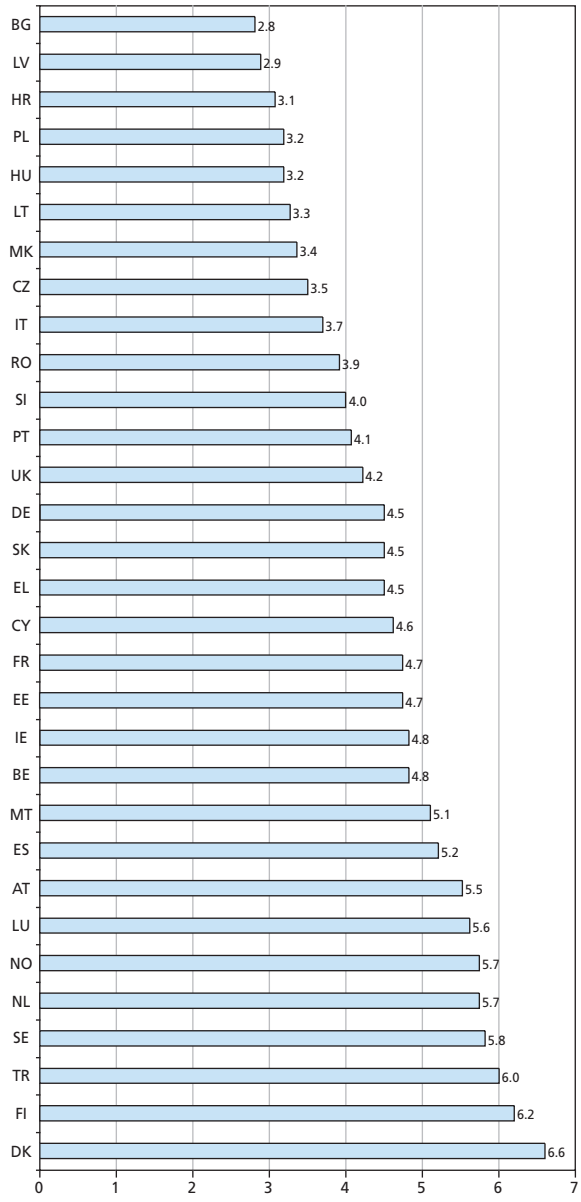
Table 26: Average levels of trust in other people, by personal characteristics and country group

		Age group			Income quartile		Employment status	
	Average total	18–34 years	35–64 years	65+ years	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Employed/ self-employed	Unemployed
CC3	4.9	4.6	5	5.4	4.5	5	5.1	4.1
NMS12	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.4	5.1	4.9	4.3
EU15	5.3	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.1	5.8	5.4	4.5
EU27	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.3	4.9	5.6	5.3	4.5

Question 23: Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means that you can't be too careful and 10 means that most people can be trusted.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Figure 28: Average levels of trust in political institutions, by country



Question 27: Please tell me how much you personally trust each of the following institutions? a) [nationality] parliament; e) The government; f) The political parties. Respondents rated their level of trust on a scale of 1 to 10.

Source: EQLS 2007.

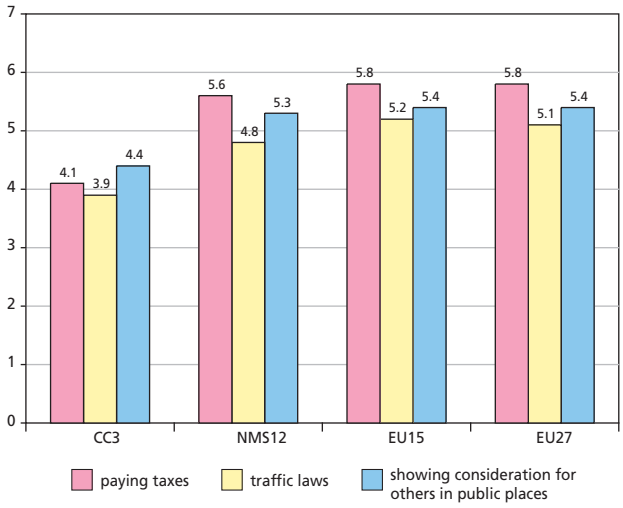
other people (Figure 27). The CC3 are polarised: trust in political institutions is relatively low in Croatia and FYROM, but in Turkey, people express high levels of trust in the political institutions, comparable to the levels observed for the Nordic countries. Among the NMS12, people in Cyprus, Estonia, Malta and Slovakia appear to have much higher levels of trust in political institutions than those in other countries within this group.

With regard to specific political institutions, it is clear that trust is consistently higher in the EU15 than in the NMS12: for the EU15, the average score for trust in the national parliament is 4.9, while it is only 3.6 for the NMS12. The corresponding figures for trust in the government (4.8 and 3.8) and in the political parties (4.1 and 3.1) are also higher in the EU15 than the NMS12. While there were no significant differences associated with the respondents' age or gender, people with higher incomes expressed consistently greater trust in all three institutions.

Another indication of social capital is derived from people's perceptions of how others in their country behave in relation to the rules and values of society. Respondents were asked to what extent the people in their country conformed in three specific areas – paying taxes, following the traffic laws and showing consideration for others in public places.

Although differences are evident between individual countries, the averages for the EU15 and NMS12 country groups in Figure 29 are quite similar; the main difference is that people in the NMS12 are thought to obey traffic laws to a lesser extent. Rule observance appears to be regarded as lower in the CC3. In the EU15 countries, it was relatively rare to see average scores of 5.0 or lower, but this was found for all three behaviours in Greece, Italy and Portugal. The

Figure 29: Perception of extent to which people obey the laws, by country



Question 24: To what extent do you think that most people in [your country] obey the rules when it comes to …? a) Paying taxes; b) Traffic laws; c) Showing consideration for others in public places. Scale ranges from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'they do not obey the rules at all' and 10 means 'they obey the rules completely'. The table shows the average score.

Source: EQLS 2007.

pattern of conforming to the different laws is also similar in the country groups: in general, respondents believe that other citizens are better at paying their taxes than at following traffic rules. These views on how others behave in different ways are not generally associated with the respondent's age, gender or income. However, in the EU15, people with education above secondary level tend to regard their fellow citizens as more likely to obey all three rules.

Overall, the combined results indicate lower social capital in the NMS12 and CC3 than in the EU15. The three indicators used – trust in other people, trust in institutions, obeying the laws – all point to the same conclusions and identify the same countries in terms of having lower levels of social capital. It is difficult to explain exactly why the countries have higher or lower social capital, as the concept itself is quite multifaceted and the most likely causes may be found in culture and history. This is reflected, for instance, in the high social capital seen in the Nordic countries, which have traditions of solidarity and stable democracy.

Social relations

The NMS12 countries have undergone major changes, both politically and economically, over the past 20 years. Such transition processes have altered the income distribution and changed the institutions in these countries, which may in turn create or exacerbate tensions between social groups. Across the EU, the debate on mobility and migration continues, both between new and old Member States and into the EU from third countries.[13] Migration within the EU has mostly been taking place from new to old Member States and has an impact both on the receiving country and the country of origin.

In the EQLS, social relations are examined in terms of tensions between groups as well as attitudes towards migrants. People were asked to rate the level of tension, ranging from 'no tension' to 'a lot of tension', between people who are poor and rich, management and workers, men and women, young and old people, different racial and ethnic groups, and different religious groups.

Although there is much discussion of 'gender' and 'intergenerational conflict', relatively few people in the EU actually register these as major sources of tension in their country. It is rare for more than 20% of the respondents to perceive 'a lot of tension' between men and women or young and old people. In the EU15, Luxembourg has the highest proportion of people reporting these tensions, at 23% and 25% respectively, followed by Spain (20% and 19%) and Greece (18% and 21%); the corresponding figures for Denmark are only 6% and 5% respectively.

In the NMS12, Hungary is the only country that has a relatively high proportion of people reporting a lot of tension between men and women (20%) and between young and old people (30%); several countries such as Bulgaria, Cyprus and Malta have levels in the region of 10% or less. People in the CC3 countries report high levels of these tensions, as well as all of the other tensions, with 21% of respondents citing 'a lot of tension' between men and women and 23% identifying this degree of tension between young and old people.

The proportions of people perceiving 'a lot of tension' between selected societal groups are presented in Table 27 overleaf. High levels of tension between rich and poor people are more likely to be perceived in the CC3 and the former socialist countries of eastern Europe, such as Hungary and Lithuania. This is probably related to the transition process in these countries, whereby economic change has caused increasingly visible income disparities over the past 20 years. In general, people in the EU15 do not report tensions in this 'traditional' area, with the notable exceptions of France, and to a lesser extent, Germany and Greece; these three countries also have relatively high proportions of people who report 'a lot of tension' between management and workers.

The higher level of reported tensions between different religious groups and between racial and ethnic groups in the EU15 probably reflects the greater population diversity in some of these countries. The EU15 countries have witnessed an influx of labour migrants as well as refugees both from within the EU and from third countries over many years. As the results in Table 27 show, tensions between racial and ethnic groups are identified most frequently in France, Italy and the Netherlands (in the EU15). Comparable levels of perceived tension are also reported in the Czech Republic and Hungary (in the NMS12), possibly associated with these countries' own large minority population.

In general, only minor differences are evident between men and women in their perception of tensions between racial or ethnic groups. There is no clear relationship between income and perceptions of ethnic tensions, but as Table 28 on p. 59 shows, several differences arise in this respect (although the patterns are not consistent across the different country groups).

[13] 'Third countries' are countries that are not members of the European Union.

Table 27: Respondents perceiving a lot of tension between groups in society, by country and country group (%)

	Poor and rich people	Management and workers	Different racial and ethnic groups	Different religious groups
AT	19	16	41	40
BE	23	22	43	30
BG	23	14	10	5
CY	11	11	22	13
CZ	39	32	52	23
DE	35	40	33	31
DK	4	4	35	31
EE	30	18	19	6
EL	36	45	35	22
ES	23	32	33	21
FI	13	14	32	15
FR	42	43	52	38
HU	70	60	49	20
IE	16	17	32	18
IT	28	30	53	45
LT	46	31	14	11
LU	30	33	34	21
LV	30	14	14	5
MT	12	17	39	16
NL	12	19	57	40
PL	32	29	16	15
PT	22	25	21	11
RO	34	31	27	17
SE	11	7	36	30
SI	34	44	28	20
SK	30	25	22	9
UK	16	19	41	32
HR	53	56	32	29
MK	57	59	36	32
TR	32	29	27	22
NO	20	10	44	42
CC3	34	31	27	23
NMS12	36	31	25	15
EU15	27	31	41	33
EU27	29	31	38	29

Question 25: In all countries there sometimes exists tension between social groups. In your opinion, how much tension is there between each of the following groups in this country? a) Poor and rich people; b) Management and workers; e) Different racial and ethnic groups; f) Different religious groups. The data show the proportion of respondents who answered 'a lot of tension' in response to four of the categories.

Source: EQLS 2007.

Differences between social groups in perceived tensions emerge when considering education level, and to a lesser extent, level of urbanisation and employment status (Table 28). People educated beyond secondary level in the CC3 perceive more tension between ethnic and racial groups, possibly because they tend to live in urban areas, which are also more ethnically mixed. However, the same findings do not seem to apply for the EU27 as a whole, where the only marked difference is in relation to the less frequent reporting of such tensions among people aged 65 years and over.

The reporting of tensions between religious groups varies to a great extent between the Member States, although it is more frequent in the EU15. No consistent differences are evident in this respect in the EU27 based on the respondents' gender, income, education or employment status, although the reporting of such tensions is, once again, less common among people aged 65 years and over.

Since the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the issue of attitudes towards migrants has received more attention. The EQLS asked respondents for their opinion about people coming to live and work in their country. The results in Figure 30 indicate that in general, people feel that migration should not be completely open or without regard to employment prospects.

In the EU27, about half of the respondents feel that migrants should only be allowed to come to work in their country if jobs are available; a further 29% opt for imposing strict limitations on the numbers coming to work in their country, while 7% would prefer to completely prohibit people from coming to work in their country. As Figure 30 shows, differences are evident in this respect between the EU15 and NMS12, while the views of the CC3 respondents appear more polarised; in the latter country group, 16% of the respondents opt for an open door policy in terms of allowing migrants to work in their country, while 31% believe there should be a complete ban on allowing migrants to come to their country to work.

Looking more closely at the individual countries, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Malta and the UK have particularly high numbers of respondents (40%–50% per country) wanting to put strict limitations on the number of people coming to work in their country. Several of these countries have witnessed an influx of large numbers of migrants over a long period, but also increasingly since the enlargement of 2004.

Countries with high proportions of people (20%–39%) who have open attitudes towards migrant workers – agreeing that their country should 'let anyone who wants to come here to work' – are the EU15 countries Denmark, Spain and Sweden, along with the NMS12 countries Poland and

Table 28: Respondents perceiving a lot of tension between racial and ethnic groups, by socioeconomic characteristics and country group (%)

		CC3	NMS12	EU15	EU27
Age group	18–34 years	35	30	43	40
	35–64 years	22	24	44	40
	65+ years	16	20	34	31
Education	Low education	26	25	43	38
	High education	39	25	39	37
Area	Rural	25	23	43	39
	Urban	29	27	40	37
Employment	Employed/self-employed	29	27	43	40
	Unemployed	34	22	46	40
Lowest income quartile		32	26	42	38
Average total		27	25	41	38

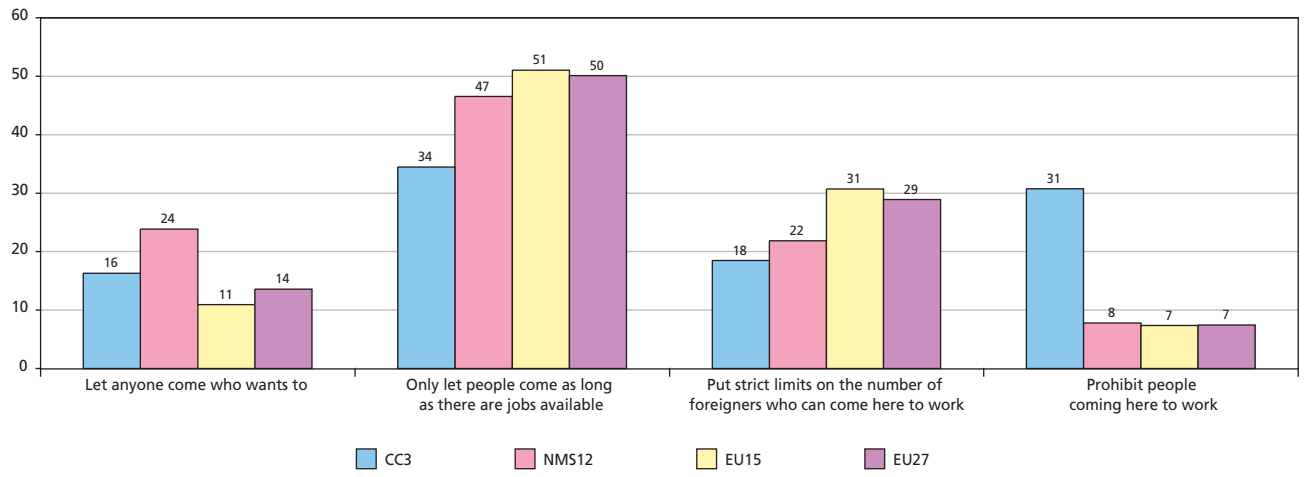
Question 25e: In all countries there sometimes exists tension between social groups. In your opinion, how much tension is there between different racial and ethnic groups? The data are based on the proportion of respondents who answered 'a lot of tension.'

Source: EQLS 2007.

Romania. Sweden was among the countries that did not apply a transitional clause limiting the free movement of migrant workers from the NMS12; nevertheless, it has, along with Denmark and the other Nordic countries, a language barrier that poses some obstacles to widespread labour migration. In contrast, Romania has been suffering from labour shortages as a result of the economic boom as well as considerable numbers of people leaving the country, which probably contributes to the respondents' positive view on people coming to work in their country.

In general, it seems that attitudes towards migrant workers are related to the specific conditions in the particular country in terms of the economic situation, employment

Figure 30: Respondents who agree with the various statements about migrants coming to live in their country, by country group (%)



Question 26: How about people from other countries coming here to live? Which one of the following do you think the government should do? ('Don't know' answers are excluded when calculating percentages.)

Source: EQLS 2007.

levels and possibly also the current numbers of migrants in the population.

Conclusions

In this chapter, the quality of society is analysed in terms of the quality of public services, social capital and social relations. Based on these indicators, the results show how differently the quality of society is perceived, both between the countries of Europe and between social groups within these countries.

The EU15 countries appear to have a generally higher quality of society – particularly the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. Apart from the 'east–west' divide implied by these findings, some indication also emerges of a distinction between the northern and southern EU15 countries: for instance, the ratings of respondents in the Mediterranean countries often appear to be closer to those of the NMS12 countries.

Within countries, it is usually the more vulnerable groups, such as unemployed people and those on low incomes, that perceive a lower quality of society. This underlines the need for a social policy focusing on social cohesion in order to provide these groups with better opportunities, security and a sense of trust in society. The EU social agenda, with its focus on opportunity (more and better jobs, secure welfare and mobility), access (to education, healthcare and social services of general interest), and solidarity (social inclusion and integration), could make a difference for these groups (European Commission, 2008a).

The EQLS findings also highlight how social relations in the societies of Europe are influenced by perceptions of widespread tensions between social groups and restrictive attitudes towards migrants. These pose different challenges, which need to be addressed both in EU mobility policy as well as in integration policy.

Conclusions 8

The first EQLS, conducted in 2003, was presented as providing 'a unique portrait of quality of life in the enlarged Europe'. This claim remains true for this second edition of the survey, with its coverage of all the EU Member States, as well as Norway and the three candidate countries, Croatia, FYROM and Turkey. The latest EQLS is a major source of information on the social and economic challenges facing the EU following the two recent rounds of enlargement. While only the first descriptive analyses of the survey's findings are presented in this overview report, it offers quite a comprehensive picture, comprising both objective and subjective elements, which is particularly timely as policymakers look increasingly at the views and experiences of Europe's citizens.

The picture across Europe

Many of the main results in this report underline the important differences in living conditions, political traditions and culture that exist across the 27 Member States of the EU. The complex picture of quality of life in many countries has been simplified with the rather crude device of grouping countries according to their history of entry into the EU, distinguishing countries according to the EU15, NMS12 and CC3 groups. In many senses, these distinctions are still relevant to current differences in the social situation in Europe. It remains true that, overall, the NMS12 as a group of countries has lower income levels, greater deprivation, lower life satisfaction, poorer health and less satisfactory housing than the EU15 countries. Nonetheless, other domains exist in which little difference can be found between the main country groups – for instance, work–life balance, optimism about the future, family contacts and perceived quality of the educational system.

Moreover, similarities emerge between Member States that do not conform to this general pattern of differences between the EU15 and NMS12 country groups. People in Slovenia, for example, report levels of material deprivation and life satisfaction that are closer to the levels observed in the EU15 countries than the NMS12. Similarly, the situation in Greece, Portugal, and to a lesser extent Italy, with regard to life satisfaction, access to health services and social capital is more like that in the NMS12 than the other EU15 countries.

Inequality and deprivation

The variations in terms of life satisfaction and attitudes regarding the future – both within and between countries – underline the significant inequalities that exist in living conditions and in the experience of daily life. As in the 2003 EQLS, the latest survey shows how low income and unemployment are related to a lower standard of living, greater material deprivation and correspondingly lower levels of subjective well-being. In particular, well-being in the former socialist countries of the NMS12 varies strongly according to social and demographic characteristics: although only in the NMS12 is increasing age associated with poorer quality of life and a lower rating of subjective well-being.

In many respects, the rank ordering of the countries appears to have remained fairly constant over the years when comparing the first and second surveys, with people in the Nordic countries reporting higher life satisfaction, trust in others and good quality public services. In these countries, social and economic differences have relatively little impact on most indicators. However, quality of life does not only reflect circumstances relative to others; the EQLS documents many instances of specific deprivation and disadvantage – for example, the lack of adequate washing and toilet facilities in particular in some of the rural areas of the NMS12 and especially in the homes of people aged 65 years and over.

Clearly, ownership of property is no guarantee of high standards of accommodation, as is evident in the significant numbers of properties that are in need of maintenance and repair in some of the NMS12 countries that have high rates of ownership. Nevertheless, some signs of improvements in housing conditions did emerge between the two surveys; however, this aspect requires, and will receive, more detailed analysis.

Health and family life

While income is undoubtedly an important factor influencing people's standard of living and quality of life, other elements such as enjoying good health and a favourable family life remain at the heart of life satisfaction for most people. It is interesting to note how frequently poor health and living as a single parent were associated with aspects of deprivation, as well as with indicators of subjective well-being. Family plays a central role in all of the countries – both as a basic vehicle for social integration and as a key source of support in meeting daily and urgent needs. The survey underlines the significant time that people, both in and outside employment, spend on maintaining family contacts, on care responsibilities and on household work.

It is also important to acknowledge that many workers reported problems in reconciling their family responsibilities with the demands of employment. Although difficulties in reconciling professional and private life appeared to be

equally common for women and men, this is partly a feature of men's generally longer working hours, but also women's greater involvement in housework and family care. In terms of satisfaction in other areas, few general differences emerged between women and men in satisfaction with either life in general or specific domains.

Quality of society and public services

On the whole, satisfaction with family and personal life is higher than satisfaction with the quality of society and public services. A large proportion of people report difficulties in accessing health services and have concerns about the quality of health and care services available. In general, the countries with the most serious difficulties in this respect are the same as those recorded in the first survey. In the context of an ageing Europe – and especially considering the high levels of poor health and disability reported by older people in the NMS12 – this represents a key challenge.

The quality of society, both locally and more generally, is a fundamental element of quality of life. This survey covers new issues compared with the first survey, specifically to address some of these key themes for public policy. When asked to rate their trust in others, people in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands expressed the highest levels of trust; however, unemployed people or those in other vulnerable groups were less confident. Respondents were asked to rate the degree of tension between different groups in their country. The results indicate that the perception of tensions between rich and poor people now appears to be more prevalent in the CC3 and NMS12 – a factor that may reflect greater income disparities in these countries following their transition to market economies. In contrast, citizens in the EU15 are more often concerned by tensions between different racial or religious groups than by gender or intergenerational conflict. Overall, the EQLS results regarding social trust and perception of societal tensions emphasise the urgent need to address new issues of social relations and social cohesion.

These conclusions give some indication of the themes that will be explored further using the EQLS data. While the results presented in this report indicate some priorities and key challenges, a better understanding of the current social situation, and of how to improve it, will come with more detailed analysis. Eurofound will look in the first instance at a comparison between the results of the 2003 and 2007 surveys. Key policy themes that will be the subject of forthcoming reports will include social exclusion, quality of society and family life in Europe.

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QUALITY OF LIFE – MAIN INTERVIEW

HH0. **(INT.: ENTER THE INTERVIEW NUMBER ON THE CONTACT SHEET)**

CONTACT SHEET NUMBER: _____

HH1. **I'd like to start by asking you a few questions about your household.**

Including yourself, can you please tell me how many people live in this household?

(INT.: WRITE DOWN THE EXACT NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD)

HH2. **(INT.: NOW OBTAIN INFORMATION THAT YOU NEED TO ENTER ON HOUSEHOLD GRID ON NEXT PAGE, STARTING WITH THE RESPONDENT)**

a. (INT.: CODE THE GENDER OF THE RESPONDENT IN GRID BELOW)

b. **Starting with yourself, what was your age last birthday?**

c. (INT.: SKIP FOR RESPONDENT)

d. (INT.: SHOW CARD D) **Which of these best describes your situation?**

HH3. **(INT.: FOR SECOND HOUSEHOLD MEMBER, START WITH THE OLDEST MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD. REPEAT GRID QUESTIONS A-D FOR ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS.)**

Now thinking about the other members of your household, starting with the oldest …

a. **Could you tell me whether this is a male or a female?**

b. **What was this person's age last birthday?**

c. (INT.: SHOW CARD C) **What is this person's relationship to you? Is he/she your …?**

d. (INT.: SHOW CARD D) **Which of these best describes your situation?**

HOUSEHOLD GRID

		A		B	C	D
		INT: Code for respondent		Age	Relationship to respondent	Principal economic status?
		Male	Female		Code from list below	Code from list below
1	Respondent	1	2			
2	Person 2	1	2			
3	Person 3	1	2			
4	Person 4	1	2			
5	Person 5	1	2			
6	Person 6	1	2			
7	Person 7	1	2			
8	Person 8	1	2			
9	Person 9	1	2			
10	Person 10	1	2			

RELATIONSHIP CODES [CARD C]

1 spouse/partner

2 son/daughter

3 parent, step-parent or parent-in-law

4 daughter or son-in-law

5 grandchild

6 brother/sister (incl. half and step siblings)

7 other relative

8 other non relative

ECONOMIC STATUS CODES [CARD D]:

1 at work as employee or employer/self-employed

2 employed, on child-care leave or other leave

3 at work as relative assisting on family farm or business *

4 unemployed less than 12 months

5 unemployed 12 months or more

6 unable to work due to long-term illness or disability

7 retired

8 full time homemaker/ responsible for ordinary shopping and looking after the home

9 in education (at school, university, etc.) / student

10 other**

* If paid a formal wage or salary for work in family farm or business, code as 1 ('at work as employee')

** If child is of pre-school age, code as 10

AFTER FILLING IN ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD IN THE GRID, THEN IF:

--------> CODES 1-2 FOR RESPONDENT GO TO Q2

--------> CODES 3-10 FOR RESPONDENT GO TO Q1

Q1. **(INT.: ASK IF RESPONDENT IS NOT IN PAID WORK (CODES 3-10 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID))**

Have you ever had a paid job?

1 ☐ Yes → Ask Q3

2 ☐ No → Go to Q12

3 ☐ Don't Know → Go to Q12

Q2. **(INT.: ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID))**

What is your current occupation?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q2 AND CODE IN THE GRID BELOW UNDER Q2)

Q3. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAD PAID WORK (CODE 1 AT Q1)**

What was your last occupation?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q2 AND CODE IN THE GRID BELOW UNDER Q3)

	Q2 current occupation	Q3 last occupation
SELF EMPLOYED		
Farmer	1	1
Fisherman	2	2
Professional (lawyer, medical practitioner, accountant, architect etc.)	3	3
Owner of a shop, craftsman, other self-employed person	4	4
Business proprietor, owner (full or partner) of a company	5	5
EMPLOYED		
Employed professional (employed doctor, lawyer, accountant, architect)	6	6
General management, director of top management (managing director, director general, other director)	7	7
Middle management, other management (department head, junior manager, teacher, technician)	8	8
Employed position, working mainly at a desk	9	9
Employed position, not at a desk but travelling (sales person, driver, etc.)	10	10
Employed position, not at a desk, but in a service job (hospital, restaurant, police, fire fighter, etc.)	11	11
Supervisor	12	12
Skilled manual worker	13	13
Other (unskilled) manual worker, servant	14	14

Q4. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID) OR IF EVER HAD PAID JOB (CODE 1 AT Q1)**

In your job, are/were you …

(INT.: READ OUT)

1 ☐ On an unlimited permanent contract

2 ☐ On a fixed term contract of less than 12 months

3 ☐ On a fixed term contract of 12 months or more

4 ☐ On a temporary employment agency contract

5 ☐ On an apprenticeship or other training scheme

6 ☐ Without a written contract

7 ☐ Other

8 ☐ (Don't know)

Q5. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID) OR IF EVER HAD PAID JOB (CODE 1 AT Q1)**

Do/did you work in the…?

(INT.: READ OUT)

1 ☐ Private sector

2 ☐ Public sector

3 ☐ Joint private-public organisation or company

4 ☐ Non-for-profit sector, NGO

5 ☐ Other

6 ☐ Don't know

7 ☐ Refusal

Q6. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID) OR IF EVER HAD PAID JOB (CODE 1 AT Q1)**

How many hours do/did you normally work per week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime?

(INT.: ENTER NUMBER OR 999 FOR DON'T KNOW) _____

Q7. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID)**

Apart from your main work, have you also worked at an additional paid job or business or in agriculture at any time during the past four (working) weeks?

1 ☐ Yes → Go to Q8

2 ☐ No → Go to Q9

3 ☐ Don't know → Go to Q9

Q8. **ASK IF 'ADDITIONAL PAYED JOB' CODE (1) IN Q7**

About how many hours per week did you work in this additional job or business or in agriculture? Please give an average figure for the last 4 working weeks.

(INT.: ENTER HOURS PER WEEK OR 999 FOR DON'T KNOW) _____

Q9. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID)**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q9)

Using this card, how likely do you think it is that you might lose your job in the next 6 months?

1 ☐ Very likely

2 ☐ Quite likely

3 ☐ Neither likely, nor unlikely

4 ☐ Quite unlikely

5 ☐ Very unlikely

6 ☐ (Don't know)

Q10. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID)**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q10)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(INT.: READ OUT THE STATEMENTS)

	(1) Strongly Agree	(2) Agree	(3) Neither agree nor disagree	(4) Disagree	(5) Strongly disagree	(6) (Don't know)
a. My work is too demanding and stressful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. I am well paid.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I have a great deal of influence in deciding how to do my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. My work is dull and boring.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. My job offers good prospects for career advancement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. I constantly work to tight deadlines.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. I work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q11. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID)**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q11)

How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year?

(INT.: READ OUT THE STATEMENTS)

	(1) Several times a week	(2) Several times a month	(3) Several times a year	(4) Less often/ rarely	(5) Never	(6) (Don't know)
a. I have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend on the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of my family responsibilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q12. **ASK IF HOUSEHOLD HAS 2 PEOPLE OR MORE (HH1)**

In your household, do you contribute the most to the household income?

1 ☐ Yes → Go to Q15

2 ☐ No → Go to Q13

3 ☐ I contribute about the same as others in my household → Go to Q15

4 ☐ Don't know → Go to Q15

Q13. **ASK IF CODE 2 AT Q12**

What is the current occupation of the person who contributes most to the household income?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q13 AND CODE IN THE GRID BELOW Q13 'current occupation')

Q14. **ASK IF CODE 2 AT Q12 AND CODE 11 – 14 AT Q13 (not working)**

Did he/she do any paid work in the past? What was his/her last occupation?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q13 AND CODE IN THE GRID BELOW Q14 'last occupation')

	Q13 current occupation	Q14 last occupation
NOT WORKING		
Responsible for ordinary shopping and looking after the home, or without any current occupation, not working	11	
Student	12	
Unemployed or temporarily not working	13	
Retired or unable to work through illness	14	
SELF EMPLOYED		
Farmer	1	1
Fisherman	2	2
Professional (lawyer, medical practitioner, accountant, architect etc.)	3	3
Owner of a shop, craftsman, other self-employed person	4	4
Business proprietor, owner (full or partner) of a company	5	5
EMPLOYED		
Employed professional (employed doctor, lawyer, accountant, architect)	6	6
General management, director or top management (managing director, director general, other director)	7	7
Middle management, other management (department head, junior manager, teacher, technician)	8	8
Employed position, working mainly at a desk	9	9
Employed position, not at a desk but travelling (salesman, driver, etc.)	10	10
Employed position, not at a desk, but in a service job (hospital, restaurant, police, fireman, etc.)	11	11
Supervisor	12	12
Skilled manual worker	13	13
Other (unskilled) manual worker, servant	14	14
NEVER DID ANY PAID WORK	19	

(INT.: ASK ALL)

Q15. **How many rooms does the accommodation in which you live have, excluding the kitchen, bathrooms, hallways, storerooms and rooms used solely for business?**

(INT.: ENTER NUMBER OF ROOMS OR 99 FOR DON'T KNOW)_____

Q16. **Which of the following best describes your accommodation?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q16 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Own without mortgage (i.e. without any loans)
2 ☐ Own with mortgage
3 ☐ Tenant, paying rent to private landlord
4 ☐ Tenant, paying rent in social/voluntary/municipal housing
5 ☐ Accommodation is provided rent free
6 ☐ Other
7 ☐ (Don't know)

Q17. **Do you have any of the following problems with your accommodation?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

	(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) Don't know
a. Shortage of space	☐	☐	☐
b. Rot in windows, doors or floors	☐	☐	☐
c. Damp or leaks in walls or roof	☐	☐	☐
d. Lack of indoor flushing toilet	☐	☐	☐
e. Lack of bath or shower	☐	☐	☐
f. Lack of place to sit outside (e.g. garden, balcony, terrace)	☐	☐	☐

Q18. **How likely do you think it is that you will need to leave your accommodation within the next six months because you can no longer afford it? Is it… [INT: READ OUT]**

1 ☐ Very likely
2 ☐ Quite likely
3 ☐ Quite unlikely
4 ☐ Very unlikely
5 ☐ Don't know

Q19. **There are some things that many people cannot afford, even if they would like them. For each of the following things on this card, can I just check whether your household can afford it if you want it?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

		(1) Yes, can afford if want	(2) No, cannot afford it	(3) Don't know
1	Keeping your home adequately warm	☐	☐	☐
2	Paying for a week's annual holiday away from home (not staying with relatives)	☐	☐	☐
3	Replacing any worn-out furniture	☐	☐	☐
4	A meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day if you wanted it	☐	☐	☐
5	Buying new, rather than second-hand, clothes	☐	☐	☐
6	Having friends or family for a drink or meal at least once a month	☐	☐	☐

Q20. **Over the past year, have you …?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

		Yes (1)	No (2)	Don't know (3)
1	Attended a meeting of a trade union, a political party or political action group	☐	☐	☐
2	Attended a protest or demonstration, or signed a petition, including an e-mail petition	☐	☐	☐
3	Contacted a politician or public official (other than routine contact arising from use of public services)	☐	☐	☐

Q21. **Some people don't vote nowadays for one reason or another. Did you vote in the last (country) national election held in (month/year)?**

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ Yes, but I spoiled my ballot/left my ballot blank
3 ☐ No
4 ☐ Not eligible to vote
5 ☐ (Refusal)
6 ☐ Don't know

Q22. **Apart from weddings, funerals and other important religious events (e.g. baptisms, Christmas/Easter, or other specific holy days), about how often do you attend religious services?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q22 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Every day
2 ☐ More than once a week
3 ☐ Once a week
4 ☐ Once or twice a month
5 ☐ A few times a year
6 ☐ Once a year
7 ☐ Less than once a year
8 ☐ Never
9 ☐ (Don't know/refusal)

Q23. **Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means that you can't be too careful and 10 means that most people can be trusted.**

(INT.: ENTER SCORE OR 11 FOR 'DON'T KNOW') _____

Q24. **To what extent do you think that most people in [OUR COUNTRY] obey the rules when it comes to…?**

[INT: READ OUT:]

	1. Do not obey the at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10. Obey rules completely
a. Paying taxes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b. Traffic laws	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c. Showing consideration for others in public places	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q25. **In all countries there sometimes exists tension between social groups.**
In your opinion, how much tension is there between each of the following groups in this country?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q25 AND READ OUT)

	(1) A lot of tension	(2) Some tension	(3) No tension	(4) (Don't know)
a. Poor and rich people	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Management and workers	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Men and women	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Old people and young people	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Different racial and ethnic groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Different religious groups	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q26. **How about people from other countries coming here to live? Which one of the following do you think the government should do?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q26 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Let anyone come who wants to
2 ☐ Let people come as long as there are jobs available
3 ☐ Put strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here to work
4 ☐ Prohibit people coming here to work
5 ☐ Don't Know

Q27. **Please tell me how much you personally trust each of the following institutions.**

[INT: READ OUT:]

	Do not trust at all									Trust completely
a. [NATIONALITY] parliament	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b. The legal system	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c. The press	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d. The police	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e. The government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
f. The political parties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q28. **Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q28 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Strongly agree	(2) Agree	(3) Neither agree nor disagree	(4) Disagree	(5) Strongly disagree	(6) (Don't know)
a. I am optimistic about the future	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. On the whole my life is close to how I would like it to be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. In order to get ahead nowadays you are forced to do things that are not correct	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. I feel left out of society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Life has become so complicated today that I almost can't find my way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. I don't feel the value of what I do is recognised by others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Some people look down on me because of my job situation or income	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q29. **All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very dissatisfied and 10 means very satisfied.**

(INT.: ENTER SCORE OR 11 FOR DON'T KNOW) _____

Q30. **Could I ask you about your current marital status? Which of the following descriptions best applies to you? Are you …?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

1 ☐ Married or living with partner
2 ☐ Separated or divorced and not living with partner
3 ☐ Widowed and not living with partner
4 ☐ Never married and not living with partner
5 ☐ (Don't know / No answer)

Q31. **How many children of your own do you have?**

(INT.: ENTER NUMBER OF OWN CHILDREN, IF NONE ENTER '00') _____

Q32. **On average, thinking of people living outside your household how often do you have direct (face-to-face) contact with…**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q32 AND READ OUT)

(INT.: IF E.G. SEVERAL CHILDREN THEN ANSWER FOR THE ONE WITH WHICH THE RESPONDENT HAS THE MOST CONTACT)

	(1) More than once a day	(2) Every day or almost every day	(3) At least once a week	(4) Once or twice a month	(5) Several times a year	(6) Less often	(7) (Don't have such relatives)	(8) (Don't know)
a. Any of your children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Your mother or father	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Any brother, sister or other relative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Any of your friends or neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q33. **And on average, how often do you have contact with friends or family living outside your household by phone, e-mail or by post?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q33 AND READ OUT)

(INT.: IF E.G. SEVERAL CHILDREN THEN ANSWER FOR THE ONE WITH WHICH THE RESPONDENT HAS THE MOST CONTACT)

	(1) More than once a day	(2) Every day or almost every day	(3) At least once a week	(4) Once or twice a month	(5) Several times a year	(6) Less often	(7) (Don't have such relatives)	(8) (Don't know)
a. Any of your children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Your mother or father	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Any brother, sister or other relative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Any of your friends or neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q34. **Do you have any friends who have come to live in [country of interview] from another country?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

1 ☐ Yes, a lot
2 ☐ Yes, a few
3 ☐ No, none at all
4 ☐ (Don't know)

Q35. **From whom would you get support in each of the following situations?**

For each situation, choose the most important person.

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q35 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Partner/ spouse	(2) Other family	(3) Work colleague	(4) Friend	(5) Neighbour	(6) Someone else	(7) Nobody	(8) (Don't know)
a. If you needed help around the house when ill	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. If you needed advice about a serious personal or family matter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c If you needed help when looking for a job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. If you were feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. If you needed to urgently raise €1000* to face an emergency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* In 12 New Member States (joined EU in 2004 and in 2007) & 2 candidate countries, €500 equivalent in national currencies

Q36. **How often are you involved in any of the following activities outside of paid work?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q36 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Every day	(2) Several times a week	(3) Once or twice a week	(4) Less often than once a week	(5) Never	(6) (Don't know)
a. Caring for and educating children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Cooking and housework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Caring for elderly/ disabled relatives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Voluntary and charitable activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q37. **ASK IF CODE 1,2,3 or 4 AT Q36**

On average, how many hours in a week do you spend on these activities?

(INT.: ENTER NUMBER OF HOURS, IF DON'T KNOW ENTER '99') _____

a. Caring for and educating children _____ hours

b. Cooking and housework _____ hours

c. Caring for elderly/ disabled relatives _____ hours

d. Voluntary and charitable activities _____ hours

Q38 **ASK IF HOUSEHOLD CONSISTS OF AT LEAST 2 PEOPLE AGED 18 OR OVER**

(SEE HOUSEHOLD GRID) Do you think that the share of housework you do is…

(INT.: READ OUT)

1 ☐ More than your fair share

2 ☐ Just about your fair share

3 ☐ Less than your fair share

4 ☐ (Don't know)

(INT.: ASK Q39 ITEM 1IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK CODE 1 OR 2 IN HH2D)

Q39. **I am going to read out some areas of daily life in which you can spend your time.**

Could you tell me if you think you spend too much, too little or just about the right amount of time in each area.

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q39 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Too much	(2) Just right	(3) Too little	(4) (Not applicable)	(5) (Don't know)
a. My job/paid work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Contact with family members living in this household or elsewhere	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Other social contact (not family)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Own hobbies/ interests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Taking part in voluntary work or political activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(INT.: ASK Q40 ITEM 2 IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK CODE 1 OR 2 IN HH2D)

Q40. **Could you please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied you are with each of the following items, where 1 means you are very dissatisfied and 10 means you are very satisfied?**

(INT.: READ OUT; FOR EACH ITEM ENTER SCORE GIVEN OR 11 FOR DON'T KNOW)

1 Your education _____
2 Your present job _____
3 Your present standard of living _____
4 Your accommodation _____
5 Your family life _____
6 Your health _____
7 Your social life _____

(INT.: ASK Q41 IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK CODE 1 OR 2 IN HH2D)

Q41. **I am going to read out a list of things that some people say are important in their quality of life. Please tell me how important each of these is in your quality of life.**

	(1) Very important	(2) Important	(3) Neither important nor unimportant	(4) Not important	(5) Not at all important	(6) (Don't know)
1 A good education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 A good job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 A good standard of living	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Good accommodation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 A good family life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6 Good health	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 A good social life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q42. **Taking all things together on a scale of 1 to 10, how happy would you say you are? Here 1 means you are very unhappy and 10 means you are very happy.**

(INT.: ENTER SCORE GIVEN OR 11 FOR DON'T KNOW) _____

Q43. **In general, would you say your health is …**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q43 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Very good
2 ☐ Good
3 ☐ Fair
4 ☐ Bad
5 ☐ Very bad
6 ☐ (Don't know)

Q44. **Do you have any chronic (long-standing) physical or mental health problem, illness or disability?**

1 ☐ Yes → Go to Q45
2 ☐ No → Go to Q46
3 ☐ (Refusal) → Go to Q46
4 ☐ Don't know → Go to Q46

Q45. **(INT.: ASK Q45 IF 'HAS CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEM' CODE 1 AT Q44)**

Are you hampered in your daily activities by this physical or mental health problem, illness or disability?

1 ☐ Yes, severely
2 ☐ Yes, to some extent
3 ☐ No
4 ☐ (Refusal) → Go to Q46
5 ☐ Don't know → Go to Q46

(INT.: ASK ALL)

Q46. **Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks.**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q46 AND READ OUT)

	Over the last two weeks	All of the time (1)	Most of the time (2)	More than half of the time (3)	Less than half of the time (4)	Some of the time (5)	At no time (6)
1	I have felt cheerful and in good spirits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	I have felt calm and relaxed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	I have felt active and vigorous	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	I woke up feeling fresh and rested	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	My daily life has been filled with things that interest me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q47. **On the last occasion you needed to see a doctor or medical specialist, to what extent did each of the following factors make it difficult for you to do so?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q47 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Very difficult	(2) A little difficult	(3) Not difficult at all	(4) (Not applicable/ never needed to see doctor)	(5) (Don't know)
a. Distance to doctor's office/ hospital/ medical center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Delay in getting appointment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Waiting time to see doctor on day of appointment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Cost of seeing the doctor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q48. **How old were you when you completed your full-time education?**

(INT.: IF STILL IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION ENTER 99) _____ years old

(INT.: IF NEVER IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION ENTER 98)

Q49. **What is the highest level of education you completed? Is this …?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD 49 AND READ OUT, FILL IN THE CORRESPONDING CODE)

1 ☐ No education completed (ISCED 0)
2 ☐ Primary education (ISCED 1)
3 ☐ Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)
4 ☐ Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)
5 ☐ Post-secondary including pre-vocational or vocational education but not tertiary (ISCED 4)
6 ☐ Tertiary education – first level (ISCED 5)
7 ☐ Tertiary education – advanced level (ISCED 6)
8 ☐ (Don't know/no answer)

ASK Q49o IF 'OTHER', CODE 98 IN Q49

Q49o. **Which other?**

(WRITE DOWN THE ANSWER- CODE AT THE OFFICE- ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Q50. How well do you read English?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q50 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Very well
2 ☐ Quite well
3 ☐ Not very well
4 ☐ Not at all
5 ☐ (Don't know)

Q51. Which of the following best describes your use of the internet over the past month?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q51 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Used the internet every day or almost every day
2 ☐ Used the internet a couple of times a week
3 ☐ Used the internet occasionally (once a month or less)
4 ☐ Did not use the internet at all
5 ☐ (Don't know)

Q52. Would you consider the area in which you live to be...?

(INT.: READ OUT)

1 ☐ The open countryside
2 ☐ A village/small town
3 ☐ A medium to large town
4 ☐ A city or city suburb
5 ☐ (Don't know)

Q53. Is your local neighbourhood an area where…?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q53 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Almost nobody is of a different race or ethnic group from most people in [OUR COUNTRY]
2 ☐ Some people are of a different race or ethnic group from most people IN [OUR COUNTRY]
3 ☐ Many people are of a different race or ethnic group
4 ☐ (Don't know)

Q54. **Please think about the area where you live now – I mean the immediate neighbourhood of your home. Do you have very many reasons, many reasons, a few reasons, or no reason at all to complain about each of the following problems?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q54 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Very many reasons	(2) Many reasons	(3) A few reasons	(4) No reason at all	(5) (Don't know)
a. Noise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Air pollution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Lack of access to recreational or green areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Water quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Crime, violence or vandalism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Litter or rubbish in the street	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q55. **Still thinking about your immediate neighbourhood, are there any of the following facilities available within walking distance?**

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Don't know (3)
a. A food store or supermarket	☐	☐	☐
b. Post office	☐	☐	☐
c. Banking facilities	☐	☐	☐
d. Cinema, theatre or cultural centre	☐	☐	☐
e. Public transport facilities (bus, metro, tram, etc)	☐	☐	☐
f. Recycling facilities	☐	☐	☐

Q56. **In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following PUBLIC services in [OUR COUNTRY]?**

(INT.: READ OUT; FOR EACH ITEM ENTER SCORE GIVEN OR 11 FOR DON'T KNOW)

a. Health services _____
b. Education system _____
c. Public transport _____
d. Child care services _____
e. Care services for elderly _____
f. State pension system _____

Q57. **A household may have different sources of income and more than one household member may contribute to it. Thinking of your household's total monthly income: is your household able to make ends meet....?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q57 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Very easily
2 ☐ Easily
3 ☐ Fairly easily
4 ☐ With some difficulty
5 ☐ With difficulty
6 ☐ With great difficulty
7 ☐ (Don't know)

Q58. **Has your household been in arrears at any time during the past 12 months, that is, unable to pay as scheduled any of the following?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

	(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) Don't know
a. Rent or mortgage payments for accommodation	☐	☐	☐
b. Utility bills, such as electricity, water, gas	☐	☐	☐

Q59. **Is total housing cost a financial burden to the household?**

1 ☐ Yes, a heavy burden
2 ☐ Yes, somewhat a burden
3 ☐ Not a burden at all
4 ☐ (Don't know)

Q60. **Has your household at any time during the past 12 months run out of money to pay for food?**

5 ☐ Yes
6 ☐ No
7 ☐ Don't know

Q61. **In the past year, has your household helped meet its need for food by growing vegetables or fruits or keeping poultry or livestock?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q61 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ No, not at all
2 ☐ Yes, for up to one-tenth of the household's food needs
3 ☐ Yes, for between one-tenth and half of household's food need
4 ☐ Yes, for half or more of the household's needs
5 ☐ (Don't know)

Q62. **In the past year, did your household give regular help in the form of either money or food to a person you know not living in your household (e.g. parents, grown-up children, other relatives, or someone not related)?**

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No
3 ☐ Don't know

Q63. **In the past year, did your household receive regular help in the form of either money or food from a person not living in your household (e.g. parents, grown-up children, other relatives, or someone not related)?**

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No
3 ☐ Don't know

Q64. **Have you or someone else in your household received any of the following types of income over the past 12 months? Please tick 'yes' or 'no' for each source of income.**

(INT.: READ OUT)

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Don't know (3)
a. Wages or salaries	☐	☐	☐
b. Income from self-employment or farming	☐	☐	☐
c. Pension	☐	☐	☐
d. Child benefit (inc. alimony)	☐	☐	☐
e. Unemployment benefit, disability benefit or any other social benefits	☐	☐	☐
f. Other income (e.g. from savings, property or stocks, etc.)	☐	☐	☐

(INT.: ASK Q65 IF 'YES' CODE (1) HAS BEEN TICKED AT LEAST TWICE IN Q64

Q65. **Which of your sources of income is the largest?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q65 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Wages or salaries
2 ☐ Income from self-employment or farming
3 ☐ Pension
4 ☐ Child benefit (incl. alimony)
5 ☐ Unemployment benefit, disability benefit or any other social benefits
6 ☐ Other income (e.g. from savings, property or stocks, etc.)
7 ☐ Refusal
8 ☐ Don't know

Q66. **If you add up the income from all sources for all the members of the household, do you know what your household's total net monthly income is, that is, the amount that is left over after taxes have been deducted?**

1 ☐ Yes → Ask Q67
2 ☐ No → Go to Q68
3 ☐ (Refusal) → Go to Q68

(INT.: ASK Q67 IF RESPONDENT KNOWS THE TOTAL NET MOTHLY INCOME OF THE HOUSEHOLD)

Q67. **Please can you tell me how much your household's NET income per month is? If you don't know the exact figure, please give an estimate.**

Net monthly income amount in national currency: _____

(INT.: ASK Q68 IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT KNOW THE TOTAL NET MOTHLY INCOME OF THE HOUSEHOLD)

Q68. **Perhaps you can provide the approximate range instead. What letter best matches your household's total net income (SHOW CARD 68)? Use the part of the show card that you know best: weekly, monthly or annual income.**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q68)

(INT.: PLEASE CIRCLE THE CODE THAT MATCHES THE RESPONDENT'S ANSWER / LETTER)

SHOW CARD Q68	Please tell me the letter that corresponds with your net household income? Use the part of the card that you know best: weekly, monthly or annual net income.

Code	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	YEARLY
D	Less than €12	**Less than €50**	Less than €600
B	€ 12 to € 24	**€ 50 to €99**	€ 600 to €1,199
I	€ 25 to € 35	**€100 to €149**	€ 1,200 to €1,799
O	€ 36 to € 49	**€ 150 to €199**	€ 1,800 to €2,399
T	€ 50 to €74	**€ 200 to €299**	€ 2,400 to €3,599
G	€ 75 to €99	**€ 300 to €449**	€ 3,600 to €5,399
P	€ 100 to €124	**€ 450 to €549**	€ 5,400 to €6,599
A	€ 125 to €149	**€ 550 to €674**	€ 6,600 to €8,099
F	€ 150 to €199	**€ 675 to € 899**	€ 8,100 to € 10,799
E	€ 200 to €249	**€ 900 to € 1,124**	€ 10,800 to € 13,499
Q	€ 250 to €299	**€ 1,125 to € 1,349**	€ 13,500 to € 16,199
H	€ 300 to €349	**€ 1,350 to € 1,574**	€ 16,200 to € 18,899
C	€ 350 to €399	**€ 1,575 to € 1,799**	€ 18,900 to € 21,599
L	€ 400 to € 449	**€ 1,800 to €2,024**	€ 21,600 to € 24,299

Code	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	YEARLY
N	€ 450 to € 499	**€ 2,025 to €2,249**	€ 24,300 to € 26,999
R	€ 500 to € 599	**€ 2,250 to € 2,699**	€ 27,000 to € 32,399
M	€ 600 to € 699	**€ 2,700 to € 3,149**	€ 32,400 to € 37,799
S	€ 700 to € 799	**€ 3,150 to € 3,599**	€ 37,800 to € 43,199
K	€ 800 to € 899	**€ 3,600 to € 4,049**	€ 41,200 to € 48,599
U	€ 900 to €999	**€ 4,050 to € 4,499**	€ 48,600 to € 53,999
V	€ 1,000 or more	**€ 4,500 or more**	€ 54,000 or more
22	(Refusal)		
23	(Don't know)		

Q69. Are you a citizen of this country [OUR COUNTRY]?

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No
3 ☐ (Refusal)

Q70. You personally, were you born…?

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q68)

1 ☐ In this country (OUR COUNTRY)
2 ☐ In another country that is today a Member State of the European Union
3 ☐ In Europe, but not in a country that is today a Member State of the European Union
4 ☐ In Asia, in Africa or in Latin America
5 ☐ In North America or in Oceania
6 ☐ (Refusal)
7 ☐ (Don't know)

Q71. Please describe where your parents were born.

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q69)

1 ☐ Your mother and your father were born in this country (OUR COUNTRY)
2 ☐ One of your parents was born in this country (OUR COUNTRY) and the other was born in another country that is today a Member State of the European Union
3 ☐ Your mother and your father were born in another country that is today a Member State of the European Union
4 ☐ At least one of your parents was born outside of the European Union
5 ☐ Refusal
6 ☐ Don't know

YOU HAVE REACHED THE END OF THE INTERVIEW - THANK RESPONDENT FOR HIS/HER TIME.

Interview protocol

(to be completed by the interviewer during the visit to the household, but after having interview with the household)

P1 INTERVIEWER CODE ☐☐

P2 HOUSEHOLD NUMBER ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

P3 CLUSTER CODE ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

P4 HOUSEHOLD POSTAL CODE ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

(household to be asked)

P5 HOUSEHOLD TELEPHONE NUMBER ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

(household to be asked)

P6 HOUSEHOLD LOCALITY (place and municipality) _____/_____

P7 REGION (NUTS 2 code or corresponding national code) _____

P8 Date of the interview: **Day:** ☐☐ **Month:** ☐☐

P9 Time of the beginning of the interview: **Hour:** ☐☐ **Minutes:** ☐☐

USE 24 HOUR CLOCK

P10 Number of minutes the interview lasted: **Minutes:** ☐☐☐

P11 Number of persons present during the interview, including interviewer.

1 - Two (Interviewer and respondent)

2 - Three

3 - Four

4 - Five or more

P12 Did anybody/anything disturb your talk with the respondent during the interview (more answers are possible)?

1 Children were around (playing)

2 Radio/TV was on

3 Pets were around

4 Telephone calls during the talk

5 The respondent was busy with another activity during the talk

6 Other (_____)

7 There were no disturbances

P13 What was the language of the interview (to be asked only in countries where the questionnaire is implemented in different languages)? _____

P14 Please assess the respondent's cooperation during the interview

1 - Excellent

2 - Fair

3 - Average

4 - Bad

P15 How many contacts (call-backs, visits) were made with the household before having the interview?

1 One

2 Two

3 Three

4 More

Annex 2: EQLS 2007 methodology

European Quality of Life Survey

The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) is implemented by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), an autonomous EU agency with a tripartite governing board, based in Dublin. TNS-Opinion was contracted by Eurofound to coordinate development of the survey instruments, as well as to organise and administer the fieldwork for the 2007 EQLS and to control data processing. The fieldwork has been carried out by TNS partner organisations in the participating countries. Fieldwork in all but one country started on 20 September 2007 and in most of the countries finished on 20 November 2007. The fieldwork in Denmark was completed on 13 December 2007 and in Luxembourg on 18 January 2008. Fieldwork in FYROM was conducted in February 2008, as this country was added to the survey at a later date.

More than 35,000 respondents were interviewed in 31 countries – that is, in the current 27 EU Member States, along with the three candidate countries, Croatia, FYROM and Turkey, as well as Norway. In order to be eligible to participate in the second EQLS, the respondents had to meet the following criteria:

- be aged 18 years or older;
- have lived in the country for the last six months;
- be able to speak the national language(s) well enough to respond to the questionnaire;
- not be living in an institution – for example, a military barracks, prison, hospital or nursing home.

The respondents answered more than 100 items on a wide range of issues regarding their living conditions, income and financial situation, housing and local environment, family, work, education, health, social participation, quality of social services and quality of society. The survey provides unique information on the different dimensions of quality of life across European countries. It delivers about 200 indicators that are fully comparable Europe-wide, since the same questionnaire was used in all the countries covered. More importantly, it allows for analysis of the interplay between the different dimensions of people's lives and searches for potential causalities. Because this is the second time that the EQLS has been conducted, the survey also offers the possibility of analysing developments in quality of life in Europe since the enlargement round in 2004. The previous round of the survey was carried out in 2003 and included all of the current EU27 Member States, as well as Turkey. While the number of questions and issues covered has changed to some extent, a set of core questions has remained the same in order to study trends in the quality of life.

Preparation for the second survey included several steps: conducting a critical review of the methods and experiences of the first round of the EQLS; acquiring a wider insight into similar cross-national household surveys in Europe, in particular the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and the European Social Survey; and consulting a number of experts on sample design, questionnaire design and the organisation and implementation of surveys. At the development stage, a team of experts from the Social Science Research Centre in Berlin (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, WZB) played an important role. Subsequently, the review examined the entire production process, identified sub-processes, described actors' roles, fixed performance targets and selected and monitored performance indicators. The quality assurance framework has been developed with the assistance of the fieldwork coordination team from TNS. Quality control was performed by internal and external agents. A minimum of 20% of interviews and 20% of random walk routes were checked in each country.

Questionnaire design and translation process

Similar to the previous edition of the EQLS, the questionnaire for the second EQLS was reviewed and improved in close cooperation with the WZB questionnaire development group. While the priority was to retain trend questions in order to enable time series and trend analysis, a number of new areas were identified so that the survey's scope could be beneficially extended – for instance, taking into account the quality of the local environment, mental health and attitudes towards migrants. New questions introduced were based on questions already successfully used in other similar national surveys wherever possible. In the case of certain background variables – such as education level, occupation and net household income – further adjustments were made in order to increase the quality of analytical variables and contribute to the enrichment of analytical possibilities.

The draft version of the master questionnaire was tested in the pilot survey, which was conducted between 7 and 15 July 2007 in the UK and the Netherlands, with 100 interviews conducted in each country. This method of testing the questionnaire enabled Eurofound and the contractor (TNS-Opinion) to look at the questionnaire in greater detail, highlighting the following issues:

- understanding of the questions;
- logic of sequences in the questionnaire;

- identification of critical sequences in the questionnaire;
- reliability of the given answers;
- adjustment of the length of the questionnaire.

The UK National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) subsequently analysed the results from the pilot survey to detect any problematic items, particularly those resulting in item non-response. NatCen also examined whether item non-response was higher among certain subgroups of the population than among others.

The improved version of the master questionnaire was translated into 30 different languages, with seven of them used in more than one country. The translation process implemented for the survey was based on current good practice in the multilingual translation of international survey questionnaires: for trend questions, existing translations from previous surveys were retained, except in a small number of cases where problems were identified and new revised translations were introduced. For new and modified questions, the English master version was subject to parallel translation into the main target languages by independent translators who are familiar with survey research in the area of living conditions. These parallel translations were merged into a final draft, which was then translated back into English to identify and resolve remaining problems or ambiguities. A number of the translations were also subject to a final review by Eurofound research managers and national experts from the expert development questionnaire group who assisted Eurofound in this task.

The translated versions of the national questionnaires were pre-tested. The pre-test focused on survey instruments (questionnaires) as well as on sampling and survey organisation. It was conducted in all countries participating in the survey except for FYROM, which joined the initiative at a later stage, when there was no more time for pre-testing. The pre-test consisted of 25 interviews per country, conducted between 20 and 27 August. This pre-test gave the countrie's fieldwork organisation an opportunity to:

- detect any sampling problems;
- test the translation of the questionnaire;
- test the routing in the questions and interviewer instructions;
- test the use of education codes – International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) codes;
- test the methodology of contacting respondents and general survey administration;
- work with the fieldwork materials – for example, show cards, contact sheets and introductory letters.

The national institutes provided feedback from this pre-test by attending a seminar, which was also attended by TNS-Opinion, Eurofound and NatCen. This process allowed for final adjustments to be made in the survey instruments and in the survey implementation plan.

Sample design

The sample of the EQLS is representative of the adult persons who were living in private households during the fieldwork period in each of the countries covered. In most of the countries, the EQLS sample followed a multi-stage, stratified and clustered design with a 'random walk' procedure for the selection of the households at the last stage.

The sampling design comprised the following stages.

1. **Stratification of primary sampling units (PSUs) according to the region and urbanisation level**. As is the usual practice in face-to-face surveys, the interviews to be conducted in each country were clustered in a number of PSUs, which were allocated to geographic areas stratified by region (NUTS 2[14] level or equivalent) and degree of urbanisation.[15] Therefore, in each country, a table with population figures broken down by region and urbanisation level was created and the PSUs were allocated to the cells according to the proportion of population in each cell. The selection of PSUs (the first stage) was completely random, and in most countries lists of municipalities, sections, wards or households were used as the sampling frame to achieve this.
2. **Random selection of starting address within each PSU**. Within each stratum, each PSU was randomly assigned an address from which the 'random walk' would start.
3. **'Random walk' procedure for the selection of households**. Starting from the assigned address, the interviewer followed a strictly predefined procedure – referred to as the 'random walk' – to select the

[14] The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (*Nomenclature d'unités territoriales statistiques*, NUTS) is a hierarchical classification established by Eurostat to provide a single uniform breakdown of territorial units for the production of regional statistics for the EU. Croatia, FYROM, Norway and Turkey do not use NUTS classification and therefore used alternative regional classification.

[15] Denmark did not stratify by urbanisation, as a relatively uniform level exists across the whole country.

households to contact for interviewing. Once a household was selected, it could not be substituted for – even if there was nobody at home – until four attempts to contact the interviewee had been unsuccessful at different times and days. The random walks were scheduled at different times of the day in order to establish contact with as many households as possible on the route. At the random route stage, strict and controllable rules are in place to limit the possibilities of interviewer influence.

4. **Selection of the interviewee within the household.** Once a successful contact with the household was achieved, the interviewer had to follow precise instructions. First, the interviewer had to identify how many adult persons live in the household. Secondly, whenever more than one adult was identified, the interviewer used the 'next birthday rule' (referred to in some countries as the 'last birthday rule') to select a person for the interview. At every address, where contact was established, at least three recalls (hence, four visits in total) were requested at different times of the day and of the week or weekend; this increases the chance of interviewing the chosen respondent. Subsequently, a face-to-face interview was carried out with the selected person. Only one person from the same household was interviewed.

The sampling selection process was random at each stage in terms of the selection of primary sampling units, addresses, households and individuals aged 18 years and over.

It should be noted that several exemptions from the described sampling procedure were allowed. In the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, the sampling methodology deviated in the sense that the sample, or a part of it, was first recruited by telephone. Due to perceived difficulties in obtaining collaboration from citizens in face-to-face interviewing, it was decided in these countries that households would be pre-recruited by telephone. Interviewers visited addresses of households only where a willing respondent had already been selected during the telephone recruitment phase. In Belgium and Malta, all respondents were randomly selected from the population register.

Sample size and completed interviews

In terms of the sample size, a target of 1,000 interviews was set for most of the countries, although the larger countries had bigger sample targets – 1,500 interviews in France, Italy, Poland and the UK, and 2,000 interviews in Germany and Turkey. In comparison to this, the first EQLS, conducted in 2003, had used a sample of 1,000 interviews in the larger countries and 600 interviews in the smaller countries. Table A1 shows the target sample size and actual number of interviews conducted for each country that participated in the 2007 survey.

Table A1: Target and actual number of EQLS 2007 interviews, by country

	Target number of interviews	Actual number of interviews
AT	1,000	1,043
BE	1,000	1,010
BG	1,000	1,030
CY	1,000	1,003
CZ	1,000	1,227
DE	2,000	2,008
DK	1,000	1,004
EE	1,000	1,023
EL	1,000	1,000
ES	1,000	1,015
FI	1,000	1,002
FR	1,500	1,537
HU	1,000	1,000
IE	1,000	1,000
IT	1,500	1,516
LT	1,000	1,004
LU	1,000	1,004
LV	1,000	1,002
MT	1,000	1,000
NL	1000	1,011
PL	1,500	1,500
PT	1,000	1,000
RO	1,000	1,000
SE	1,000	1,017
SI	1,000	1,035
SK	1,000	1,128
UK	1,500	1,507
HR	1,000	1,000
MK	1,000	1,008
TR	2,000	2,000
NO	1,000	1,000
Total EQLS 2007	35,000	35,634

Source: EQLS 2007.

In 12 of the countries, paper-and-pencil face-to-face interviews (PAPI) were used, while in the remaining 19 countries the interviews were conducted using computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI).

The average duration of interviews in the survey was 36 minutes. Average interview duration varied by country,

ranging from 29 minutes in Portugal, Turkey and the UK to 45 minutes in Norway. The interview duration varied because some of the countries used CAPI while others used PAPI. CAPI is generally the quicker of the two methods. The variation in interview duration can also be attributed to cultural differences, as some of the concepts in the survey questions were easier and quicker to explain in some countries than in others.

Table A2: EQLS 2007 response rates for face-to-face interviews, by country (%)

Country	Response rate
RO	88.2
BG	82.2
IE	81.7
PT	78.6
SK	77.2
MK	74.7
MT	73.3
DE	71.6
AT	66.4
HU	65.1
CZ	64.2
EE	62.2
TR	61.2
CY	60.9
BE	58.1
LV	55.6
SI	54.4
FI	53.2
HR	51.6
LT	51.3
NO*	45.2
ES	44.8
LU	43.7
DK	43.4
IT	43.3
PL	41.9
FR	39.9
NL*	36.7
EL	33.9
UK	33.5

Note: Sweden not included. * In the Netherlands and Norway, the figures only pertain to the random route segment of the sample. The 2003 method of calculating the response rate was as follows: eligible sample minus the refusal rate. (The eligible sample is eligible households minus non-contacted target persons.)
Source: EQLS 2007

Fieldwork outcome and response rates

The EQLS response rate is calculated as the proportion of completed interviews out of the total number of eligible cases. The overall response rate for face-to-face recruited addresses and interviews was 58%, which is a reasonable response rate for this type of survey. Moreover, it corresponds with the rate achieved in the first round of the survey (58.4%). Table A2 shows the response rate for 30 of the 31 countries, starting with the country with the highest response rate (Romania). The table does not contain figures for Sweden, where all pre-recruitments were completed by telephone.[16] Details on the reasons for the differences in the response rates across the countries are outlined in the EQLS Technical Report (available on the Eurofound website).

For some 2,027 interviews that were completed using telephone recruitment (all 1,000 interviews conducted in Sweden, along with 783 interviews in the Netherlands and 227 in Norway), the response rate was much lower than in face-to-face interviews. The problem with telephone recruiting is that, apart from having to deal with a large percentage of 'deadwood' numbers, in the event that contact is made it is even easier for a potential respondent to refuse on the telephone than when they are confronted by an interviewer at the door.

Weighting

In the second EQLS, the following three types of weighting were applied to the data in order to enhance the representativity of the results.

- **Design weights.** The 'random walk' selects households and, within households, respondents. This has the unintended consequence of giving more probability of selection to respondents living in smaller households: for example, in a one-person household, the probability of being selected is 100%, whereas it falls to 33% in a three-adult household. Thus, it was necessary to correct the design effect of the sampling procedure in most of the countries – with the exception of Belgium and Malta, which were without design effect since all of the respondents were randomly selected from the population register. This has been corrected by applying design weights, which equalise unequal selection probabilities: the selection of the single individual from the household is irrespective of how many adults were identified in the household. The compensation is proportional to the number of adults living in the household: for example, in a household with three

[16] Due to the telephone screening applied, the achieved response rate was quite low in Sweden – 25.1%.

adults, the weight of the respondent is multiplied by three.

- **Non-response or post-stratification weights.** Different types of eligible respondents have different response rates, which can lead to biased estimations. The usual way to minimise this effect is to generate a weight that corrects for the biased response measured for some key variables. Obviously, this requires knowledge of the real population (the universe) figures for the variables used for producing these non-response weights. In this stage, the variables taken into consideration in the weighting procedure are:
  - age;
  - gender;
  - urbanisation level;
  - region (NUTS 2 or the corresponding national regional classification);
  - household size (adults in size of household).
- **International weights.** This final step in the weighting is applied so that estimations can be generated for the country groupings (EU27, EU15, NMS12 and CC3). The weights of all respondents in each country are multiplied by the proportion that this country represents in the total adult population in the respective cross-national area. This removes the bias that occurs due to a proportionally greater number of interviews in smaller countries. For international weighting, TNS-Opinion applies the official population figures as provided by Eurostat or national statistics offices.

Limitations of the survey

The EQLS represents a unique source of data for exploring a number of quality-of-life dimensions in a wide range of countries. The survey is an important, if not a major, source of information, which highlights the challenges faced by the EU in light of the two recent rounds of enlargement. The EQLS enables an accurate picture to be drawn of the social situation in the enlarged EU – a picture that includes both objective and subjective elements.

Notwithstanding the survey's strengths, it should be noted that the EQLS data also have certain limitations. While the national samples allow for a general population profile to be drawn in each country, they are too small to enable a detailed analysis of subgroups in individual countries – such as immigrants, unemployed people or single-parent families. Furthermore, although the wide range of topics covered by the survey is on one level a clear advantage, it also means that none of the topics could be analysed in great depth. Some of the dimensions of quality of life are measured with a narrower set of indicators than would be used in highly specialised surveys. However, the strength of the survey is that it provides a synthesis of information on the main aspects of quality of life, both objective and subjective. At the same time, and more so than other EU-wide surveys, the EQLS allows for an examination of the relationships and the interplay between the different aspects of people's lives.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Second European Quality of Life Survey: Overview

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2009 – VIII, 95 pp – 21 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 978-92-897-0847-0

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4 5 TJ-80-08-442-EN-C

The European Union's social policy agenda puts improving the well-being and quality of life of Europe's citizens at the forefront of its objectives. The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) has been developed as an essential source of information on critical elements of the policy debate. This report is based on the second EQLS carried out in 2007-8 and offers a wide-ranging view of the diverse social realities in the 27 Member States, as well as covering Norway and the candidate countries of Turkey, Macedonia and Croatia.

The report presents the views and experiences of people living in Europe across a set of key domains: employment and income, family and community life, health and housing. It looks at factors influencing well-being and happiness and reflects people's views on the quality of the society in which they live. The analysis reveals similarities and differences associated with country, age, gender and income, while exploring the links between objective and subjective indicators of quality of life.

Publications Office

Publications.europa.eu

ISBN 978-92-897-0847-0