



Eurofound

Quality of life in enlargement countries

Third European Quality of Life Survey – Introduction

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Country codes

EU27

The order of countries follows the EU protocol based on the alphabetical order of the geographical names of countries in their original language.

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

Enlargement countries

HR	Croatia	IS	Iceland
ME	Montenegro	MK	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ¹
RS	Serbia	TR	Turkey
XK	Kosovo ²		

¹ MK corresponds to ISO code 3166. This is a provisional code that does not prejudice in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place under the auspices of the United Nations (http://www.iso.org/iso.country_codes/iso_3166_code_lists.htm).

² This code is used for practical purposes and is not an official ISO code.

Introduction

This document provides background information to the profiles on quality of life in seven EU enlargement countries that are published as individual papers on Eurofound's website. It identifies the countries that participated in the survey, explains survey characteristics, and provides definitions of indicators reported in individual country papers.

In 2011–2012, when the third European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) was carried out, the European Union consisted of 27 Member States. It enlarged to 28 when Croatia joined on 1 July 2013. A further eight countries are engaged in the ongoing process of a future enlargement of the EU. Depending on the stage they are at in the process towards the EU membership, countries are in acceding country, candidate country or potential candidate status.³

The third EQLS, carried out in all the EU Member States, also took place in the summer of 2012 in seven of the nine countries engaged in the enlargement process (see Table 1). The EQLS is a representative survey that serves as a rich source of information on living conditions, housing, local environment, health, public services, social cohesion and quality of society, as well as subjective well-being. Given the recent high level of interest in quality of life, the survey is an important contribution to the monitoring of, and research into, the topic as well as the policy debate surrounding it.

Countries involved in the EU enlargement process are expected to harmonise specific policies and implement relevant reforms. Each of them, however, has experienced specific social changes and comes with its own social and historical background. Alongside regular reports by these countries and the European Commission on their progress in adopting EU standards and key country statistics, which are being gradually integrated into the European Statistical System coordinated by Eurostat, the EQLS contributes to the development of a more comprehensive portrait of European societies. It also enhances understanding of life in the enlargement countries.

This project on quality of life in the enlargement countries presents seven individual country profiles consisting of the main survey findings and a brief discussion.

About the country profiles

Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey – seven non-EU enlargement countries covered by the third EQLS – are a diverse group. With a population of 328,000, Iceland is the smallest country among the existing and candidate countries of the EU; however, on quality of life indicators Iceland scores relatively high and often exceeds the EU average. With a population of over 72 million, Turkey is by far the largest of the countries discussed, bigger than all other enlargement countries taken together. All surveyed countries, including those in the western Balkans, have some unique features in terms of their demographic, social and ethnic composition and in relation to their current situation in the international context, both within their region and in European background. For example, all enlargement countries except Croatia and Serbia have a higher share of children than the EU27 average; Kosovo experienced the fastest population growth (1.5%) in 2000–2010, exceeding all the EU27 and enlargement countries. Montenegro stands out as the country with the highest rate of mobile phone penetration, reaching 2.2 subscriptions per person in 2010, with Croatia and Serbia also exceeding the EU27 average of 1.2.⁴

³ For more information on the enlargement process, country status and progress, see the web page of the Directorate General for Enlargement: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm.

⁴ For more statistics on enlargement countries in the European context, see the Eurostat database or the *Pocketbook on the enlargement countries: 2012 edition*, published by Eurostat

Given this diversity, this project does not treat the surveyed enlargement countries as necessarily belonging to one group of directly comparable countries. Instead, it provides a review of country-specific findings in a broader European context. As a point of reference, the EU27 average is often used, or a discussion takes place in the context of data from all the 34 surveyed countries.

About the survey and the data

All countries were surveyed following the same methodological approach: face-to-face interviews were conducted in people's homes with a random sample of the adult population (18 years and older) resident in the country concerned for at least the previous six months. Interviews were conducted in the country's national language(s). The sample size was 1,000 in all surveyed non-EU countries, except for Turkey, where it was 2,000. Interviewing took place in May–July (up to mid-August in Turkey) 2012.

Further findings on the enlargement countries covered by the EQLS will be available through the **Survey Mapping Tool** on the Eurofound website, as well as in larger forthcoming reports on changes over time in Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Eurofound published a broad overview of quality of life dimensions in the EU Member States in 2012. This provides additional contextual information for themes covered in the country profiles.

Questionnaires and survey technical and methodological reports are available on the Eurofound website.⁵ In addition, following the publication of reports, Eurofound makes the survey datasets freely available to those interested, via the UK Data Archive.

Country participation in the survey

Eurofound implemented the survey, with funding support from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, in those enlargement countries that had expressed an interest in having the EQLS carried out. The next round of the EQLS will take place in 2016.

⁵ See <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/eqls/2011/index.htm>.

Table 1: *Enlargement countries and their participation in the EQLS*

Country	Status with regard to EU enlargement, as of 1 July 2013	Participation in the EQLS		
		2003	2007 (2008)	2012
Croatia	Acceding (on 1 July 2013)		X	X
Iceland	Candidate			X
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Candidate		X	X
Montenegro	Candidate			X
Serbia	Candidate			X
Turkey	Candidate	X	X	X
Albania	Potential candidate			
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Potential candidate			
Kosovo	Potential candidate			X

Quality of life domains: Indicators and definitions

The approach in the EQLS reflects an increasingly global movement that goes beyond an exclusive focus on economic progress towards measuring broader public policy goals, embracing a greater consideration of quality of life. For this review of quality of life in enlargement countries, a range of indicators were selected and are presented below.⁶

Information related to the selected quality of life domains sheds light on both objective living conditions and subjective well-being, both individual life circumstances and the perceived quality of society, as well as participation. It helps obtain an overview of quality of life in a country.

 Table 2: *Quality of life domains and indicators*

Subjective well-being	
Life satisfaction (1–10)	Mean score of answers to the question: 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.
Happiness (1–10)	Mean score of answers to the question: 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.
Optimism about the future (% 'agree' or 'strongly agree')	Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with the following statement: I am optimistic about the future.
Health and mental well-being	
Satisfaction with health (1–10)	Mean score of answers to the question: 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? - Your health
Mental well-being (0–100)	This index is calculated from responses to five items: a) I have felt cheerful and in good spirits; b) I have felt calm and relaxed; c) I have felt active and vigorous; d) I woke up feeling fresh and rested; e) My daily life has been filled with things that interest me (Question 45). Each of the items has a six-point answering category, ranging from 'all of the time' (5) to 'at no time' (0). The scores to these five questions can amount to a maximum of 25, which is then multiplied by 4 to get to a maximum of 100. The index was developed by the World Health Organization.

⁶ For more information, consult the EQLS questionnaire and methodological reports, available on the Eurofound website.

Living standards	
Satisfaction with standard of living (1–10)	Mean score of answers to the question: 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? - Your present standard of living
Difficulty making ends meet (% ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’)	Percentage of respondents who answered ‘with difficulty’ or ‘with great difficulty’ to this question: Thinking of your household’s total monthly income: is your household able to make ends meet? Austria was chosen as a reference country when comparing age categories in Figure 2 in the country profiles due to its having the smallest differences from the mean across different age groups. Also, it is a country that has a very low level of poverty and the lowest misery index score. (The misery index adds price inflation and the unemployment rate.)
Number of items people cannot afford (0–6)	The average number of items that a respondent’s household cannot afford if they wanted, from the following list: a) keeping your home adequately warm; b) paying for a week’s annual holiday away from home (not staying with relatives); c) replacing any worn-out furniture; d) a meal with meat, chicken, fish every second day if they wanted it; e) buying new, rather than second-hand, clothes; f) having friends or family for a drink or meal at least once a month.
Informal debts (% in arrears over last 12 months)	Percentage of respondents indicating that their household has been in arrears at any time during the past 12 months, that is, unable to pay, as scheduled, payments related to informal loans from friends or relatives not living in their household.
Work–life balance	
Work–life conflict (on any dimension, % women)	This measure is based on three questions that ask how often the respondent: 1) comes home too tired after work to do household jobs; 2) found it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities because of time spent at work; and 3) found it difficult to concentrate on work because of family responsibilities. The work–life conflict indicator shows the proportion of people experiencing at least one of these conflicts at least several times a month.
Work–life conflict (on any dimension, % men)	
Doing household tasks at least several days a week, difference between women and men (percentage points)	This measures the percentage of respondents involved in cooking and/or housework every day or several days per week. The difference between the proportion of women and men is presented in percentage points.
Women, economically inactive, willing to work (%)	Percentage of female respondents of working age (under 65) who are neither employed nor categorised as unemployed, and answered ‘at least one hour’ to the question asking how many hours per week they would like to work if they could freely choose their working hours, taking account of the need to earn a living.
Public services	
Cost as a problem to see a doctor (‘very difficult’)	Percentage of respondents who answered whether cost made it difficult for them to see a doctor on the last occasion they needed so, and indicated ‘very difficult’ (other answer categories being ‘a little difficult’ and ‘not difficult at all’).
Households with children <12 years using childcare services	Percentage of respondents in whose households there were children under 12 years, and who indicated that they or someone in their household used childcare services.
Proportion using public transport	Percentage of respondents who rated the quality of public transport (as opposed to those who indicated explicitly ‘service not used’).
Trust and tensions	
Trust in people (1–10)	Mean score of answers to the following question: 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.
Trust in the government (1–10)	Mean score of answers to the question about respective public institutions: Please tell me how much you personally trust each of the following institutions. Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means that you do not trust at all, and 10 means that you trust completely.
Trust in local authorities (1–10)	
Tension between different racial or ethnic groups (% perceiving ‘a lot of tension’)	Percentage of respondents who indicated ‘a lot of tension’ (other categories being ‘some tension’ and ‘no tension’) about respective social groups in answering the following question: 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?
Tension between poor people and rich people (% perceiving ‘a lot of tension’)	- Different racial and ethnic groups - Poor and rich people

Participation and exclusion	
Index of perceived social exclusion (1–5)	This index is calculated as an average score based on an assessment of four statements: 1) I feel left out of society; 2) Life has become so complicated today that I almost can't find my way; 3) I feel that the value of what I do is not recognised by others; 4) Some people look down on me because of my job situation or income. The index can range from 1 to 5, where 1 represents maximum integration based on strong disagreement with all the above statements, and 5 represents maximum exclusion based on strong agreement with all of them.
Participation in voluntary work	Percentage of respondents who did unpaid voluntary work at least occasionally over the last 12 months.
Civic and political involvement	Percentage of respondents who did at least one of the following over the last 12 months: a) attended a meeting of a trade union, a political party or political action group; b) attended a protest or demonstration; c) signed a petition, including an email or online petition; d) contacted a politician or public official (other than routine contact arising from the use of public services).

Other data sources

In addition to the indicators calculated on the basis of the EQLS data, some contextual information is used from other sources. For instance, sections on living standards refer to the percentage of the population at risk of poverty and the Gini coefficient. Where available, data from the databases of the European Statistical System (see <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>) are used and refer to the year 2011. In a few cases, data from national statistical offices are used (however, in some cases these were not available).

The at-risk-of-poverty rate is defined as the proportion of population that is 'at risk of poverty'. People are at risk of poverty if their equivalised disposable income is below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60% of the national median after social transfers. It is calculated, as defined by Eurostat, on the basis of the equivalised disposable personal income using the new OECD equivalence scale. The lowest level of poverty among the surveyed countries is found in Austria (where 12.6% are at risk of poverty, according to Eurostat). The highest may well be in Kosovo; while no recent official statistical data are available for this country, the EQLS provides an early, survey-based estimate of 28%.

The Gini coefficient measures income inequality. It ranges between 0 and 100 whereby 0 means perfect equality (everyone has the same income) and 100 means maximum inequality, when one person has all the available income. The lowest Gini coefficient is in Iceland (23.6). The highest may well be in Kosovo, based on EQLS estimates.

The misery index, as developed by Arthur Okun, adds the inflation rate to the unemployment rate, and is used to assess a country's economic conditions. For example, Austria's misery index in 2011 was 7.8 (its unemployment rate was 4.2 and its inflation rate was 3.6), Denmark's was 10.3, Greece's was 20.8 and Spain's was 24.8. The highest misery indices in 2011 were for Kosovo (52.3), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (35.9) and Serbia (30.3).

General country population data are provided for the purposes of basic background information. They are provided for the years 2007, 2009 and 2012. The year 2007 is the year prior to the global economic crisis as well as the year of the first EQLS, and 2012 is the year of the survey wave reported in this publication. Data are compiled from various sources, outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Data sources for population data

Data	Source
Population (as of 1 January)	Eurostat; national statistics
Age structure: people <15 years as % of total	Eurostat; national statistics
Age structure: people 15–64 years as % of total	
Age structure: people 65+ years as % of total	
Women per 100 men	Eurostat; national statistics
Life expectancy at birth, men	World Health Organization
Life expectancy at birth, women	

National statistics used were obtained from the sources shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Sources for national statistics

KAS, Kosovo Agency of Statistics	http://esk.rks-gov.net/
Monstat, Statistical Office of Montenegro	http://monstat.org/
State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia	http://www.stat.gov.mk/
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia	http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/website
Turkish Statistical Office	http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/

Table 5: Selected survey results discussed in the country profiles

	HR	IS	XK	MK	ME	RS	TR	Range of 34 surveyed countries				EU27
								Minimum	Maximum			
Subjective well-being												
Life satisfaction (1–10)	6.8	8.3	6.2	6.7	6.9	6.3	6.6	BG	5.5	DK	8.4	7.1
Happiness (1–10)	7.3	8.3	6.3	7.2	7.6	7.1	6.9	BG	6.3	IS	8.3	7.4
Optimism about the future (% 'agree' or 'strongly agree')	56%	87%	81%	65%	70%	60%	59%	EL	20%	IS	87%	52%
Health and mental well-being												
Satisfaction with health (1–10)	7.3	8.0	7.4	7.7	8.0	7.4	7.5	LV	6.5	CY	8.4	7.3
Mental well-being (0–100)	62	69	63	68	66	54	56	RS	54	DK	70	62.5
Living standards												
Satisfaction with standard of living (1–10)	5.9	7.7	5.8	5.8	6.1	5.3	5.9	BG	4.7	DK	8.3	6.9
Difficulty making ends meet (% 'difficult' or 'very difficult')	29%	9%	21%	18%	17%	31%	22%	DK	3%	EL	50%	17%
Number of items people cannot afford (0–6)	1.7	1.1	2.3	2.0	1.6	2.2	2.9	LUX	0.3	BG	2.9	1.2
Informal debts (% in arrears over last 12 months)	6%	4%	21%	5%	6%	9%	21%	MT	1%	XK	21%	8%
Work–life balance												
Work–life conflict (on any dimension, % women)	74%	59%	68%	78%	79%	85%	80%	IT	44%	CY	86%	59%
Work–life conflict (on any dimension, % men)	77%	49%	65%	67%	69%	77%	75%	IT	39%	RS	77%	54%
Doing household tasks at least several days a week, difference between women and men (percentage points)	43	18	53	53	58	50	72	FI	11	TR	72	30
Women, economically inactive, willing to work (%)	73%	91%	45%	65%	62%	57%	58%	XK	45%	IS	91%	70%

	HR	IS	XK	MK	ME	RS	TR	Range of 34 surveyed countries				EU27
								Minimum	Maximum			
Public services												
Cost as a problem to see a doctor ('very difficult')	5%	5%	27%	5%	9%	14%	16%	UK	1%	EL	28%	8%
Households with children <12 years using childcare services	25%	66%	24%	23%	21%	23%	7%	TR	7%	SE	69%	34%
Proportion using public transport	81%	69%	93%	81%	74%	85%	97%	CY	50%	TR	97%	87%
Trust and tensions												
Trust in people (1–10)	4.6	6.3	4.9	3.6	4.8	4.6	4.9	CY	1.9	FI	7.1	5.1
Trust in the government (1–10)	3.3	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.1	3.0	6.3	EL	2.1	LUX	6.5	4.0
Trust in local authorities (1–10)	3.3	5.4	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.3	5.8	RS	3.3	LUX	6.7	5.2
Tension between different racial or ethnic groups (% perceiving 'a lot of tension')	33%	11%	21%	43%	30%	33	40%	IS	11%	CZ	68%	37%
Tension between poor people and rich people (% perceiving 'a lot of tension')	61%	26%	20%	37%	43%	48%	42%	DK	4%	HU	71%	35%
Participation and exclusion												
Index of perceived social exclusion (1–5)	2.4	1.8	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.4	DK	1.6	CY	3.0	2.2
Participation in voluntary work	27%	54%	61%	29%	9%	16%	20%	ME	9%	XK	61%	32%
Civic and political involvement	31%	61%	41%	22%	16%	19%	8%	TR	8%	IS	61%	25%

Further information

For further information, please contact Tadas Leončikas, at Tadas.Leoncikas@eurofound.europa.eu.

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