European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Quality of life in Europe

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First European Quality of Life Survey 2003

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For every tree felled, at least one new tree is planted.

Foreword

The European Union of 25 Member States is a diverse and heterogeneous body. Culture, political traditions and living conditions vary within and between the 25 countries and there are large differences in quality of life. Possible further enlargement to embrace up to four more countries will increase this diversity and create an ever more complex Europe.

Information is key in any effort to promote cohesion in Europe. Seeking to address gaps in existing knowledge, the Foundation launched its European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) in 2003. The first results of this ambitious attempt to explore quality of life issues in 28 countries – the EU25 and three candidate countries, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey – provide a comprehensive portrait of the face of an enlarged Europe.

With comparisons between countries as well as between demographic, social and economic groups, the report documents material conditions, employment situations, living and working conditions, family and community life, health and housing in the 28 countries. It looks at the views of Europe's citizens on these conditions, their subjective well-being and their assessments of the society in which they live. More in-depth analyses on specific issues raised in the survey will form a key part of the Foundation's ongoing series of reports on Quality of Life in Europe.

This report provides a unique insight into Europeans' quality of life today. We trust it will be a useful contribution towards shaping the policies which seek to improve living and working conditions throughout Europe.

Willy Buschak
Acting Director

Contents

Country codes

EU25

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

CC3

BG	Bulgaria
RO	Romania
TR	Turkey

Abbreviations

EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey
PPS	Purchasing Power Standards
EU15	15 EU Member States (pre May 2004)
EU25	25 EU Member States (post May 2004)
NMS	10 new Member States which joined the European Union in May 2004 (former 'acceding' countries)
CC3	Three candidate countries: Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey
ECHP	European Community Household Panel
ESS	European Social Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

Introduction

The enlargement of the European Union in May 2004 embraced 10 new Member States. A further enlargement may include four more. This puts diversity at the forefront of the European Union – diversity in living conditions, in cultural traditions and in outlook. Nurturing this cultural diversity is at the very heart of the European ideal. But large differences in material resources and living standards, in political participation rates, in levels of trust in public institutions and in how needs and responsibilities are understood, can lead to tensions and conflict.

To help foster cohesion in this larger and more diversified Union, policymakers and civil society actors need to draw on precise information about how people live and how they perceive their circumstances.

Against this background, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions launched its first ever pan-European quality of life survey (EQLS) in the summer of 2003. It covered 28 countries: the 15 EU Member States (EU15), the 10 acceding countries (now new Member States – NMS) and the three candidate countries at that time (CC3). The survey examined quality of life in core life domains in European countries. The resulting comparative data covers a broad spectrum of circumstances in the surveyed countries. It gives a first overview of quality of life in these 28 countries. A series of more in-depth analyses of specific themes will follow. The results build on the findings of existing Eurobarometer data in this area which have already contributed to the Foundation's Quality of life in Europe series.

The EQLS explored both subjective and objective aspects of quality of life in major areas which shape living conditions and opportunities of individuals. Some of these areas, such as employment, poverty and social exclusion are already the focus of long-standing European policy initiatives. Others like health care and housing may now become more crucial issues following European enlargement.

Quality of life as a concept

Quality of life, which has gained prominence in social research study since the 1970s, is a broad concept concerned with overall well-being within society. Its aim is to enable people, as far as possible, to achieve their goals and choose their ideal lifestyle. In that sense, the quality of life concept goes beyond the living conditions approach, which tends to focus on the material resources available to individuals. Three major characteristics are associated with the quality of life concept (Fahey, Nolan and Whelan, 2003):

1. Quality of life refers to individuals' life situations. The concept requires a micro perspective, where the conditions and perceptions of individuals play a key role. Macroscopic features relating to the economic and social situation of a society are important for putting the findings at individual level into their proper context, but they do not take centre stage.

2. Quality of life is a multi-dimensional concept. As noted above, the notion of quality and the consideration of several areas of life broaden the narrower focus on income and material conditions which prevails in other approaches. Multi-dimensionality not only requires the description of several life domains, but emphasises the interplay between domains as this contributes to quality of life.

3. Quality of life is measured by objective as well as subjective indicators. Subjective and attitudinal perceptions are of particular relevance in identifying individual goals and orientations. Individual perceptions and evaluations are most valuable when these subjective evaluations are linked to objective living conditions. Applying both ways of measuring quality of life gives a more complete picture.

Drawing on previous studies, the Foundation selected six core areas for the EQLS. These are:

- employment
- economic resources
- family and households
- community life and social participation
- health and health care
- knowledge, education and training.

A strategy for the enlarged Europe

Two major challenges underpin Europe's approach to quality of life:

1. The EU's strategic goal to 'become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion', in line with the Lisbon Strategy.

2. Following EU enlargement in May 2004 to include 10 new countries, and with preparations for the integration of up to four further candidate countries, there is clear evidence of increased cultural diversity and disparities in living conditions between the

Member States. Strengthening social cohesion as a way of improving living conditions and reducing differences will ultimately facilitate integration.

European Union social policy has a key role to play in empowering people and enabling them to take advantage of social change and improve their lives.

Quality has become a key concept in these policies because it allows for a better measurement of progress. The notion of 'qualify of life' links living and working conditions in one holistic concept which in turn, ensures effective monitoring of the success or otherwise of the ambitious Lisbon strategy.

This report focuses on eight key issues. The first six look at objective circumstances and the last two at subjective perception:

1. *Economic situation*
   Income distribution and deprivation levels are quite diverse across Europe. This is a crucial issue which affects the aim of building a socially cohesive European society.

2. *Housing and local environment*
   Tenure status is indicative of material resources and long-term security. Housing conditions and surrounding environment are equally important in shaping quality of life.

3. *Employment, education and skills*
   High quality jobs are crucial to social inclusion and an important means of protecting individuals and households from poverty. Creating more and better jobs to strengthen a competitive economy is a main objective of EU employment policy. Policies to promote gender equality and support lifelong learning are also crucial dimensions of the European employment strategy, especially in the light of the enlargement process.

4. *Household structure and family relations*
   Family contributes greatly to an individual's sense of well-being and the feeling of security and belonging. Different patterns for men and women may be discerned in households and families as the gender division of labour still regulates main responsibilities for housework and family care.

5. *Work-life balance*
   Work and love, according to Freud, are the two axes of individual identity which have become separated over time. Also, family not only represents love, but also work, hence 'family work is the work of love'. There is also an emotional investment in paid work. The goal of reconciling family and paid work has been attempted by the gender division of labour in the past but this approach is now being questioned, not only by women but also by men. Therefore achieving better work-life balance must be done in this new context.

6. *Health and health care*
   Good health is not only important for a sense of well-being but also determines our ability to reach our goals. Differences in health across Europe and the quality of the health care service need to be addressed in policy terms.

7. *Subjective well-being*
   The individual's own assessment of their quality of life and their situation is an important factor which may correct or strengthen the picture which emerges as a result of the survey.

8. *Perceived quality of society*
   Quality of life can be related to how appealing a society is to live in and the degree of trust citizens across Europe have in one another and in their social and political institutions. Equally important are social divides. Survey findings show that perceptions of tensions between social groups differ between old and the new Member States and do not always reflect the issues predominant in public debate.

The report concludes with a summary of the survey's key results, relating them to recent policy debates and developments.

European Quality of Life Survey

The survey was carried out by Intomart GfK in 28 countries: the 15 EU Member States before May 2004 (EU15); the 10 acceding countries which became Member States in May 2004 (NMS); and the three candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey (CC3). Around 1,000 persons aged 18 and over were interviewed in each country, except for the 'smaller' countries – Cyprus, Estonia, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia – where around 600 interviews were conducted. The questionnaire (see Annex) was developed by a research consortium and covers a broad spectrum of life domains with an emphasis on employment and working conditions, housing, family, social and political participation, quality of society, and subjective well-being. The processing of data was carried out by the Social Science Research Centre in Berlin (WZB). Several macro indicators were added at this stage in order to provide a linkage between individuals' self-reports (e.g. household income) and the social situation of

the country as a whole (e.g. GDP per capita). The finalised dataset is presented here as the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS).

The EQLS represents an ambitious attempt to explore quality of life in a wide range of countries. It is a major source of information, highlighting the challenges the EU faces in the light of recent enlargement. The survey enables an accurate picture of the social situation in the enlarged Community 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 sample sizes of around 1,000 per country provide a general population profile, they are too small to allow for detailed analysis of sub-groups, such as immigrants or single parent families. Furthermore, although the wide range of topics covered by the survey is on the one hand a clear advantage, it also means that none of the topics could be treated in great depth. Some of the dimensions of quality of life are measured with a narrower set of indicators than one would use 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.

Methodology

The data collection was organised by Intomart GfK, which assigned national institutes to draw the random samples and conduct the interviews in each country. The overall response rate was 58.4%. However, there was a large variation in national response rates, ranging from 30.3% in Spain to 91.2% in Germany (see Annex). After data collection, the data were checked thoroughly by the Social Science Centre (WZB) with the help of national experts.

The report illustrates the results for all 28 participating countries. Where appropriate, data are displayed for all countries separately, although statistical values are only presented in the report if at least 30 cases are represented.

To highlight any differences between the former acceding countries (the recently joined Member States), the three candidate countries, and the former 15 EU Member States, the complexity and amount of data need to be reduced. For this purpose, four cross-country averages are provided:

1. The EU15 average refers to the former 15 EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.
2. The NMS average refers to the 10 former 'acceding' countries which joined the European Union in May 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.
3. The CC3 average refers to three pre-enlargement 'candidate' countries which are set to join the European Union at a later date: Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey.
4. The EU25 average refers to the 25 countries of the Community following the 2004 enlargement: EU15 and NMS.

All the averages are population-weighted. This means that population rich countries have more impact on the value of the average than countries with lower populations. Therefore, Poland and Turkey dominate the cross-country averages for the NMS and the CC3 respectively. The advantage of this weighting procedure is that the average represents the number of individuals living in the respective region. However, 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 because the average reflects the very different population sizes of the respective countries.

All analyses are descriptive. This means that the tables and figures show how European countries differ in some respects and how the results are interrelated with other characteristics of social groups. There are no extensive attempts to explain why such differences arise. A descriptive report of many variables for 28 countries necessarily has to highlight core results, while neglecting many other findings. In this report, the criteria for selecting core results was consistency. 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 there are clear-cut country groups visible which reveal consistent social patterns, even if for one country the significant relation did not exist.

Economic situation 1

The term 'quality of life' refers to the overall well-being of individuals. Its distinctive feature is the attempt to move beyond a narrow or one-dimensional view of human personality. In this chapter, the focus is on objective living conditions and the manner in which individuals evaluate their economic situation. The broad framework in which such issues are addressed is based on the notion that it is not simply outcomes that matter, but rather the capacity to affect outcomes. Therefore, in order to understand both what produces differences in observed living conditions and what to read into such differences, it is necessary to include material resources and, where possible, key contextual characteristics. A central element in improving quality of life is enabling people, as far as possible, to attain their own goals. This chapter will focus on income and lifestyle deprivation while recognising that, in capturing the resources and opportunities open to people, collective as well as individual resources need to be assessed. Social provision in areas such as health care, housing and social services are fundamental and this is dealt with in later chapters. However, previous research suggests that the aspects concentrated on in this section are crucial to individuals' evaluations of their well-being (Whelan et al, 2001; Russell and Whelan, 2004).

Monitoring living conditions and quality of life cannot be a purely 'scientific' exercise but must tap into the central concerns and goals of society. In the light of the present research, this involves situating the findings in the context of the European social policy agenda. For many years, the predominant policy focus of the EU was economic rather than social. However, in recent years, that focus has shifted. The EU has an increasing interest and competence in social policy, partly because of the perceived need to offset some of the potential effects of creating the single market. Such concerns have taken on even greater significance with the recent enlargement of the EU.

Important landmarks in the development of social competence were the 1989 Social Charter, the Social Protocol of the Maastricht Treaty in 1989, and Articles 136 and 137 of the Amsterdam Treaty requiring the Community to support Member States' actions to combat social exclusion. The concerns of European policy now encompass raising living standards and improving living conditions, strengthening social cohesion and combating exclusion. This broadening of focus is occurring in the context of the link between economic and social spheres being crucial. The relationship between the policy domains is highlighted in the Lisbon European Council's identification of a fresh set of challenges that must be met.

It is within this context that social exclusion is identified as a key focus for social policy. It seeks to address the new challenges created by transformation in the economic sphere.

The shifting balance between economic and social concerns and the need to continually review the relationship between them, particularly in the context of EU enlargement, is reflected in the manner in which key elements in the conceptual architecture of EU integration policy are interpreted. Used in this context, the concept of 'social cohesion' refers to equality between countries and regions within the EU, particularly in regard to level of economic development. It is measured by the degree to which key economic indicators at national or regional level, such as GDP per capita, converge towards an EU-wide mean. A socially cohesive EU, in this sense, is one where no country or region is much poorer or less economically developed than the norm for the EU as a whole.

Social inclusion/exclusion can almost be thought of as the within-country counterpart of the cross-country concept of social cohesion. Its concern is with within-country inequalities between individuals or households, rather than cross-country inequalities between countries or regions. It does not take account of the full range of the social distribution within countries, but focuses on a dichotomy between the bottom tail of the distribution – the socially excluded minority who are 'cut off' – and the rest, which is assumed to constitute the 'mainstream'.

A socially inclusive society, in this sense, is one where no individuals or households fall below the threshold of living conditions that is thought to provide the minimum necessary basis for participation in the normal life of a society. Concern focuses not solely on inequalities *per se* but on the consequences of such inequalities, including the manner in which they are experienced. What is at issue is not just the extent of different levels and forms of inequality but also the manner in which they are socially structured. To what extent are cross-national variations a consequence of different socio-demographic profiles? Do similar sorts of factors account for inequalities as between the EU15 and the NMS and CC3, or are the bases of social stratification variable? Do resources generated outside the market play a greater role outside the EU15? The development of appropriate policy responses can be greatly facilitated by a better understanding of such issues.

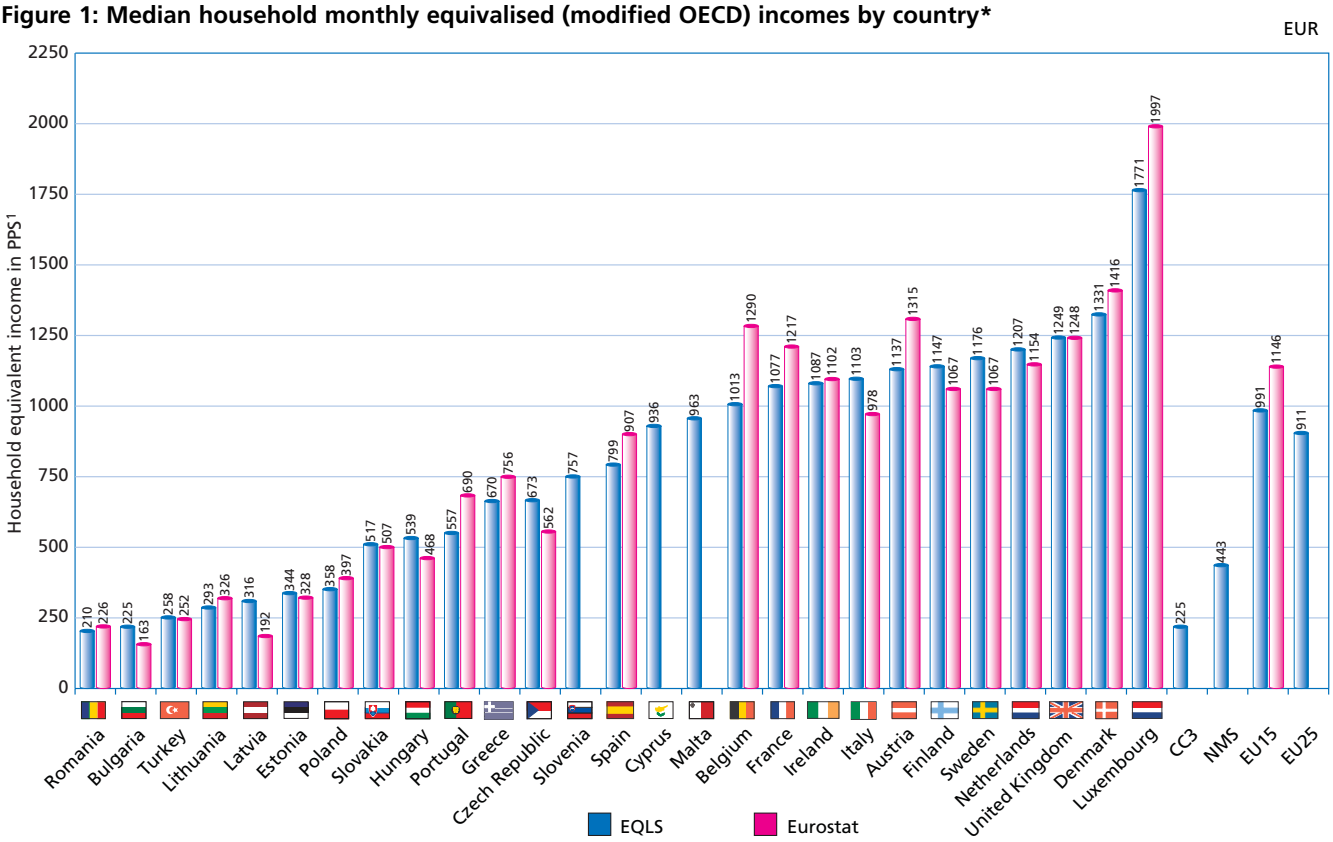
Income wealth and inequality

Economic wealth and standard of living are strongly dependent on the resources a country can generate: the level of national income. Evaluation of economic performance is usually captured through the use of GDP per capita which facilitates international comparisons. For this reason, it is proposed to first discuss a macro economic indicator and examine the level and variation of GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS)[1] for the 28 countries of the survey. This will be followed by a comparable analysis employing the data generated by the EQLS, focusing on national median household income.

Not surprisingly, there is a sharp differentiation by country group in terms of their level of GDP, with the highest GDP per capita being observed for the EU15 countries followed by the NMS and then by the CC3. The average GDP per capita of the EU15 is 1.3 to 3 times higher than that of the countries within the NMS. Within the EU15, the countries with the lowest GDP per capita have nearly the same level of GDP per capita as countries with the highest GDP per capita in the NMS. There is little variation within the CC3 group, GDP per capita being very similar for each of the countries, and the EU15 average is in each case more than four times higher.

Moving from national macro economic data to the micro data, the EQLS provides information about a household's net monthly income, which is used to present similar analyses conducted with GDP per capita in PPS. The measure of household net monthly income has been converted into PPS to allow for comparisons between countries. To increase comparability and adjust for the fact that households differ in terms of size and composition, the modified OECD scale is used to calculate disposable household equivalent income in PPS for each country. The findings from the EQLS survey were compared to the equivalent figures from the Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat) for the year 2001 in order to examine the accuracy of the 2003 survey. This exercise identified some problems with the German income figures from the EQLS. For that reason, it has been excluded from Figure 1. It should be made clear that the purpose of the EQLS is not to collect independent

Figure 1: Median household monthly equivalised (modified OECD) incomes by country*



Question 65: If you add up all income sources (for all household members), which letter corresponds to your household's total net income: the amount that is left over after taxes have been deducted? (19 categories according to national income distribution)

Source: EQLS 2003 and Eurostat (New Cronos database) 2001 * Data for DE not available. Eurostata data missing in some cases.

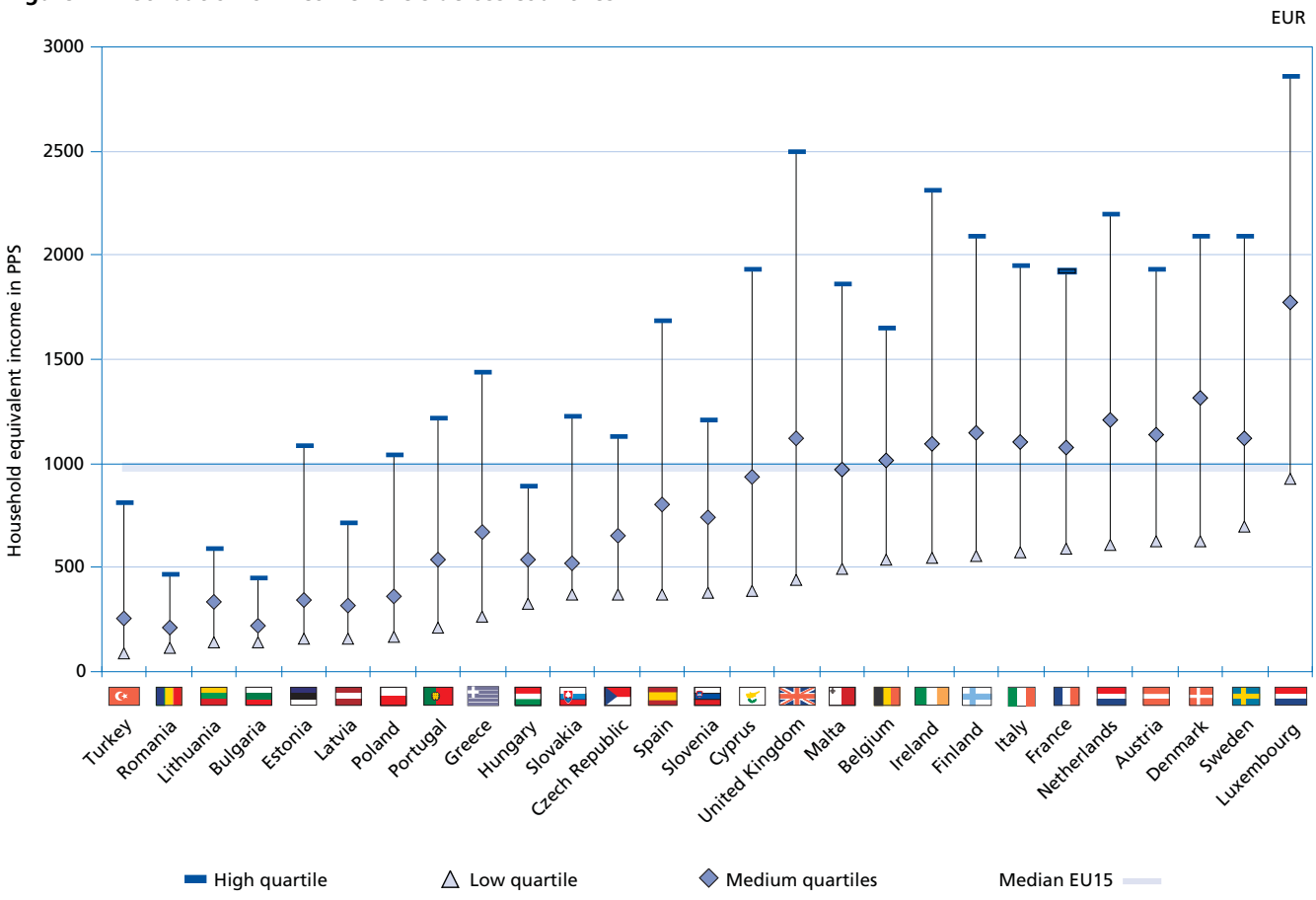
[1] Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) in an artificial common currency where differences in price levels between countries have been eliminated by using Purchasing Power Parities (PPP)

estimates of income but rather to enable relationships involving income to be examined, provided that overall estimates are consistent with those deriving from sources specifically devoted to the estimation of income.

The comparison of median household income as reported by Eurostat and the EQLS reveals that, for the EU15, the Eurostat estimates are significantly higher than those derived from the EQLS, with the differences ranging from 6% to 29%. Comparing estimates for the NMS and CC3 with the EQLS, the reverse pattern is observed, with the Eurostat estimates generally being lower – except in Lithuania and Poland – on average between 2% and 40% (Figure 2). Despite differences in estimates of absolute amounts of income between Eurostat and EQLS, the pattern of distribution of household income between the 28 countries is similar. The same distinct groups of countries can be observed. In the EU15 countries, 11 out of 15 states have a median household monthly equivalent income over 1000 PPS. Greece, Portugal and Spain have the lowest values at between 550 and 800 PPS. For the NMS, the median is less than half that of the EU15. In the NMS, no country reports a monthly equivalent income above 1000 PPS; Cyprus and Malta are just below this threshold. Within the CC3, the income median range is very narrow and the overall median in each case represents a fifth of that of the EU15's and just over half that of the NMS.

For all EU15 countries, with the exception of Greece, Portugal and Spain, the median household income of the middle quartile is above the median EU15. For most of the NMS, the median household income of the top quartile is at a similar level to that of the two medium levels of the EU15 (Figure 2). Some countries, such as Hungary, Latvia and the candidate country Turkey, fail to reach this level

Figure 2: Distribution of income levels across countries*



The breakdown within each country of median equivalised (modified OECD) household income (new OECD) with the countries ranged from left to right according to GDP per capita, with the lowest on the left.

* Data for DE not available

Source: EQLS 2003

but are clearly above the lowest EU15 level. At the extreme end of the continuum are Romania and Bulgaria, where the median of the top income is at the same level as that of the bottom income of the majority of EU15 countries.

Looking at household income in terms of gender, in the EU15, income is about 10% higher for men in most countries but this rises to about 30% in Italy, Portugal and Spain. The same broad pattern is observed for the NMS where the ratio male to female income ranges from 0.9 to 1.3. Poland is the exception: here female respondents report higher household income. The CC3 countries also conform to the pattern of higher income for men.

Income variation by age is examined with respondents grouped into five categories. In the vast majority of EU15 countries, the mean income is lowest for those aged 18-24. However, there is significant variation in the stage at which income peaks, with the observations dividing equally between the 25-34 and 50-64 age groups. Uniformity is restored as income declines sharply at retirement age, 65 and over. Undoubtedly reflecting the limitations of national pension provision, the elderly are particularly disadvantaged in Greece, Portugal and Spain, where they report levels of income significantly below those of the youngest age group. The disparity between age groups within countries is the sharpest in the UK and Portugal, and is at its lowest in Austria, Belgium and Italy.

Looking at the NMS, for eight out of 10 countries, the income level is at its highest between the ages of 25-34. Unlike the situation for the EU15, the youngest age group are not particularly disadvantaged. For nine of the 10 countries, the income level is at its lowest for those aged 65 or over. On average, disparities by age are no wider than for the EU15. The overall results for the NMS are affected by the fact that the Polish pattern of low income in the youngest age group and high income in the oldest group is something of an exception. For the CC3, a curvilinear pattern is again observed with the lowest levels of income being observed at the extremes of the age distribution.

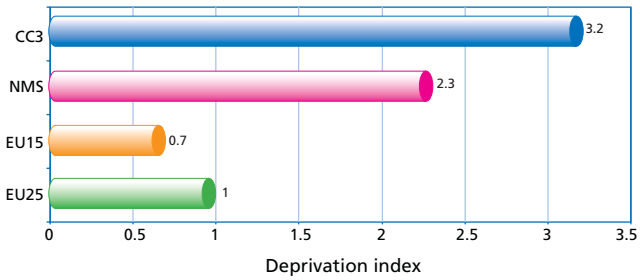
Household essentials and deprivation

Earlier research using Eurobarometer and the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) data has demonstrated that, to understand economic well-being, it is necessary to take into account not only current household income but also more direct measures of living standards such as deprivation. (Whelan et al, 2001; Russell and Whelan, 2004).

The measure of deprivation focuses on a set of six items which a household cannot afford. These items are of a kind that have been included in efforts to construct poverty indices that capture exclusion from minimally acceptable standards of living. For each of these items, the respondent was asked if the household possessed it and, if not, if this is because they could not afford it. An individual is considered as deprived only where both conditions are fulfilled. The intention therefore is to measure 'enforced' deprivation. The mean number of items of which people are deprived is selected for each country. Aggregate figures are weighted by population for all countries in each cluster – the EU15, the NMS, EU25 and CC3 (Figure 3).

The pattern of deprivation is consistent with previous expectations. The lowest level of deprivation is found for the EU15 with a value of 0.7 (which means that, in the EU15, on average, people are deprived of less than one item). The corresponding value for the NMS is over three times higher at 2.3, and that for the CC3 four and a half times higher at 3.2. The fact that the score is weighted by population ensures that the figures for the EU25 and the 28 countries overall are closer to the EU15 figure than the NMS and CC3 levels. The disparities between clusters of countries reported above are remarkably similar to those found earlier, based on median equivalised household income, where the corresponding ratios between the EU15 and the remaining two clusters (NMS and CC3) were 2.2 and 4.4. Thus, both income and deprivation approaches locate groups of countries at almost identical points on a continuum of disadvantage.

Figure 3: Mean deprivation (six items) by country grouping



Mean number of six items – (1) keeping your home adequately warm; (2) paying for a week's annual holiday; (3) replacing any worn-out furniture; (4) having a meal with meat every second day if you wanted; (5) buying new, rather than second-hand clothes; (6) having friends or family for a drink or meal at least once a month – of which people are deprived, in a sense that they cannot afford it (Question 20).

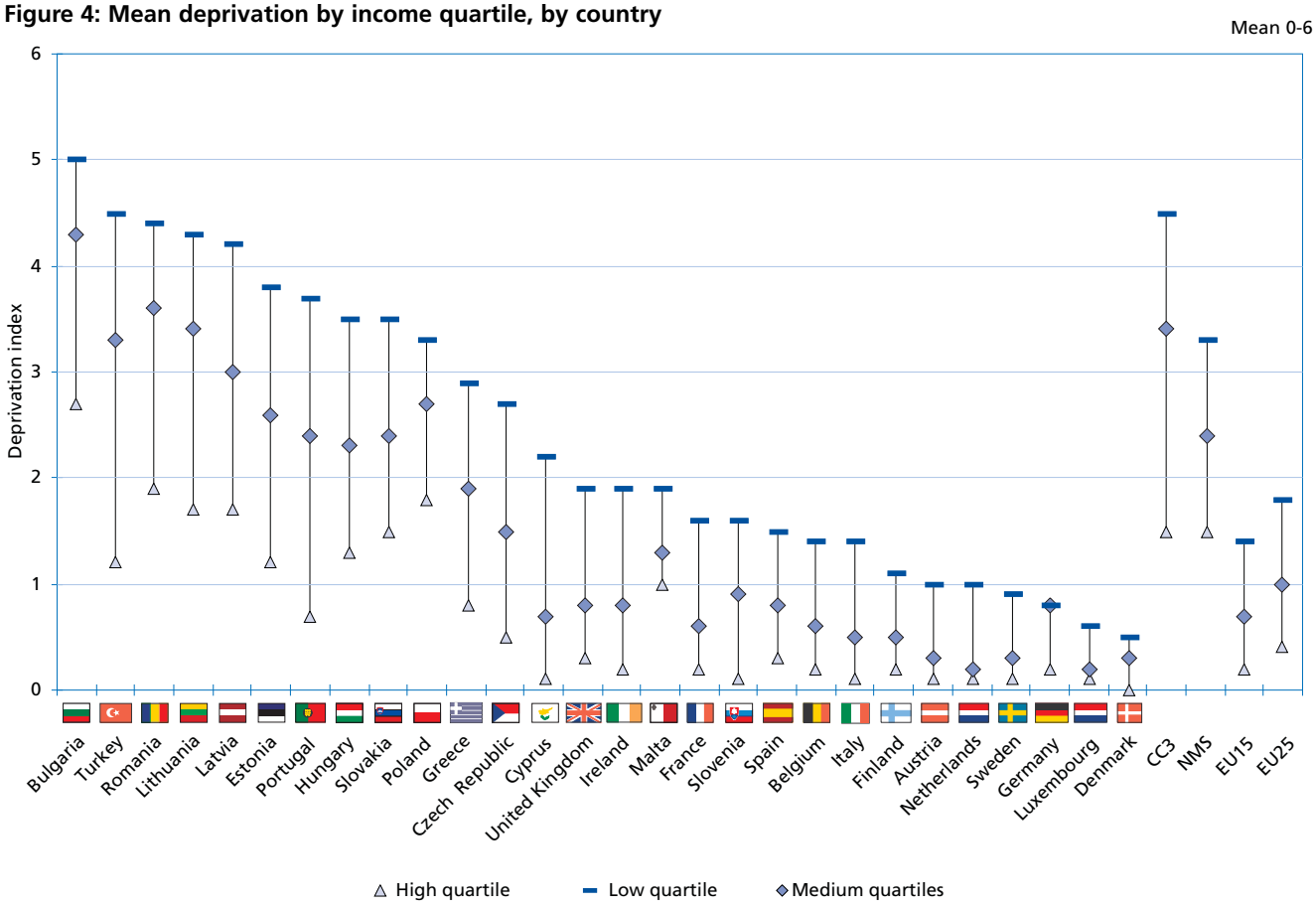
Source: EQLS 2003

Focusing on levels of deprivation within clusters, the results show that Portugal and Greece are sharply differentiated from the remaining EU15 countries. The former exhibits a deprivation level three times the EU15 average and the latter about two and a half times higher. As a consequence, both of these countries have deprivation levels higher than those observed in four of the NMS: Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta and the Czech Republic (in order of deprivation levels). In fact, Slovenia and Cyprus have values that are not very different from the majority of the EU15. Thus, neither group constitutes an entirely homogeneous block. The CC3 group do display distinctively high levels of deprivation with only the high value reported for Lithuania preventing this group from accounting for the three highest values.

Next, within-country inequalities related to position in the income distribution are examined (Figure 4). Here, the disparity between the lowest and highest quartile is sharpest in the EU15 where the ratio is 7:1. For the NMS, the corresponding ratio has a value of 2.2:1 and, for the CC3, it is 3:1. The gap between groups of countries is shown by the fact that the level of deprivation in the lowest quartile in the EU15 is marginally lower than in the highest quartiles in the remaining countries. The disparities between clusters of countries are greater at the top than at the bottom. Shifting perspective slightly and focusing on differences between clusters within quartiles, rather than looking at differences across quartiles within clusters, one finds that, for those in the bottom quartile, the deprivation level for the NMS group is 2.4 times that of the EU15 and that of the CC3 is 3.2 times higher. The corresponding figure in the highest quartile is 7.5:1 in both cases.

Calculating ratios between quartiles for countries within the EU15 countries is made difficult by the fact that, in the top quartile, deprivation levels are close to zero for many countries. Only in Greece and Portugal are deprivation levels significantly above zero at the top of the income

Figure 4: Mean deprivation by income quartile, by country



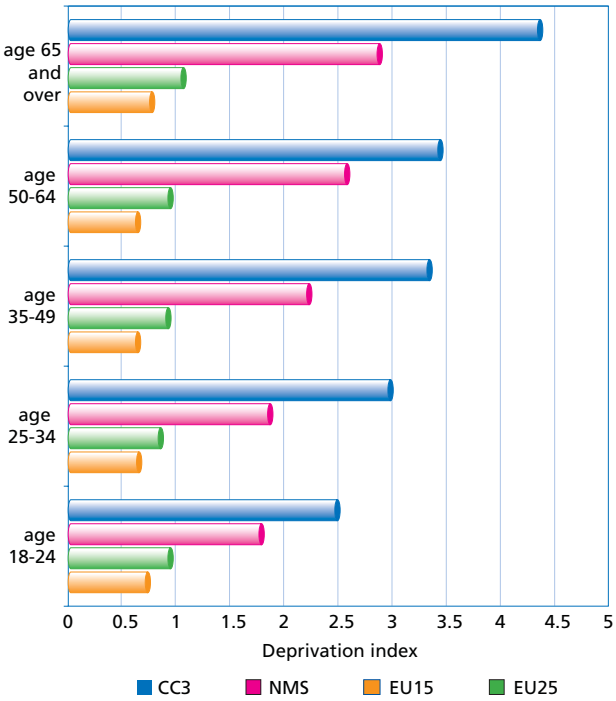
Mean number of six items – (1) keeping your home adequately warm; (2) paying for a week's annual holiday; (3) replacing any worn-out furniture; (4) having a meal with meat every second day if you wanted; (5) buying new, rather than second-hand clothes; (6) having friends or family for a drink or meal at least once a month – of which people are deprived, in a sense that they cannot afford it (Question 20).

Source: EQLS 2003

hierarchy. The pattern of deprivation as such is that the highest degree of inequality is not found in those countries with the highest levels of deprivation. In the bottom income quartile, the pattern between country differences is very much as one would expect. The northern European countries display distinctively low levels. Ireland and the UK, which are characterised by liberal welfare regimes, display levels of deprivation that are higher than all other countries apart from Greece and Portugal.

Among the NMS, it is again true that inequalities in deprivation are greater in countries such as Slovenia and Cyprus than in the EU15 countries. However, for these two countries, their absolute levels are relatively low and are very similar to those encountered in the EU15 group. (Conversely, Greece and Portugal have similar results to the NMS group.) For the remaining countries of the NMS group, the variations in inequalities between countries are relatively modest, and countries like Poland, Hungary and Slovakia are found at an intermediate level of deprivation. Among the NMS, the Baltic countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – display the highest level of deprivation. The CC3 group is found at the extreme end of the deprivation continuum, with Bulgaria reporting the highest value.

Figure 5: Mean deprivation index by age group of the household respondent, by country grouping



Mean number of six items – (1) keeping your home adequately warm; (2) paying for a week's annual holiday; (3) replacing any worn-out furniture; (4) having a meal with meat every second day if you wanted; (5) buying new, rather than second-hand clothes; (6) having friends or family for a drink or meal at least once a month – of which people are deprived, in a sense that they cannot afford it (Question 20).

Source: EQLS 2003

As is the case with income, women are disadvantaged in all clusters of countries. Deprivation levels are low in the EU15 but they are 50% higher for women. In the NMS, the absolute levels are higher but gender differentials are less sharp. Women have scores that are approximately 30% higher. For the CC3, the trend of increasing absolute levels but diminishing gender differentials continues. In this case, female scores are 10% higher. As a consequence of this pattern, differentials between men across country clusters are greater than those observed for women.

In comparison with the generally curvilinear pattern observed for income, where income rises with age but then declines, there is relatively little variation in deprivation associated with age across the EU15 (Figure 5). However, this conceals the fact that, in Portugal, Greece and Spain, deprivation increases with age. Thus, in Portugal, the figure for the over 65 group is three times that for those under 25. In Greece and Spain, there is a disparity of approximately two to one. In other cases, such as the Scandinavian countries, the UK, France and Germany, there is a clear tendency for deprivation to decline with age. In Ireland, Austria and the Netherlands, on the other hand, there is little variation across age groups. For the NMS and CC3 countries, deprivation increases with age, with the level for the oldest group being 40% higher than for the youngest age group in both cases.

Although there is some variation by country within the NMS and the CC3, in every case, other than the Czech Republic, the highest level of deprivation is found among the oldest age group and, in the vast majority of cases, the youngest group is the least deprived. As a consequence of these differences, comparisons across clusters of countries and individual countries need to be age-specific. Thus, deprivation levels for the youngest group in the NMS and CC3 countries are 2.4 and 3.3 times higher respectively than for the EU15. For the oldest age group, the corresponding figures are 3.6 and 5.5. It remains true that, even for the younger groups in the NMS and CC3 countries, deprivation levels remain substantially higher than for the elderly in the EU15. Individual countries are affected even more by these age differences. Younger people in the UK exhibit particularly high levels of deprivation, probably as a consequence of their well-known tendency to establish independent households at

Table 1: Proportion of households in arrears for utility bills, by country grouping

%

	CC3	NMS	EU15	EU25
Mean	25	21	7	10
Minimum	Bulgaria (5)	Czech Republic (7)	Denmark (3)	Denmark (3)
Maximum	Romania (30)	Poland (28)	Greece (12)	Poland (28)

Question 59: 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? B: Utility bills, such as electricity, water, gas.

Source: EQLS 2003

an earlier age than their European counterparts. Comparing this group to the corresponding Portuguese group, results show that the deprivation level for the latter is actually slightly lower. In contrast, the 65 and over age group in Portugal report deprivation levels that are five and a half times higher than their UK counterparts.

Similarly, while younger Spaniards report much less deprivation than their UK counterparts, the pattern is reversed as one moves from the youngest to the oldest age group. Similar results are observed over a range of country comparisons.

Household debts

A further measure of disadvantage available from the EQLS is whether or not people were in arrears with utility bills at any time in the previous month (see Table 1).

One in four households in the CC3 and one in five in the NMS report arrears with utility bills. These rates are respectively, two and a half, and two times higher than for the EU15. There are some individual observations that are not easy to interpret. Respondents in Greece report a distinctively high level of problems while those in other southern European countries and Bulgaria report a low level. The remaining observations are broadly in line with expectations of low rates in Scandinavia and the Benelux countries and relatively low rates among the NMS in the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Malta.

Household production

It has been suggested that, in comparing the EU15 with the other groups of countries, household production for consumption may be a good deal more important in the latter countries, particularly in mitigating absolute poverty. To explore this possibility, households were asked whether in the past year their households had helped meet their needs for food by growing vegetables or fruits or keeping poultry or livestock. It should be noted that the question does not attempt to distinguish between production out of necessity and production governed by choice.

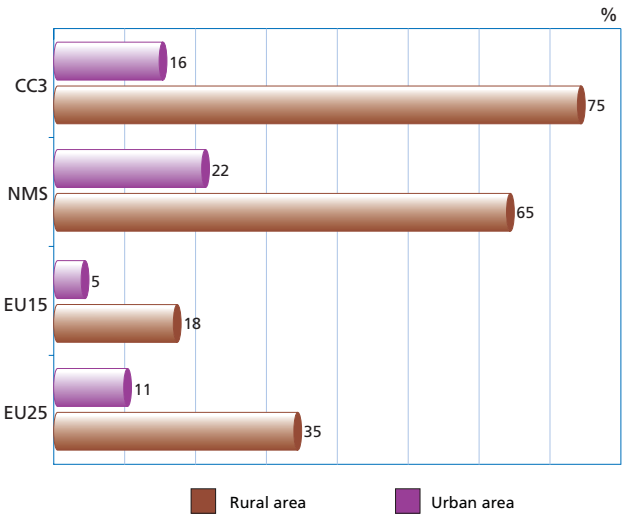
Overall, such production is a great deal more frequent in the NMS and CC3 than in the EU15 in both urban and rural areas (Figure 6). Not surprisingly, in every case it is a good deal more frequent in rural than in urban areas. In the CC3, 75% of those in rural areas engage in such production, compared with 66% in the NMS and approximately 14% in the EU15. In urban areas, the respective figures are approximately 17% (CC3), 20% (NMS) and 5% (EU15). Thus, differences between country clusters are in part accounted for by their distribution across the urban-rural continuum but this is by no means the only factor involved. While such production is greater in rural areas in the CC3 than the NMS, in urban areas household production is greater in the NMS than the CC3. Thus, urban-rural differentials are much sharper in the CC3 than the NMS where they are closer to those in the EU15.

Figure 7 shows variation in household production across income quartiles by country grouping. For the EU15, the variation across quartiles is less than for other country clusters. For the NMS group, such production is one and a half times more likely among the lower quartile than in the highest. For the CC3, this ratio rises to almost three to one. It is necessary to note that the overall NMS results are heavily influenced by the results for Poland. Thus, for Poland, and the Baltic countries, such variation is substantial but, for the remaining countries, it is a good deal more modest. Such production is more likely among older age groups in the EU15 and the CC3 but not in the NMS.

Subjective economic strain

Perceived economic strain defined as reporting that households have difficulties in making ends meet produces a sharp differentiation between the country clusters (Figure 8). One in 10 households in the EU15 reports such difficulty. For the NMS, the rate is almost four times higher and, for the CC3, it is almost five times higher. Within the EU15, rates vary across countries rather as would be expected, with the highest rates being observed

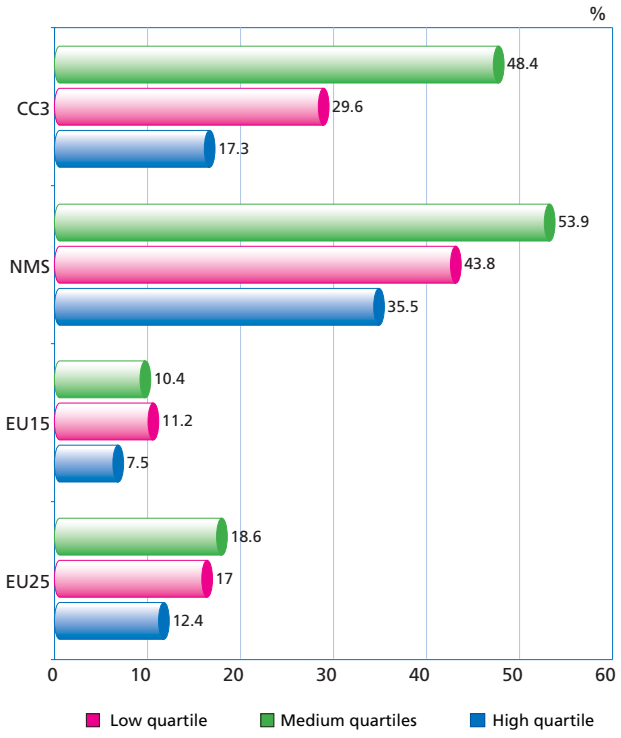
Figure 6: Household food production, by country grouping and area



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: No; Yes, up to one tenth of the household's food needs; Yes, between one tenth and one half; Yes, for half or more of the household needs. Yes-categories are grouped together.

Source: EQLS 2003

Figure 7: Household food production by income quartile and country grouping



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: No; Yes, up to one tenth of the household's food needs; Yes, between one tenth and one half; Yes, for half or more of the household needs. Yes-categories are grouped together.

Source: EQLS 2003

for Greece, Portugal and Spain. Among the NMS countries, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland display relatively high rates.

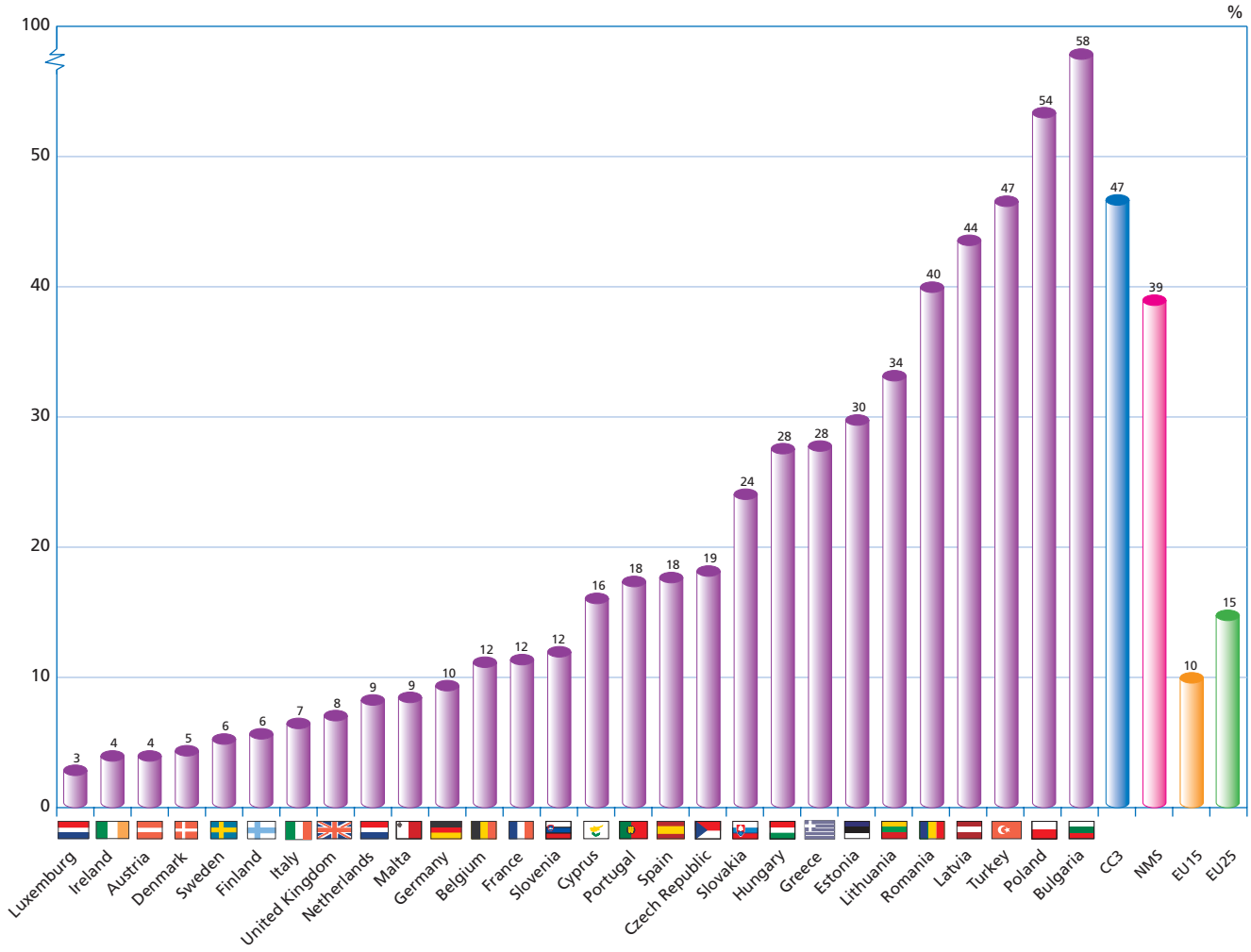
Looking at the distribution of subjective economic strain across income quartile, there are striking variations for each group of countries. Thus, among the EU15, the rate is seven times higher in the lowest income quartile (23%) than in the highest (3%). For the NMS group, the disparity between the lowest and highest income quartiles is four to one with the respective figures being 43% and 11%. For the CC3, the disparity is close to five to one with the relevant figures being 74% and 16%. There is a clear relationship between the proportion reporting difficulty and median household income.

Conclusions

The analysis conducted on the EQLS remains preliminary and descriptive. However, the findings relating to income are consistent with evidence from other sources that EU enlargement has produced a situation where income inequalities among Member States are substantially increased. Similar effects are also observed for lifestyle deprivation and subjective economic strain. However, it is important to take into account the fact that the EU15 and the NMS are not totally homogenous blocks.

For each of the dimensions considered, there is substantial variation within and between countries. While there is clear evidence of a good deal of similarity across clusters of countries in the manner in which socio-demographic factors influence outcomes, there is also preliminary evidence that, in some cases, outcomes are structured somewhat differently. European inequalities appear rather different depending on which dimension and which group of countries one focuses on, suggesting that differentiated policy responses may be necessary. Gender and age differences in relation to income provide examples of uniformity in differentiation. Thus, in each of the country clusters, women and the youngest and oldest age groups are most disadvantaged. As a consequence, differentials across country clusters are broadly similar for men and women and for young and old. For deprivation, the situation was rather different with the level of deprivation rising with age in southern Europe and the NMS and CC3, but declining with age in a number of northern European

Figure 8: Households having difficulty in making ends meet, across countries



Question 58: 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: very easily, easily, fairly easily, with some difficulty, with difficulty, with great difficulty. Categories, with difficulty and with great difficulty are grouped together.

Source: EQLS 2003

countries, and showing little variation by age for others. Thus, any comparisons need to be age-specific.

The relationship between lifestyle deprivation and position in the income hierarchy also necessitates taking into account variable patterns. Thus, while lifestyle deprivation levels are substantially higher in the NMS and CC3 than in the EU15, whether the focus is on the bottom or the top of the income distribution, inequalities between income groups are substantially greater for the EU15. As a consequence, disparities between the EU15 and the NMS and CC3 are considerably lower among those in the bottom income quartile than in the top quartile. Thus, rather different policy concerns are raised by a within country/cluster perspective as opposed to one that focuses on a between country/cluster perspective.

Furthermore, different kinds of effects can operate in a fashion that is cumulative or compensatory. For example, cases would be cumulative where within country or cluster inequalities are greatest and absolute income is lowest or deprivation is highest. Alternatively, within country/cluster variations can serve to compensate between country differences for the least advantaged groups. The latter kind of pattern was observed when the relationship between lifestyle deprivation and position in the income hierarchy was considered. The present analysis addresses these issues in only a relatively superficial fashion. Subsequent

efforts will address much more explicitly the manner in which internal and external forms of stratification structure variability in European living conditions and shape the agenda to which policymakers must respond.

There is clear evidence that household production is more important in the NMS and CC3. While the overall difference is in part accounted for by the distribution of the respective populations across the urban-rural continuum, such differences are observed for rural and urban individuals. However, although it is true that, for most of the countries, such production varies with income quartile, it might not only express an economic need, as the distribution of household production across countries and within country clusters does not seem to be strongly related to the country's wealth. This is an issue that requires further exploration.

Over and above the documentation of objective differences between and within the EU15 and the NMS and CC3, it is necessary to develop an understanding of how individuals experience such differences. The current analysis shows that subjective economic strain was sharply influenced by social integration and social exclusion factors, with perceived difficulty in making ends meet varying systematically across country clusters and according to position in the income hierarchy within clusters. Attempting to assess the relative importance of such factors is one of the crucial issues that will be addressed in subsequent analytical work.

Housing and the local environment

2

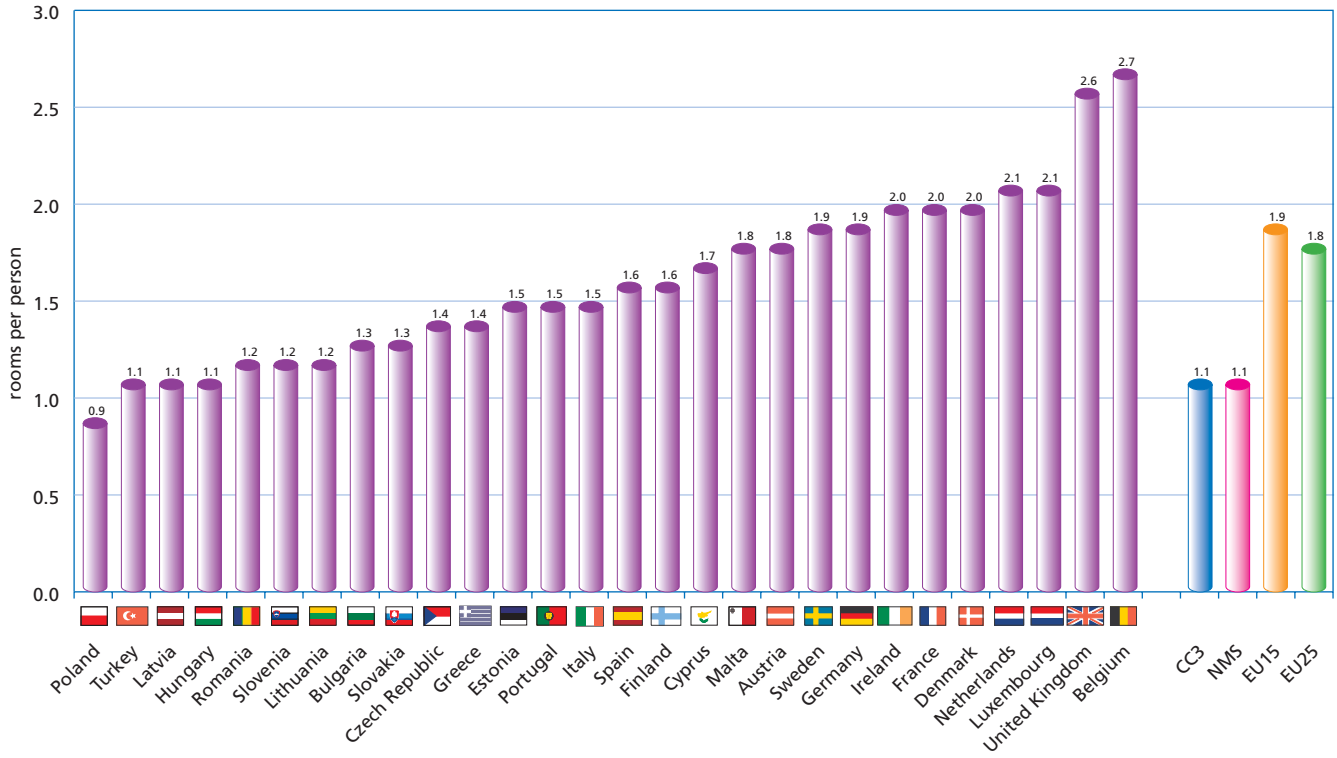
At the EU Gothenburg Summit in June 2001, it was agreed that a third environmental dimension should be added to the Lisbon Strategy. This paved the way for a more integrated strategy for social, economic and environmental sustainable development based on a sectoral approach (transport, energy, etc).

Housing is one of the key dimensions of an individual's material position and quality of life. Adequate accommodation not only affects well-being, it can also be a matter of survival. The home is a place of rest and physical regeneration. Moreover, it is the centre of family life, where children are born and raised, where socialisation takes place, and family ties are nurtured. Living in an area of multiple disadvantage, precarious housing conditions and homelessness are factors which are believed to increase the risk of social exclusion and which are being tackled by the National Action Plans on social inclusion (European Commission, 2002a, p. 19).

Housing conditions are closely related to the local environment, which is defined here in terms of space, access to recreational areas, level of pollution and surrounding noise, and also in terms of various social menaces such as crime. A pleasant local environment is considered to be a valuable asset which contributes to how comfortable people feel; this in turn has a considerable impact on people's health and sense of security. The significance of adequate housing has, in part, been recognised in the agreed Convention of the European Union, which provides a right to housing assistance.

It is well known that the social distribution of housing conditions and the quality of the environment partly depend on macro systemic factors such as general level of affluence (measured for example by GDP per capita), the subsidy system, accessibility of credit for housing, and the development of the construction industry and maintenance services. This analysis presumes that an individual's position in the social structure is also an important factor in determining the quality of their local environment and housing. Therefore, the task here is to show how housing and the quality of the local environment are distributed according to socio-economic status, family income, age, and area of residence. Some light will be shed on the possible reasons for inequalities in housing and the local environment, and a map of cross-national similarities and differences between European countries will be drawn.

Figure 9: Mean number of rooms per person, across countries



Question 17: How many rooms does the accommodation in which you live have, excluding the kitchen, bathrooms, hallways, storerooms and rooms used solely for business?

Source: EQLS 2003

Living space

Since no data are available on space in terms of square metres, the analysis is based on the number of rooms in an individual's home. Unfortunately, such an indicator does not carry any information about the size of the rooms, which is obviously important as far as personal comfort is concerned. However, it does give an idea of how much privacy each member of the family might have.

The data reveal clearly that spatial conditions in the EU15 are substantially better than in other countries (Figure 9). Problems of space seem to be worst in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Turkey, Hungary, Slovenia and Romania. People in Belgium (which has the highest mean number of rooms per person) have three times more rooms than people in Poland. Malta and Cyprus show more or less the same standard of housing as the EU15 countries. As well as the basic divisions between the EU15 and NMS, there are substantial discrepancies within the EU itself. People living in the southern part of Europe have considerably less space than those residing in the western part of Europe, such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, France and Ireland.

Not surprisingly, living space increases with age (Table 2). The oldest respondents (aged 65 years and over) have the most living space; this seems to be a general cross-country rule. The positive association between age and living space might be explained by the fact that people invest in housing over the course of their lifetime, and so elderly people are likely to have more space than younger people. Another reason could be that increasing spatial mobility and greater independence among young people reduces the number of multi-generational households. Instead, more and more elderly people live together as a couple without children or grandchildren, or even remain alone when their spouse dies (see also Chapter 4).

Predictably, there is a clear relationship between household income and the number of rooms per person. Generally speaking, a higher household income corresponds to more spacious accommodation. However, this relationship is more consistent in the EU15 than in other countries. In the NMS and CC3, this tendency is weaker, but nevertheless consistent. The only exceptions are Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic and Lithuania.

It is notable that the differences between urban and rural areas appear rather small. In some countries, such as Luxembourg, Austria and France, the number of rooms per person is higher in rural areas while in others, like the United Kingdom or Slovenia, the opposite is true.

Standard of accommodation

Size of accommodation is only one factor in assessing housing conditions. Big apartments can imply a relatively poor standard of living. Damp or rot in windows, doors and floors, and the presence of an indoor flushing toilet are other measures of housing conditions in the survey.

The research reveals that there is a substantial difference between the EU15 countries on the one hand and the NMS and CC3 on the other as far as reported housing problems are concerned (Table 3). According to the data, there are consistently fewer complaints about shortage of space and the condition of accommodation in the EU15. In most NMS and CC3 countries, households face these problems more frequently than households in the EU15 (Table 3). Poor housing conditions are especially acute in the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). Turkey, Romania, Poland and Bulgaria reveal a similar picture. Only the Czech Republic and Slovenia come close to EU15 standards. With the exception of Portugal, where damp and rot are reported as often as in eastern European countries, standards in the EU15 countries do not vary widely.

Table 2: Rooms per person by age and income quartile, by country grouping

		Age					Quartiles of household income			
	Total	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65 and over	lowest quartile	second quartile	third quartile	highest quartile
CC3	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.6	0.8	1.0	1.3	1.4
NMS	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.5	0.8	1.2	1.1	1.2
EU15	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.7	2.0	2.5	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.3
EU25	1.8	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.9	2.4	1..5	1.7	1.8	2.1

Question 17: How many rooms does the accommodation in which you live have, excluding the kitchen, bathrooms, hallways, storerooms and rooms used solely for business?

Source: EQLS 2003

Table 3: Proportion of households that declared problems with accommodation

%

	Shortage of space	Rot in window, doors or floors	Damp and leaks	Lack of indoor flushing toilet	At least two problems
Austria	14	5	8	1	5
Belgium	14	9	13	3	9
Denmark	19	5	11	1	7
Finland	22	8	15	2	10
France	21	11	14	1	12
German	11	4	10	1	5
Greece	21	11	19	4	13
Ireland	17	9	13	2	10
Italy	20	12	13	1	11
Luxembourg	25	5	7	n.a.	n.a.
Netherlands	16	9	11	2	7
Portugal	25	16	40	5	24
Spain	14	5	14	2	7
Sweden	20	2	6	1	3
United Kingdom	22	7	8	1	7
Cyprus	17	15	20	4	17
Czech Republic	15	6	13	5	9
Estonia	30	40	31	17	36
Hungary	18	24	15	8	17
Latvia	29	32	29	20	31
Lithuania	26	35	19	25	30
Malta	13	21	31	1	19
Poland	30	28	21	11	25
Slovakia	13	41	13	7	20
Slovenia	15	14	13	5	11
Bulgaria	21	19	25	30	26
Romania	28	30	29	39	35
Turkey	33	31	31	11	31
CC3	31	30	30	21	32
NMS	24	25	19	10	22
EU15	17	8	12	1*	9*
EU25	18	11	13	3*	11*

* Luxembourg is excluded from the EU15 and EU25 mean as the data on 'indoor flushing toilet' are inadequate.

Question 19: Do you have any of the following problems with your accommodation? (1) Shortage of space; (2) Rot in windows, doors or floors; (3) Damp/leaks; (4) Lack of indoor flushing toilet.

Source: EQLS 2003

As far as the distribution of rot and damp problems across socio-economic categories is concerned, it can be seen firstly that they are least frequent among professionals and the self-employed. Secondly, they are much more common among workers, especially unskilled workers. Both tendencies hold true for the EU15 and the NMS and CC3. The only significant deviation from this rule is to be found in Denmark, Finland, Belgium and France, where the self-employed report problems with accommodation more often than other workers.

As far as country groups are concerned, there is no clear pattern in the relationship between housing conditions on the one hand and area of residence, household income quartile and age on the other. However, problems with rot and damp tend to be more common in rural areas, especially in the eastern European countries and Turkey, and they are also more frequently reported by people with lower incomes, for example, in the Baltic states. This tendency is clearly marked in almost all countries except Denmark, Germany and Slovakia. As far as distribution according to age category is concerned, no consistent pattern emerges.

The lack of an indoor flushing toilet may be regarded as indicative not only of poor housing conditions but also of a low standard of living. Table 4 shows the proportion of households which do not have an indoor flushing toilet. The differences between countries are substantial, with a basic division between the EU15 as one group and the NMS and CC3 as another. Within the EU15, a greater number of households in Portugal, Greece and Belgium do not have a toilet but, even in these countries, the number does not rise above 5%. The only NMS/CC3 countries with an equally low percentage are Malta, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. The numbers in the remaining countries are much higher, reaching 20% in Latvia and Lithuania, and 30% in Romania and Bulgaria. Cross-country differences concerning the lack of a toilet clearly correspond to other housing problems, for example, relating to rot or damp.

Table 4: Proportion of households that do not have an indoor flushing toilet, by age of respondent and area of residence

%

	Total	Age					Area	
		18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65 +	rural	urban
CC 3	21	15	18	20	26	35	48	7
NMS	10	6	9	9	12	14	15	6
EU15	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
EU25	3	2	2	2	3	4	4	2

Question 19.4: Do you have any of the following problems with your accommodation? Lack of indoor flushing toilet.

Source: EQLS 2003

The lack of an indoor flushing toilet is associated with area of residence (Table 4); this problem can generally be seen more often in the countryside. The urban-rural divide appears to be stronger in the eastern European countries. In the rural areas of some countries (Lithuania, Bulgaria,

Romania), one in two households lacks an indoor toilet. In Latvia, Estonia and Turkey, the proportion is around one third. These data once again indicate that rural areas of the NMS/CC3 need specific consideration on the part of social policymakers so that housing conditions can be improved.

With the exception of Greece and Portugal, age does not seem to relate to the lack of a toilet in a significant way in the EU15. There is a more consistent pattern in eastern Europe, where older respondents are more likely to lack an indoor toilet. This is especially true for Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania.

To sum up, age constitutes an important line of differentiation as far as housing conditions are concerned. On the one hand, older age groups are less likely to suffer from shortage of space but, on the other hand, their accommodation may be of a lower standard. This tendency may be generally true for poorer societies.

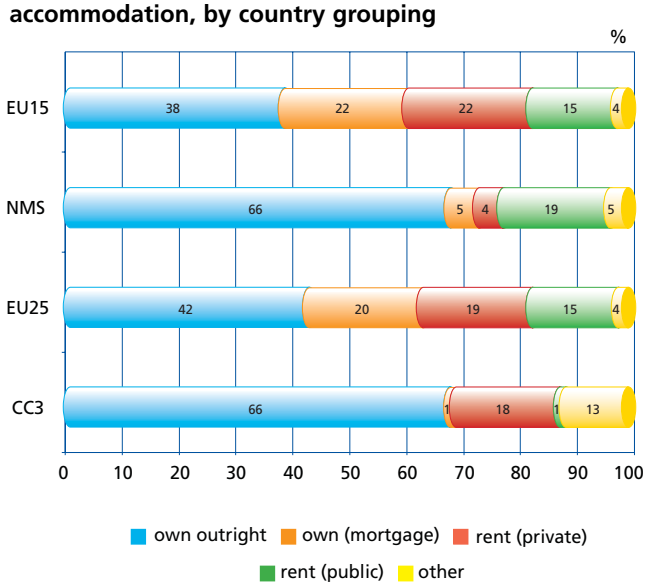
The lack of a toilet is extremely rare in families belonging to the highest quartile of household incomes. This, however, is not the case in Estonia, Latvia and Romania, where, even in the most affluent categories, a significant proportion of persons report that they have no indoor flushing toilet (the highest rate, in Romania, is 20%).

Ownership structure

The question of ownership is particularly interesting in the light of the debate on the new form of social cleavage which has replaced the 'old' class system: the difference between home owners and non-home owners. The data on the ownership structure of accommodation in Europe only serve as a tentative comparison, since different pathways to, and types of, ownership and the financial obligations related to them (as in the 'own with mortgage' rubric) exist in different countries.

The difference in tenure patterns in the EU15 and NMS/CC3 countries is somewhat surprising (Figure 10). Most people in the latter group are homeowners; more than a half of all respondents own their own home, and in some cases – Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania – the figure is over 80%. There are two exceptions to this rule: the Czech Republic and Latvia. In the EU15, the rate of home ownership is only above 70% in Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain, and none of the EU15 countries exceed the 80% line. However, it should be remembered that accommodation in the NMS/CC3 is of a relatively poor standard compared with the EU15 countries.

Figure 10: Tenure status according to the accommodation, by country grouping



Question 18: Which of the following best describes your accommodation: (1) Own without mortgage; (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.

Source: EQLS 2003

The 'own with mortgage' type of ownership is much more common in western Europe than in the southern or eastern part of the continent; this is most probably the result of a long tradition of using credit to buy property. Among the NMS, only Cyprus has a similar rate of this kind of ownership. Renting is most common in France, Greece and Turkey. The Netherlands (42%), Austria (26%) and the United Kingdom (26%) have the highest rates of municipal housing in the EU15, and the Czech Republic (38%) and Latvia (28%) have the highest rates in the NMS. This kind of accommodation is virtually non-existent in the CC3 (below 2%). Moreover, the private market for rented accommodation is very under-developed in both the NMS and CC3. Accommodation provided rent-free is rare everywhere, but it is relatively more common in Turkey, Romania, Lithuania and Portugal.

Further analysis will be devoted to the social identification of people owning their own homes; this category of owners consists of all those who reported living in their own accommodation with or without a mortgage.

Living in one's own home is clearly more common in rural areas than in urban areas (Table 5). This tendency prevails in all countries except Latvia and Bulgaria and seems to be most prevalent in Austria, Germany and Poland. There are two possible explanations for the universal character of

this pattern. First, it is cheaper to buy or build a property in rural regions – which are generally poorer – than in cities. A second reason might relate to different life choices and professional careers. Farmers living in the countryside will have considerably different life strategies to their urban counterparts, since city-dwellers are more likely to change their place of residence (for instance, they sometimes need to do so for work reasons). Consequently, urban residents may be less eager to own their own accommodation.

Table 5: Proportion of persons living in own homes, by age, area of residence and occupational status

%

	CC3	NMS	EU15	EU25
Age				
18-34	57	58	44	47
35-64	61	71	56	58
65 and over	89	78	67	68
Area				
rural	81	83	70	72
urban	60	61	53	54
Household occupational status				
professional managerial	68	81	69	70
other non-manual	70	70	56	58
self-employed	67	79	71	72
farmers	83	95	82	85
skilled workers	76	66	57	59
non-skilled workers	64	72	47	51

Question 18: Which of the following best describes your accommodation: (1) Own without mortgage; (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. Home ownership includes owning the dwelling with both and without mortgage.

Source: EQLS 2003

One might expect ownership to be related to wealth – as indicated by income – and to socio-economic status. Many people also believe that owning a property is related to age, because it is an important factor in the process of accumulation of wealth over a person's lifetime. Both hypotheses find support in the existing data. The positive correlation between ownership and age is remarkable: older people are more likely to own a property than younger people. Three exceptions are Italy, Slovenia and Cyprus, where there is not such a clear pattern. Moreover, there is also a strong correlation between household income and ownership in most EU countries, although this is not a rule. In the NMS/CC3, such a correlation is only noticeable in Poland and Cyprus. However, in most of these countries, ownership of accommodation does not coincide with a high standard of living, and the material value of property is not high.

Farmers have the highest ownership rates in all groups of European countries (Table 5). As expected, the second and third highest ownership rates are found among managers and the self-employed. There is a striking difference between the NMS/CC3 and the EU15 as far as non-skilled workers are concerned. In the former group, home ownership for non-skilled workers is quite high (70%) and does not deviate much from other occupational groups; but, in the EU15, non-skilled workers have by far the lowest ownership rates and show high deviations from other occupational groups. Inequality in home ownership as such is much more prevalent in the EU15 than in the NMS/CC3.

Local environment

The perceived quality and safety of the neighbourhood and local environment were addressed in the survey. The EQLS asks about criticisms of the environment in four aspects: noise; air pollution; lack of access to green areas; and water quality (Table 6). There is a division between the EU15 and the NMS/CC3, but urban-rural location also influences complaints about the local environment.

In general, the inhabitants of southern European countries report more reasons to complain about their natural environment than those living in the north. The proportion of complaints in eastern European countries is not much higher than the average for the EU15, except where the quality of water and air is concerned. Italy stands out in the EU15 for its level of dissatisfaction about the environment: citizens here complain more than people in other EU15 countries about noise, air pollution, lack of access to green areas, and water quality. The French, Greeks, Spainish and Portuguese also have a relatively high level of complaints. However, when interpreting these results, it should be borne in mind that these are subjective opinions based on what could be very different personal concepts of a pleasant environment. General differences between the more affluent and the poorer countries reflect the division between the less advanced and the more advanced countries in terms of their natural environment protection policies. No clear correlation between individual respondents' wealth and their tendency to complain has been noted.

Table 6: Proportion of respondents who complain about environmental problems, by country

%

Country	Noise	Air pollution	Lack of green space	Water quality	at least two problems
Austria	11	8	4	2	7
Belgium	21	17	14	14	17
Denmark	5	3	1	1	2
Finland	8	5	1	2	4
France	26	29	23	28	30
Germany	9	5	4	2	5
Greece	29	33	25	24	33
Ireland	8	7	10	11	9
Italy	30	40	36	26	41
Luxembourg	16	16	10	17	15
Netherlands	8	3	8	2	4
Portugal	17	17	23	13	19
Spain	22	17	21	24	24
Sweden	7	6	3	1	3
United Kingdom	11	7	4	5	7
Cyprus	24	23	21	37	27
Czech Republic	20	20	11	13	19
Estonia	13	13	6	24	14
Hungary	21	22	13	18	21
Latvia	20	24	16	37	25
Lithuania	17	20	22	39	27
Malta	34	49	44	34	49
Poland	19	22	17	21	22
Slovakia	17	19	14	15	18
Slovenia	14	19	6	15	15
Bulgaria	18	23	18	28	24
Romania	19	26	17	22	26
Turkey	29	29	45	41	44
CC3	25	28	35	35	37
NMS	19	21	15	20	21
EU15	18	18	16	15	19
EU25	18	18	16	15	19

Question 56: 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: noise, air pollution, lack of access to recreational or green areas, and water quality?

Source: EQLS 2003

As expected, city-dwellers declare their dissatisfaction with environmental conditions more frequently than inhabitants of rural regions. This tendency seems to be stronger in eastern Europe. The effect of age is only noticeable in France, Poland and Belgium, with elderly people being less likely to complain in these three countries.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which these opinions result from objective factors (that people in rural areas do in fact live in cleaner and less noisy environments), or from the 'net effect' of perception and sensitivity. It could be hypothesised that younger city-dwellers are more aware of ecological problems and therefore more likely to report them. Such a 'net effect' of subjective factors may also explain the difference in the number of complaints made by women and men: women report problems related to the natural environment more frequently than men.

Family income and socio-economic status have no clear effect on the level of complaints. What seems clear is that farmers are in general least likely to complain about their natural environment. However, the data do not show that people with a lower income are more critical of their local environments. Moreover, an opposite trend is noticeable in some countries (France, Lithuania, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania), where households with a higher income complain more often about all the problems listed here.

Turning to the important issue of perceptions about security, the EQLS question asked: 'How safe do you think it is to walk around in your area at night?'. The results indicate that a feeling of safety in the neighbourhood is more common in the EU15 than in the NMS/CC3. The perception of the neighbourhood as unsafe is lowest in Scandinavia and Austria, and relatively high in the United Kingdom and some southern countries (especially in Greece and Portugal). In contrast, most inhabitants of the NMS/CC3 perceive their area of residence as quite dangerous, especially people in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Bulgaria. People in Cyprus feel more secure than people in the rest of this group of countries.

How safe people feel depends on the area of residence in all countries. People generally feel less safe in urban areas than in rural areas. In some, generally safer, EU15 countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands) people in cities feel three times less safe than people living in the countryside. This also holds true for people in Slovenia and Poland.

There is also a clear association between age and sense of security. Older people seem to feel less safe than young people. People over the age of 65 are most likely to feel unsafe. A lower feeling of security is also more frequently reported by women; they are more concerned about safety of their neighbourhood than men in all countries.

In the EU15 (except for Greece), a comfortable financial situation coincides with a sense of security. This pattern is however not so clear among the remaining countries.

Table 7: Proportion of respondents who think that their neighbourhood is (rather or very) unsafe at night, by age, area of residence, income and gender

%

	Total	Age		Area		Quartiles of household income		Sex	
		18-24	65 and over	rural	urban	lowest quartile	highest quartile	men	women
CC3	38	38	47	26	45	36	33	29	48
NMS	32	25	42	17	46	28	33	27	37
EU15	21	17	31	12	27	27	15	16	26
EU25	23	19	32	13	30	27	18	17	28

Question 57: How safe do you think it is to walk around in your area at night? Categories: Very safe, rather safe, rather unsafe, or very unsafe.

Source: EQLS 2003

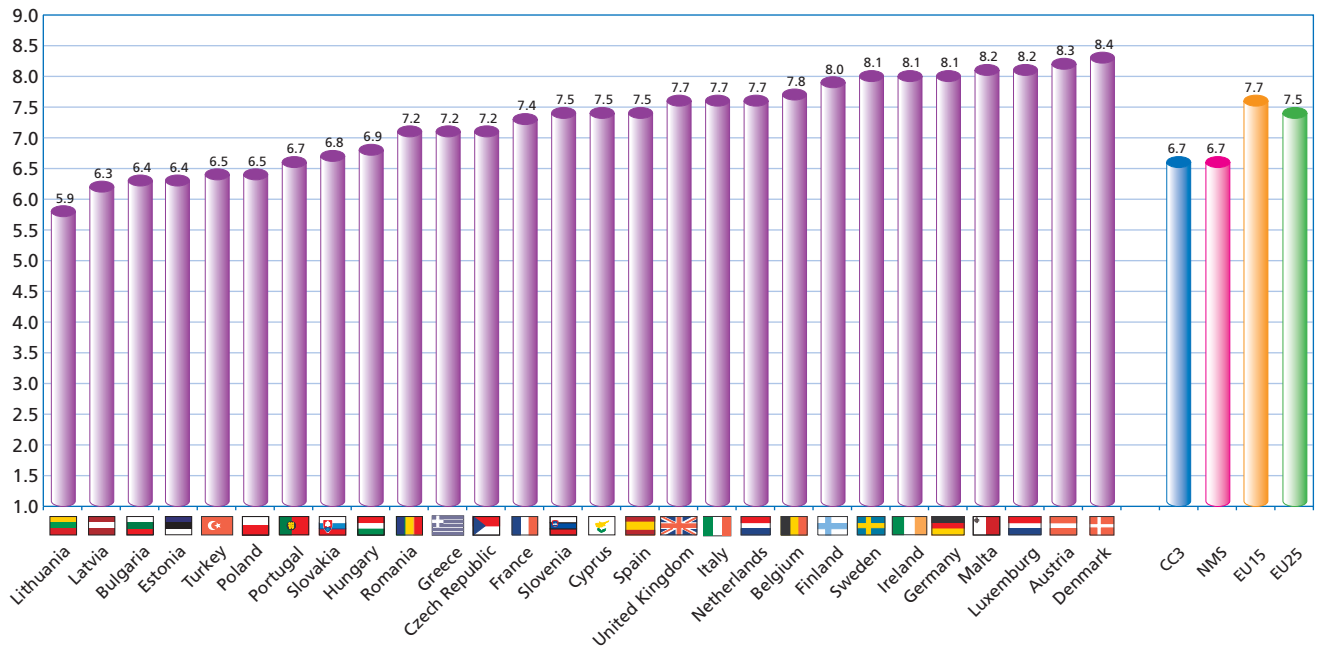
Moreover, it is reversed in Poland and Lithuania – it is the rich who perceive their neighbourhood as threatening and potentially dangerous.

Satisfaction with accommodation

Perceived satisfaction with accommodation corresponds by and large with the assessment of housing conditions. Differences are measured on a 10 point scale, with one indicating 'very dissatisfied' and 10 indicating 'very satisfied' with accommodation (Figure 11).

The highest levels of satisfaction are found in Denmark, Austria and Luxembourg, and the lowest in Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. These findings largely correspond with the housing conditions and environmental problems mentioned above. There are no clear patterns of differences in satisfaction between people of different ages or people living in rural and urban areas, even though these groups have different housing conditions. There are significant differences between people who are better off and those who are not, and this holds true for all countries. The biggest gap is between people from the lowest quartile of income in Lithuania (5.1) and the highest quartile of income in Germany and Luxembourg (8.5).

Figure 11: Mean satisfaction with accommodation, by country



Question 41D: Could you please tell me on a scale of one to 10 how satisfied you are with each of the following items: Your accommodation.

Source: EQLS 2003

Conclusions

The two most striking results are firstly that home ownership is more prevalent in the NMS/CC3 and that two-thirds of the dwellings in these countries are owned outright without a mortgage or loan. In the EU15, one third of owned accommodation involves payment of a mortgage. Secondly, housing and environmental conditions are generally much better in the EU15. Not only is the average accommodation bigger, the standard and condition of homes are consistently better. There is a clear contrast between the Nordic countries, which have among the best housing conditions, and the three Baltic states which are at the bottom of the NMS group. Turning to the local environment, a similar division appears in terms of pleasant neighbourhoods and safety. Denmark, Austria and Sweden, where 90% of citizens feel safe in their neighbourhood, are at one end of the scale, while Lithuania and Latvia, where more than 50% of people feel unsafe at night, are at the other. Other environmental problems are criticised as frequently in the EU15 as in the NMS/CC3.

However, despite the predominant EU15-NMS/CC3 dichotomy, there are also clear overlaps between these two groups of countries. The research shows that Portugal exceeds the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia and Cyprus in terms of reported problems with the condition of housing. People living in Italy and France complain much more about environmental problems than people from Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. Greeks report feeling less safe more frequently than people living in Cyprus and Slovenia.

In addition, it is interesting that, while the CC3 has generally low housing standards, public housing is not common. In the EU25, by contrast, the share of public rented dwellings is quite substantial, at 15%.

The differences which have been examined here indicate two major problems. First, great public efforts have to be made to create better environmental conditions across the EU as a whole. Second, poor housing conditions may be a major contributor to social exclusion. While home ownership (which lowers people's risk of homelessness and therefore social exclusion) is prevalent in the NMS/CC3, housing conditions are poor for many people in these countries. This could severely limit social participation and social mobility – as well as diminishing quality of life.

Employment, education and skills 3

The goals of more and better jobs and reduced unemployment are major elements of the EU's Lisbon strategy. EU enlargement has made these goals a major challenge, in view of the fact that the new Member States are found to have less favourable employment circumstances than the EU15. The European Commission has identified the following main disadvantages in the employment situation of the NMS (European Commission, 2004a).

- The employment rate in the NMS is lower on average than in the EU Member States. In the NMS in 2002, 56% of the population aged 15-64 was at work, compared to 64% in the EU15. Some individual countries in the NMS have employment rates that compare well with those in the older Member States (e.g. the Czech Republic at 66% and Slovenia at 63%) but others were considerably lower than any of the EU15 (e.g. Poland at 52%) (European Commission, 2004a). The EU's target employment rate for the age-group 15-64 is 65% by the year 2005 and 70% by 2010.

- Employment levels in many of the NMS have stagnated or fallen in recent years. Between 1998 (when employment data became available for most acceding states) and 2002, the employment rate fell by over seven percentage points in Poland and Romania, by four percentage points in Estonia, and by two percentage points in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Lithuania. Only Slovenia, Latvia and Hungary showed increases in employment, and these increases were modest. Employment levels have fallen even though GDP growth has picked up in many of these countries following the reverses of the early years of transition. 'Jobless growth' arises in these countries because of rapidly rising productivity. This in turn reflects the ongoing restructuring of the transition economies and the shedding of jobs in agriculture and other low-productivity traditional sectors. The scale of restructuring which is required means that the contraction of employment in a number of economic sectors in the NMS is likely to continue for some time into the future and will be difficult to counterbalance with employment growth in more dynamic sectors (European Commission, 2004a, pp. 9-10).

- There is a relatively high concentration of employment in the agricultural sector. In the NMS in 2002, 13% of employment was found in the agricultural sector, compared to 4% in the EU15. The agricultural sector is particularly large in Poland (19%) and Romania (37%) (European Commission, 2004a, pp. 14, 188–203).

- Unemployment is high: the unemployment rate in the NMS in 2002 was 15%, compared to 8% in the EU15.

- Long-term unemployment accounts for a larger share of unemployed people in the NMS. In 2002, 56% of the unemployed in these countries were long-term unemployed, compared to 40% in the EU15 (European Commission, 2004a, p. 188).

The EQLS was not a dedicated survey of the labour force or of working conditions, and therefore does not provide a basis for detailed analysis of work or employment patterns. It deals, rather, with a number of issues which add to the picture already available from existing data. These issues include the incidence of jobless and job-rich households, the proportion of workers with second jobs and the hours they work in those jobs, and perceptions of a number of aspects of job quality and job security. In addition, the data provide information on certain skills and areas of knowledge which are becoming increasingly important in the globalised economy, such as knowledge of the English language, Internet usage and participation in continuing education and training.

Jobless and job-rich households

One dimension covered by the indicators of social exclusion adopted by the Laeken Council in 2001 (the 'Laeken indicators') is the incidence of jobless households. The indicator that Eurostat uses to measure this dimension is the proportion of persons aged 0-64 years who live in households where no one has a paid job or contributes unpaid work to a family enterprise (see Eurostat New Cronos database, Theme 3, domain: ILC, collection: Laeken indicators, at http://europe.eu.int/newcronos).

Table 8 presents data on joblessness that parallel this Laeken indicator and also add to it by including information on households which might be considered as 'job-rich' in that two or more people in the household have a job. The version of the jobless indicator presented here differs in two ways from that used in the Laeken indicators: it refers to the population aged 18-64 (the population covered by the EQLS) rather than 0-64 and is based on a narrower concept of a job. The latter feature means that, in the EQLS data, somewhat fewer people are counted as being in a job and therefore the count of

joblessness is somewhat higher than in the Laeken indicators.[1]

The data in Table 8 suggest that, despite the lower employment levels found in the NMS compared to the EU15, there is no great difference between the incidence of jobless households in the two regions. If anything, jobless households are slightly less common in the NMS: 17% of those aged 18-64 live in jobless households in the NMS compared to 19% in the EU15. This would suggest that, while unemployment rates in the NMS are higher and employment rates lower than in the EU15, the available jobs in the NMS are more evenly distributed across households than in the EU15, thus giving rise to a similar incidence of households with and without jobs in the two regions. The CC3 has a somewhat higher incidence of joblessness than either of these two regions, with 24% of 18-64 year-olds living in jobless households.

As already mentioned, Eurostat's Laeken indicator on jobless households produces a lower estimate than that presented here. Eurostat data suggest that 12% of persons aged 0-64 live in jobless households in both the EU15 and the NMS, compared to 17-19% of persons aged 18-64 in jobless households in the EQLS estimate (Eurostat New Cronos database, Theme 3, Laeken indicator lk07 at http://europe.eu.int/newcronos). These differences may be accounted for both by the different job concepts underlying the estimates (note 1) and the different age ranges covered. It is notable, however, that the Eurostat data corroborate this analysis in showing that the NMS do not have a higher incidence of jobless households than the EU15, even though they have a higher rate of unemployment. This confirms the finding that the available jobs are distributed more evenly across households in the NMS than they are in the EU15.

The data in Table 8 also suggest that the NMS have a somewhat higher proportion of 'job-rich' households (that is, households where two or more people have a job) than the EU15. In the former group, 50% of 18-64 year olds live in households where either two people are at work (39%) or three or more people are at work (11%). This compares to 43% in the EU15 (36% in households with two people at work, 7% in households with three or more people at work). In accounting for the apparently higher incidence of job-rich households in the NMS despite the lower levels of employment in those countries, we have to recall that the job concept on which the present data are based is narrow and tends to undercount incidental and part-time

Table 8: Proportion of persons aged 18-64 living in jobless and job-rich households

		Number of persons at work in household			
		none	1	2	3 or more
		% of persons aged 18-64			
EU15	Austria	19	40	36	6
	Belgium	26	35	35	4
	Denmark	20	33	44	3
	Finland	26	39	33	3
	France	17	44	36	4
	German	26	40	31	4
	United Kingdom	24	32	36	8
	Greece	21	42	30	7
	Ireland	17	38	33	12
	Italy	13	47	31	9
	Luxembourg	10	37	44	9
	Netherlands	18	40	37	6
	Portugal	14	33	40	13
	Spain	13	39	35	13
	Sweden	15	40	41	4
NMS	Cyprus	12	35	40	12
	Czech Republic	16	30	41	12
	Estonia	19	36	37	7
	Hungary	21	26	40	13
	Latvia	21	35	35	8
	Lithuania	22	35	37	6
	Malta	6	39	35	20
	Poland	23	35	34	8
	Slovakia	16	27	43	14
	Slovenia	13	29	46	12
CC3	Bulgaria	21	34	34	12
	Romania	30	31	33	6
	Turkey	20	55	18	6
CC3		24	41	28	8
NMS		17	32	39	11
EU15		19	39	36	7
EU25		18	37	37	8

The statistics are based on the questionnaire's household grid.

Source: EQLS 2003

1 In the Laeken jobless indicator, reflecting the practice adopted in Eurostat's Labour Force Surveys (LFS), a person who engaged in economic activity for one hour or more in a reference week is counted as being in a job. This is a wide job concept as it includes those with incidental part-time jobs and those who contribute small amounts of labour to family enterprises. The EQLS job concept is more restrictive as it is based on the respondent's *principal economic status*. This concept counts people as being in a job only where they report that job as their main activity. It excludes those who engage in an economic activity which they regard as secondary to their main status outside the workforce (as in the case of women in the home or students who have a part-time job as a secondary activity). The narrower job concept in the EQLS produces a lower count of persons at work, especially among women, than does the LFS, and this leads to a slightly higher count of jobless households.

jobs among women and students. To the extent that such jobs might be more common in the EU15 than in the NMS (a possibility on which the available evidence is not clear), their omission would disproportionately lower the count of the job-rich households in the EU15.

Table 9 presents further details on patterns of joblessness by showing both the gender differences in the risk of living in jobless households and the relationship between the risk of joblessness and the number of adults in the household. The gender comparison shows that women have a higher risk of living in jobless households than men. This is particularly so in the NMS, where 22% of women aged 18-64 are in jobless households compared to 16% of men (the corresponding percentages in the EU15 are 20% and 18%). In the CC3, by contrast, although the overall level of jobless households is higher, there is no gender difference in the proportions living in such a household: the figure is 23% for both men and women.

The comparison of joblessness across households containing different numbers of adults shows that, as might be expected, the more adults there are in the household, the less likely it is that the household will have no one in a job. However, it is striking to note how strong this pattern is, especially with regard to the very high risk among those living in one-adult households. In the NMS, 46% of those aged 18-64 who are living in households where they are the only adult are jobless. The corresponding percentage in the EU15 is lower (37%) but is still high in absolute terms. Part of this high risk of joblessness among one-adult households is associated with single parenthood, but it arises also among individual adults who live alone – the percentages of single parent and one-person households which are jobless are similar across all the major groups of countries.

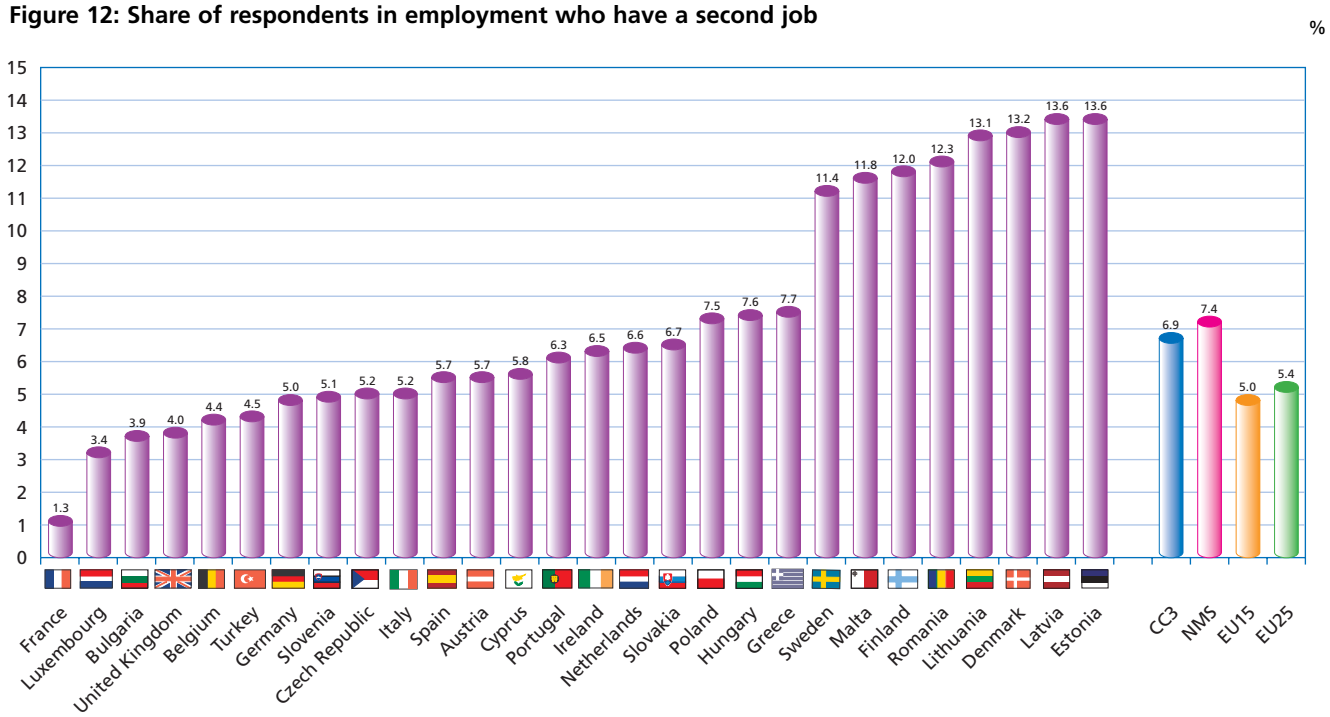
Table 9: Percentages of those aged 18-64 in jobless households, by gender of respondent and number of adults in household

	Gender of respondent		No. of adults (aged 18+) in household			
	Male	Female	1	2	3	4 or more
	% in jobless households					
CC3	23	23	55	22	27	12
NMS	16	22	46	20	14	9
EU15	18	20	37	15	10	7
EU25	17	20	38	16	11	8
% of sample in category	50	50	19	49	19	14

The statistics are based on the questionnaire's household grid.

Source: EQLS 2003

Figure 12: Share of respondents in employment who have a second job



Question 9: 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?

Source: EQLS 2003

Second job

The EQLS data indicate that, perhaps surprisingly, only a small minority of people in employment have a second job, whether in the EU15, the NMS or the CC3. In some individual countries, a second job is somewhat more common, especially in the Nordic countries and the Baltic States where, in all cases, more than 10% of employed people have second jobs (Figure 12). In other countries, the incidence is very low, such as France (1%) and the UK (4%). Hours worked in the second job are on average similar in the EU15 and NMS, at 15-17 hours per week. The sample numbers of those with second jobs are too small (in most cases less than 30) to allow for further detailed analysis, but it would appear that in the Nordic countries, where the incidence of double jobbing is higher than elsewhere in the EU15, average hours worked in the second job are low (10 hours per week or less), while in the Baltic states, which have similarly elevated levels of double-jobbing, average hours worked in the second job are somewhat higher (14 to 20 hours per week).

Table 10 shows the incidence of double-jobbing by gender of the respondent and the occupational group of the main earner in the household. In most countries, there is little difference in the proportion of male and female workers who have second jobs. Occupational class patterns show that double-jobbing tends to concentrate either in higher level occupations (as is very much the case in the NMS and CC3, where 13-14% of those in higher professional or managerial jobs have second jobs) or in farming. The latter is especially the case in the EU15, where farmers are about twice as likely as any other occupational group to report second jobs. Again, however, it must be emphasised that double-jobbing is the exception even among these groups.

Table 10: Respondents in employment who have a second job, by gender and occupational status

%

	Gender of respondent		Occupational status of the household's main breadwinner				
	Male	Female	Professional, managerial	Other non-manual	Self employed	Manual worker	Farmer
CC3	7	6	13	5	5	7	5
NMS	8	7	14	8	8	5	9
EU15	5	5	5	6	4	4	10
EU25	6	5	6	6	5	4	9

Question 9: Apart from your main work, have you also worked at an additional paid job or business or agriculture at any time during the past four (working) weeks?

Source: EQLS 2003

Perceived job security

As noted earlier, weak labour market conditions in the NMS have left these countries with higher unemployment rates than the EU15. In addition, the pace of restructuring here is such that those who are in employment may be exposed to higher levels of insecurity of employment. One would expect to find this reflected in people's perceptions of their job security and therefore to find a more widespread sense of job insecurity in the NMS than in the

Table 11: Perceived likelihood of losing one's job in next six months among employed respondents, by country

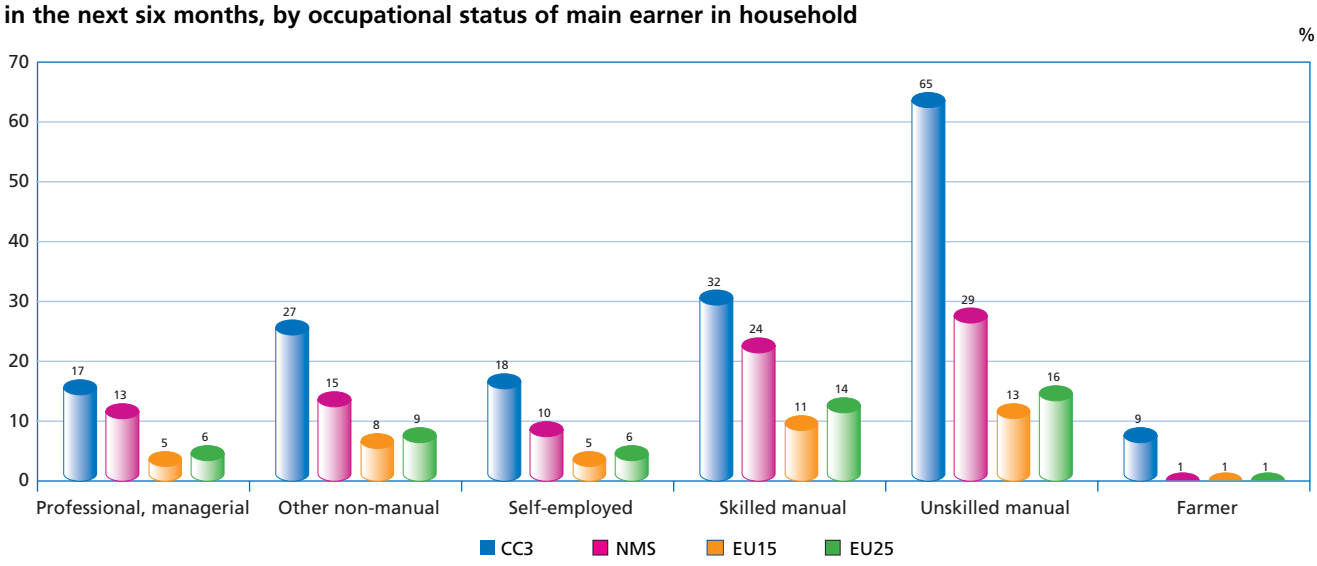
%

		Very or quite likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Very or quite unlikely
EU15	Austria	5	11	84
	Belgium	6	8	86
	Denmark	8	5	87
	Finland	8	7	85
	France	9	21	70
	Germany	7	15	77
	Greece	12	19	69
	Ireland	6	11	83
	Italy	7	9	84
	Luxembourg	8	6	86
	Netherlands	3	10	88
	Portugal	12	14	74
	Spain	10	16	75
	Sweden	9	3	88
	United Kingdom	7	8	86
NMS	Cyprus	12	12	75
	Czech Republic	17	32	52
	Estonia	20	15	65
	Hungary	9	18	73
	Latvia	30	21	49
	Lithuania	32	25	43
	Malta	9	8	84
	Poland	18	20	62
	Slovakia	19	32	49
	Slovenia	9	16	75
CC3	Bulgaria	52	19	30
	Romania	18	20	62
	Turkey	28	17	56
CC3		27	17	55
NMS		18	23	60
EU15		7	13	79
EU25		9	15	76

Question 11: How likely do you think it is that you might lose your job in the next six months? (all categories are displayed in the table)

Source: EQLS 2003

Figure 13: Proportion of employed persons who think it 'very likely' or 'quite likely' that they might lose their job in the next six months, by occupational status of main earner in household



Question 11: How likely do you think it is that you might lose your job in the next 6 months? Categories: very likely, quite likely, neither likely nor unlikely, quite unlikely, very unlikely.

Source: EQLS 2003

EU15. In fact, in the NMS and CC3, only a minority of those in employment feel highly secure in their jobs: 27-29% think it 'very unlikely' that they will lose their jobs in the next six months compared with 59% in the EU15. At the other end of the spectrum, as Table 11 shows, 18% of NMS workers and 27% of CC3 workers feel insecure in their jobs: they consider it either 'very likely' or 'quite likely' that they will lose their jobs in the next six months. This compares to 7% of workers in the EU15 who feel the same way.

There is little difference between male and female workers in perceptions of job security. Age differences are present in the EU15 – workers aged under 25 feel more insecure in their jobs than older workers – but are less pronounced in the NMS. A stronger socio-demographic influence on perceived job security is occupational group. This is shown in Figure 13, which presents data on perceptions of job insecurity across occupational groups. It shows that the sense of insecurity rises moving from higher to lower level occupations and does so consistently across the EU15, the NMS and the CC3. Generally speaking, unskilled manual workers are 2.5 times more likely to feel insecure in their jobs than those in professional or managerial occupations.

Job quality

The EU's employment strategy seeks to promote not only more but also better jobs for its working citizens. This gives rise to an interest in the quality as well as quantity of jobs in the EU labour market. Here, too, concerns arise about the situation in the NMS as there is evidence that certain aspects of working conditions are at a lower standard than in the EU15 (Paoli and Parent-Thirion, 2003). Table 12 provides a perspective on this issue by presenting respondents' perceptions of a range of aspects relating to the quality of their jobs.

On a number of these aspects, workers in the EU15 rate their jobs more highly than do workers in the NMS and CC3. This is so most clearly in connection with pay: the proportion of workers in the EU15 who feel they are well paid (43%) is roughly twice as large as in the NMS (21%) or the CC3 (24%). Some individual countries in the EU15 score low in this regard (especially Portugal, where only 18% consider themselves well paid) and some NMS/CC3 countries score high (especially Cyprus, where 50% consider themselves well paid).

A second aspect of job quality which clearly differentiates the EU15 from the NMS and CC3 is the physical quality of working conditions: the proportion of workers who feel they work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions is only half as great in the EU15 (14%) as it is in the NMS (30%) or the CC3 (27%). Greece is high by EU15 standards on this item (31%) and so too, rather oddly, is Sweden (23%). Malta is very low by NMS standards (11%).

The advantage of the EU15 compared to the NMS or CC3 is more variable on other aspects of job quality but, in

Table 12: Proportion of respondents who agree or strongly agree with various statements about their job

%

		My job offers good prospects for career advancement	I am well paid	I have a great deal of influence in deciding how to do my work	My work is too demanding and stressful	My work is dull and boring	I constantly work to tight deadlines	I work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions
		Positive characteristics			Negative characteristics			
CC3	mean	31	24	52	66	29	42	27
	min	RO (22)	BG (18)	RO (49)	RO (47)	RO (11)	BG (20)	TR (23)
	max	TR (39)	TR (26)	TR (53)	TR (76)	TR (42)	TR (47)	RO (33)
NMS	mean	26	21	49	48	18	46	30
	min	HU (14)	HU (15)	HU (37)	EE (34)	SI (6)	EE (36)	MT (11)
	max	MT (38)	CY (50)	SI (70)	LT (59)	MT, PL (23)	SI (63)	PL (36)
EU15	mean	36	43	65	47	10	46	14
	min	FI (26)	PT (18)	PT (47)	FI (19)	NL (4)	PT (32)	IT (8)
	max	UK (47)	LU (69)	DK (82)	IT (68)	EL (23)	UK (60)	EL (31)
EU25	mean	34	39	63	47	11	46	17
	min	HU (14)	HU (15)	HU (37)	FI (19)	NL (4)	PT (32)	IT (8)
	max	UK (47)	LU (69)	DK (82)	IT (68)	EL, MT, PL (23)	SI (63)	PL (36)

Question 12: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements describing positive and negative aspects of your job? (1) My work is too demanding and stressful; (2) I am well paid; (3) I have a great deal of influence in deciding how to do my work; (4) My work is dull and boring; (5) My job offers good prospects for career advancement; (6) I constantly work to tight deadlines; (7) I work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions. Categories: Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.

Source: EQLS 2003

most cases, an advantage is present, especially in comparison with the CC3. On two items, however, – 'my work is too demanding and stressful' and 'I constantly work to tight deadlines' – there is no difference between the EU15 and the NMS.

The general result, therefore, is that, in many dimensions of job quality, the EU15 has an advantage over the NMS and CC3. In some dimensions, the NMS come up to the level of the EU15, but in no dimension do they have an overall advantage over the EU15.

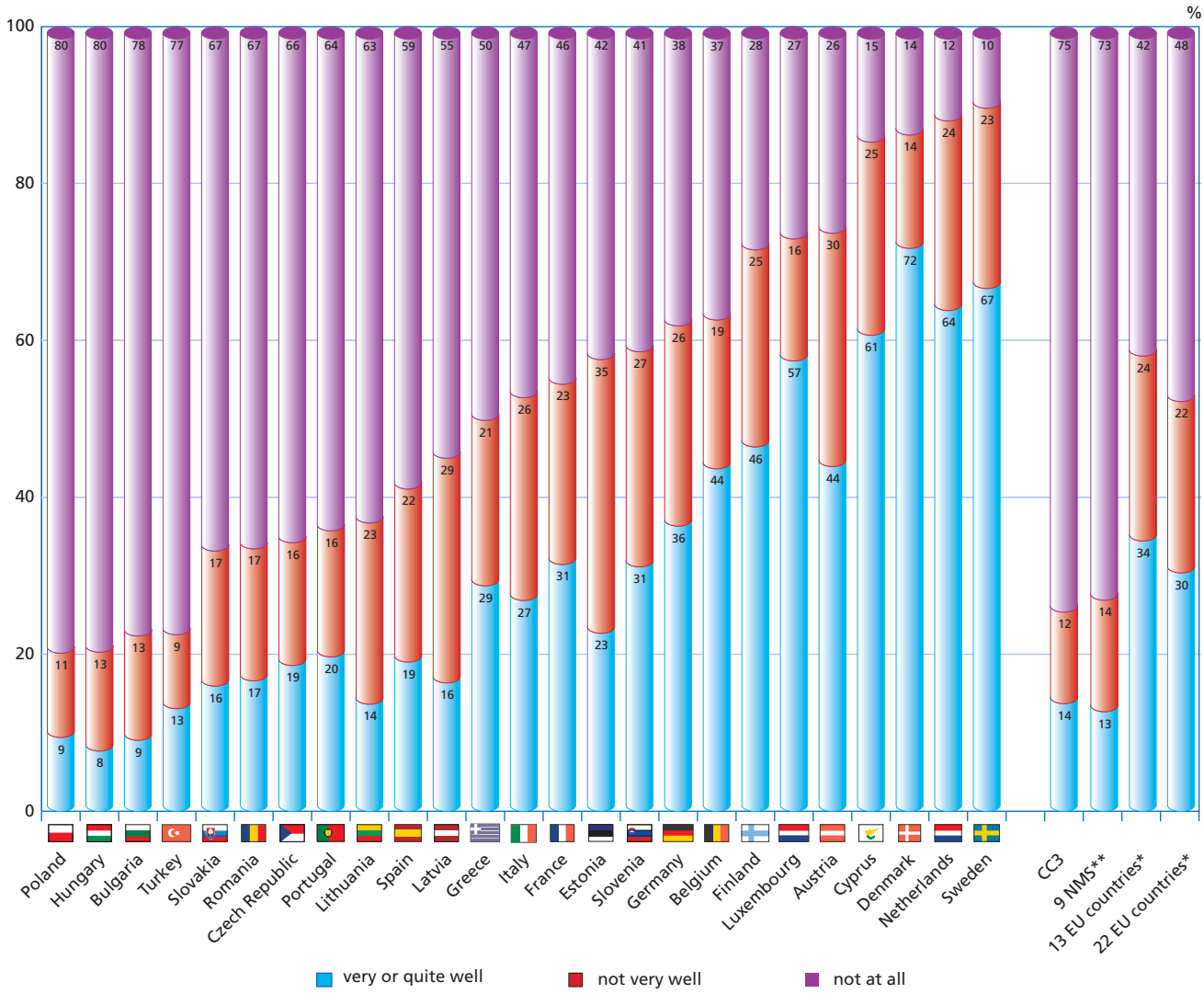
Educational level and ability to read English

One of the few areas where, on the surface, the NMS appears to be at no disadvantage compared to the EU15 is in education. Some 78% of the population aged 25-64 in these NMS have completed at least upper secondary education, which is well above the EU15 average of 64% (European Commission 2004a, p. 47). The NMS compares less strongly with regard to third-level education. Nonetheless, in most of these countries, higher proportions of the working-age population have third-level education than in many of the poorer regions in the southern EU15 countries (European Commission 2004a, p. 47).

However, questions have been raised about the quality of the educational attainment of people in the NMS, particularly with a view to the needs of a modern, rapidly developing labour market. One indicator of how well the education system has equipped people in this regard is knowledge of the English language, given that English is rapidly becoming the language of the globalised marketplace. An ability to read English is also an important dimension of integration into the modern economy, i.e. use of the Internet. The EQLS survey asked respondents how well they could read English. Countries in which English is a vernacular language (Ireland, Malta and the UK) are excluded from the results.

The proportion of the population who can read English either very well or quite well is nearly three times higher in the EU13 – excluding UK and Ireland – (34%) than in the NMS (13%) (Figure 14). A minority of people in the EU15 say they have no reading ability at all in English but, while this minority is large (42%), it contrasts with the very large majority in the NMS (73%) who are in the same position. Differences between men and women in reported ability to read English are small, but tend to favour men slightly.

Figure 14: English reading ability, by country



* English-speaking countries excluded (Ireland, Malta and UK) ** Malta (English speaking country) excluded.

Question 51: How well do you read English? Categories: very well, quite well, not very well, not at all.

Source: EQLS 2003

Table 13 presents details on two further aspects of the ability to read English – how it differs by educational level (as measured by age at which respondents' education was completed) and present age. As would be expected, ability to read English is strongly linked to educational level across all regions. It is particularly high among those who completed their education in their twenties or later (that is, for the most part, those who have third level education). However, the disadvantage of the NMS compared to the EU15 is also present across all educational levels. In the NMS considered (excluding Malta), for example, only 23% of those who finished their education at or after age 20 can read English well, compared with 58% of those with the same educational level in the EU15 considered (excluding Ireland and the UK).

The breakdown by age in Table 13 indicates the beginnings of a catch-up in the ability to read English among younger people in the NMS. Undoubtedly, the EU15 have an advantage over the NMS in all age groups, and certain clusters of countries in the EU, especially the Nordic states and the Netherlands, have very high levels of ability in English. But there is a significant narrowing of the gap between the two groups of countries in the youngest age group – those aged 18-24. In the older age groups, the proportion of people in the EU15 who can read English well is generally three or four times higher than in the NMS (for example, 55% compared with 18% in

Table 13: Proportion of respondents who can read English 'very well' or 'quite well', by educational level and age group

%

	Age at completing full-time education			Present age				
	up to 15 years	16-19 years	20+ years	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65 and over
CC3	1	11	30	32	15	9	4	3
9NMS*	1	7	23	37	18	10	4	2
EU13 countries*	4	26	58	63	55	38	22	10
EU22 countries*	4	22	53	57	48	32	19	9

* English speaking countries excluded (UK, Ireland, and Malta)

Question 51: How well do you read English? Categories: very well, quite well, not very well, not at all.

Source: EQLS 2003

Table 14: Proportion who used Internet a couple of times a week or more, by educational level and age group

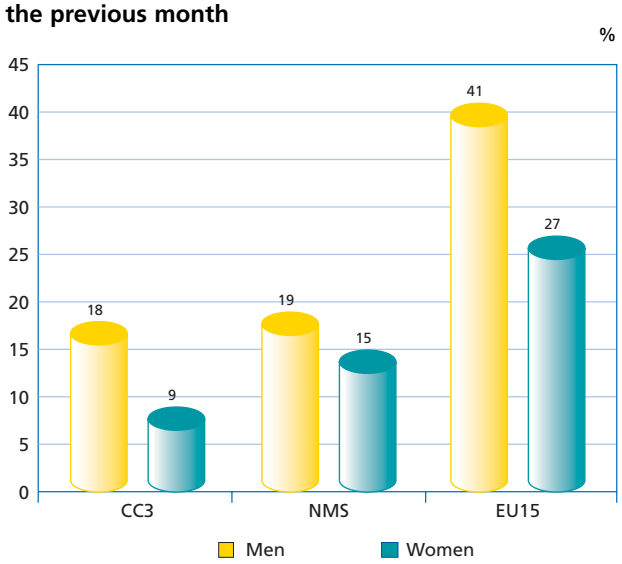
%

	Age completed education			Present age				
	up to 15 years	16-19 years	20+ years	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65 and over
CC3	2	11	27	30	19	9	2	0
NMS	3	10	32	38	26	18	6	2
EU15	8	29	55	56	54	42	24	5
EU25	8	25	52	52	49	38	21	5

Question 52: Which of the following describes your level of use of the Internet over the past month? Categories: used it every day or almost every day; used the Internet a couple of times a week; used the Internet occasionally; did not use the Internet at all.

Source: EQLS 2003

Figure 15: Proportion of men and women who used the Internet a couple of times a week or more over the previous month



Question 52: Which of the following describes your level of use of the Internet over the past month? Categories: used it every day or almost every day; used the Internet a couple of times a week; used the Internet occasionally; did not use the Internet at all.

Source: EQLS 2003

the 25-34 age group). However, in the 18-24 age group, the differential falls below two-fold (63% of this age group in the EU15 can read English well compared with 37% in the NMS and 32% in the CC3). This reflects a sharply rising gradient in the lower age range in these countries. In the NMS, for example, twice as many people in the 18-24 age group can read English well as in the 25-34 age group (37% compared with 18%).

Internet usage

Another aspect of skills and resources that is important in the new economy is familiarity with the Internet. In this instance, lack of access to the appropriate technology can be as much of a barrier as lack of ability to use the technology. The EQLS asked respondents about their Internet usage over the previous month. This measure taps both the access and ability issues without distinguishing between them.

Differences on this indicator between the EU15, the NMS and the CC3 are broadly similar to those found with ability to read English. The data show that, as a whole, the percentage using the Internet more than weekly in the EU15 (34%) is roughly twice that in both the NMS (17%) and the CC3 (15%). As Figure 15 shows, there is also a significant gender differential in Internet use. This differential is particularly marked in the EU15, where 41% of men report using the Internet a couple of times weekly or more compared with 27% of women.

Table 14 shows that, in all countries, Internet usage is linked both to educational level and present age, as was the case with ability to read English. As a whole, the EU15

have a clear advantage over the NMS at all educational levels and ages, but again a catch-up trend was evident among the youngest age group. There, for example, the proportion of 18-24 years who used the Internet (38%) was two-thirds the corresponding proportion in the EU15 (56%). This was a considerably narrower gap between the EU15 and the NMS than was found in the next oldest age group (25-34), where the EU15 level of Internet usage (54%) was double that of the NMS (26%).

Education and training over the life course

Lifelong learning is widely regarded as crucial in today's world. The EQLS asked respondents if they had taken any education or training course at any time in the previous year and, for those who answered that they had, it went on to ask what kind of course that was. Figure 16 presents results for the EU15, NMS and CC3. These results suggest that the gap in levels of participation in education and training between the EU15 and the NMS is narrower than that for the other indicators of human capital examined, though it is equally wide in the case of the EU15 and the CC3.

In the EU15, 21% of respondents had taken a course in the previous year, compared to 19% in the NMS and 12% in the CC3. Furthermore, the NMS had an advantage over the EU15 as far as the job-related focus of the courses taken was concerned. Over half of the courses taken in this group of countries were job-related compared to 43% in the EU15. Thus, while slightly fewer people in the NMS take courses than in the EU15, a slightly higher proportion of people in the NMS take courses which are job-related. This gives rise to similar levels of participation in job-related courses in the two regions.

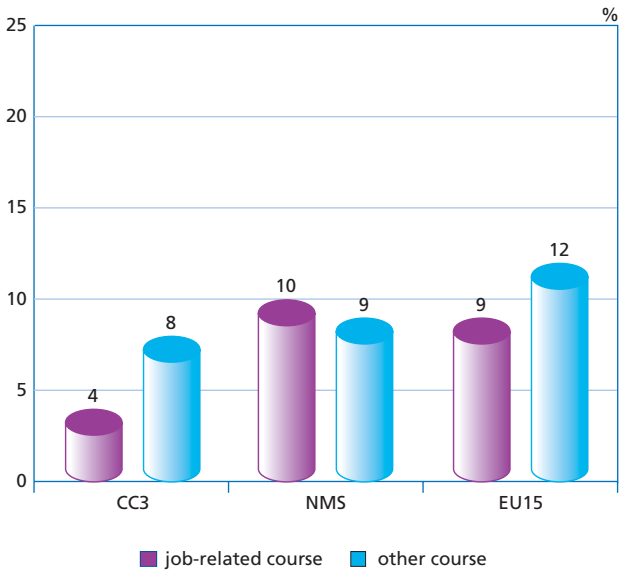
There are no indicators in the present data by which to assess the quality of the courses taken in either group of countries. But as far as quantity is concerned, these results may point to another area where catch-up between the NMS and the EU15 is under way and where some potential may exist to redress the human capital disadvantages of the NMS.

Satisfaction with educational level

A final dimension of the human capital situation dealt with in the EQLS was the respondent's level of satisfaction with their own educational level.

Figure 17 shows that the overall satisfaction scores decline from the EU15 to the NMS and the CC3. However, the differentials are not very wide, except in the case of Turkey, which is far below the level of every other country.

Figure 16: Proportion of respondents who have taken an education or training course over the previous year, job-related and non-job related



Question 48: Have you taken an education or training course at any time within the last year? Question 49: If yes, what kind of course is/was it?
Source: EQLS 2003

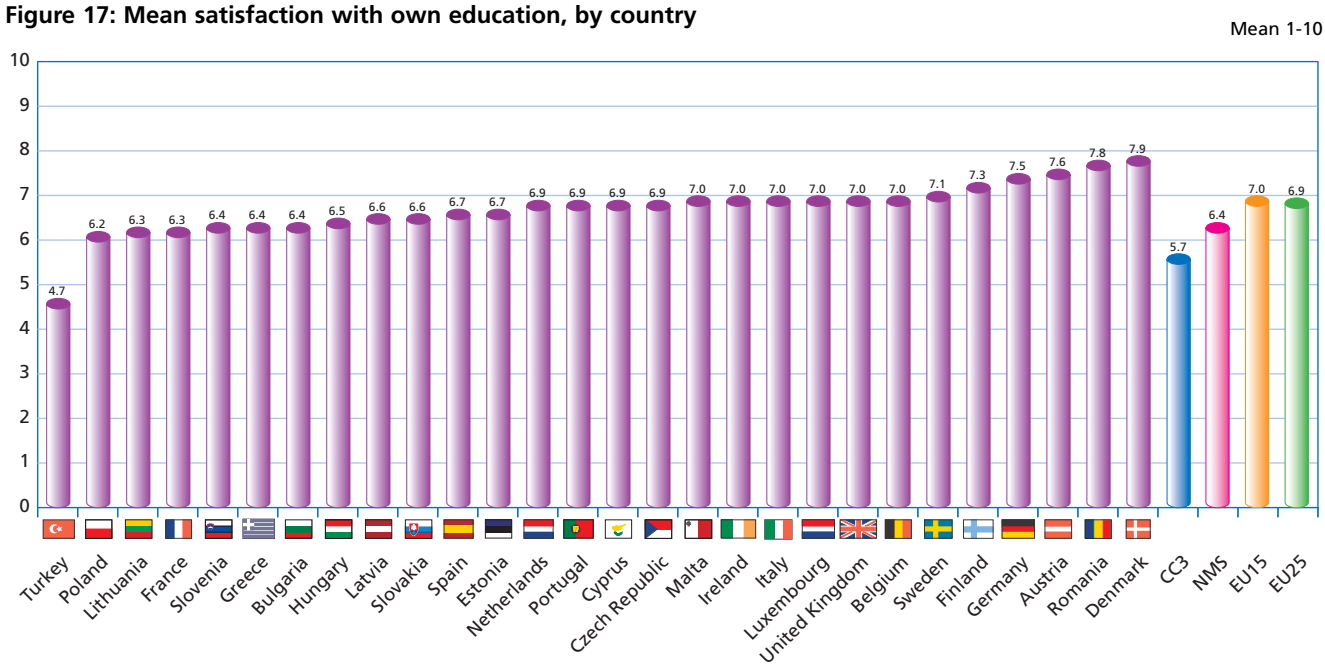
Otherwise, scores for the countries show that there is a considerable overlap between the three groups of countries. Of the EU15 countries, people in France reported exceptionally low levels of satisfaction with their education level – only Poland and Turkey are lower. At the other extreme, Romania has a particularly high score, second only to Denmark. Further investigation of the experience of the education system in the individual countries is needed to better understand these differing levels of satisfaction.

Conclusions

The perception that the NMS and CC3 have greater difficulties in the world of work and employment than do the EU15 is largely borne out by the material presented in this chapter, though there are some areas where the disadvantage of the NMS/CC3 is less pronounced than in others.

The incidence of jobless households is one area where the NMS is not as disadvantaged as one might expect. Although these countries in general have higher unemployment rates and a lower proportion of their populations at work than do the EU15, the proportion of the working-age population living in jobless households is

Figure 17: Mean satisfaction with own education, by country



Question 41a: Could please tell me on a scale of one to 10 how satisfied you are with each of the following items, where one means you are very dissatisfied and 10 means you are very satisfied? Item: Your education.

Source: EQLS 2003

no greater in the NMS than in the EU15. This would suggest that the available jobs in the NMS are more evenly distributed across households than is the case in the EU15. The proportion living in job-rich households (that is, where two or more people have a job) is, if anything, slightly higher in the NMS than in the EU15.

Another area where the NMS are more or less keeping pace with the EU15 is in connection with lifelong learning, particularly when it comes to participation in job-related training courses. The data suggest that, while a slightly lower proportion of people in the NMS than in the EU15 had taken education or training courses in the previous year, a slightly higher proportion of the courses they took were job-related, thus giving rise to approximate equality between the two regions in levels of participation in job-related training.

Aside from these areas, however, the NMS emerge as consistently disadvantaged compared with the EU15 on indicators related to the world of work and employment. Workers in the NMS, and even more in the CC3, are more likely to feel insecure in their jobs than their counterparts in the EU15. They are also less likely to consider themselves well-paid and more likely to rate their working conditions as dangerous or unhealthy. On some dimensions, such as the perception of work as demanding and stressful, the disadvantage of workers in the NMS is narrow, but there are no dimensions of job quality in which the NMS or CC3 have an advantage over the EU15.

In spite of the ostensibly high level of educational attainment in many of the NMS and CC3, a measure of human capital that is increasingly relevant in the labour market – ability to read English – shows that those states are lagging behind the EU15. The same is true of Internet usage which is of growing importance in the modern economy. The EU15 scores two to three times higher than the NMS/CC3 on indicators related to these issues. However, there are some grounds for optimism on both these fronts, since the youngest adult age groups are showing much higher levels of proficiency than older adults and are showing signs of catch-up with their EU15 counterparts.

Household structure and family relations 4

The EQLS provides an opportunity to explore how patterns of household and family organisation and support vary, or remain stable, across different ages as well as across Europe, particularly in relation to the gender division of labour ('gender contracts') and inter-generational support ('intergenerational contracts'). This chapter sets out to analyse whether there is a convergence in patterns of household formation across Europe, as some observers maintain, or whether distinctive national patterns remain. It examines how such patterns may be related to economic and welfare regime patterns, as well as to cultural values. It also explores possible tensions, which might or should be addressed at the social policy level.

Two phenomena are of particular relevance in this perspective: increasing participation in the labour market by women with family responsibilities, and the ageing of the population (including the ageing of family networks). In different ways, these two phenomena challenge the gender and intergenerational arrangements and contracts which for a long time underpinned patterns of household organisation as well as of family support.

Increasing women's labour force participation is one of the main targets of the Lisbon strategy. Thus, reconciling work and family commitments has become a critical issue in European societies. It is also a central goal of European employment policy as outlined under the equality pillar of the European Employment Guidelines. This increase encounters varying difficulties within countries with different kinds of labour markets. It also involves different kinds of changes and possible pressures in countries which have developed different definitions and practices with regard to the gender division of labour within households and families, as can be seen from the EQLS data. Social policies play an important role in the way these changes are accommodated and tensions between different obligations and demands are managed.

With regard to the ageing of the population, according to a recent scenario exercise (EU Commission, 2003), the main increase among the elderly in the next 15 years in the EU will concern the over 80 years age group, which will increase by about 50%. The situation looks more balanced in the NMS, since their population is on average younger, but the trend is quite similar (Fahey and Speder, 2004). An increasing number of households at any given point in time will comprise only elderly people. Kinship networks will have an age and intergenerational balance skewed towards the elderly – with the frail elderly constituting a significant, if relatively outnumbered, proportion of those, with their needs and demands for care.

The ageing of the population arises not only from the increase in life expectancy but also from a low fertility rate. Fertility rates have been below replacement level throughout Europe for three decades. Yet there are significant inter-country differences, which to some degree overlap with differences in patterns of entering adulthood (exiting the parental household, living together as a couple, having a child) by the younger groups. The reasons for these different patterns are multiple. Some of them have to do with family values and models. But these are often supported by the way the young have access to social protection, financial credit, housing and so forth in each country.

Households, families and social networks occupy a crucial position in the social integration of individuals and families, and in the social cohesion of communities. They are also an arena of great diversity across and within countries. These divergences can be reduced – or widened – by changes in the economy and in the welfare state. The EQLS data provide a good base for understanding these diversities as well as commonalities.

Household composition

The number of households has increased strongly in past decades throughout Europe. Reasons for this are the ageing of the population, the increasing reduction of family size even in countries – such as some of the NMS and CC3 – in which the multiple and extended family has had a relevant role, the changing patterns of entering adulthood among the younger generations, and the increasing instability of marriages.

Trends, however, differ markedly between the EU15 and even more among these and other European countries (NMS, CC3), depending on the age structure of the population and on patterns of household formation. In particular, there are substantial differences in the age at which the young leave the parental home and which kind of household they form when they do so. To a lesser degree, there are also differences in the kind of household the elderly are more likely to live in. These different patterns of household formation indicate different – cultural, as well as practical – patterns of understanding and arranging intergenerational obligations. These in turn have an impact on the way individual and household needs are assessed and acknowledged both at the private and social policy level, thus affecting the quality of life.

Only 35% of EU25 households include a couple with children, while 30% include a couple only. Single parents comprise 8% of all households. One-person households make up 25% of all households, while extended households, where relatives (usually older) live with a couple and children form a small group (Table 15). With regard to this latter phenomenon, it is worthwhile noting that living in an extended family requires more space than living alone or in a small size household. Mediterranean and NMS countries are exactly those in which the number of rooms per person is below the mean (Chapter 2). Therefore, resources flowing to people according to the type of households should also be considered in relation to material constraints coming from the high density in housing.

Table 15: Household composition by country grouping

%

Country grouping	Living alone	Couple	Single parent	Couple with 1-2 children < 16	Couple with 3+ children < 16	Couple with all child(ren) > 16	Extended house-hold
CC3	9	19	8	24	6	24	10
NMS	15	19	11	20	4	22	10
EU15	26	32	7	15	2	16	2
EU25	25	30	8	16	2	17	3

Question HH3 (household grid): Now thinking about the other members of your household, starting with the oldest. What is this person's relationship to you?

Source: EQLS 2003

In the general prevalence of the nuclear (i.e. comprising a couple with or without children) household pattern, there are clear differences among the groups of countries: one-person households are prevalent in the EU15, much less so in the NMS and particularly in the CC3. To a lesser degree, this is also true for childless couples. These differences may not fully be explained by a lower incidence of the experience of parenthood in EU15 compared to the NMS and CC3 although, in the two latter groups, a higher percentage has had at least one child: respectively 75% and 70% have had at least one child in the NMS and CC3, compared to 66% in the EU15. Moreover, slightly less than a quarter has had at least three children in the NMS and CC3, compared to 18% in the EU15. Differences in the incidence of household patterns depend also on differences in patterns of life course household dynamics. In the NMS and particularly in the CC3, children live longer with their parents and a significant minority continue living with them even when the children form a couple of their own. On the contrary, in the EU15, households become childless earlier; and losing one's partner translates more easily into becoming a one-person household.

As for marital instability, 9% of all Europeans of 18 years and over experience singleness after the breakdown of a previous partnership, while 10% of Europeans are single because of the death of their spouse. Women tend to remain single more often (or longer) than men after the end of a partnership. Once again, there are important group differences, with the EU15 exhibiting the highest percentage of singleness (with or without children) after a couple breakdown (10%), followed by the NMS (8%), and, at a great distance, by the CC3 (3%). Such macro-group differences are accompanied by internal cross-country differences. The highest percentages of people who are single after partnership or marital breakdown are found in the northern and central EU15 and in the Czech Republic, while the lowest are found in Turkey, Malta, Bulgaria and the southern EU15 countries. These differences suggest different patterns of household formation and dynamics over the life course.

Household circumstances of young people

The kind of household people live in during different phases of the life course is a more meaningful indicator of patterns of household formation than the distribution of household types across countries. Thus, in this report, the focus will be on the types of household structures in which individuals of various ages live across Europe, with particular attention to the young (18-34) and the elderly, since these two age groups exhibit the most different household arrangements across Europe.

The degree to which the young (under 35) experience household/housing autonomy with respect to their parents shows a great variance not only among the EU15, NMS and CC3 countries, but also within each cluster (Table 16).

There is a clear divide between the EU15, where the majority (55% of men, 66% of women) of young people live outside the parental household, either alone, or in a childless partnership, and the NMS and CC3, where these two situations are much less common. In these two latter groups, the majority of young people either still live in the parental household, or are already parents themselves.

Within the EU15, at least two patterns may be observed. The first is based on the high numbers who enjoy household independence without parental responsibilities. This is clearly present in many of the northern and central European countries, particularly among men.

The second pattern shows children staying longer in the parents' household. Italy fits this pattern perfectly,

Table 16: Household status by gender and country (young people aged 18-34)

%

Country	Status in Household: Male (18-34)							Status in household: Female (18-34)						
	Living alone	Member of couple	Member of couple with children	Lone parent	Living with parents without partner and children(1)	Living with children(with or without partner) in an extended family	Other kind of house-holds (2)	Living alone	Member of couple	Member of couple with children	Lone parent	Living with parents without partner and children(1)	Living with children (with or without partner) in an extended family	Other kind of house-holds (2)
EU15	26	16	13	1	33	1	10	18	24	20	4	25	2	7
Austria	35	14	13	2	26	-	9	23	26	18	12	13	2	6
Belgium	28	20	20	2	27	1	3	11	14	33	11	27	1	3
Denmark	33	28	20	-	17	-	1	28	28	21	9	8	-	6
Finland	39	26	18	-	13	1	3	29	25	26	6	11	-	3
France	36	16	15	-	28	1	5	24	23	23	6	18	2	5
Germany	40	11	20	1	19	-	10	26	27	23	5	14	1	4
Greece	33	8	9	1	37	1	12	24	14	33	0	17	4	8
Ireland	10	14	15	1	24	9	26	7	15	18	12	17	10	21
Italy	11	8	11	-	61	-	8	6	12	20	2	57	2	2
Luxembourg	12	13	25	1	32	3	14	5	13	39	4	20	3	16
Netherlands	27	19	12	1	35	-	5	20	22	25	10	22	-	2
Portugal	7	8	28	-	46	3	8	5	10	30	9	27	6	14
Spain	5	22	13	1	39	2	18	5	16	26	2	30	3	18
Sweden	44	17	22	-	10	1	6	31	24	23	5	10	-	6
United Kingdom	34	22	8	1	19	-	16	14	37	19	14	12	2	6
NMS	6	8	21	-	44	6	16	4	8	26	4	33	12	13
Cyprus	16	9	19	2	43	2	10	6	20	30	2	27	2	13
Czech Republic	9	17	20	-	46	1	7	8	7	34	7	27	7	9
Estonia	17	26	10	2	34	2	9	19	23	17	5	28	5	4
Hungary	13	10	16	1	39	2	18	5	14	25	3	27	11	15
Latvia	14	13	21	2	30	8	13	13	20	24	6	16	8	13
Lithuania	9	8	34	-	37	7	5	8	14	35	10	16	11	6
Malta	7	9	9	-	67	2	6	4	14	11	1	54	3	13
Poland	2	4	22	-	45	8	19	3	4	23	3	37	14	16
Slovakia	4	4	21	1	47	8	15	1	4	31	3	38	13	10
Slovenia	10	10	17	-	48	3	13	6	11	26	3	39	7	8
EU25	22	15	14	1	35	2	11	16	21	21	4	26	3	8
CC3	8	10	22	1	51	8	8	5	13	42	2	28	10	5
Bulgaria	11	3	23		40	4	18	3	13	25	4	15	17	24
Romania	6	12	11	1	44	7	19	11	18	20	2	18	7	24
Turkey	6	7	20	1	42	7	17	1	9	40	2	26	7	13

1 The category 'living with parents' includes only respondents who live with parents (with or without brothers and sisters) and without other aggregate members in the household (for example partner).

2 The category "other" includes a number of mixed cases, such as non partnered individuals living with relatives (other than parents) or friends, individuals living with partner and relatives or friends, lone parents living with other aggregate members (other than parents). All together they amount to 11%, but they can neither be considered a category of its own nor be attached to other categories. And in each country this group is composed somewhat differently.

[Survey Question (HH3): Now thinking about the other member of your household, starting with the oldest. What is this person's relationship to you?]

implying both a delayed household independence and delayed parental responsibilities. Other southern European countries (Spain, Portugal) present more or less the same pattern.

The NMS are very similar to southern European countries with regard to the children staying longer in the parental household. In the 18-34 year age group, 45% of men in Mediterranean countries and 44% of men in the NMS live as children in the parental household. For women, the figures are 34% and 33%. But, as indicated by demographic sources (Eurostat 2003), a higher percentage of young people in the NMS than in the Mediterranean

countries already have parental responsibilities: 21% compared with 13%. This is true also for the CC3. On average, in these two groups of countries, young people, and particularly young women, become parents earlier than in the EU15.

Other cross group differences concern the higher incidence of the 18-34 age group living, either alone or with a partner and/or with their own children, in three generation or other kinds of households (see the last two columns in Table 16 for men and women) in the NMS and CC3 compared to the EU15.

Gender differences are evident in all countries and wider in the CC3, delineating a different timing for men's and women's life courses: women exit the parental home, enter a partnership and become parents younger than men. They are less likely to live alone or as a partner in a childless couple when young, but more likely to become single parents: 4% of young women in the EU15 and NMS countries live as single parents, compared with almost no young men. To these figures should be added an additional 1% of single mothers who live in an extended household.

Household circumstances of older people

The household circumstances of elderly people (those aged 65 and over) depend, firstly, on patterns of household formation (whether a young couple remains living with parents or forms a new household, the age at which young people leave the parental home, and so forth). Their circumstances also depend on gender. The pattern of elderly people living alone is increasing rapidly, if one considers that, according to ECHP figures, in 1998 the proportion of elderly people living alone was 45% for women and about 16% for men (see Eurostat, 2003)

Gender differences are noticeable. The higher life expectancy of women, together with the persistence of an age differential between spouses, implies that women over 65 are more likely – more than twice as much – than men to be widowed, and thus of living alone. Figure 18 shows the differing situations of elderly men and women in each country.

Within these general common trends, there are noticeable cross-country differences. Elderly men and women are much more likely to live alone in the EU15 than in the other European countries. Gender differences are greater

Figure 18: Household status of elderly people (65 and over): men relative to women

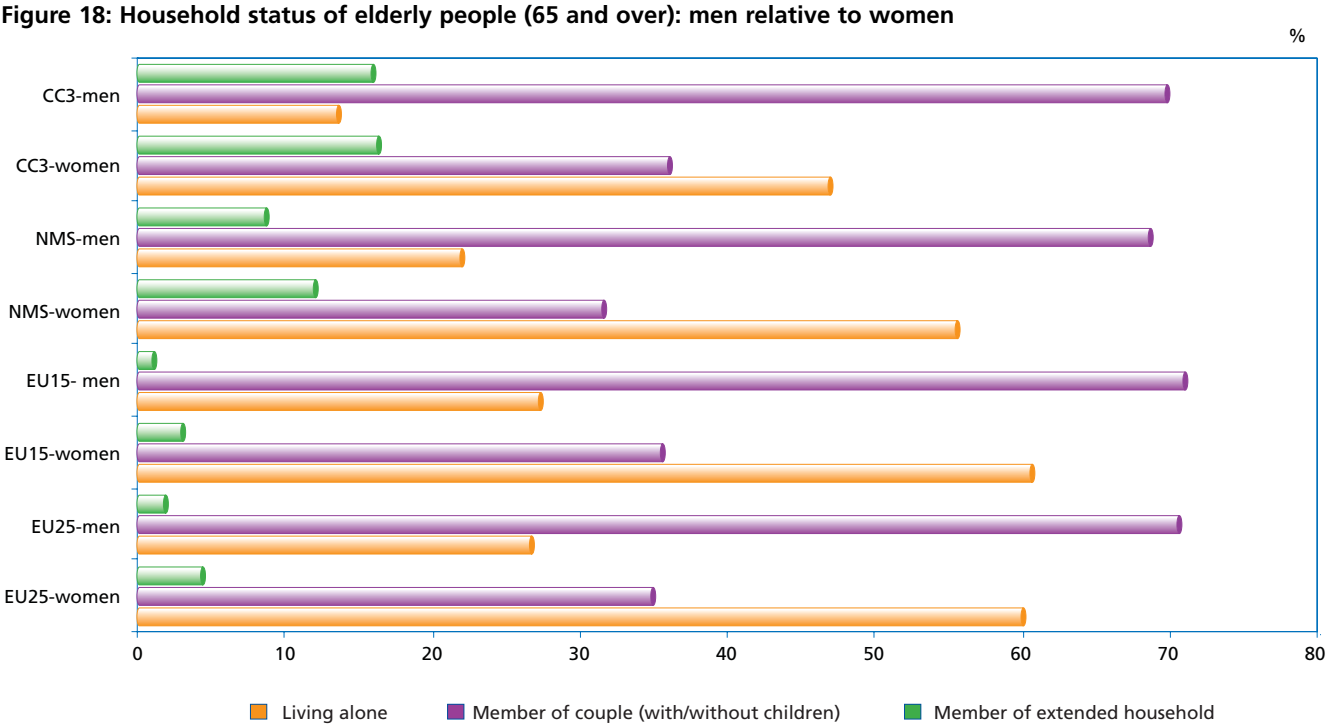


Figure 18 shows the differences between the household status of men and women (calculated as difference between the percentage of men who live in a given household status and the women's percentage in the same household status). Negative differences show how much less men are in that household status compared to women. Positive differences show how much more men are in that household status compared to women. The status 'living with children' is not represented because, in all countries, there are too few cases. Question HH3 (household grid): Now thinking about the other members of your household, starting with the oldest. What is this person's relationship to you?

Source: EQLS 2003

Table 17: Frequency of care and housework, by country groupings and age groups

%

	How often: care for and educating children				How often: housework				How often: caring for elderly/ disabled people			
Countries clusters	Every day	3-4 times a week	1-2 times a week	Less often/ never	Every day	3-4 times a week	1-2 times a week	Less often/ never	Every day	3-4 times a week	1-2 times a week	Less often/ never
CC3												
18-34	48	4	4	44	53	13	12	22	12	4	6	77
35-64	43	6	7	44	66	8	7	19	14	5	7	74
65 +	10	3	3	85	68	5	9	18	6	1	1	92
NMS												
18-34	40	3	3	55	53	18	15	13	4	3	6	87
35-64	42	7	7	44	71	11	8	10	9	3	6	82
65 +	9	4	6	82	79	8	5	8	6	1	2	91
EU15												
18-34	30	2	2	66	47	16	20	17	3	1	3	93
35-64	41	4	5	50	64	11	11	13	7	3	7	83
65 +	6	2	4	89	68	10	7	14	6	1	3	90
EU25												
18-34	31	2	2	65	47	16	20	17	3	1	3	93
35-64	41	4	5	50	65	11	11	13	7	3	7	83
65 +	6	2	4	88	68	10	7	14	6	1	3	90

Question 37: How often are you involved in any of the following activities outside paid work? A) Caring for and educating children; B) Housework; C) Caring for elderly/disabled relatives. The column 'Less often/ never' comprises the categories: Once or twice a month, less often, and never.

Source: EQLS 2003

in the NMS and in some Mediterranean countries than in most EU15 countries; once again pointing to similarities in patterns of household formation and dynamics between the NMS and the Mediterranean countries within the EU15.

Living alone does not imply isolation in itself. It may even be an indicator of kinship support. Yet, the high number of people, particularly women, living alone when old, particularly when very old, points to gaps in the social policy field, which can no longer be ignored. In the EU15, 39% of men and 76% of women over 75 years old live alone. In the NMS and CC3, the figures are respectively 38% (men) and 82% (women), and 34% (men) and 81% (women).

Responsibility for care and housework

Caring for others and housework are the means by which the fabric of households and families is continuously re-woven. They are also the activities which most differentiate obligations within households and families on the basis of age and gender.

With regard to caring, the EQLS data show that, in all European countries, caring activities are targeted at children more than at elderly and disabled people.

The ageing of the population increases the likelihood that individuals have in their family network a frail or disabled relative needing care. According to Eurobarometer data (Alber and Kohler, 2004), about 17% of adults in the EU15 take care of a frail elderly or disabled person not living with them and the same percentage do it for a person living with them. In the NMS/CC3, the percentages are slightly higher: 18% and 23%, respectively. The EQLS data indicate somewhat lower percentages: more than half of those questioned never take care of an elderly or disabled relative, 5% assumes such an obligation daily, another 5% at least once a week, and the remainder less often. Women are more frequently care providers than men, although differences are not large: 6% of women care for a disabled/elderly relative every day compared to 4% of men; 7% of women do it at least once a week compared to 6% of men. Of course, these data do not indicate what care is provided.

Not surprisingly, as Table 17 indicates, there are differences in caring for the elderly according to age of the respondent. The age at which elderly/disabled care is most provided differs across countries, although the most numerous providers are in the 35-64 age category. Therefore, particularly in the case of women, they often

combine elderly care with childcare. In the EU15, care providers seem to be concentrated more in the 55-64 age category, indicating that adult children who are approaching old age themselves take care of the older generation of parents.

Elderly/disabled care provision in all age categories increases from the EU15 to the NMS to the CC3, notwithstanding the greater proportion of elderly people in the EU15 countries. This suggests that different patterns of welfare provision are at play; there are also different patterns of perceived intergenerational obligations. In addition, the longer duration of children in the parental home in both NMS and CC3 and the higher incidence of extended households may encourage, or sometimes even enforce, the assumption of caring obligations towards the elderly/disabled by young people.

Caring for and educating children seems a more age-related duty in the EU15 than in the NMS and CC3. Looking at weekly childcare rates, Table 17 shows that, in the EU15, it is a task involving adults in the central age groups while, in the NMS, it is more balanced between these and the younger age groups. In the CC3, it is more skewed towards the younger age group. This is explained by the younger age of getting married and having children in these countries. In the NMS, more elderly people act as childcare providers.

Housework is also an age-differentiated activity. On average, elderly people do this more frequently than others. In both NMS and CC3, the distribution of housework is somewhat more evenly distributed across ages and generally a greater proportion of the population is involved in housework. The economic and housing conditions of the households in these countries (Chapters 1 and 2) may require more time devoted to the maintenance of living quarters as well as to acquire and transform consumption goods.

Housework and gender

As the survey data indicate, the gender imbalance in time spent in housework occurs throughout the life cycle, to some degree irrespective of family status. It is most apparent within couples, and more so when children are present.

Housework is a daily duty, especially for adult women in all the countries. The proportion of women doing housework every day are above 85% everywhere; and around 90% for the NMS/CC3. The biggest gender gap is in the CC3 countries, with the highest figures concerning adult women (91% being involved in daily housework) and the lowest involving young men (23%).

There are substantial cross-country differences both in the amount of time men and women living with a partner spend doing housework and in the size of the gender gap. Considering the median number of daily hours devoted to housework across the country groups, there is no distinct pattern between couples with and without children (Table 18). However, the divide between men and women is evident in every group – women do housework for more hours a day than men.

Table 18: Housework by sex and household status: median of daily hours

Country cluster[1]	Men[2]		Women[2]	
	Couple	Couple with child(ren)	Couple	Couple with child(ren)
CC3	4	3	4	4
NMS	3	3	4	4
EU15	2	2	3	3
EU25	2	2	3	3

[1] The Czech Republic, Poland and Spain are not included in the analysis because of filter problems in the questionnaire.

[2] The median values apply only to those people who answer 'every day' in question 37b.

Question 38b: How many hours a day are you involved in housework?

Source: EQLS 2003

The median number of hours spent on housework is constantly higher – for men and women – in the NMS and CC3 than in the EU15. Among those who perform housework daily, women living within a couple in the CC3 devote twice as much time a day to it as men in the EU15. Men living within a couple in the CC3 who perform housework daily, do it for about the same amount of time as women.

The observed cross-country differences in involvement in housework are possibly due to a higher incidence of low-income households in the NMS/CC3, which means less easy access both to domestic technology and to paid services. Moreover, given the generally poorer housing conditions in these countries (Chapter 2), housework might also involve house repairs, taking care of appliances and means of transportation, minor gardening to provide household food, and so forth. As a consequence, men and women might be involved in quite different kinds of housework. The proportion of both women and men under 65 who are out of work is higher in these countries.

Contrary to widespread expectations, the numbers of hours devoted to housework do not change between households with and without children at the aggregate level. Between individual countries, however, one may notice that in some, particularly the Mediterranean countries and most of the NMS and CC3, men with children devote less time to housework than men in childless couples, while the reverse is true for women. As will be indicated in Chapter 5 on work-life balance, this corresponds to a parallel phenomenon in time devoted to paid work, with fathers devoting more time to paid work than mothers. Parenthood remains a differentiating event with regard to the division of family responsibilities in paid and unpaid work, and in the respective presence of men and women in family and in paid work.

The gender imbalance in the allocation of housework is sharper in the Mediterranean and middle European countries (Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, and Ireland) and in the NMS. The allocation appears more balanced in the Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom and Lithuania.

Households in the NMS seem to be under the greatest pressure from paid and unpaid work demands. A lower proportion of women in the NMS than the EU15 are in paid work, but they work for longer hours (Chapter 5). They also work longer hours in unpaid housework. In the CC3, men work longer hours both in paid work and in unpaid housework than men in the EU15. There are fewer women in paid work although they too, on average, work longer hours than women in the EU15. The proportion of men out of work is high too. Thus, in both the NMS and CC3, a number of households may experience excessive (paid and unpaid) work demands, while others may suffer because of a lack of paid work, which they try to compensate through an extended version of unpaid domestic production of goods and services.

Not surprisingly, more women than men living within a couple feel that they do more than their fair share of housework: 43% compared to 13%. The perception of an asymmetry varies between country and group cluster, and increases dramatically for women when there are children in the house, while it decreases for men. Mothers in the CC3 are particularly likely to report doing more than their fair share of housework; nearly 69% (with Turkish mothers reaching 83%) say this; true also for 42% both in the NMS and in the EU15.

Caring for children

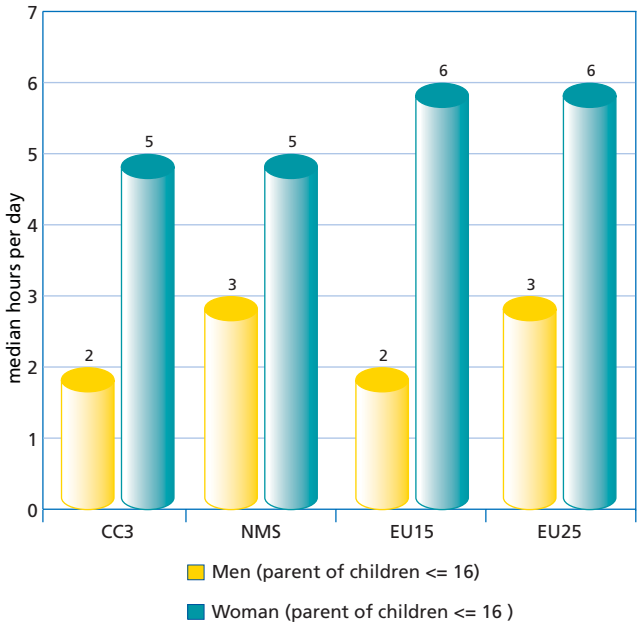
As indicated in Table 17 above, children remain the main beneficiaries of family care in Europe. In particular, over 70% of both fathers and mothers of children under 16 years devote time to caring and educating their children at least twice a week. However, looking at how much time is devoted to this activity, more mothers than fathers do it daily and, among those who do it daily, mothers devote more hours than fathers. Mothers' hours are on average more than twice as high as the father's hours, often involving a full working day (Figure 19).

At the aggregate group level, these gender differences persist for children of different ages: among those who say they care daily, in the EU15, fathers of children under four years of age provide on average 4.3 hours of care a day, which drops to 2.7 hours in the case of 10-16 year old children. For mothers, the amounts are 10.5 and 5.2 hours respectively. The same trend is visible in the NMS and CC3.

There are, however, noticeable differences among the fathers and mothers who give care every day, as well as gender differences within countries.

Within the EU15, parents in the UK and the Netherlands exhibit the greatest gender gap (five hours difference between fathers and mothers), those in France the lowest

Figure 19: Hours of daily caring[1] for children, by country grouping[2] and parent's sex



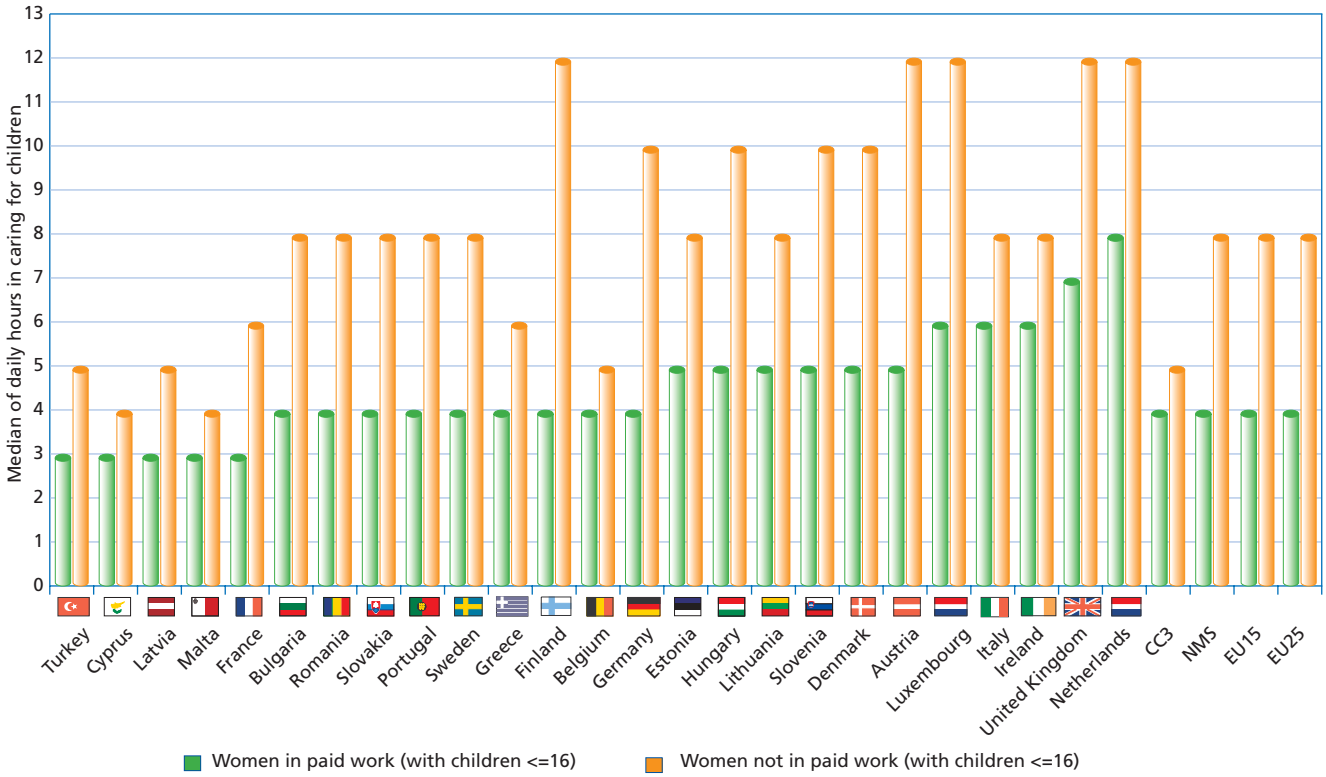
[1] The median values refer to the answers 'every day' to Question 37a. Men and women with children of less than 16 years are selected.

[2] The Czech Republic, Poland and Spain are not represented due to a misleading filter in the countries questionnaire.

Question 38a: How many hours a day are you involved in caring for children?

Source: EQLS, 2003

Figure 20: Hours of daily caring[1] for children, by country[2] and employment status of mother



[1] The median values refer to the answers 'every day' to Question 37a. Women with children with less than 16 years are selected.

[2] The Czech Republic, Poland and Spain are not represented because of too few valid cases.

Question 38a: How many hours a day are you involved in caring for children?

Source: EQLS, 2003

(two hours difference). Fathers in Finland and Ireland report spending the highest median number of hours daily (4) in childcare. Among mothers, French women appear to devote fewer hours daily to childcare – less than half of that reported by Dutch, UK and Irish mothers.

Within the NMS, gender differences are generally smaller than those found in the EU15, particularly in Malta, Cyprus and the Baltic states (an average of two hours difference). However, both mothers and fathers in Malta, Cyprus and Latvia report rather low hours of parental childcare compared with, for example, parents in Slovenia, Slovakia and Hungary.

Lower levels of parental care may of course be substituted by other kinds of family care (e.g. grandparents' care, as in many southern European countries), or by collectively provided social services, including a long school day, as in the Scandinavian countries and France. This is a crucial issue in policy planning and provision, particularly in view of the fact that the number of mothers of young children who are in paid work is increasing in all countries, even if there are wide cross-country differences. Furthermore, increasing women's labour market participation is one of the crucial objectives of European employment policies.

When mothers are in paid work, the gender gap in the amount of childcare provided is reduced, but not eliminated. Among those in paid work, mothers devote on average about one third more hours than fathers to childcare every day: 5.3 hours compared to 3.4. This explains why working mothers generally have a longer (unpaid and paid) working day than working fathers but are often obliged to reduce their paid working time and thus also their personal income (Chapter 1). Nevertheless, differences between mothers in paid work and mothers not in paid work are greater than gender differences (Figure 20).

Both in the EU15 and in the NMS, mothers not in paid work spend almost double the number of hours in childcare as mothers in paid work: about eight hours a day. This high caring time might be due not only to a reduced use of childcare, but also to the presence of a higher number of children among these mothers and/or to a younger age of the children.

Data on women's labour market participation in Europe and more generally in industrialised countries indicate that, the higher the number of children and the lower their age, the less likely mothers are to be in the labour force (OECD, 2001). Differences are less striking in the CC3 countries, confirming that, on average, mothers in these countries provide fewer hours of care. Within the EU15, the biggest differences between mothers in paid and unpaid work can be found in Finland, the lowest in Belgium. Differences between mothers in paid work and not in paid work are remarkably small in Italy and Ireland, possibly because in these countries working mothers may count on help from family.

Patterns of support and sociability

The large majority of European citizens may rely on family support in case of need, particularly when practical matters – help around the house, an urgent need of money – are involved. Family remains prominent, but to a lesser degree, in the case of more personal matters. In this case, friends and others are also involved, particularly when moral or emotional support is needed. This finding is consistent with other national and comparative studies (see e.g. Alber and Fahey, 2004).

The proportion of people who say they have no one to turn to when in need is quite low. It is highest in the case of financial need: 11% of citizens in the EU15, 17% in the NMS and 24% in the CC3 say they cannot rely on anybody if they urgently need to raise a modest sum of money (€1,000 in the EU15 countries; €500 in the NMS/CC3).

Responses concerning help around the house when ill are highly consistent across the countries and country groups, with over 80% of the sample being able to receive help from family and another 15% from friends or others. In Table 19, the data are shown only for two of the items: help in the case of psychological distress and in the case of financial need.

The strong role of the family in providing support is evident. The varying relevance of family and friends, depending on the kind of need, points to a diversification, rather than a substitution, of the sources of support. Country differences in the relative weight of family and friends or others' support might be taken as an indicator of the degree to which the process of individualisation and weakening of family dependence has taken place.

Close kin (non-cohabiting children and parents) have an important role in patterns of sociability throughout Europe

Table 19: Support by family and other people

%

	Help when you were feeling a bit depressed			Urgently raise €1,000 to help in an emergency[1]		
Country	Family	Other[2]	Nobody will support	Family	Other[2]	Nobody will support
Austria	53	44	3	77	19	4
Belgium	49	43	8	66	19	15
Denmark	50	47	3	62	29	10
Finland	40	57	3	58	37	5
France	47	49	4	63	21	16
Germany	52	43	4	70	16	14
Greece	67	29	4	70	20	10
Ireland	56	43	1	73	23	4
Italy	47	48	5	78	14	7
Luxembourg	51	40	9	70	21	9
Netherlands	52	43	5	68	20	12
Portugal	69	28	3	70	16	14
Spain	62	35	3	80	15	5
Sweden	49	49	2	69	25	6
United Kingdom	54	41	5	66	18	15
Cyprus	66	30	5	78	10	11
Czech Republic	46	49	4	64	24	12
Estonia	39	54	8	38	31	31
Hungary	63	34	3	68	18	15
Latvia	38	56	6	23	39	37
Lithuania	46	49	5	41	38	20
Malta	61	33	7	88	6	7
Poland	52	42	6	63	19	19
Slovakia	58	40	2	67	23	11
Slovenia	58	40	2	64	28	8
Bulgaria	51	45	5	33	34	33
Romania	67	30	3	43	25	32
Turkey	52.	44	5	61	19	20
CC3	56	40	4	54	22	24
NMS	53	42	5	62	21	17
EU15	52	44	4	70	19	11
EU25	52	43	4	69	19	12

[1] In the new Member States and candidate countries, the reference is €500.

[2] 'Others' refers to: 'work colleagues', 'friends', 'neighbours', 'someone else'.

Questions 36c, 36d): From whom would you get support in each the following situations? From each situation, choose the most important person ... c) if you were feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to, d) if you needed to urgently raise €1,000/€500 to face an emergency.

Source: EQLS 2003

but, as Table 20 shows, to a lesser degree than friends in almost all age categories. Family contacts appear more frequent in the NMS but there are no major differences between country clusters, or within them, with regard to the frequency of contacts with friends. The elderly have only a slightly lower frequency of contacts with friends than the young. Over 80% of all elderly people see a friend at least once a week in all countries (Table 20).

Table 20: Frequent[1] contacts face to face with parents/children and friends, by age

%

	Frequent contact with parent/children[2]			Frequent contact with friends		
Country grouping	18-34	35-64	65 and over	18-34	35-64	65 and over
CC3	74	73	65	90	88	88
NMS	92	88	79	92	84	86
EU15	69	74	76	92	86	87

[1] 'Frequent contact' includes: 'More than once a day', 'Every day or almost every day' 'At least once a week'.

[2] The modalities children and mother and father are considered together.

Questions 34a, b, c: 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 of your friends or neighbours.

Source: EQLS 2003

The likelihood of (non cohabitant) family contacts increases with age in the EU15 while, in the NMS and CC3, the opposite occurs. This may be partly explained by the higher proportion of elderly in the latter countries who live with their children and their families compared to the EU15, and by the higher proportion of young people in the CC3 who are already parents in their own household. Similarly, more parents live with their children and grandchildren than in the EU15, but also more children at a relatively young age have a family of their own, thus inducing a higher exchange with their parents, in the role of grandparents. Conversely, the higher number of childless single people and couples among the young in the EU15 may reduce the exchange between parents and children at this life stage.

Satisfaction with family life

How satisfied are Europeans with their family life? The issue is explored through Q. 41e of the questionnaire. The relative majority (42%) give a high score (between 8 and 10), a similar proportion a medium score (5-7), while 11% give a very low score (0-4). Those reporting most satisfaction are those living either alone, or as a partner in a childless couple. Women are less satisfied than men (14% compared to 18%), and CC3 citizens are less satisfied than other Europeans, with people in the NMS in between. Altogether, the factors of living in an extended household, followed by single parenthood, are linked to a lower degree of satisfaction for both men and women. Within the CC3, however, women who live with a partner and children show a lower degree of satisfaction than single mothers (46% of the former are little satisfied compared to 36% of the latter), indicating that having a traditional household may not always produce satisfaction if the workload is high and the budget tight.

These findings are consistent with those coming from other surveys on the quality of life (e.g. Delhey, 2004). The high variance in satisfaction scores according to gender, age and country, however, questions the hypothesis that satisfaction with family life comes from feelings people have of being more in control of this private domain, contrasting with other domains in the public sphere. Indeed, this private sphere might be perceived as out of one's control when resources are lacking and/or it is difficult to meet obligations.

Conclusions

Households and families are evidently an important source of help and support in Europe, contradicting any notion that, in a world of growing individualisation, their role is weak and remains important only in the most traditional and/or poorer countries.

EU enlargement will contribute to further differentiating the patterns of household formation and dynamics. The data presented here indicate that there is no clear convergence towards one model. The traditional (in the literature) country groupings are somewhat reshaped, with some of the NMS countries appearing more similar to the southern European ones, while others are more similar to the Nordic ones. This diversity questions many assumptions about the singular impact either of religion or of welfare state patterns or even of political traditions. Long-standing family cultures and values appear to have an independent role in shaping behaviours, although of course they interact with the economic context and with the policy framework. In this perspective, it is worthwhile pointing out that the formation of new households and entering into the responsibilities of parenthood appear more difficult in the very countries in which family and intergenerational support is stronger and possibly more expected. Delayed exit from the parental household in the southern European and in most of the NMS/CC3 group, together with low fertility, indicates that too much reliance on family support – for financial protection, access to housing, caring needs – might constrain the ability of younger generations to become fully independent and to assume parental responsibilities in their turn.

Men and women in the middle age groups seem to bear most responsibilities for care. Yet, the ageing of the population and the increase in women's labour force participation may lead to a caring deficit for the frail elderly in countries where their needs are still mainly left to family care and responsibilities.

The gender division of labour within households and families appears relatively resistant to change. Women who bear the main responsibility for the daily organisation of household and family, for caring for family members, and for family relationships, are often those who complain about unfair domestic workloads and are less satisfied with family life. At the same time, intra-gender differences emerge: between women with children and women without children, between women in paid work and not in paid work, as well as between women in the richer – financially, but also at the level of services provision – countries and women in the poorer ones. Also differences between men emerge, although to a lesser degree, with regard to the extent to which they share family responsibilities. While men in the EU15 countries seem in general to share more of the caring responsibilities involved in parenthood, in the NMS and particularly the CC3, men seem to share more of the housework workload.

Family behaviours are not changed by law and policies alone but must interact with deeply-felt values concerning what is good and adequate in this field (see e.g. Alber and Kohler, 2004). Moreover, governments and social actors in different countries look to different priorities when thinking about family policies, thus reflecting not only specific political balances but also specific sets of shared values and conceptions of standards. Yet, policies have a role in enabling people to negotiate and even to critically assess their values and standards. In this perspective, key policy areas seem to be:

- Equal opportunity policies with regard to economic activity, and also participation in decision-making processes (see European Commission, 2000b). An important role in these policies is played by caring services for young children and frail elderly and disabled people, in terms of coverage, quality, affordability and flexibility. Also, policies promoting a higher participation by men in family caring responsibilities (e.g. parental and father's leave) are important in order to weaken gender divisions.
- Policies specifically addressed to frail elderly people in order to strengthen their right to 'age in place' (OECD, 1996), while not rendering them exclusively dependent on family support.
- 'Reconciliation' policies for men and women across the life course, which acknowledge that both men and women workers have family responsibilities which may vary in intensity over the life course. This was particularly highlighted during the Swedish presidency and was included in the Council Resolution of 29 June 2000 on the balanced participation of women and men in family life and working life.
- Policies specifically addressed to young people, which render them less dependent on family support. This is probably an area where differences are greatest in Europe, in legal as well as in policy terms, and where some degree of convergence in social security provisions might be advocated.

Work-life balance 5

Reconciling work and family life has become an increasingly important issue in European societies. The balance between these two areas of life is believed to have a major influence on labour participation, fertility, family formation and quality of life. Both the EU Social Policy Agenda (European Commission, 2000a) and the EU Employment Guidelines (Council of the EU, 2002) have included the compatibility of work and family life in their core policy values.

The European Employment Strategy and the Lisbon Strategy both aim at increasing labour force participation, especially for women. However, raising fertility rates in order to slow down the demographic change in Europe's ageing societies has also become a social policy concern. In practice, spending time at work and simultaneously taking on family responsibilities are often contradictory demands, with one aspiration lagging behind the other. Therefore, the balance between work and family life is important for both employment participation and fertility rates. Parental leave options, care services and flexible working time regulations are instruments which can have a great impact on the opportunities parents – in particular women – have to combine work and family tasks (Webster, 2001; European Parliament, 2004a).

A balance in family and working life is strongly related to equal opportunities between men and women. In this respect, it is essential to offset the disadvantages faced by women in terms of access to and participation in the labour market, and the disadvantages faced by men in terms of participating in family life.

The EQLS investigates the perceived difficulties people have in combining their paid work with their family responsibilities and household chores. This chapter is mainly concerned with employed people. However, there is a large variation in the rate of labour participation in different European countries and, of course, a big difference between male and female rates. Employment patterns have to be kept in mind when interpreting the work-life balance results, because they affect quite different parts of the population in different countries.

Difficulties reconciling work and family life

Two questions in the EQLS relate to the perceived difficulties working people have in fulfilling household and family responsibilities. A third question asks whether people have difficulties concentrating at work because of family responsibilities. People living in the EU15 report fewer difficulties than people in the NMS/CC3 in their

Table 21: Proportion of employed persons who have difficulties reconciling work and family life several times a week, by country

%

Country	Too tired to do household jobs	Difficulties in fulfilling family responsibilities	Difficulties in concentrating at work
Austria	12	4	2
Belgium	21	7	2
Denmark	16	5	1
Finland	14	5	2
France	18	8	2
Germany	17	6	1
Greece	29	14	4
Ireland	18	7	4
Italy	22	10	2
Luxembourg	14	9	2
Netherlands	12	5	3
Portugal	25	13	6
Spain	39	17	3
Sweden	19	8	3
United Kingdom	27	12	7
Cyprus	33	17	3
Czech Republic	22	10	2
Estonia	38	17	3
Hungary	30	14	4
Latvia	47	27	8
Lithuania	29	15	5
Malta	35	11	5
Poland	32	17	5
Slovakia	20	10	5
Slovenia	27	16	4
Bulgaria	37	20	6
Romania	36	17	3
Turkey	36	27	11
CC3	36	23	8
NMS	29	15	4
EU15	22	9	3
EU25	23	10	3

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

Question 13a: I have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done.

Question 13b: It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend working.

Question 13c: I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of my family responsibilities.

Categories for all questions are: several times a week, several times a month, several times a year, less often, never.

Source: EQLS 2003

responses to all three questions (Table 21). Only a minority of employed people in continental Europe and the Nordic countries say they have difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities because of the amount of time they spend working. In the United Kingdom, as well as in Greece, Portugal and Spain, problems reconciling the work-life balance are reported more frequently than in the other EU15 countries, but Spain is the only EU country where people perceive more difficulties than people in the NMS countries. Around 40% of Spaniards – twice the EU15 average – report problems organising their household jobs several times a week because they are too tired after work. The populations of the remaining countries report much more difficulty reconciling work and family life than the populations of the EU15. In general, one third of the population in the NMS is too tired to do household jobs and around one sixth report having difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities several times a week. All CC3 countries are above the EU15 average as well as the NMS average; in general, citizens from these countries have more difficulties reconciling work and family life. Workers in Turkey are especially likely to report problems: around one third have difficulties doing their household jobs as well as fulfilling family responsibilities.

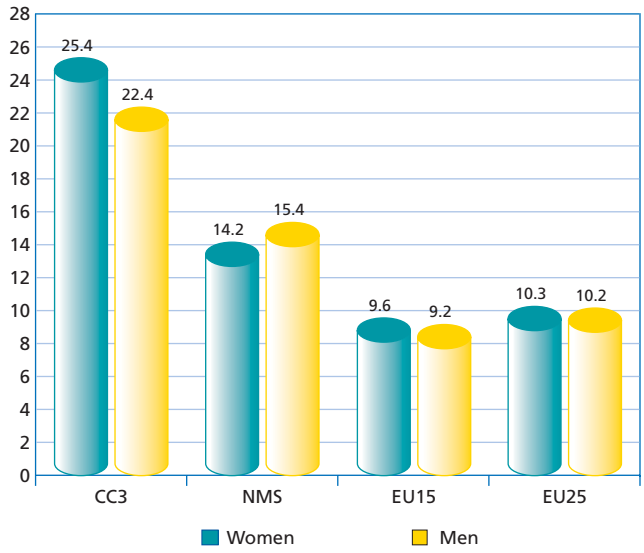
In contrast to perceived problems combining domestic work and family tasks, problems concentrating at work because of family responsibilities are less widespread. Turkey is the only country where more than 8% of individuals report difficulties of this kind. Differences between countries are also rather small in this respect. Hence, workers seem to feel that work affects family life much more than family life influences work performance.

Gender differences

Chapter 4 highlighted the fact that women spend more time on domestic work and family tasks than men. Moreover, women and men have quite different employment patterns. Part-time work in particular is more prevalent for women in most European countries. Both aspects indicate that there might be gender-specific strategies for reconciling work and family life. Therefore, it is important to consider the situation of women and men separately.

It is remarkable that women and men do not differ greatly in the level of reported difficulties they have in fulfilling their family responsibilities. This may reflect the different values and perceptions of men and women, but it

Figure 21: Difficulties fulfilling family responsibilities among women and men – Proportion reporting 'several times a week'



Question 13b: How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year? It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend working. Categories: Several times a week, several times a month, several times a year, less often, never.

Source: EQLS 2003

corresponds with an earlier study in the EU15, where men report more often than women that their working hours fit poorly or not at all with family and social commitments (Fagan, 2003). When cross-country averages are examined, it can be seen that the gender differences for the EU15 and NMS are below one percentage point (Figure 21). In the NMS, men perceive even more difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities than women. In the CC3, women report problems reconciling work and family life more often than in the other country groups. However, this mainly reflects the strong influence of the results for Turkey on the CC3 average. The similarities between men and women in the cross-country averages are also present at national level. Only in Cyprus, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom is the difference between women and men above five percentage points. However, in the United Kingdom and Cyprus, men report more difficulties than women, whereas in the other four countries women perceive more problems than men. To get a better understanding of why the gender differences are quite small despite the conditions for women and men being very different, it is important to highlight the most influential factors: the number of working hours and the extent of family responsibilities.

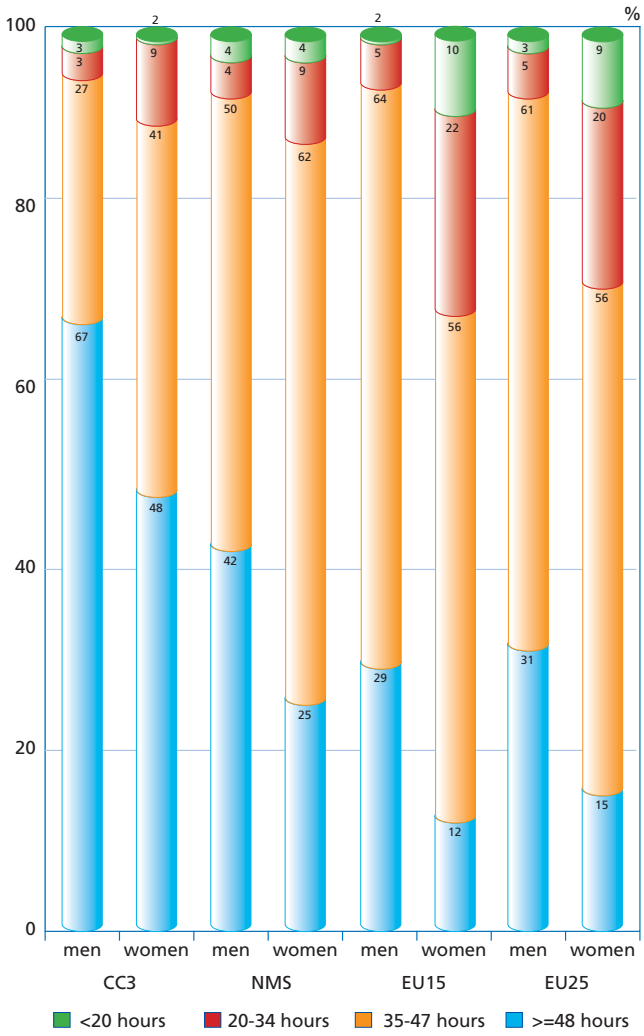
Impact of working hours

Working time regulations are one way of helping to achieve a better balance between work and family life. There are several ways of reorganising working time and implementing more flexible working time options, such as part-time contracts, time accounts, compressed working weeks, tele-working, parental leave or retirement schemes (Fagan, 2003). The EQLS does not provide detailed information on different working time regulations, but it does give information on weekly working hours. In the EQLS data, the average working time in the main job is 1-5% higher than in the standard data source on working hours in Europe, see Labour Force Survey (LFS). The reason for this deviation might be that persons with very low weekly working hours are better covered by the LFS (which includes people working one hour or more), whereas the EQLS focuses upon the respondent's principal economic status (Chapter 3).

As far as average working hours for women and men are concerned, there are clear differences between the EU15 and the NMS/CC3 (Figure 22). The majority of employed women in the latter group of countries work full-time (35 hours and more), whereas in the EU15 part-time work (less than 35 hours) is more widespread for women. In Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, more than 40% of employed women work part-time. On the other hand, men quite often work 48 hours or more a week. In Greece, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey, over 40% of men report working very long hours. Part-time work still plays only a minor role for men. Only in the Netherlands is there a substantial proportion of men working part-time (around 15%). These findings underline the difference in the paid weekly working hours of men and women.

People may reduce their working hours because of family responsibilities; equally, they may report problems because of work. In general, the longer the working time, the more often individuals report difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities (Table 22). People working 48 hours a week or more in particular consistently report more difficulties. The proportion of persons employed full-time who report difficulties is two to three times higher than the proportion among people working part-time. These findings suggest that the higher proportion of people in the NMS/CC3 reporting difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities might be to some extent explained by the higher proportion of people working 48 hours and more per week. Nevertheless, working time arrangements do not fully explain the differences between the countries. National differences in household structure, family formation and care services for children, elderly and disabled people are further important determinants.

Figure 22: Weekly working hours[1] by sex



[1] Working hours calculated from the reported normal weekly working time in the main job as well as in the second job, including any paid or unpaid overtime (Question 7: How many hours do/did you normally work per week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime? Question 10: 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).

Source: EQLS 2003

There is a clear gender difference. The general pattern that longer paid working time increases the difficulty people have in fulfilling family responsibilities consistently applies to women. For men, however, this tendency does not appear when part-time work is compared to regular full-time employment (see also Fagan, 2003, p. 45). Only men who work 48 hours or more report a substantial increase in difficulties fulfilling family responsibilities. All in all, there seem to be two contrary patterns for men and

Table 22: Proportion reporting difficulties 'several times a week' in fulfilling family responsibilities, by working hours and sex (% within groups)

%

	Part-time (20-34 hours)			Full-time (35-47 hours)			Very long full-time (48+ hours)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
CC3	11	17	14	9	18	12	29	33	30
NMS	11	7	8	11	12	11	21	23	22
EU15	9	5	6	5	11	7	17	16	17
EU25	9	6	6	6	11	8	18	18	18

Question 13b: How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year? It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend working. Categories: Several times a week, several times a month, several times a year, less often, never.

Source: EQLS 2003

women, related to the number of working hours, which might shed light on why they do not differ sharply with regard to perceived difficulties in reconciling work and family life:

1. Women tend to report more difficulties balancing work and family tasks than men when in full-time employment. However, on average they spend fewer hours in paid work than men, and shorter working hours are in general related to fewer difficulties in fulfilling family responsibilities.

2. Men in general report fewer difficulties reconciling work and family life when working full-time, even when they are working very long hours. However, they are likely to have longer paid working hours per week than women, and longer working hours increase the likelihood of perceiving difficulties in fulfilling family responsibilities.

Children, housework and care

Working time regulations are one side of the coin; the other side is the time and effort spent on domestic work as well as on childcare, and care for elderly or disabled people (see previous chapter). These tasks are closely related to household composition. In general, the younger people are, and the more children there are in the household, the higher is the likelihood that women will not be in paid employment at all. The ratio of non-employed mothers with children under 16 to non-employed fathers with children under 16 is lowest in Sweden (1.2) and highest in Spain (5.7) and Portugal (7.3). The EU15 average (3) is higher than in the NMS and CC3 (both 2). In the Mediterranean countries, childcare is strongly associated with non-employment of mothers. These findings again underline that the gender gap is evident when the different labour force participation of fathers and mothers is considered. Men with young children are better integrated in the labour market than women.

Table 23: Perceived difficulties employed persons have fulfilling family responsibilities 'several times a week', by household type

%

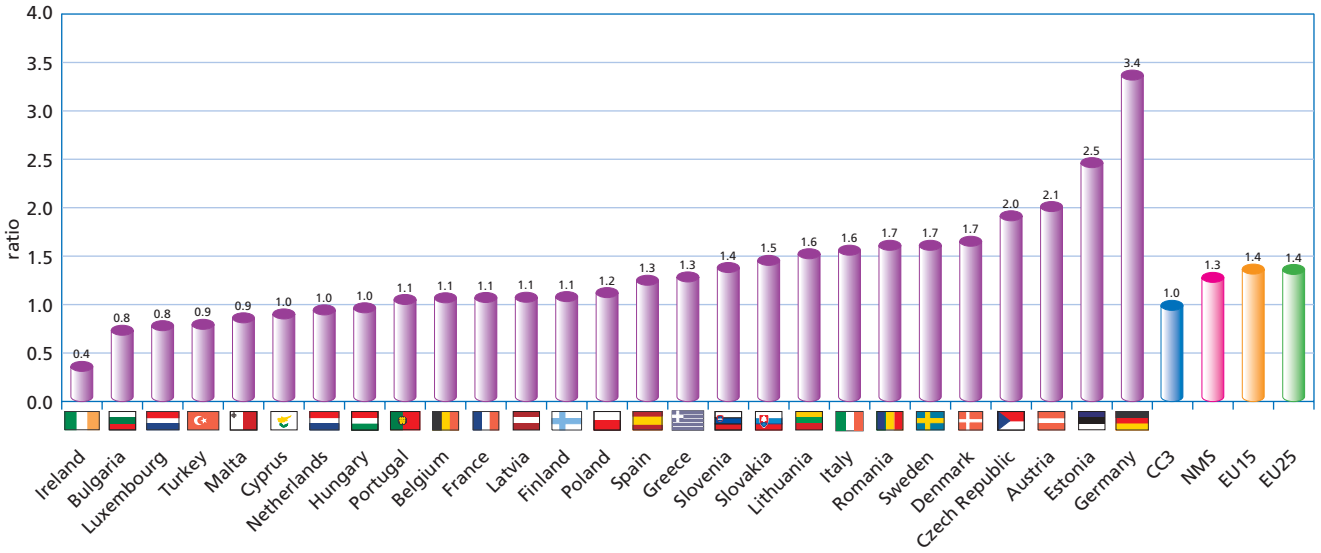
Country group	Single parent with children <16 years	Couple with children < 16 years	Couple with children >16 years	Couple	Living alone	Total
CC3	54	25	19	20	25	24
NMS	26	15	13	18	13	15
EU15	13	11	12	6	7	10
EU25	15	12	12	7	8	10

Question 13b: How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year? It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend working. Categories: Several times a week, several times a month, several times a year, less often, never.

Source: EQLS 2003

One crude illustration of the impact of housework and care on the work-life balance is given by household composition (Table 23). The clearest finding is that employed single parents with children under the age of 16 perceive the most difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities in almost all countries. Turkey, Romania and Poland show the highest rates with more than 45% of single parents reporting problems reconciling work and family life. Low rates under 10% were found in Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Estonia. In addition, single parent households have the highest rate of daily housework and care activities, and they spend more time on those activities than other persons. Since more than three-quarters of single parent households consist of mothers living with their children, it can be seen that the gender differences are consistently important.

Figure 23: Difficulties fulfilling family responsibilities several times a week: ratio of working parents with children less than four years to all other employed persons



Question 13b: How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year? It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend working. Categories: Several times a week, several times a month, several times a year, less often, never.

Note: The ratio of working parents with children aged three or younger to the total average reporting that they have difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities several times a week because of the time they spend working. The data for the UK are missing due to missing information on household composition. The EU15 and EU25 means were computed without data from the UK.

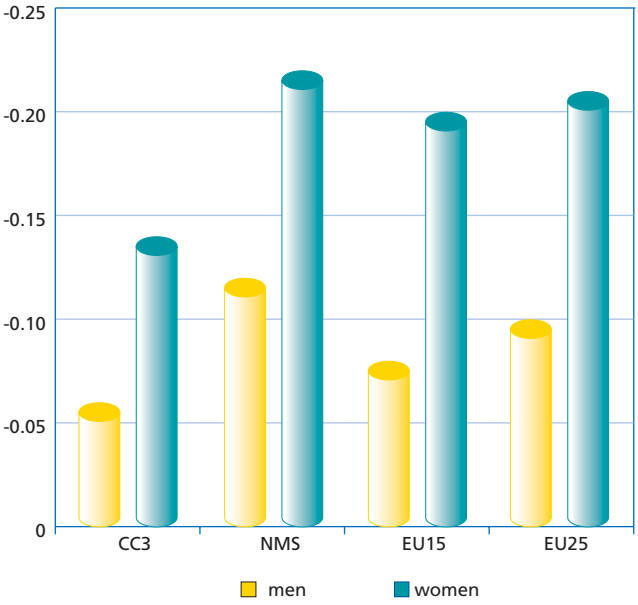
Source: EQLS 2003

The differences between the other household types are not that distinctive and the variations between countries are relatively high. In the EU15, it can be clearly seen that parents with children living in the household report difficulties more often than couples without children or people living alone. This pattern is not visible in the NMS/CC3. It is surprising that in some countries persons who live alone quite often report problems reconciling work and family life; this may be because of child or elderly care responsibilities outside the home. Poland, Romania and Turkey show relatively high percentages in this respect. Such results suggest that family structure and family ties differ a lot between the national cultural settings. Thus, the term 'family responsibilities' might have different meanings as far as the extent of family members and the closeness of family ties are concerned.

Parents with young children should be a target group for policy intervention. Young children need a lot of care time and parents – mainly mothers – fulfil these demands. Doing so is often associated with a negative effect on occupational prospects. National childcare services and parental leave regulations play a major role in reconciling these work and family demands. If one compares the amount of difficulty fulfilling family responsibilities experienced by parents with children aged three or younger to the population average, remarkable differences between countries can be seen (Figure 23).

In 14 countries, working parents with children younger than four years do not report difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities more frequently than the overall average of employed persons. Parents of young children in Ireland, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Turkey and Malta are even below the country average. Thus, employed parents with young children in these countries express fewer difficulties reconciling work and family tasks than all employed persons. However, it should be noted that in these countries (except Luxembourg), as well as in Portugal, the employment rate for mothers with young children is lower than the average employment rate. In the remaining countries which have small differences for parents with young children (Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Poland), both aspects come together: parents of young children do not experience more difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities and are as integrated in the labour market as the total population. The opposite result was found in Germany, where parents of young children report difficulties 'several times a week', around 3.5 times more often, even if a high proportion of mothers with young children are not employed. There is no clear pattern

Figure 24: Relation between formal working time and time spent on family work, by sex



Note: The correlation coefficient is calculated using the normal weekly working time in the main job as well as in the second job (Question 7 and Question 10) and the sum of hours spent daily on housework, on care for children, and on care for elderly or disabled people (Question 38). Only those people who report that they do at least one of these activities daily are included.

Source: EQLS 2003

distinguishing the EU15 from the NMS/CC3. This emphasises that national regulations on parental leave and childcare as well as family support networks are quite heterogeneous across the countries (see also OECD, 2002; OECD 2003; GVG, 2003).

The picture for women and men reveals interesting differences. In nine out of the 15 EU Member States, fathers with children below the age of four report more difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities than mothers. The opposite picture can be seen in Portugal and Spain, where women with children below the age of four are much more likely to report difficulties than men. Similar results could be found for Cyprus, Estonia, Romania and Slovenia. But in seven of the NMS/CC3, fathers report more difficulties than mothers. According to time use studies, men increase the amount of domestic work they do if young children are in the household. This increase is even stronger for women, but women tend to cope with the higher family workload by cutting back on their formal work (Eurostat, 2003; OECD, 2001). Nevertheless, time budget studies show that women's overall paid and unpaid working hours are higher than those of men.

This fact is highlighted by relating the time in paid work to the time spent on housework or care (Figure 24). The inverse relationship between formal working time and time spent on care responsibilities and domestic work is quite strong for women in almost all countries. As a rule of thumb, women tend to adjust the time they spend on paid work to the time they spend on care responsibilities and domestic work. The more time they spend on family tasks, the shorter is their working time and vice versa. This is particularly true for Austria and Germany within the EU15, as well as Malta and Cyprus in the NMS. Men do not act in this way with the same regularity and consequence. Only in four countries is the correlation stronger for men than for women. The overall association between formal working time and time spent on care or housework is rather low for men. The difference between the EU15 and the NMS is small, although the variation between the countries is high. In the CC3, the association between formal working time and time spent on housework and care for both men and women is weaker.

However, men spend more time than women in paid employment each week. As already noted, a high number of working hours makes it more difficult to reconcile work and family life. These findings are in line with time preference studies, where women working part-time declare an interest in working longer hours, and men in shortening their working time (Fagan, 2003). However, reduced working time for men does not necessarily increase the time men spend on housework and care activities; they allocate a great deal of the additional time on leisure and recreation. Moreover, the EQLS data show that only very long weekly working hours lead to a substantial increase in perceived difficulties fulfilling family responsibilities for men (European Commission, 2002b). Thus, there are two gender specific strands regarding working hours and better reconciling of work and family life:

1. Men working in extended full-time arrangements should have better opportunities to reduce their working time in order to spend more time with the family.

2. Women should have more flexibility to decide how much time they would like to devote to paid work and family responsibilities.

The first point may be of greater importance in the NMS/CC3, where the average working time for men is relatively high. The second point is perhaps more relevant in the EU15, where it is mainly women who reduce their working time to cope with family responsibilities. Two

aspects should be further considered: first, women – particularly mothers with young children – have much lower employment rates in general. Second, the degree of working time autonomy is quite limited for many employees, especially for those in higher occupational positions (Fagan, 2003).

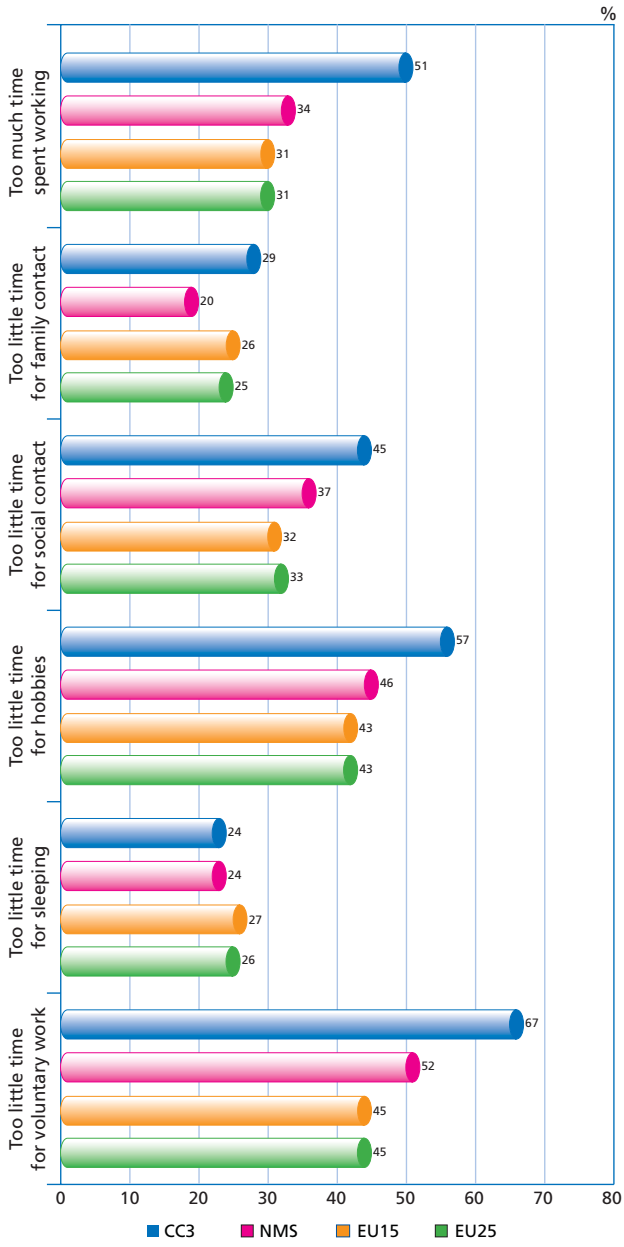
Time constraints

The EQLS provides information about whether respondents think that they spend too little time, just the right amount of time, or too much time in different areas. The questionnaire covers six activities: 1) work; 2) contact with family members living in the household (abbreviated as 'family contact'); 3) other social contacts; 4) hobbies and interests; 5) sleep; 6) doing voluntary work or taking part in political activities (abbreviated as 'voluntary work').

The surprising result is that, in almost all countries, people feel that there is too little time for hobbies and interests as well as for voluntary work and political activities. There could be two reasons for this: in the first place, people might like to spend more time on these activities because they think they are important things which they are missing out on in their lives. The second reason relates to the importance people ascribe to specific areas or activities. The more important an issue is, the more likely it is that people will spend their time on it. Thus, the findings could also be interpreted in the sense that the activities people say there is too little time for are the less important ones, because the available time is given to other more important subjects like family or social contacts. This latter interpretation is in line with the ranking of the importance of family and of leisure time provided by the European Social Survey (ESS), and with the finding that participation in the activities of associations is regarded as less necessary for a high quality of life (Delhey, 2004, p. 11).

Perceived time constraints are most widespread in the CC3, especially where social contact, hobbies and interests, and voluntary work are concerned (Figure 25). In contrast to the CC3, the EU15 average shows the lowest values in this respect. However, it is more differentiated at country level. In the EU15, people in Finland and Italy perceive more time constraints than people in most other countries whereas, in the NMS, people from Estonia and Hungary report time constraints less often than people in nearly all other countries. There are only slight differences between the country aggregates for family contact and time for sleep. On average, people report fewer time constraints on both activities compared with the other options. This might indicate again that people first try to use their time dealing with their basic needs and then share the remaining time out on other activities.

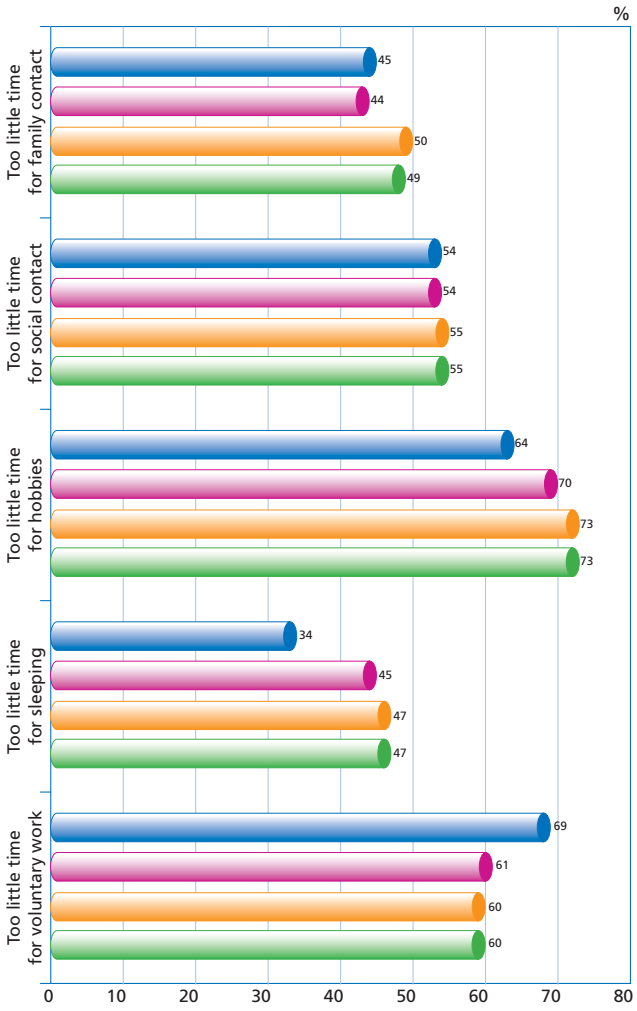
Figure 25: Proportion of people who perceive time constraints for different activities, by country grouping



Question 40: I am going to ask you about 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? Categories: a) My paid job; b) Contact with family members; c) Other social contact; d) Own hobbies and interests; e) Sleeping; f) taking part in voluntary work or political activities.

Source: EQLS 2003

Figure 26: Time constraints of those who report that they work too much, by country grouping



Question 40: see Figure 25.

There are no substantial gender differences except for the time men and women want to devote to hobbies and interests: women express more time limitations on their opportunities to take part in these activities than men.

One main reason that there are time constraints on social and recreational activities is the amount of time which has to be spent on work, either formal work or housework and care activities. These obligations may hinder other activities. This fact is underlined by the EQLS data. People in the CC3 report that they spend too much time on work more often than people in other countries; every second person in these countries has this perception. In the EU15 and NMS, the figure is lower, with only every third person reporting that he or she works too much.

It is to be expected that reconciling work, family and leisure time is especially problematic for those who regard themselves as working too much. It is not surprising then that this assumption is confirmed by the data. People who think they work too much report time constraints more often than people who work just the right amount or even too little. People who feel they spend too much time working are more likely than the general population to feel they have too little time to spend sleeping, on hobbies and interests, and on social contact (Figure 26).

Too much work affects other activities differently in the country groups. It is remarkable that the perceived time constraints for people who report that they work too much is higher in the EU15 than in the NMS and particularly in the CC3, despite the fact that people in the latter group reported having more difficulties fulfilling family responsibilities because of work. These findings may indicate that there is a more flexible relationship between work, family life, and leisure time in the CC3 than in the NMS and in the EU15.

Like the population as a whole, people who report that they work too much feel they have too little time for hobbies and interests as well as voluntary work. Two thirds to three quarters of all people who perceive they work too much report that they have too little time for these activities.

Conclusions

There are important differences in labour force participation between the old and the new European Member States. The lower employment rates in the NMS/CC3, as well as the fact that part-time work in these countries is not as common as in the EU15, open up some options for the countries. The first would be to widen labour force participation and the second to negotiate more flexible working time arrangements.

As far as views on the reconciliation of work and family life are concerned, one core result is that work affects family life much more strongly than the other way around: employed people report that they have difficulties doing their housework or fulfilling their family responsibilities because of job demands more often than they report difficulties concentrating at work because of family responsibilities.

Women and men do not differ much in their perceptions of how much difficulty they have fulfilling their family responsibilities because of the amount of time they spend working. However, the results for men are mainly connected to the time they spend on their paid work, whereas women tend to adjust their formal working time arrangements to the demands of care and domestic work.

The difficulties they perceive as far as fulfilling family responsibilities are concerned are predominantly caused by the double burden of combining paid work and family responsibilities. Single parent households in employment, which mainly consist of mothers with their young children, report most difficulties in balancing work and family life.

People in the EU15 report fewer difficulties reconciling work and family life than individuals in the NMS and especially in the CC3. One reason for these results is the difference in working hours per week. Individuals who work 48 hours or more a week are most likely to report that they are too tired after work to do housework, and that they have difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities, because of the time they spend working. Very long working hours are more common in the NMS/CC3 and this might explain the higher share of people who report difficulties reconciling work and family life in these countries. However, working time seems to be only one part of the story. There are still huge differences observable between countries. Working time regulations, care services infrastructure, family formation and family ties must also be considered as influences on work-life balance.

Too much work is associated with a lack of time for other activities. In particular, people who report spending too much time on work think that they have too little time for hobbies and interests as well as for voluntary work. The results for the NMS/CC3 and the EU15 are in some sense contradictory. Difficulties fulfilling family responsibilities because of work are more common in the former group, but people in the EU15 who perceive that they work too much report time constraints more often. This may indicate that work and family tasks reduce the opportunities for leisure and recreational activities in the EU15 to a much greater degree than in the NMS/CC3.

Health and health care 6

In a recent Eurobarometer survey, 'being in good health' is found to contribute most to quality of life. It is the resource that people in both the EU15 and NMS/CC3 place top of their list of priorities (Alber and Fahey, 2004). The value of good health and its protection is incorporated into the fundamental goals of the European Union. While the organisation and delivery of health care is a matter for the individual Member States, the European Commission coordinates a programme of public health activities that: considers health in relation to other policies; supports prevention of illnesses and health risks; and promotes exchange of information on health status and performance of health systems. This monitoring and information role must include the perspectives of citizens and service users. Some of these views and experiences are presented in this chapter.

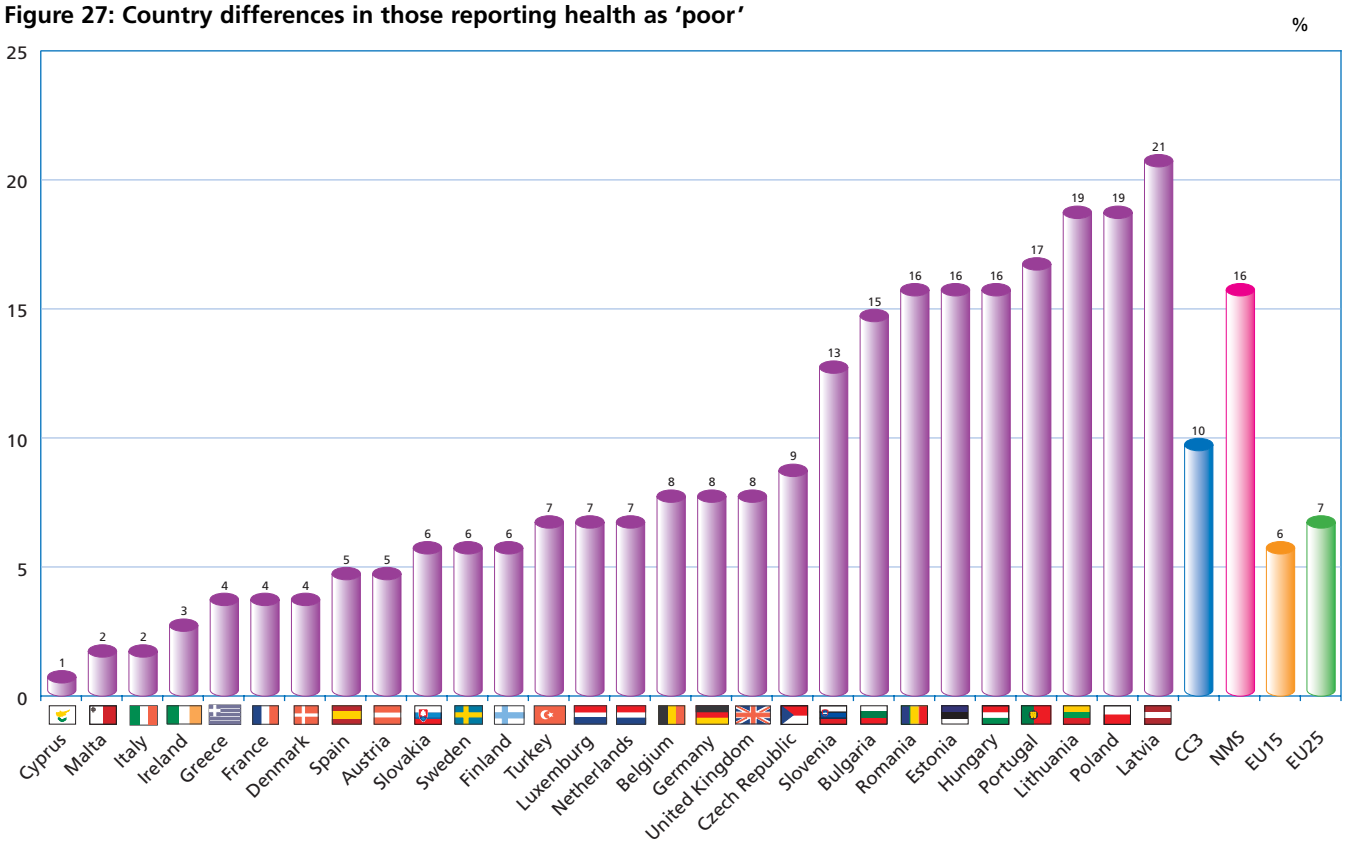
Enlargement underlines the diversity in the EU and the challenges this poses. The health situation in the post-Communist acceding countries deteriorated during and after economic transition. During the 1990s, death rates began to fall and life expectancy increased but there were large differences between countries in the pace of improvement. Today, many of the main causes of death remain more prevalent in the NMS/CC3 than in the EU15 (WHO and European Community, 2002).

Social inequalities in health, associated with gender, income, education and employment, are found in the EU15 (European Commission, 2003) and are emerging as an important feature of the health situation in the NMS/CC3 (Alber and Kohler, 2004). Clearly, health policies and systems alone cannot address these inequalities but the health and social services have an important role to play.

The promotion of equity and accessibility of health and care systems has become a key element in the debate on social protection in Europe. Policy documents from the European Commission increasingly stress measures to improve the quality of care and cooperation in the field of health care and long-term care as a contribution to the sustainable modernisation of the European social model and greater social cohesion (European Parliament, 2004b).

These policy concerns constitute the basis for the main themes explored in this chapter. Following an overview of health status and its distribution between and within

Figure 27: Country differences in those reporting health as 'poor'



Question 43: In general, would you say your health is: Excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?
Source: EQLS 2003

countries, the chapter considers satisfaction with health. It is recognised that this is only one of many papers that have considered the 'health gap' but there is a need to examine experiences across the 28 countries of the EU and candidate countries – particularly in the light of enlargement. On the other hand, there is rather little information on the views and experiences of health services users in these 28 countries. Although not examined in depth, the chapter looks at some aspects of both access to and quality of services.

Health status

Self-rating of health has proved to be a relatively good measure of health status (Robine et al, 2003) and many studies (e.g. the European Community Household Panel) have used broadly the questions applied in this survey to measure health and the prevalence of disability or chronic illness. The individual's subjective assessment of their own health is an important element of their general quality of life.

Altogether 35% of people in the whole sample reported that, in general, their health was 'excellent' or 'very good'. However this proportion varied markedly in the different countries ranging, in the EU15, from 61% in Denmark and Ireland down to only 18% in Portugal; and, in the NMS/CC3, from 68% of people in Cyprus to 9% of respondents in Latvia. The proportions of people in different countries who regarded themselves as in 'poor' health are shown in Figure 27.

In general, perceived health is more likely to be rated 'poor' in the NMS (16% of respondents) than in the EU15 (6%). This pattern reflects generally higher morbidity rates, particularly in the acceding countries of central and eastern Europe (Ferrinho and Pereira Miguel, 2001). In relation to life expectancy, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have the lowest levels in this group, followed by Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

Gender differences in life expectancy are larger in the NMS/CC3, with women living longer than men. Even so, and in part because of a greater proportion in older age groups, there is a tendency for women to report more poor health: 18% of women in the NMS rate their health as poor compared with 14% of men; corresponding figures for the CC3 are 13% and 8%; there was no consistent difference between men and women in the EU15. There is a similar pattern for reporting long-standing illness or disability: the gender gap is six percentage points higher for women in the NMS and nine points higher in the CC3, but there is no overall difference between men and women in the EU15.

Not surprisingly, reporting of both poor health and long-standing illness or disability increases with age. This is shown in Table 24 for the question: 'Do you have any long-standing illness or disability that limits your activities in any way? By long-standing I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you for a period of time.' The overall figures for the country groupings are similar to results from previous Eurobarometer surveys (Alber and Kohler, 2004).

Table 24: Long-standing illness or disability in relation to age

%

	Age group					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Total
CC3	7	13	22	34	54	23
NMS	12	13	23	48	66	32
EU15	8	9	14	28	37	20
EU25	9	9	16	31	41	22

Question 44: Do you have any long-standing illness or disability that limits your activities in any way? By long-standing, I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you for a period of time. Categories: yes.

Source: EQLS 2003

The extent of long-term illness or disability reported by people aged 65 and over is striking between the country groups; in the EU15, this figure exceeds 50% only in the UK (52%) and Finland (61%) but this proportion is over 50% in all the NMS/CC3 except in Cyprus and Malta. Although many of those reporting such disability do not have a severe problem (Grammenos, 2003), the numbers indicate a major challenge for health care systems as the population ages – notwithstanding potential improvements in the health of the next generations.

Alber and Kohler (2004) note that in some EU15 countries (Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, UK) there is an unexpectedly high prevalence of reported illness or disability among young people. To some extent, this pattern is again reproduced in the EQLS survey, with 15% or more of people in the youngest age group (18-24) in Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Luxembourg reporting long-term illness; this proportion was not reached in any of the NMS/CC3. As the previous report notes, it is difficult to interpret this pattern, and it may reflect only a readiness to classify themselves as being long-term ill, but it bears further investigation.

There is long-standing evidence of socio-economic differences in health status, as well as in patterns of

morbidity and mortality (Berkman and Kawachi, 2000). Educational attainment is an important factor influencing lifestyle, opportunities and awareness of risks: people with more education are likely to rate their health more positively (European Commission, 2003). So, too, in this survey, the proportion rating their health as excellent or very good was only 21% among those who had left school at 15 years or younger, compared with 33% of those who left between 16 and 19 years of age, and 41% of those who had stayed in education to the age of 20 or older. Altogether, only 8% of people rated their health as poor, but this figure rose to 38% among those in the NMS who had completed their full-time education at 15 years or younger; the proportion was 40% or higher in Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, as well as in Bulgaria.

Among people of working age, it is clear that unemployment has a negative relationship with health and quality of life in both the old and new Member States of the EU (Alber and Fahey, 2004). This pattern is evident in nearly all countries for both self-rating of health and reporting long-standing illness or disability. So, for example, the proportion of people reporting long-standing illness or disability is 12% among people in employment but 23% among those who are unemployed (and this figure is the same in the different country groupings); while 8% of unemployed people rate their health as poor compared with only 3% among the employed population (and 19% among retired people). Clearly, poor health can have an impact on employment prospects as well as unemployment contributing to poor health. There are many pathways from unemployment to poor health – social, emotional, behavioural and material, but lack of income appears to have a pervasive effect (European Commission, 2003).

The literature on income and health (e.g. Berkman and Kawachi, 2000) shows that within countries poorer health is associated with lower income, although it appears that the improvement in health from a fixed increase in income is smaller at higher income levels. Data on income generally suffer from relatively high non-response, and these data capture the situation at a single point in time. Nevertheless, looking at quartiles of household income, there is a relationship between health status and income overall and in most countries; the picture is more consistent in the EU15 countries although the relationship is not apparent in Austria, France and Luxembourg. In the NMS/CC3, the highest income quartile reports better health in all countries but there is no consistent difference between the lowest quartile and the two middle quartiles (see Table 25). Again, this is similar to results in the 2002 Eurobarometer survey (Alber and Kohler, 2004).

Table 25: Health differences between income groups

%

	Household income quartiles[1]		
	Lowest quartile	Middle quartiles	Highest quartile
Proportion reporting long-standing illness or disability			
CC3	27	24	17
NMS	37	38	24
EU15	25	21	15
EU25	27	24	16
Proportion reporting poor health			
CC3	18	10	4
NMS	19	20	10
EU15	9	6	3
EU25	11	8	5

Question 43: In general, would you say your health is: Excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

[1] Income quartiles refer to the household equivalence income (new OECD scale).

Source: EQLS 2003

On the whole, these relationships are weaker than reported elsewhere (European Commission, 2003) and need to be explored further, particularly in the NMS countries of central and eastern Europe.

The highest rates of long-standing illness or disability (more than 40%) are reported in the lowest income quartiles in Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, the UK and Finland, and among the middle income quartiles in Poland. The highest proportions rating their health as poor (more than 25%) were among the lowest income quartiles in Portugal, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania, and again in Poland among people in the medium quartile. These figures illustrate that poorer health is not only found in some country groups; there are many overlaps between the reports from the EU15 and NMS.

Age is clearly a powerful factor influencing health but the analysis here also underlines the important role of the socio-economic situation – education, unemployment and income. In general, social and economic inequalities appear to be at least as significant for health in the new Member States as in the EU15.

Satisfaction with health

Evidently, people who regard their health more positively are more likely to be satisfied with it. Respondents were asked to rate satisfaction with their health on a scale from one to 10 where one means they are very dissatisfied and 10 that they are very satisfied. The mean score was 7.4 but

this was only 5.2 for people who reported a long-term illness or disability, compared with 8.0 among those without disability. Likewise, the mean satisfaction score fell from 9.4 among people describing their health as 'excellent' to 7.7 for those rating themselves in 'good' health and 3.1 for those reporting 'poor' health. In general, the pattern of responses to this question on satisfaction with health reflects the pattern associated with the indicators of health status.

Satisfaction with health is higher in the EU15 (mean score 7.5) than in the NMS (mean score 6.8) but it is higher in Cyprus and Malta than in most of the EU15 countries. Dissatisfaction appears to be greatest in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Bulgaria, again reflecting other indicators of mortality and life expectancy (WHO and European Communities, 2002).

There was no consistent difference between satisfaction ratings of men and women in the EU15, although in the Mediterranean countries – Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain – the average score for men was around 0.5 points higher than that for women. In all the NMS, men had higher scores, although the difference was less than 0.5 in Poland, Slovakia, Cyprus and Malta. These differences are again consistent with differences in ratings of health status.

Almost without exception there is a steady decline in health satisfaction with advancing age in all countries, falling from a mean score of 8.3 among people aged 18-24 to 6.2 among those aged 65 and over. This decline was more marked in the NMS/CC3 where the corresponding mean scores fell from 8.6 to 4.7.

For the whole sample, the measure of satisfaction with health had remarkably consistent relationships with the socio-economic situation of respondents. People with higher incomes were more satisfied with their health (mean score of 7.8 in the highest quartile compared with 6.9 in the lowest). Likewise, there was a clear association with age at which education was completed, with the mean health satisfaction score increasing from 6.6 among those with full-time education completed by 15 years of age to 7.8 among those who left education at 20 years or older. Again, this trend was particularly marked in the NMS where the corresponding mean score increased from 5.0 to 7.3.

Access to health services

A number of questions in the survey were designed to assess aspects of access to and quality of health services. Although considerable information is available on the structure and organisation of care in the NMS/CC3 as well as the EU15 (WHO and European Commission, 2002), there is much less systematic and comparable data on the views and experiences of service users. Clearly such information is essential for the monitoring, planning and evaluation of service provision and for policy development. Furthermore, personal services such as health, social services and education are regarded as particularly important influences upon quality of life (Fahey et al, 2003).

Several aspects of access to a doctor were examined, relating to the last occasion when the respondent needed to see a doctor or medical specialist. Access was not, on the whole, a major problem for large numbers of people (Table 26).

Table 26: Difficulties in access to medical care

%

Proportion reporting:	Very difficult	A little difficult	No difficulty
Distance to doctor's office/hospital	8	18	74
Delay in getting appointment	14	25	61
Waiting time to see doctor on day of appointment	14	29	57
Cost of seeing the doctor	13	19	69

Question 45: 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: distance to doctor's office/hospital/medical centre; delay in getting appointment; waiting time to see doctor on day of appointment; cost of seeing the doctor?

Source: EQLS 2003

These issues of access have become key subjects of debate around social protection on the EU agenda, even if the organisation and funding of health care systems as such remains the prerogative of Member States. From a public health perspective, there are concerns about access and quality of services in relation to country, urban-rural area, income, gender and age (European Parliament, 2004b).

Across the four dimensions of access – distance, delay, waiting and cost – the most consistent reporting of difficulties appears in the Mediterranean countries of the EU15 and in the CC3. Altogether, there was no significant difference between the experience of service users in the EU15 and NMS but, if the Mediterranean countries are examined separately, the proportions finding it 'very difficult' to access services is twice as high in the NMS/CC3 group as in the rest of the EU15 (Table 27).

Table 27: Country differences in access to services

%

	Proportion reporting very difficult						
	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Spain	Rest of EU15	NMS	CC3
Distance	11	9	9	5	2	6	26
Delay	16	24	24	13	7	14	27
Waiting	16	23	27	13	7	15	29
Cost	21	26	17	4	4	15	32

Question 45: see Table 26.

In general, country of residence was the most evident factor influencing views on access to services. Within countries, rural-urban differences are not generally important. In part, this may be because the questions address access to a doctor in either hospital or clinic or general practice. Alber and Kohler (2004) report that severe problems in getting to a doctor are not very widespread, although rural populations in the candidate countries of Romania and Bulgaria had more difficulties in accessing hospital care. Likewise, in the current survey, significant disadvantages for people in rural areas were most marked in the CC3: 40% of people in rural areas of Turkey reported that distance to a doctor was 'very difficult' compared with 24% in urban areas; corresponding figures for Romania are 22% and 8%. The only other countries with rural-urban differences of 5% or more were Portugal (10% compared with 5%); Slovenia (11% compared with 3%) and Latvia (15% compared with 5%). There were no consistent differences between rural and urban areas in relation to the other dimensions of access.

It is striking that income inequalities show a pattern of advantage for people in the highest income quartile in access to services across all four dimensions. This pattern is evident in all country groupings, although to the least extent in the EU15 and most markedly in the candidate countries, largely reflecting experience in Turkey (income was not a factor in Bulgaria). The figures are shown in Table 28.

As Table 28 illustrates, differences by income are most clear in relation to the proportion of people reporting that, on their last visit, the cost of seeing the doctor made it 'very difficult' to do so. In the EU15, this was a particular feature of the experience of people in Belgium (among whom 17% in the lowest quartile found it 'very difficult' compared with 3% in the highest income quartile) and in Ireland where the corresponding figures were 13% and 4%. Again, three of the Mediterranean countries reveal serious problems with cost as well as marked differences in the experience of the lowest and highest income quartiles:

Table 28: Difficulties in access to medical care, by country group

%

	Difference between proportion reporting 'very difficult' between the highest and the lowest income quartile (%)			
	CC3	NMS	EU15	EU25
Distance	24	5	3	3
Delay	17	4	4	4
Waiting	20	5	3	4
Cost	27	12	6	7

Question 45: see Table 26.

Greece (30% of lowest income quartile found it 'very difficult' to afford seeing a doctor compared with 13% among highest income quartile); Portugal (22% compared with 8%); and Italy (31% compared with 18%). Money as a barrier to use of services has not been overcome in several of the EU15 countries. In the NMS, the greater disadvantage of those in the lowest income quartile was 10% or more in all countries except Cyprus and the Czech Republic.

Concern about socio-economic inequalities in access to services is widespread, and, particularly at European level, considering needs associated with an ageing population (European Parliament, 2004b). This reflects both the greater health care needs of older people and concerns about disadvantage or discrimination experienced by this age group. There was no consistent evidence that older people found it more or less easy to get an appointment nor that age was related to waiting times on the day of an appointment. However, people aged 65 and over had more difficulty in relation to distance to the doctor's surgery: this was especially the case in the NMS where 13% of people aged 65 and over reported that distance made the most recent visit 'very difficult' compared with 5% of younger people. This problem was most commonly reported by older people in Hungary (18%), Slovakia (21%) and Cyprus (27%). Although 30% of people aged 65 and over in the CC3 reported that distance made access 'very difficult', only in Romania was this associated with age. Older people in Greece, where 20% of those aged 65 and over found distance 'very difficult' and in Italy, where the figure was 14%, also appear to be disadvantaged.

Difficulties associated with the 'cost of seeing the doctor' were not related to older age in general; however they appeared to be an issue for people aged 50 and over in some of the NMS – Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania, in each of which around 30% of people aged 50 and over found the cost 'very difficult'.

Altogether, the survey offers substantial evidence of social inequalities in access to medical services, particularly for people on lower incomes and for older people. These are important and urgent issues to be addressed as part of the challenges to improve health services in the NMS/CC3 (European Commission, 2004b).

Quality of health and social services

One set of questions asked respondents to rate the general quality of a number of public services in their country. The mean scores for each country are presented in Table 29.

There is some indication that respondents ranked the quality of social services lower than that of health services; for example, scores differed by more than 0.5 points in Sweden, the UK and France, as well as in Poland and Estonia. However, there are also exceptions, notably in Ireland, where social services received a higher rating than health services. In fact, the scores and their rank order are remarkably similar for health and social services within countries, which suggest it would be meaningful to aggregate the values and present ranking of the quality of health and social services as the mean value from the two questions.

On the whole, as Figure 28 shows, assessments of the quality of health and social services fall into two groups, with the EU15 countries having higher scores than the NMS. However, as in other research (Alber and Kohler, 2004), some EU15 countries, notably Portugal and Greece, but also Italy and Ireland, are below the mean score for all countries, while the ratings of people from Malta and Cyprus put their countries among the top half for health and social services. There is a striking similarity in the top countries rated according to 'satisfaction' with services in the 2002 survey (Alber and Kohler, 2004) and now in terms of their 'quality' in 2003. There was no consistent pattern of differences between rural and urban areas.

There are no marked general differences by gender in assessments of health or social services. This might be considered surprising as women both report more ill-health and are likely to be greater users of health and social services in their role as carers of children and older people. Within countries, nearly all the gender differences are small for both health and social services.

Older people are much greater users of health services, and probably also of social services; ratings of quality tend to be higher specifically from people aged 65 and over.

Table 29: Quality of public services

Scale 1-10

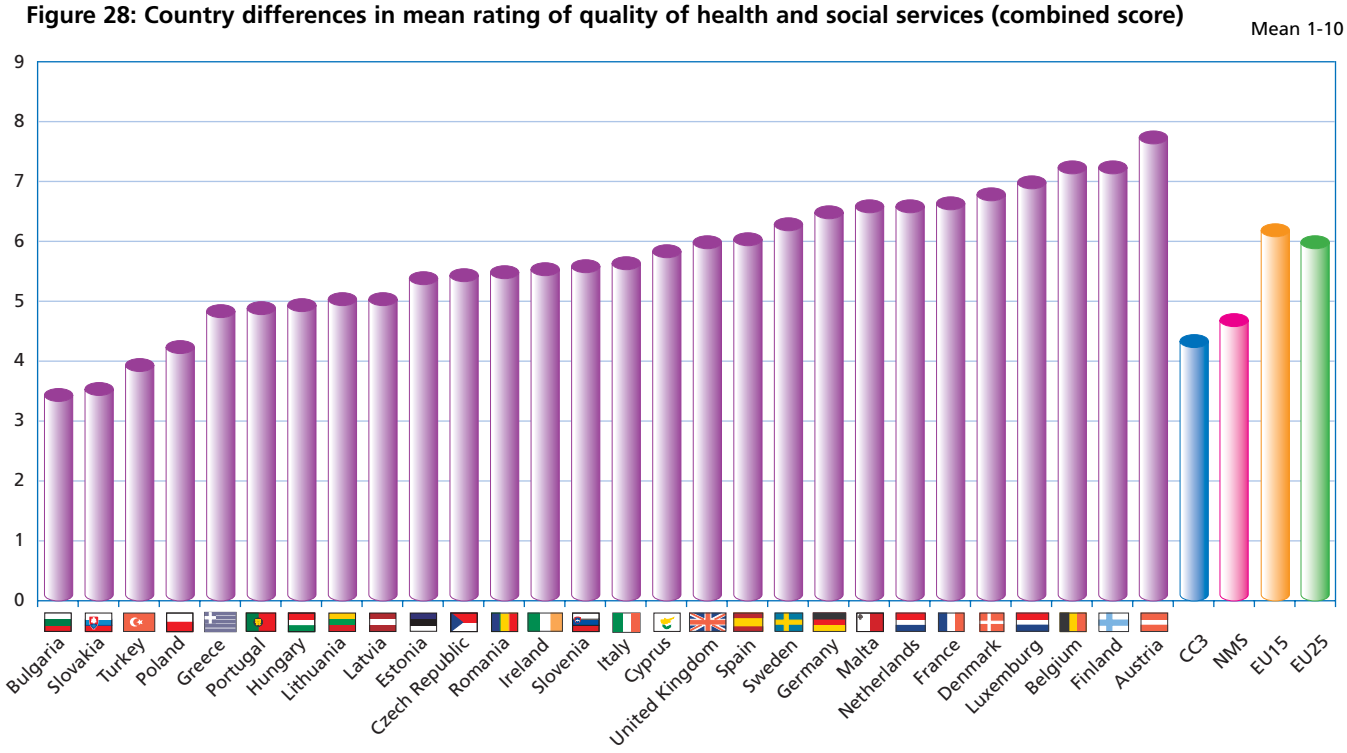
	Quality of health services	Quality of social services
Austria	8.1	7.6
Belgium	7.6	7.1
Denmark	7.0	6.8
Finland	7.3	7.4
France	7.1	6.4
Germany	6.5	6.7
Greece	5.1	4.8
Ireland	5.3	6.1
Italy	5.8	5.7
Luxembourg	7.1	7.1
Netherlands	6.7	6.7
Portugal	4.9	5.1
Spain	6.3	6.0
Sweden	6.7	6.1
United Kingdom	6.4	5.8
Cyprus	6.1	5.8
Czech Republic	5.8	5.3
Estonia	5.8	5.2
Hungary	5.3	4.8
Latvia	5.2	5.1
Lithuania	5.1	5.2
Malta	6.7	6.7
Poland	4.7	4.0
Slovakia	3.7	3.6
Slovenia	5.7	5.6
Bulgaria	3.5	3.6
Romania	5.6	5.6
Turkey	3.9	4.2
CC3	4.3	4.6
NMS	5.0	4.5
EU15	6.4	6.2
EU25	6.2	6.0

Question 54: In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the public services in [country]? Please tell me on a scale of one to 10, where one means very poor quality and 10 means very high quality – health services, social services.

Source: EQLS 2003

There is no clear trend for age; rather the mean score for health services is 6.4 among people aged 65 and over compared with 5.8 for younger people; the corresponding mean ratings of social services are 6.3 and 5.7. In the case of health services, the difference is more pronounced in the NMS/CC3 group, specifically in Poland and Turkey. Assessment of the quality of social services is generally higher among people aged 65 and over compared with the rest of the population across all countries. However, ratings of young people (aged 18-24) in many of the NMS/CC3 (Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania,

Figure 28: Country differences in mean rating of quality of health and social services (combined score)



Question 54: In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the public services in [country]? Please tell me on a scale of one to 10, where one means very poor quality and 10 means very high quality – health services, social services.

Source: EQLS 2003

Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania) were just as high. Perhaps this is related to the increasing professionalisation of these services which are more evident to those with recent education, or possibly it again reflects experience of using such services.

If the respondent's employment status is considered, then assessments of the quality of social services are relatively high among those 'still studying' in the NMS, but not in the EU15. Perhaps even more striking is the low appreciation of social services among people currently unemployed in the former group (Table 30).

So, one group at least – unemployed people in the NMS/CC3 – who might be expected to make substantial use of social services, appear relatively poorly served. There was overall no marked association between assessment of quality and whether children were in the household for either single parents or couples.

Differences in assessment of health services followed a similar pattern with a tendency for retired people to rate the service somewhat higher than employed people, but the differences were small in most countries. There was no consistently lower rating of health services by unemployed people.

Table 30: Quality of social services and employment status

	Mean score on scale from 1 (very poor) to 10 (very high) quality					
	Total	Employed	Home-maker	Unem-ployed	Retired	Still studying
CC3	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.0	4.9	4.8
NMS	4.5	4.5	4.7	3.7	4.6	5.1
EU15	6.2	6.1	6.2	5.9	6.5	6.3
EU25	6.0	5.9	6.2	5.3	6.2	6.1

Question 54: see Table 29.

The disadvantages experienced by lower income groups in access to medical services did not translate into lower overall assessment of the quality of the health services. Although a lack of income-related differences in the assessment of health care has been found previously (Alber and Kohler, 2004), it is nonetheless somewhat surprising – perhaps income groups lack awareness of their relative advantages and disadvantages or accommodate different expectations of the services. There are a few countries, such as Ireland, where those with high income rate the health service more highly (5.9 for people in the highest quartile compared with 5.1 among other lower earners) but the general picture is of weak relationships between income and quality assessment.

Broadly speaking, there is no strong link between income and assessment of the quality of social services. However, in all the NMS except Malta, people in the highest income quartile have a somewhat higher rating than those in the lowest quartile; the mean difference for the NMS is 0.5 points (4.1 among people in the lowest quartile compared with 4.6 among those in the highest income quartile). It might be expected that the highest earning group would be less frequent users of social services, or perhaps they are better served when the need arises. Like many of the differences noted here, they are only a starting point for further exploration, understanding and more detailed investigation.

Conclusions

The main findings in this chapter on health status tend to underline the importance of social inequalities in health, particularly in the new Member States and candidate countries. So, the 'new' EU will demand intensified attention to social and economic conditions as factors influencing health – and therefore to the role of policies beyond health.

The health status of people in the NMS/CC3 is generally less good than in the EU15, with the notable exceptions of Cyprus and Malta. Particular challenges are posed by the poor health of people with low educational attainment in the NMS/CC3, especially when so many strategies to improve health emphasise effective communication and information – as well as opportunities to use that information. The health situation in the NMS gives no grounds for comfort regarding the challenges that will be posed to meet the health needs of an ageing population; indeed the prevalence of chronic illness and disability among older people in the NMS/CC3 is striking.

The analyses of questions about access to and quality of services emphasise the need for more detailed investigation. These have become subjects of central importance to European-level debates about health and social protection, and are related to major economic and employment concerns. Nevertheless, the country rankings of quality of services revealed a remarkable similarity to results from a study one year previously, reinforcing confidence in these data and the relevance of asking citizens directly for their views. While the general picture of the quality of the systems highlights differences between the different country groupings, there are also EU15 countries which are clearly not meeting expectations of their populations. There is a great deal to be done to increase confidence of citizens in the quality of their health and social services. There was also some indication of services failing to reach those in particular need, such as unemployed people.

There is much discussion of the principles underlying access to quality health and social services – support, equity, affordability, and universality. The results show that social inequalities in access nevertheless prevail – specifically to the advantage of higher income groups. In many instances, older people still reported problems with physical access to services, and affordability was a real barrier for many people, especially those on low incomes in the Mediterranean and NMS/CC3. Enlargement will, in the short term, increase some of the challenges which remain to be overcome across the EU.

Subjective well-being 7

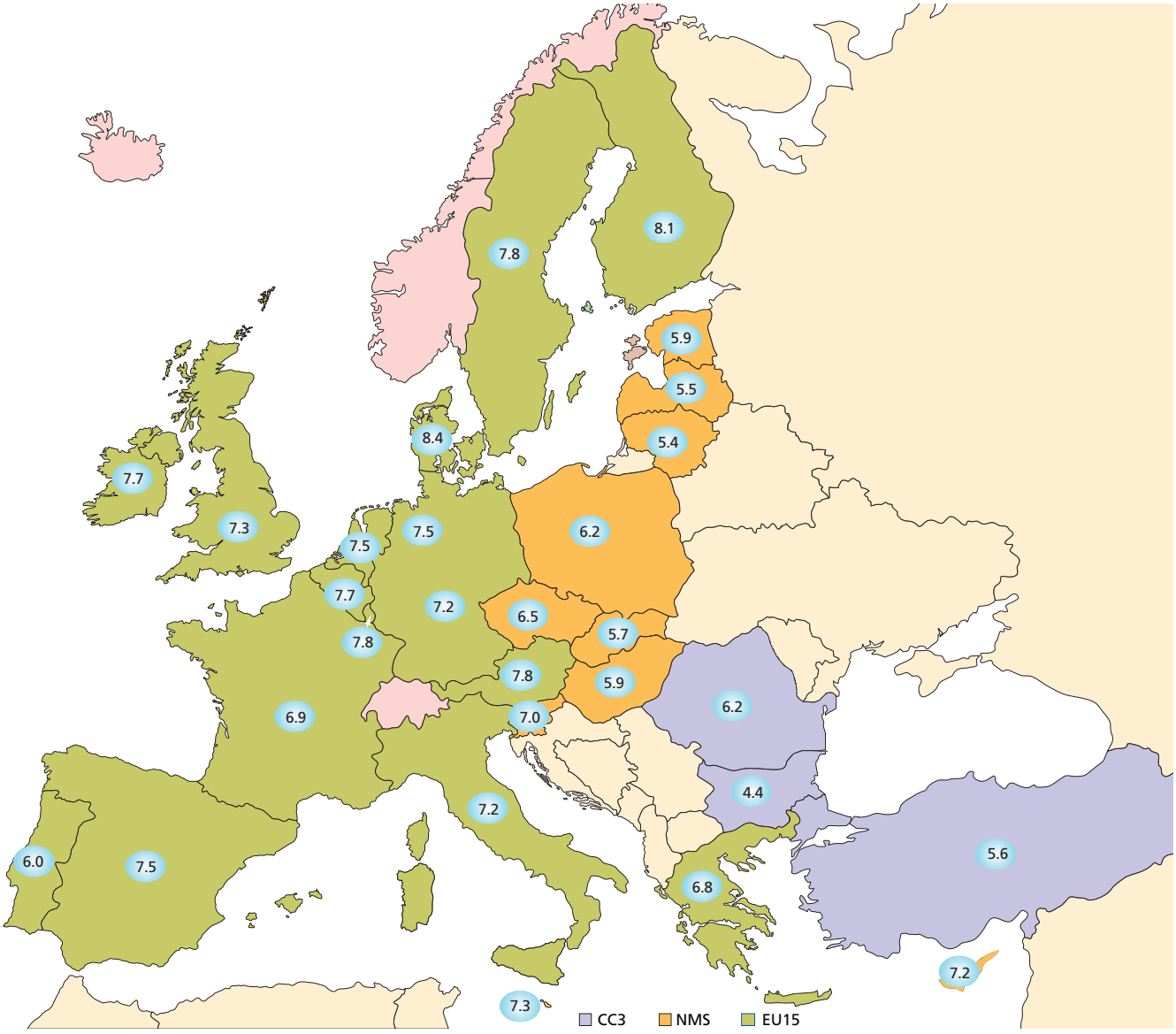
Quality of life refers to the overall level of well-being of individuals. It indicates how well people fare in several dimensions of life which reflect important societal values and goals.

The issue of quality of life is salient to many different European policies. In particular, the EU aims to improve the working and living conditions of EU citizens, and to strengthen the Union's economic and social cohesion. At the national level, the national action plans for employment and social inclusion aim at improving living and working conditions for disadvantaged social groups. Enlargement poses a real challenge to the Commission's aim of achieving social cohesion across the EU, since many of the NMS/CC3 lag behind the EU15 in important respects. Two examples highlight this challenge:

- The NMS/CC3 have per capita national incomes below the EU15 average. Eight of these countries have per capita national incomes which are less than half the Community average (Chapter 1).
- Some of the NMS are plagued by severe problems of poverty and high levels of inequality between social groups (Milanovic, 1998), problems which are experienced to a lesser extent in most of the EU15.

This chapter aims to shed some light on the diversity of subjective well-being in the enlarged Europe. It does not

Figure 29: Life satisfaction across Europe



Question 31: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Mean life satisfaction on a scale from one 'very dissatisfied' to 10 'very satisfied' is reported.

Source: EQLS 2003

focus on objective living conditions, but rather on how citizens evaluate their living conditions in terms of 'good' and 'bad', 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'. Information on subjective well-being is highly relevant to policymakers for at least two reasons. Firstly, one can objectively measure a person's income situation, accommodation, health status, social relations and so on, but there is no guiding rule on how to combine these pieces of information. Only subjective indicators make possible comprehensive assessments of quality of life. Secondly, measures of subjective well-being, especially overall life satisfaction, are the best available indicators of the degree to which the needs of the population are met. In this chapter, overall subjective well-being is measured using two indicators: life satisfaction, which gives a more cognitive-driven evaluation of living conditions and life as a whole; and overall happiness, which gives a more emotional assessment.

General levels of satisfaction and happiness

Two questions in the EQLS investigate general life satisfaction and happiness. The first question asks: 'All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life these days?'. The second question asks: 'Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?', Both items are measured on a 10 point scale where one means very dissatisfied or very unhappy and 10 means very satisfied or very happy. Most Europeans tend to be fairly satisfied. The averages for all countries except Bulgaria and Lithuania are above the scale centre (Figure 29). However, there are major differences between countries (see also Delhey, 2004).

The most striking difference is between the EU15 and the NMS/CC3. Citizens in the EU15 countries by and large report much higher life satisfaction. These results correspond strongly with the findings of the Eurobarometer Survey 2002 (Delhey, 2004, p. 32). Exceptions to this broad divide between the two groups are Portugal, which has the lowest living standard in the EU15 (see Chapter 1), and Malta and Cyprus, which did not undergo the same transformation processes and economic cutbacks as the former eastern bloc countries. Apart from the west–east division in subjective well-being, the EU15 countries roughly follow a north–south gradient. The Nordic countries are the most satisfied, with Denmark consistently expressing the highest satisfaction levels. Austria, the Benelux countries and Ireland make up a block in the middle. France, Germany, Italy and the UK rank at the lower end, and Greece and Portugal show the lowest satisfaction with life in the EU15 countries. Spain, in this respect, has relatively high levels of life satisfaction.

Turning to happiness, the picture is pretty much the same. Individuals in the NMS report lower happiness than those in the EU15. Again, Malta and Cyprus are exceptions; both show quite high happiness rates compared to the other countries in the group. Portugal is the only EU15 country which is below the NMS average. Just as with

Table 31: Life satisfaction and happiness, by country

Mean 1-10

Country	satisfaction mean	happiness mean
Austria	7.8	7.9
Belgium	7.5	7.7
Denmark	8.4	8.3
Finland	8.1	8.1
France	6.9	7.3
Germany	7.2	7.6
Greece	6.8	7.6
Ireland	7.7	8.1
Italy	7.2	7.5
Luxembourg	7.7	8.0
Netherlands	7.5	7.7
Portugal	6.0	6.8
Spain	7.5	7.8
Sweden	7.8	7.9
United Kingdom	7.3	7.7
Cyprus	7.2	7.8
Czech Republic	6.5	7.2
Estonia	5.9	6.8
Hungary	5.9	7.1
Latvia	5.5	6.4
Lithuania	5.4	6.4
Malta	7.3	7.9
Poland	6.2	6.9
Slovakia	5.7	6.5
Slovenia	7.0	7.4
Bulgaria	4.4	5.9
Romania	6.2	7.2
Turkey	5.6	6.5
CC3	5.6	6.6
NMS	6.1	6.9
EU15	7.3	7.6
EU25	7.1	7.5

Question 31: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Scale from one 'very dissatisfied' to 10 'very satisfied'

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

Source: EQLS 2003

Table 32: Mean life satisfaction and deviation from the mean, by social groups

Mean 1-10

		Income[1]		Education		Employment status			Long-standing illness	
Country	Mean total	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Low	High	Employed	Out of labour force	Unemployed	Yes	No
CC3	5.6	-0.9	0.8	-0.3	0.6	0.2	0	-1	-0.9	0.3
NMS	6.1	-0.7	0.6	-0.7	0.4	0.3	-0.1	-1.1	-0.6	0.3
EU15	7.3	-0.5	0.4	-0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	-1.4	-0.4	0.1
EU25	7.1	-0.6	0.4	-0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	-1.4	-0.5	0.4

[1] Mean household equivalent income generated by the new OECD equivalent scale.

Question 31: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Mean life satisfaction on a scale from 1 'very dissatisfied' to 10 'very satisfied' is reported.

Source: EQLS 2003

satisfaction levels, a north-south gradient can be seen within the EU15. In general, people tend to score themselves slightly higher on the happiness scale compared to the satisfaction scale (Table 31).

In general, the satisfied tend to be happy and the dissatisfied are rather unhappy. The correlation between satisfaction and happiness is surprisingly high. As far as individuals are concerned, the correlations within countries are between 0.5 in Malta and 0.7 in the Netherlands, which is a high interrelation in the field of social research. Although happiness and satisfaction refer to different states of consciousness of an individual, both dimensions of subjective well-being are closely linked. This finding does not seem to be an artefact because the questions in the questionnaire sequence are a long way away from each other. Nevertheless, satisfaction and happiness are often used as analogue measures for hedonistic attitudes (Kahneman et al, 1999). These findings mean that the following analysis is based on the satisfaction scale only. Further analysis showed that, as a rule of thumb, the results for happiness produce the same patterns as the findings for satisfaction.

Drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

For many people, social progress means not only establishing better living conditions in general, but establishing them for as many citizens as possible. The EU15 countries follow this tradition, and the social policy agenda of the EU is concerned with enhancing life chances for those who are disadvantaged, such as poor, unemployed or disabled people. Likewise, the policy principle of gender mainstreaming aims at equalising life chances for women and men. Against this background, this section analyses life satisfaction differences between social groups, both along vertical (e.g. income group) and horizontal (e.g. age group) lines. The analysis shows how objective social characteristics lead to different life results, as self-perceived by the citizens. The 'vertical' positions are income, education, employment status, and health (Table 32). The 'horizontal' positions are age, gender and household type (Table 33). The tables report how strongly and in which direction social groups deviate from their respective national average of life satisfaction. This identifies the most dissatisfied and the most satisfied groups within each society.

The most striking result is that unemployment diminishes life satisfaction very strongly. This shows the paramount importance paid work has in modern societies, both as a source of income and social status. The negative effect is somewhat lower in the NMS, presumably because there are greater opportunities in the shadow economy and because unemployment in these countries is more common. The negative effect of unemployment is greatest in two countries, Germany and the Czech Republic.

The second striking result is the strong impact income has, especially in the NMS and CC3. Across Europe, those in the lowest income group (the lowest quartile) are considerably less satisfied with their life, and those in the highest income group are more satisfied, compared to the national average. These findings fit perfectly with the Eurobarometer findings that sufficient income is one of the most important contributors to quality of life. Satisfaction with income correlates strongly with general life satisfaction, and people in the highest income quartile have higher satisfaction rates than those in the lowest quartile in all countries (Delhey, 2004). By and large, the negative effect of low income on life satisfaction is bigger in poorer countries. Here, having a low income really means having severe problems getting by, whereas the less well-off in richer countries may still be in a relatively comfortable position. In the Nordic countries with their broad welfare state provisions, the income effect is quite moderate, emphasising that the type of welfare provision might also play a role.

Education reveals a similar pattern: those with higher levels of education are in most countries more satisfied with their life in general than the average, whereas those with lower levels of education enjoy less life satisfaction (see also Delhey, 2004, p. 55). The reason might be that higher education leads to better jobs with higher income; or, more generally, that educated people are better equipped to make use of their capabilities and to control their life, which enables them to be more satisfied. Again, this pattern is more marked in the NMS, especially in the central European countries.

Health is one of the most important factors contributing to quality of life (Delhey, 2004, p. 38). Not surprisingly, suffering from a long-standing illness decreases life satisfaction almost everywhere. Again, this effect is stronger in the NMS and in the CC3 (especially in Turkey), than in the EU15. This might be explained by the fact that health care systems in the EU15 are more developed and can help people cope with long-standing illness, thus preventing them from a greater decline in quality of life and overall satisfaction (see also Chapter 6). Besides the quality of the health care system, a tentative explanation could be that, in the richer Member States, people with chronic illness command more resources and can therefore buy more services and support to make life more comfortable.

In contrast to the vertical dimensions, horizontal characteristics do not typically result in such clear-cut divisions between satisfied and dissatisfied groups (Table 33). The exception is household composition (see also Argyle, 1999). In many countries, single parents are less satisfied than the average; this can be seen as a result of them having more stressful lives (see Chapter 5) and – in many cases – lower income positions. In most countries, single people are also less content with life than the average citizen, whereas couples and couples with children are quite satisfied with their lives. This indicates that it is not only material aspects – having – which make up a good life, but also the quality of social relations, and particularly intimate relations within the family. This reiterates the famous formula of Eric Allardt (1993), that quality of life is the sum of having, loving, and being.

Age groups do not differ strongly in the EU15, but they do in the NMS, particularly in many post-communist countries. Apart from the difference in strength, the varying pattern is of interest: in the EU15, there is a division between the southern Member States where the younger age group is more satisfied and the oldest is less satisfied, and the northern Member States where the oldest age group is most content. The older generation in these northern countries experienced the golden era of economic growth and social progress in the western part of Europe from the 1950s to the 1970s. In the NMS, the youngest group is most satisfied, and the oldest age group and those aged 35-64 are less satisfied than the average citizen, particularly in the former post-communist countries. The results provide evidence that there is a generation cleavage in life satisfaction in the post-socialist countries, because system transformation since 1989 has put younger and older people on very different opportunity tracks. People in their 40s and 50s suffer particularly from a lack of employment opportunities, which helps to understand their lower satisfaction levels. In contrast to age, gender differences are small everywhere.

When looking at countries separately, two findings are striking. First, the Scandinavian countries, which are rather egalitarian and try to avoid sharp inequalities, are also rather egalitarian with regard to the pattern of subjective life satisfaction. Typically, the lowest satisfaction differences between groups are found in Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Second, the less

Table 33: Mean life satisfaction and deviation from the mean, by social groups

Mean 1-10

		Gender		Household type				Age		
Country cluster	Mean total	Women	Men	Living alone	Single parent[1]	Couple[2]	Couple + children	18-34	35-64	65 +
CC3	5.6	0	-0.1	0.1	-0.6	0.4	0	0.2	-0.1	-0.3
NMS	6.1	0	0	-0.5	-0.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	-0.3	-0.1
EU15	7.3	0	0	-0.3	-0.7	0.3	0.2	0.1	-0.1	0.1
EU25	7.1	0	0	-0.3	-0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	-0.1	0.1

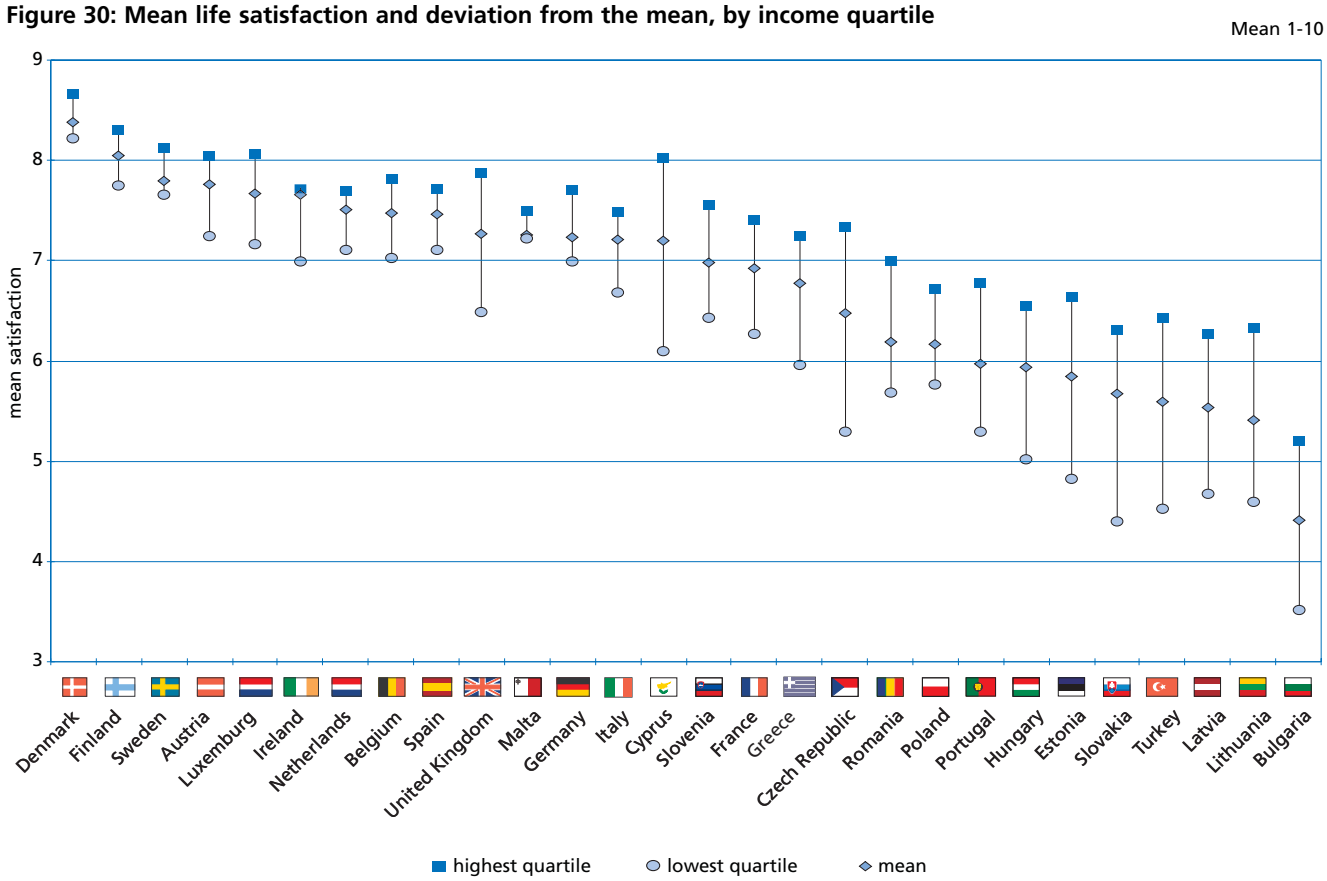
[1] Single parent household with children below the age of 16.

[2] Couple households consist of married couples as well as partners living in consensual union.

Question 31: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Scale from one 'very dissatisfied' to 10 'very satisfied'.

Source: EQLS 2003

Figure 30: Mean life satisfaction and deviation from the mean, by income quartile



Question 31: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Scale from one 'very dissatisfied' to 10 'very satisfied'.

Note: Income quartiles are calculated on the basis of the household equivalent income (new OECD scale)

Source: EQLS 2003

modernised Mediterranean countries Portugal and Greece, and to some extent Spain, often show patterns which are similar to the NMS. These points underline the place of the modern welfare state in equalising life chances across social groups.

To summarise, the key finding of this section is the much higher inequalities in life satisfaction between social groups that can be found in many of the NMS and CC3, albeit not in all of them. In particular, life satisfaction in the former socialist countries varies more strongly across demographic and socio-economic groups than in most EU15 countries. Moreover, there is a generation cleavage that is not found in the EU15. The exception is being unemployed, which seems to have a stronger detrimental effect on subjective well-being in the EU15.

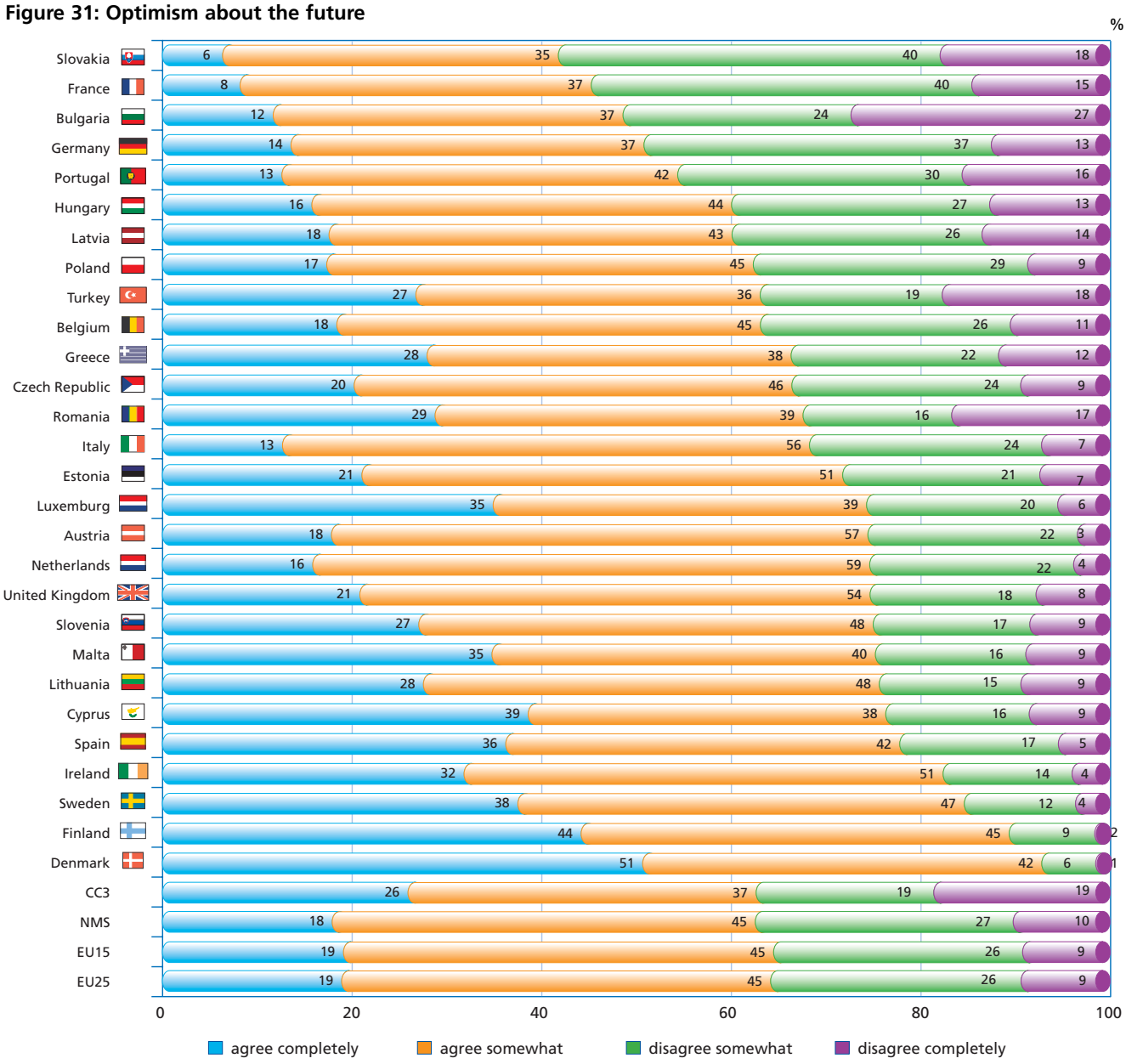
These results are based upon examination of relative satisfaction levels – relative to the respective national averages, which vary considerably between the countries. On average, even the disadvantaged groups in the EU15 countries – unemployed people, those with low income or low education, single parents and the chronically ill – are still more satisfied with their life than average citizens in many of the NMS/CC3.

This relationship is clearly illustrated for income quartiles (Figure 30). In 11 of the EU15 countries, the mean life satisfaction score of the poorer population is higher than the average satisfaction level for all NMS/CC3 countries. In five of the NMS and in all CC3 countries, the satisfaction level of the richest quartile is even lower than the average life satisfaction of the population of all EU15 countries, except Portugal and Greece.

Expectations about the future

This final section looks at the expectations of European citizens. In 25 out of 28 countries, more people are optimistic than pessimistic, and in 16 countries more than two-thirds of people agree completely or at least somewhat that they are 'optimistic about the future' (Figure 31).

Figure 31: Optimism about the future



Question 30: Please tell me whether you agree completely, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree completely with the statement: I am optimistic about the future.

Source: EQLS 2003

Only in Bulgaria, France and Slovakia is the proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that they are optimistic about the future below half of the total population. Although there might be cultural differences in expressing optimism – an interpretation which is not examined here – the following patterns appear. Just as levels of satisfaction and happiness were higher in the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden have the highest shares of optimists, followed by Ireland and Spain, which have undergone significant economic growth during the last five years. In Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia, the social and economic situation has also improved during previous years and this trend seems to be sustaining. Germany and France are located at the bottom end; both are low-growth countries, which are involved in huge reforms of the welfare systems and reductions in social benefits. The other two countries with low optimism rates, Bulgaria and Slovakia, can be characterised as being in a stagnant situation which requires economic development to get over the recession years of the 1990s. This explanation goes back to the idea that people will extrapolate past events and their current life situation into the near future.

Table 34: Optimism about the future, by social group

%

		Sex		Household type				Age		
Country	Total	Women	Men	Living alone	Single parent	Couple	Couple + children	18-34	35-64	65 and over
CC3	63	64	61	56	68	64	63	67	62	49
NMS	63	62	64	55	68	60	66	74	58	53
EU15	65	63	66	60	58	63	69	76	61	56
EU25	64	63	65	59	59	63	68	75	61	55

Proportion of people who completely agree or agree somewhat that they are optimistic about the future.

Question 30: Please tell me whether you agree completely, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree completely with the statement: I am optimistic about the future.

Source: EQLS 2003

Table 35: Optimism about the future, by social group

%

		Employment status			Education[1]		Income		Long-standing illness	
Country	Total	Employed	Out of labour force	Unemployed	Low	High	Lowest quartile	Highest quartile	Yes	No
CC3	63	62	64	53	59	65	55	70	50	66
NMS	63	68	60	53	50	71	55	73	52	68
EU15	65	70	60	49	59	72	57	72	54	67
EU25	64	70	60	50	58	72	56	72	53	67

Proportion of people who completely agree or agree somewhat that they are optimistic about the future.

[1] Education level is measured by the age the respondent completed full-time education. A low level means that the respondent completed their education by the age of 15; a high educational level means that the respondent completed full-time education aged 20 or over.

Note: Income quartiles are calculated on the basis of the household equivalent income (new OECD scale).

Question 30: Please tell me whether you agree completely, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree completely with the statement: I am optimistic about the future.

Source: EQLS 2003

Optimism in some of the NMS may even reflect prospects associated with enlargement of the EU.

All in all, the differences between the EU15, the NMS and the CC3 averages are small. On average, around 64% of individuals in the enlarged EU are optimistic about the future. However, the picture is different when specific groups are examined. Tables 34 and 35 show the proportion of optimistic people in different social groups in the EU15, NMS, CC3 and the EU25.

There are some similarities to the perception of satisfaction. There is no clear difference between men and women. As far as household type is concerned, single person households are not only less satisfied, they are also less optimistic about the future. In contrast, couples with children living in the household tend to be more optimistic. Surprisingly, there is a big difference between the EU15 and the other country groups as far as single parents with children below the age of 16 are concerned. In the EU15, these persons tend to be more pessimistic, while they are rather optimistic in other countries.

Optimism is very unequally distributed between the young and the old. People between 18 and 34 are more optimistic than other age groups in all countries. On average, three out of four respondents in this age group in the EU25 are positive about the future. Percentages in the CC3 countries are smaller, mainly because the young are as pessimistic as the average population in Turkey. In all 28 countries, people aged 65 and over are consistently more pessimistic.

Employed people tend to see the future more optimistically, whereas the unemployed are much less optimistic than the average (Table 35). Less than half of unemployed people in the EU15 see the future with optimism, and rates in Germany are remarkably low, with only 17% of unemployed people saying they are optimistic about the future. The results by educational level, income and long-standing illness are quite similar to the results for perceived satisfaction. Achieving a high educational level or being in the top income quartile is associated with optimism, which is in line with the better opportunity structure these people have in general compared to people with a low level of education or low income. Individuals with a long-standing illness are clearly less optimistic about the future. To sum up, and not very surprisingly, the more satisfied and happier a person is, the more likely it is that he or she will be optimistic about the future.

Conclusions

Subjective well-being – measured by satisfaction and happiness – is quite unequally distributed across Europe. There is a strong east–west divide between the EU15 and the NMS/CC3, where people from the former socialist countries in particular tend to be less satisfied; and there is a north–south difference within the EU15, with people living in the Nordic countries being the most satisfied in Europe. These findings are consistent for happiness as well as for satisfaction.

Several groups are markedly more or less satisfied when their satisfaction levels are compared to the national averages. The clearest difference is that being unemployed results in a lower mean satisfaction. Single parents, too, have lower levels of life satisfaction and happiness. Low educational level and a long-standing illness also affect satisfaction negatively, although not that much. By and large, the differences between the national average satisfaction and the group-specific mean satisfaction is higher in the NMS/CC3. There are noticeably different patterns for age groups and employed persons in the EU15 and the former eastern bloc. In most of the EU15, people aged 65 and over tend to be more satisfied than younger ones, whereas individuals over the age of 35 are rather dissatisfied in the former eastern bloc countries compared to the young people in these countries. Once again, the differences between the old and new European Member States are accompanied by clear deviations within the country groupings.

Looking at citizens' optimism, the countries are quite heterogeneous, although the means for the EU15, NMS and CC3 are close. The Scandinavians are the most optimistic people in Europe. Some of the findings could readily be associated with increasing prosperity on the one hand or to the stagnant economic situation in some countries on the other.

Strengthening social cohesion in an enlarged Europe will be a difficult task, because the NMS increase differences in subjective well-being across the EU, and because the differences in subjective well-being between the social groups examined in this survey are in general higher in the NMS than in the EU15.

Perceived quality of society 8

The three pillars of the multidimensional concept of quality of life are objective living conditions, subjective well-being, and perceived quality of society (Veenhoven, 1996; Zapf, 1984). Perceived quality of society, which this chapter will examine, includes people's evaluations of social institutions as well as their perceptions of solidarity in society, and their perceptions of trust between social groups and individuals.

Various EU documents have looked at the issue of what constitutes a good society. A key EU aim is for Europe to become a dynamic knowledge-based economy capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The last goal implies promoting social integration as well as modernising and improving social provision (European Commission, 2000a).

Since democracies are made for and by their citizens, the EQLS asks a series of questions designed to find out how Europeans feel about their societies. These questions examine at least implicitly how far some of the key social objectives are being met in European countries. Questions about the extent to which people perceive tension or antagonism between various social groups and the extent to which people trust each other are relevant to the EU goals of cohesion and integration. Questions about how citizens rate the performance of various public services and how much trust they have in the future of the state pension and social benefit systems relate to the goal of providing high quality social protection.

The following analysis has two aims. First, it compares how citizens' perceptions of societal tensions, their evaluations of public services and their trust in other people vary by country; second, it investigates the extent to which there are differences between social groups within each country. Special attention is given to groups which may be considered to be socially vulnerable.

Perception of tensions in society

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they were aware of tensions between rich and poor, management and workers, men and women, old and young, and between different racial or ethnic groups. Table 36 shows noticeable differences in the perception of such tensions between the EU15, NMS and CC3. Citizens in the NMS and CC3 predominantly perceive a lot of tensions which reflect traditional social cleavages – between rich and poor people and between management and workers. With the exception of Greece (which differs from the other EU15 countries with an unusually high perception of tensions in all respects), EU15 citizens do not see tensions in these 'traditional' areas as much as people in the NMS and CC3 do.

People in the EU15 are more likely to perceive tensions between different racial or ethnic groups than between any other social groups. Belgium, France and the Netherlands

Table 36: Tensions between social groups

%

	Poor and rich people	Manage-ment and workers	Men and women	Old and young people	Different racial or ethnic groups
Austria	30	29	13	22	41
Belgium	36	34	16	21	60
Denmark	4	6	7	3	39
Finland	21	17	8	9	37
France	46	49	12	23	62
Germany	36	34	7	13	38
Greece	58	61	27	27	57
Ireland	28	27	12	15	46
Italy	21	30	7	8	40
Luxembourg	21	22	18	15	25
Netherlands	25	23	9	18	61
Portugal	24	24	10	10	36
Spain	32	37	20	14	42
Sweden	24	16	10	10	45
United Kingdom	23	26	17	17	48
Cyprus	18	18	11	9	16
Czech Republic	44	36	7	16	56
Estonia	50	20	6	17	13
Hungary	61	47	11	19	55
Latvia	44	26	4	19	19
Lithuania	62	53	9	19	10
Malta	27	33	20	19	50
Poland	52	53	9	17	23
Slovakia	49	42	5	14	43
Slovenia	43	49	10	21	42
Bulgaria	54	37	9	17	13
Romania	53	49	17	29	33
Turkey	60	48	34	33	46
CC3	58	47	27	31	39
NMS	51	47	8	17	34
EU15	31	34	12	15	46
EU25	35	36	11	16	45

Question 29: In all countries, tensions sometimes exist between social groups. In your opinion, how much tension is there between each of the following groups in [country]? Poor and rich people, management and workers, men and women, old people and young people, different racial and ethnic groups: A lot of tension, some tension, no tension.

Proportion of people reporting 'a lot of tension'.

Source: EQLS 2003

Table 37: Reporting of tensions, by sex and social groups

%

	Total	Women	Aged 18-24	Unem--ployed	Single parent	Low educational level	Lowest income quartile	Skilled worker	Non-skilled worker	Farmer
Tensions between management and workers										
CC3	47	48	48	54	51	50	48	45	54	42
NMS	47	47	43	61	49	49	52	52	50	47
EU15	34	34	33	45	40	34	39	38	34	41
EU25	34	36	35	49	41	36	42	41	37	43
Tensions between young and old people										
CC3	31	34	31	24	40	33	32	31	33	24
NMS	17	19	18	19	21	17	18	19	20	21
EU15	15	17	16	17	17	17	18	16	18	19
EU25	16	17	17	17	18	17	18	17	19	20
Tensions between different racial and ethnic groups										
CC3	39	39	55	42	44	37	37	33	39	42
NMS	34	36	41	31	48	33	36	32	38	27
EU15	46	47	51	44	52	44	44	45	45	49
EU25	45	45	49	41	51	43	43	42	44	43

Question 29: In all countries, tensions sometimes exist between social groups. In your opinion, how much tension is there between each of the following groups in [country]? Poor and rich people, management and workers, men and women, old people and young people, different racial and ethnic groups: A lot of tension, some tension, no tension.

Proportion of people reporting 'a lot of tension'.

Source: EQLS 2003

are conspicuous for their unusually high sense of racial or ethnic tensions, with 60% or more of respondents in these countries perceiving 'a lot of' such tensions. Among the NMS/CC3 countries, Malta, the Czech Republic and Hungary, and to a lesser extent Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, also have relatively high proportions of the population who see tensions between ethnic or racial groups in their country. These figures reflect the ethnic diversity of European countries and probably increasing attention to issues like migration.

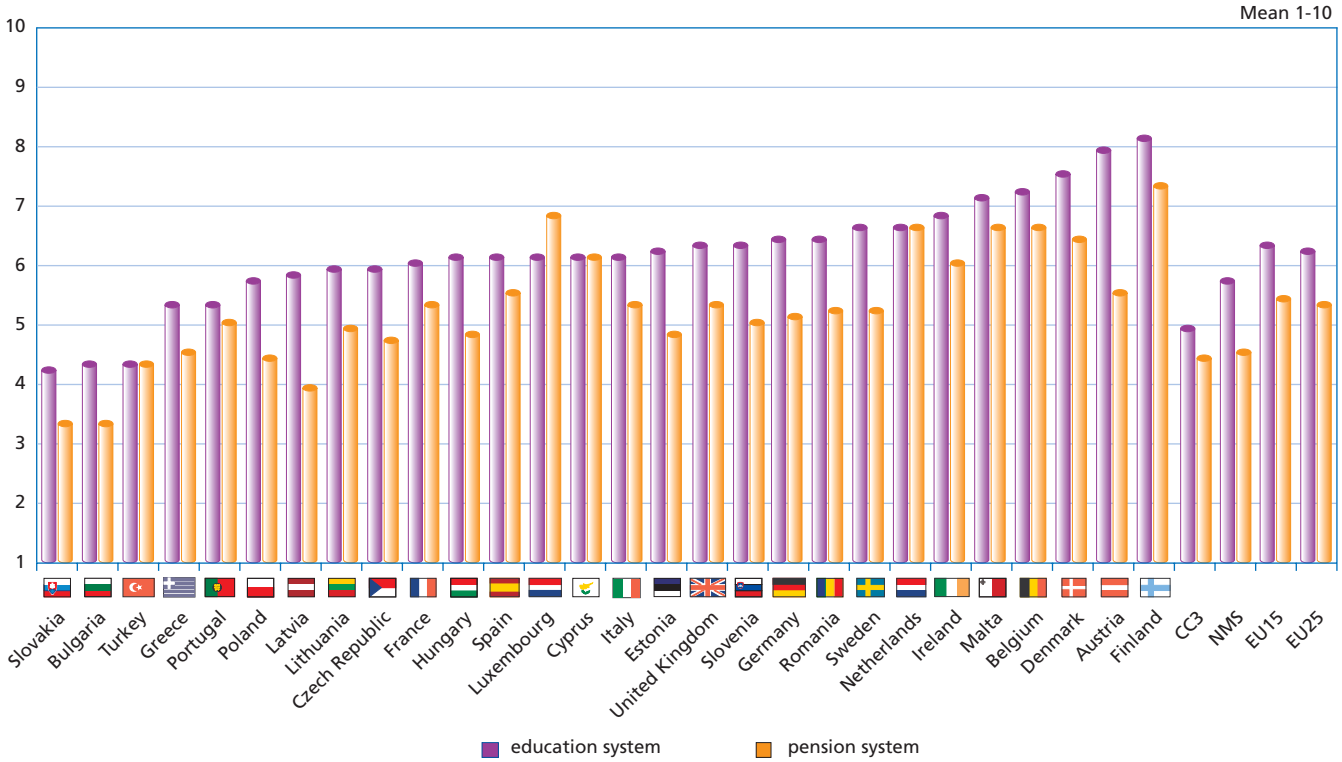
Tensions between men and women and between old and young people are regarded as of relatively minor importance in most of the EU15 and the NMS. Gender conflicts are mentioned by a small minority in most countries, and there are only a few countries where more than one fifth of respondents are aware of tensions between men and women (Greece, Spain, Malta, and Turkey).

Within the EU15, the Greeks most frequently report tensions between the generations. Very few people in the Scandinavian countries perceive tensions between old and young people; the figures for these countries are unusually low for the EU15. This may reflect the quality of pension schemes or of care arrangements; but respondents in Italy, Portugal, and Spain have similarly low scores. The inter-country variation in the NMS is smaller than in the EU15, ranging from a low of 9% in Cyprus to a high of 21% in Slovenia. Romania and Turkey stand out in the CC3 for their higher reporting of tensions between the generations.

A few other country-specific points should be made. Cyprus and Malta generally come closer to the EU15 pattern of perception of group tensions than to that of the other NMS. Among the CC3, the Turkish population stands out as being particularly likely to perceive group conflicts in general and for the unusually high number of times gender and generational conflicts are mentioned. Finally, Denmark's population has the most harmonious perception of relations between different social groups; the only tensions frequently perceived by Danish citizens are racial and ethnic tensions.

Perceptions of group tensions may be expected to vary between social groups. The analysis here focuses on women and groups which may be considered socially vulnerable: unemployed people, single parents, people with a low level of education, people with a low income, unskilled workers, farmers and young people (Table 37). Contrary to frequently voiced opinions, unemployed people, groups with low income, and groups with lower levels of education and skills do not perceive tensions

Figure 32: Perceived quality of the education system and the state pension system



Question 54: In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following public services in [country]? Please tell me on a scale of one to 10, where one means very poor quality and 10 means very high quality: Education system, state pension system.
Source: EQLS 2003

between different racial and ethnic groups much more than other groups. Only the young and – somewhat surprisingly – single parents stand out as being somewhat more sensitive to ethnic and racial tensions. Unemployed people perceive tensions between management and workers more frequently than other groups. The most striking result with respect to the perception of generational conflicts is that the youngest age group does not perceive such tensions any more frequently than the population at large does.

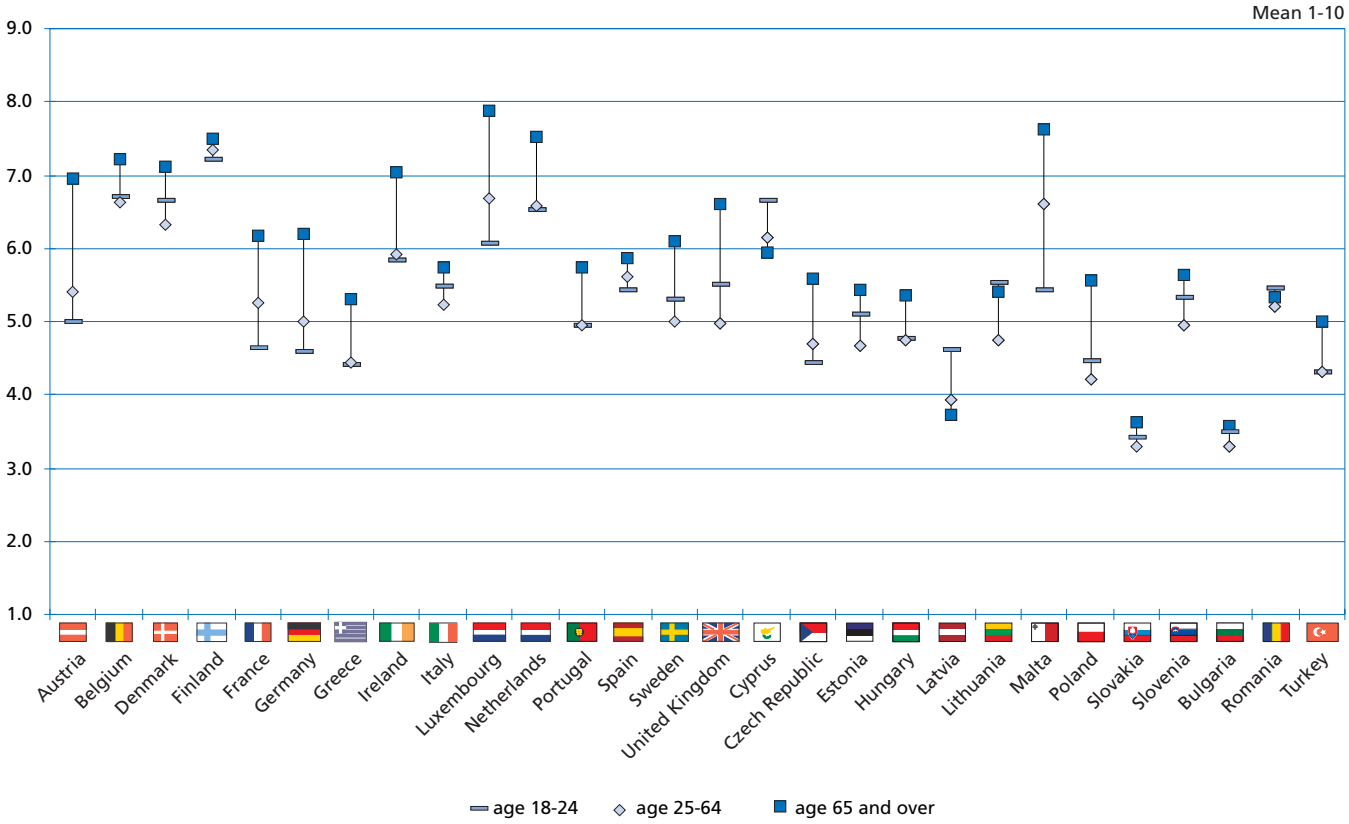
Quality of education and pension systems

The quality of the national education system is of decisive importance for the international competitive position of a country as well as for the life chances of its young people. The EU itself has given highest priority to the topic, stating that European countries show several gaps in comparison to the US when undergoing the transition to a knowledge society (European Commission, 2000a). The question here is the extent to which this expert opinion conforms with citizens' assessments of the quality of the education system.

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of their national education system on a scale of one to 10, with one indicating 'very poor quality' and 10 indicating 'very high quality'. Differences between the country groups are not very big, but they display a clear pattern. EU15 citizens in general have more favourable views than NMS and CC3 citizens (see Figure 32). All three country group averages lie fairly close to the mid-point of the scale (5.5), signalling a degree of dissatisfaction with the quality of the education systems. At national level, there is a much higher degree of variation. Respondents in Finland, Austria, Denmark, Belgium and Malta give their education systems high ratings of above 7, whereas the Slovakian, Bulgarian and Turkish respondents express discontent, with ratings below 5. The Finnish citizens reflect the results of the OECD's PISA study on education which gave Finland the highest ranking. A closer look at the averages in different social groups reveals very homogeneous opinions about the quality of the education system within these societies.

A good society cares not only for its young people but also for its pensioners. Ratings of state pension systems are lower than those for education systems. Only Luxembourg and the Netherlands deviate from this general rule. The EU15 respondents rated their national pension systems more highly than did the respondents in NMS and CC3

Figure 33: Perceived quality of the state pension system, by age group



Question 54: In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following public services in [country]? Please tell me on a scale of one to 10, where one means very poor quality and 10 means very high quality: Education system, state pension system.
Source: EQLS 2003

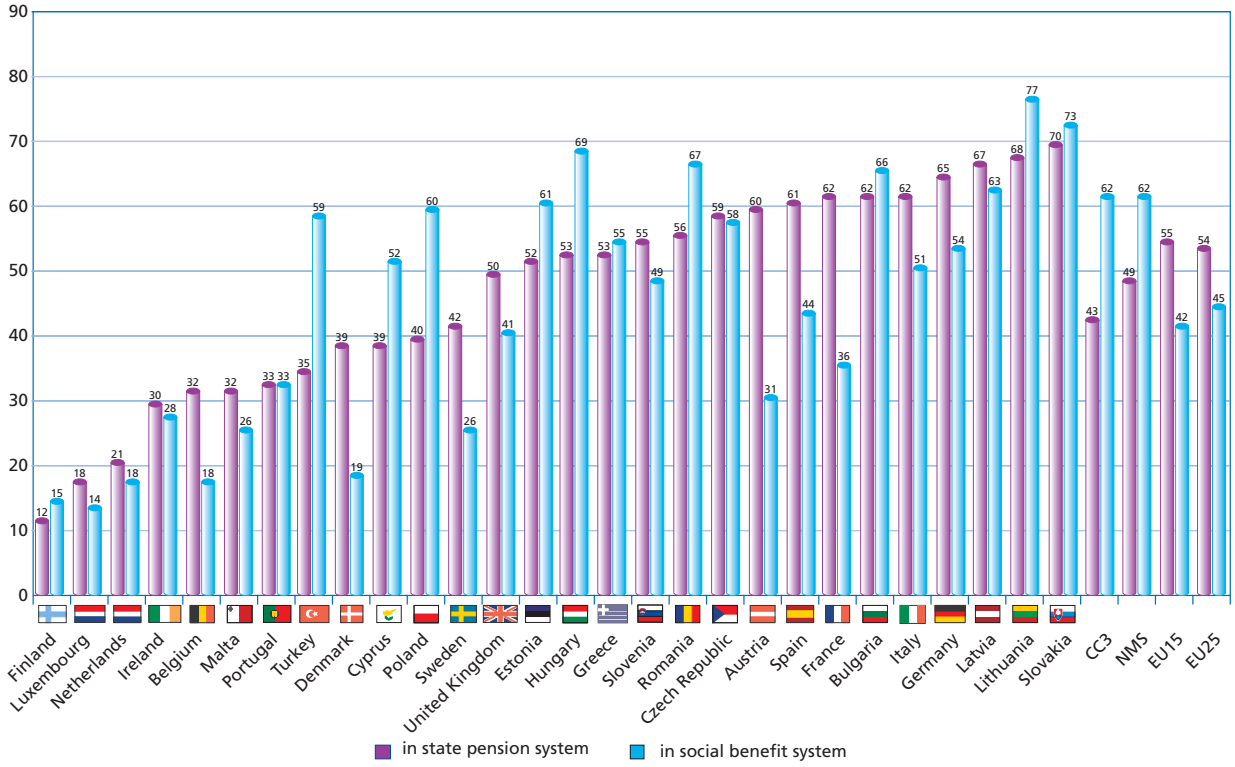
but, as in the case of education systems, the difference is rather small (Figure 32). Only one point on the 10-point scale separates the EU15 mean at the top from the CC3 mean at the bottom. The NMS mean is only one tenth of a scale point higher than the CC3 mean. At national level, the Finns again rate their pension system most highly, whereas in Bulgaria and again in Slovakia the state pension system is considered to be of low quality.

In almost all countries, the respondent's age considerably affects the evaluation of the state pension system (Figure 33). Older respondents usually rate their national pension system more positively and younger respondents more negatively than the population averages. Latvia, Cyprus and Romania are the only cases where the young have a more favourable view. Since older people are the beneficiaries, while younger persons are likely to see themselves as contributors, age-specific assessments of the quality of the pension systems come as no surprise. The differences between the average ratings of the oldest and the youngest groups are usually rather small and never exceed two scale points. The fact that the older generation still has a favourable image of pension schemes despite recent curtailments is probably related to the fact that many reforms were implemented in a way which affects future rather than current pensioners.

Confidence in the pension and social benefit systems

Assessments of the present quality of pension schemes may say little about their perceived future sustainability. Information about how much confidence or trust people have in the state pension system to deliver benefits in the future can fill this gap. In the EU15, more than half of the respondents do not trust the state pension system to deliver when they need it, followed closely by more than 40% of people in the NMS and the CC3 (see Figure 34). This is a remarkable reversal of the order of countries with respect to the perceived quality of the pension schemes. Obviously, a positive assessment of the present quality of pensions can coincide with doubts about their future sustainability. In the EU15, the Austrian, French, German, Italian and Spanish respondents have the lowest levels of trust in their state pension systems. Although their pensions are relatively high – at least in Austria and

Figure 34: Lack of trust in the state pension system and in the social benefit system %



Question 27: How much trust do you have in the ability of the following two systems to deliver when you need it? State pension system, social benefit system: A great deal of trust, some trust, hardly any trust, no trust at all.

Proportion of people reporting 'hardly any trust/no trust at all'.

Source: EQLS 2003

Germany – they may expect a cut in benefits to result from both current and planned reforms of the pension systems. The highest confidence in the future of pensions is found in Finland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. In the NMS and CC3 groups, Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania show the highest proportions of respondents who lack trust in the system, whereas Cyprus, Malta and Turkey have the lowest percentages. These figures once more confirm the special status of Cyprus and Malta within the NMS group.

Working people (both employed and unemployed) appear to be the population group with the least confidence in the state pension system (Table 38). Single parents also have little trust. This may be because recent discussions on reform of pension systems have generated fears among working people that they will not be adequately rewarded for lifelong working, while single parents may not have much faith in a pension system which ties entitlement to earnings. Striking differences show in the degree of trust various generations have in the system. In the EU15 and the NMS, a huge trust gap separates the sceptical youngest age group from the more trusting oldest age group. This pattern is not found in the CC3, where trust in the pension system shows only very little variation by age.

Trust in the social benefit system is also a good measure of the perceived quality of a society, as a high level of social security is part of the European social model. Many Europeans now express doubts about the future functioning of the social benefit system. Some 42% of the EU15 respondents and 62% in the NMS and in the CC3 do not believe in the future capacity of the system to deliver (Figure 34). In the EU15 group, people in Greece, Germany and Italy have the highest levels of distrust, whereas the Finnish, Belgian and Dutch respondents are the most trustful. Lithuania has the highest percentage of sceptical respondents out of all the 28 countries, followed by Slovakia and Hungary.

Unemployed people and single parents – risk categories that depend particularly on the social benefit system – are the social groups most lacking trust in that system (Table 38). As in the case of pensions, the oldest age group (65+) have most confidence that the benefits system will deliver.

Indicators of inter-generational conflict

The growing proportion of elderly people who are outside the labour market places an increasing load on the shoulders of the economically active population

Table 38: Lack of trust in the state pension system and the social benefit system, by social groups

%

	Total	Self-employed	Unemployed	Single parent	Age group				
					18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
State pension system									
CC 3	43	50	55	40	44	45	42	42	43
NMS	49	57	56	48	53	55	56	44	34
EU 15	55	64	68	73	61	66	67	50	35
EU 25	54	63	65	69	59	64	65	49	35
Social benefit system									
CC 3	62	65	71	71	63	65	61	60	58
NMS	62	64	68	59	59	61	67	65	53
EU 15	42	45	52	49	41	44	47	42	35
EU 25	45	47	56	51	44	46	50	45	37

Question 27: How much trust do you have in the ability of the following two systems to deliver when you need it? State pension system, social benefit system: A great deal of trust, some trust, hardly any trust, no trust at all.

Proportion of people reporting 'hardly any trust/no trust at all'.

Source: EQLS 2003

specifically to pay for social protection. Given the rapid demographic change, there are widespread concerns about a potential generational conflict, which the European Commission has frequently highlighted (European Commission, 1999, 2000a, 2003). The data have shown that trust in the pension scheme varies widely by age, but this does not yet imply that different levels of trust lead to intergenerational conflicts. The available data might indicate the likelihood of such conflicts if doubts about the quality of the pension scheme or distrust in the delivery of a pension were systematically associated with a propensity to perceive tensions between old and young people.

At the level of country comparisons, there is a slight correlation between giving a low rating to the quality of the pension system and a higher frequency of reporting tensions between the generations, but the correlation is weak. Trust in the pension system and the propensity to perceive generational tensions are even less strongly associated. At an individual level, there is a tendency for low opinions about the pension system to be associated with an assessment of tensions between young and old (Figure 35). Respondents who give poorer quality ratings perceive tensions more frequently in almost all countries. The strength of the correlation varies between countries; there is no obvious connection between poor evaluations of the pension system and an awareness of generational tensions in the Mediterranean countries. In the CC3 group, the relatively negative evaluations (especially in Bulgaria and Turkey) have a high correlation with the reporting of tensions.

Lack of trust in the state pension system is also associated with a higher propensity to perceive intergenerational conflicts, but here the correlation is significant in only about a half of all the countries surveyed (Austria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey), and is also independent of EU membership status.

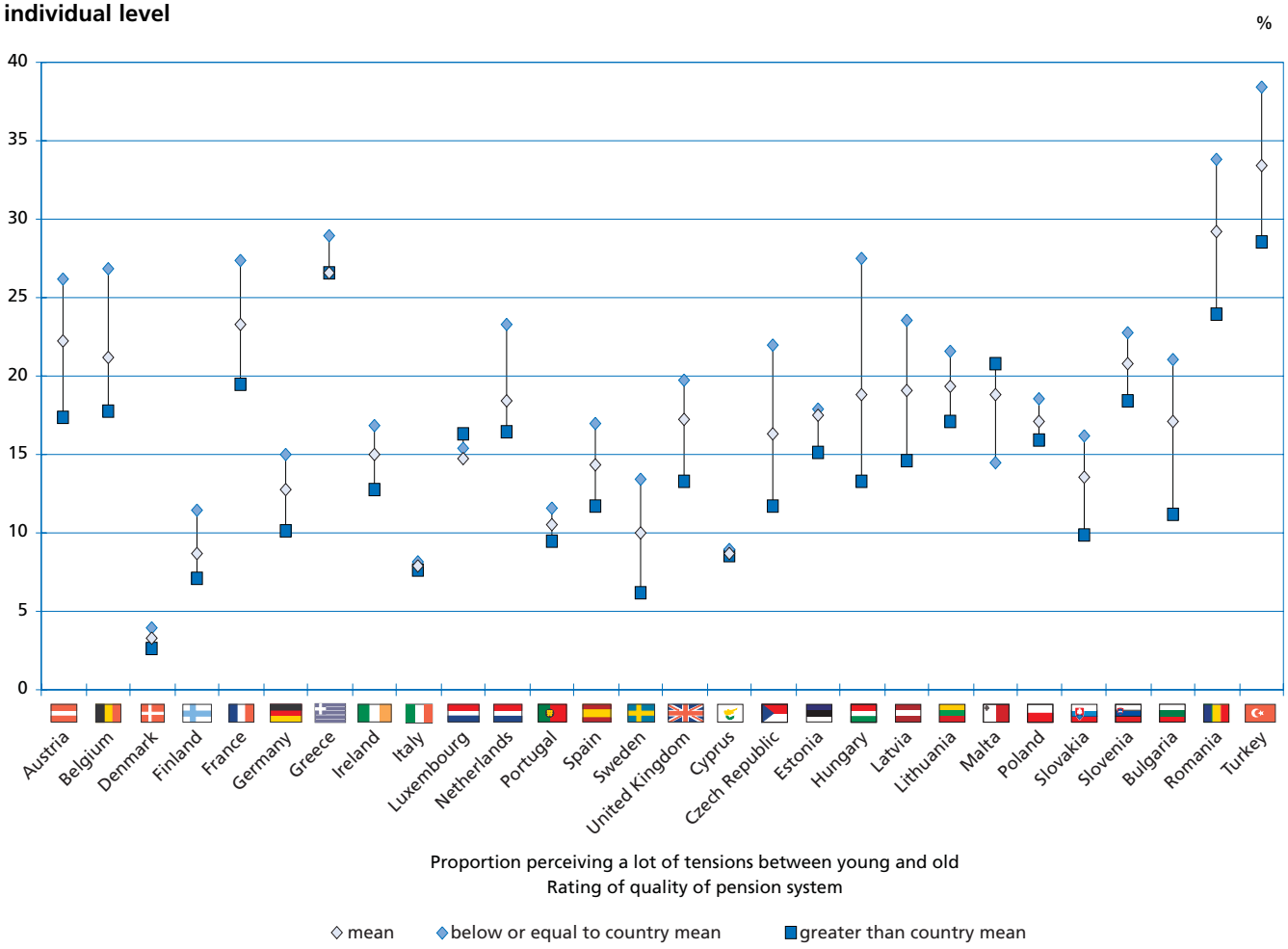
Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary have all the indicators of a potential generational conflict: high perceived tensions between young and old people, and strong correlations between perceived tensions and the quality of *and* trust in state pension systems.

Social capital

A question about whether citizens trust each other is usually employed by social scientists as a general measure of the quality of a society. A high degree of trust is taken as evidence of a wealth of social capital. Social capital means having a large number of people who are good citizens in the sense that they actively participate in the life of the society and contribute to collective well-being. In order to compare the 28 European countries in terms of the social capital of their societies, the respondents were asked to rate the amount of trust they have in other people on a scale from one (can't be too careful in dealing with people) to 10 (most people can be trusted) (Figure 36).

The results for the three country groups are consistent with the other findings in this chapter (Figures 32 and 34). The EU15 citizens are the most trustful, the NMS mean is one scale point lower, and the CC3 mean is another tenth lower. The Nordic countries show the highest levels of

Figure 35: Quality of the state pension system and awareness of tensions between young and old people at an individual level



Question 29: In all countries, tensions sometimes exist between social groups. In your opinion, how much tension is there between each of the following groups in [country]?...Old people and young people. A lot of tension, some tension, no tension.

Question 54: In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following public services in [country]? Please tell me on a scale of one to 10, where one means very poor quality and 10 means very high quality: state pension system.

Source: EQLS 2003

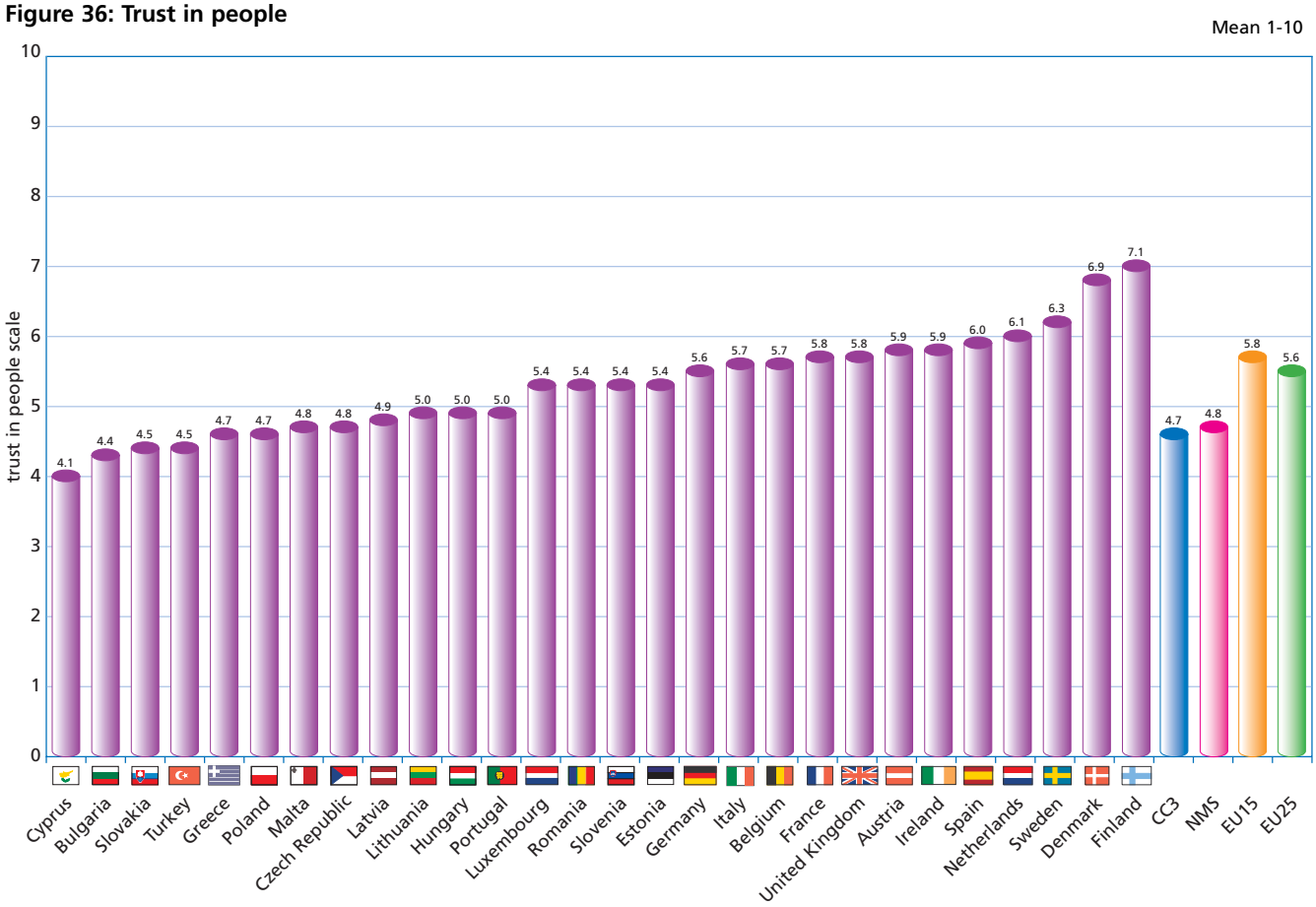
social capital, and again Finland is at the top. Within the EU15, the lowest levels of trust in people are found in Greece and Portugal. Slovenia and Estonia show the highest levels of trust out of the NMS, and the lowest levels are found in Cyprus and Slovakia. Romanians appear to have the highest social capital within the CC3. Their level of trust is the same as in Luxembourg, Slovenia and Estonia, and it is one scale point higher than the means of Bulgaria and Turkey.

Within individual countries, most social groups do not differ much more than one scale point on the general trust measure (not shown in detail here). There is a tendency for the better off to express more trust, but the differences are usually very small. Since there is little difference in the levels of trust shown by citizens within individual countries, social trust should not be understood as the personal property of individuals but as a collective characteristic of the societies in which they live. In this sense, the degree of social trust may almost be considered as an 'objective' measure of the quality of a society (see Delhey and Newton, 2003).

Conclusions

Perceptions of the quality of a society usually vary according to country clusters, and correlate with national economic performance and the development of the democratic institutions. In addition, national historic and cultural factors exert a certain influence on the evaluations. Last but not least, citizens' social status and the interests which derive from it, also affect people's evaluations of the society they live in.

Figure 36: Trust in people



Question 28: 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 one to 10, where one means you can't be too careful and 10 means that most people can be trusted.

Source: EQLS 2003

The most striking results are, firstly, that conflict between different social strata is perceived more strongly in the NMS, whereas in the EU15 tensions between different racial or ethnic groups come first. Furthermore, with the exception of single parents, the traditional risk groups of the modern society do not differ from the country average in their assessments of tensions between different racial and ethnic groups; instead, the youngest age group identify such tensions more often.

Secondly, across almost all countries, the quality of as well as trust in the state pension system are rated highest by the older generation, whereas the youngest age group has a marked degree of distrust. This signals a certain potential for generational cleavages, even though at present only a very small minority perceives a lot of tension between old and young people. Those who rate the quality of pensions poorly or have little trust in the pension system are more likely to perceive intergenerational tensions. This suggests that safeguarding the sustainability of pension schemes is a sensitive issue which is of crucial importance for keeping intergenerational conflicts low and for fostering the social integration of European societies.

The analyses of differences between social groups identified two groups whose unfavourable situation clearly affects their evaluations of society: single parents with young children and unemployed people. They show by far the most critical attitudes towards their societies. Being a single parent with at least one child below the age of 16 has a negative influence on almost all the indicators of quality of society which were tested. The results reveal that the (growing) group of single parents see themselves as one of the most neglected groups in society. Leading a life in unfavourable material and emotional circumstances, and having the responsibility of raising children and preparing them for an independent and satisfactory life points to a need for more effective public support. The European Commission has already begun to address the problem (European Commission, 2000a).

Conclusions 9

This report sheds light not only on the living conditions of people in different European societies, but also on subjective well-being and individuals' perceptions of the societies in which they live. It draws on the results of the European Quality of Life Survey, which was carried out in 2003 in the EU25 and CC3, and provides a unique portrait of quality of life in the enlarged Europe.

Each chapter looks at different quality of life issues: economic situation; housing and the local environment; employment, education and skills; household and family structure; work-life balance; health and health care; subjective well-being; and quality of life in society. The main objectives of the report are to compare the situation in the EU15 and the NMS, and to highlight the social situation in three of the countries which have applied to join the Community.

This chapter summarises the key findings and points to some of the connections with EU policies. Differences and similarities between the three groups of countries, as well as differences between social groups with respect to gender, age, income, occupational status and education, are highlighted for each quality of life issue. It is worth noting that this report is primarily descriptive. It will be followed by a series of in-depth analyses, which will examine in more detail the social context and individual conditions, both at country and social group level, which affect quality of life across Europe. These analytical reports will provide deeper understanding and assess policy implications, which a descriptive report, by definition, cannot.

This concluding presentation of the key findings is structured along four lines:

1. What has been learned about the quality of life of citizens living in the NMS and CC3, compared to the situation in the EU15?
2. How deep are inequalities in quality of life between social groups in individual countries?
3. How do Europeans perceive the quality of the society they live in?
4. What groupings of countries sharing similar levels and characteristics of quality of life can be distinguished, and to what degree do they overlap with traditional east–west and north–south distinctions?

Quality of life in the different country groupings

The accession of 10 new Member States in May 2004 has opened a huge opportunity for Europe, but also a challenge. The new EU of 25 Member States has become far more heterogeneous in terms of cultures, political traditions, and living conditions. The research has revealed large discrepancies in quality of life between the old and the new Member States, especially with regard to material living conditions, employment situation, working conditions, health and subjective well-being. But there are also domains of quality of life in which differences between the two country groups are minimal, such as social support networks, and educational levels. And there are some (such as family support) in which the situation in the NMS appears better. The following paragraphs highlight the main results, chapter by chapter. The focus is on the comparison between old and new Member States, leaving aside for the moment variations within these country groups, as well as differences between social groups.

Economic situation: lower living standards in the NMS and CC3

Analysis of individual data and situations has confirmed what was already known from data relating to aggregate GNP: standards of living are much lower in the NMS and CC3 than in the EU15. In eight of the NMS/CC3 group, the average standard of living of the population is lower than in the least well-off EU15 country, Portugal. Most importantly, average household income in purchasing power standards in these countries is only half that of the average EU15 household. Turning to very low standards of living (deprivation), measured as the non-possession of basic consumer durables, it can be seen that deprivation is three times higher in the NMS than in the EU15, and four times higher in the CC3. In addition, rent arrears are much more common in the NMS/CC3.

People in these countries partially compensate for low income by growing vegetables or keeping livestock, particularly in some post-communist countries. On average, more than 40% of households in the NMS report that they grow crops or keep livestock in order to increase their standard of living, compared to only 8% in the EU15. Hence, people in the NMS and CC3 participate in multiple economies to earn their living. The existence of multiple economies in this region is one reason why standards of living might be somewhat higher than indicated by exclusively monetary figures. But even when multiple economies are taken into account, there is no doubt that the standard of living is markedly lower in these countries, and that this influences peoples' subjective assessments and appreciation of life. Every second household in the CC3, and 20% of households in the NMS, report difficulties making ends meet – proof that a large proportion of the population worries about satisfying

material needs. In the EU15, the majority is free from such worries, with only one in 10 persons reporting difficulties.

A major objective of the EU social policy agenda is to prevent citizens from suffering poverty and social exclusion. Relative poverty rather than absolute poverty, as defined in the EU's Laeken initiative, is used as a basic indicator. 'Relative' means that poverty and exclusion are measured in relation to the national average income level, which, however, differs considerably from country to country. Absolute poverty, on the contrary, refers to a lack of access to goods and services which are deemed necessary in a given society. In relative terms, poverty is no bigger a problem in the NMS than in the EU15, due to a comparable pattern of income distribution: levels of intra-country inequality are similar. However, when an absolute approach is applied, as is possible with the EQLS data, huge shares of the population in the NMS have a lower material living standard than even the poorest groups in the EU15. Against this background, a shift of resources from the old to the new European Member States would be needed in order to strengthen cohesion within the enlarged Europe.

Housing: worse housing conditions, but more home owners in the NMS

Housing conditions confirm the general picture of lower living standards in the NMS and CC3. By and large, living space is smaller, homes are less comfortable, and neighbourhoods are not as safe. The standard of housing illustrates this. One in five households in the NMS and one in three in the CC3 have housing problems such as rotting windows, damp and leaks, or no indoor flushing toilet: in the EU15, fewer than 10% of households face these problems.

With regard to environmental problems, such as air pollution, poor water quality, noise or lack of green space, there are no clear differences between the NMS/CC3 and the EU15, but the country differences are striking. On average, one in five households in the EU25 complains about at least two of these environmental problems.

While housing conditions are not as good as in the EU15, it is worth noting that home ownership is much more common in the NMS/CC3. Nearly 75% of the population living in the latter group own their own dwelling compared to 60% in the EU15, and this certainly helps people to get by on a smaller income. In addition, a huge majority of households in the NMS/CC3 own their accommodation outright without any mortgage or loans. Property as accumulated capital is an important source of wealth and can increase a person's standard of living. Typically, rural societies have high home ownership rates, but this is only part of the story. In the case of the post-communist countries, the privatisation policy of the 1990s gave many people the opportunity to turn from tenant to home owner. This is the main reason why the average ownership rate in the NMS/CC3 exceeds that in the EU15 by around 15 percentage points, especially in urban areas.

Although home ownership is widespread in the NMS/CC3, housing conditions in these countries are poor and this can severely limit people's social integration. Therefore, it is clear that public policy has a role to play in establishing better housing and environmental conditions in the NMS and also in some of the EU15.

Working conditions: working longer under worse conditions

On average, people in the NMS and CC3 work longer hours than their EU15 counterparts. Around 40% of employed men in the NMS, and two-thirds in the CC3, report working 48 hours or more a week, compared to one third in the EU15. Women also work longer, since full-time arrangements are the norm in these countries. At the same time, the overall employment rate for women is lower than in the EU15. Part-time contracts only play a minor role; this contrasts with the situation in the EU15 (with the partial exception of the southern countries), where women in particular have a higher rate of part-time work. These findings indicate that access to the labour market in the NMS/CC3 is predominantly divided into employees who have full-time contracts and those who do not work at all. This situation is not likely to change as long as part-time work does not provide an income which is sufficient to meet household needs.

On average, the perceived quality of jobs is worse in the NMS/CC3. When compared to the EU15, more than twice as many working people (30%) report that they work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions. These working conditions are not compensated for by higher wages or other measures. In the NMS, a smaller share of people think that they are well paid, that they have a great deal of influence on their jobs, or that they have good job prospects. Levels of perceived job insecurity in this group are more than twice as high as those in the EU15. Around one in five employed people in the NMS thinks that they might lose their job within the next six months. This feeling of insecurity seems to have been influenced by the traumatic experiences associated with the privatisation of the socialist economy, when millions lost their jobs.

Educational levels

Educational attainment is one area in which the NMS appear to be ahead of the EU15. The NMS have higher numbers of people with an upper secondary education than the EU15, and the two groups are relatively equal with regard to third-level education. However, the NMS lags behind with respect to the skills which are increasingly important for living in a globalised network society: the ability to read English and Internet usage (although it should be pointed out that the survey did not ask about competence in other foreign languages and that many east-central Europeans speak Russian or German). The proportion of the population who can read English is more than three times higher in the EU15 (34% - not counting the English speaking countries, Ireland and the UK). This advantage can be seen across all educational levels and age groups, although the younger groups in the NMS are showing signs of catching up. In much the same way, EU15 citizens are more familiar with using the Internet. Hence, some efforts are necessary to enable the NMS/CC3 to be able to better meet the demands of the information society. At the same time, the fundamental modernisation of the infrastructure after the breakdown of the communist regimes has opened up the possibility of establishing a sophisticated electronic infrastructure in these countries. Estonia, for example, has become a forerunner in the area of e-governance. Therefore, while it is evident that the NMS/CC3 are lagging behind the EU15 as far as Internet usage is concerned, they have plenty of opportunity to implement new information technologies and even to overtake the EU15 in this area.

Family ties: compensating for economic strain and weak institutions

Family patterns are somewhat different across Europe, particularly for young people and for the elderly. Altogether, the young remain longer in the parental home in the NMS/CC3 than in the EU15, but they become parents earlier. In general, one-person households are more prevalent in the EU15 than in the former group. There are, however, many similarities which cut across old–new distinctions, particularly between the NMS and southern EU15 countries.

In all societies, families and friends are shown to be the crucial factor in promoting social integration and providing support. Social support networks are strong in all 28 countries. In both groups of countries, a huge majority of the population – around 80-95% – can count on help from relatives, friends or neighbours when personal problems arise; and in all countries, people rely primarily on family members. In general, support from family members is found to be more important in the NMS/CC3 than in the EU15. Strong family ties in the former group are also indicated by a higher frequency of contacts with other family members. Here, around 85% have frequent contact with parents or children, compared with 72% in the EU15. In addition, household production of food is much more widespread in the NMS/CC3 than in the EU15. Hence, to some extent, closer cooperation between household and family members compensates for lower economic resources.

Reconciling work and family life is an important issue on the EU policy agenda, which aims both at increasing women's participation in the labour market, and at enabling family care of children or dependent adults. There is a substantial gender imbalance in the division of housework and particularly family care in both groups of countries: women who have responsibilities as a carer are less likely to be able to stay in the labour market. In the NMS/CC3, difficulties reconciling work and family life are more widespread than in the EU15. Employed persons report more frequently that they have difficulties fulfilling their family responsibilities because of the amount of time they give to their paid job. This is consistent with both the longer working week and with closer family ties. Since the NMS have low fertility rates, in common with the EU15, much effort needs to be made in order to enable people to have both family and paid work.

Health: improving health status is a crucial task in the new Member States

Being in good health is an indispensable precondition for enjoying a high quality of life. In the NMS/CC3, self-rated health status is on average worse than in the EU15. Compared to the EU15, a poor health status is reported 2.5 times more often by citizens living in the NMS, and twice as often by people in the CC3. Around one third of the population in the NMS report that they have a long-standing illness, compared to one fifth in the EU15. People living in post-communist countries report health problems more frequently than Cypriots, the Maltese or Turks. These findings for individual health correspond with widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of health services and with feelings prevalent in post-communist countries that access to medical care is problematic.

Subjective well-being: citizens in the NMS/CC3 are less happy and less satisfied, but equally optimistic

A further striking difference between the NMS and the EU15 is that subjective well-being is lower in the NMS. This is true for life satisfaction and happiness, which overlap to a large extent. There is a considerable gap in subjective well-being, echoing the gaps found in objective

living conditions, especially economic resources and living standards, working conditions, and health. In most EU15 countries, the least satisfied groups are still more satisfied than affluent groups in the NMS and CC3. This mainly reflects the huge difference in living standards between these two groups of countries, although this is not the only factor. Material living conditions are of paramount importance for citizens' subjective well-being, but aspects of 'loving' and 'being' also impact on how satisfied people are with their lives. Whereas current living conditions are evaluated very differently, there is no division regarding optimism about the future. More optimistic or more pessimistic people are to be found in both groups of countries. On average, two thirds of European citizens are optimistic about the future. In this respect, the differences between individual countries are much more striking than those between old and new Member States. People in countries which have undergone huge social reforms against the background of stagnating economic performance, such as France and Germany, are less optimistic.

Quality of life of specific social groups

Strengthening social cohesion in the European Union involves not only bringing about a decrease in disparities between the Member States, but also helping disadvantaged groups within single societies. Reducing social inequalities by promoting equal opportunities, and combating poverty and social exclusion rank high on the EU's social policy priorities. This section summarises the main findings concerning the situation of certain social groups. The analysis has focused on specific groups: by income, education and occupation, which are the main vertical dimensions structuring the life chances of individuals; and by gender and age, which are key horizontal dimensions.

Vertical inequalities: stronger in the NMS/CC3

Low income, low education, unemployment, and a low occupational status are related to a lower standard of living and to correspondingly lower levels of subjective well-being consistently across the 28 countries. Not surprisingly, having a low income is often accompanied by deprivation in terms of household essentials, difficulties in making ends meet and sub-standard housing conditions. But the detrimental effects go far beyond standard of living, since low income is often also associated with poor health status. By and large, low education, a non-skilled occupational status and unemployment are also associated with precarious living conditions. Respondents' subjective assessments also show that life is not as good for these social groups: people in these groups are clearly less satisfied and less happy with the life they lead, compared to the national average.

More striking than these well-known associations is the finding that vertical positions shape life opportunities and living conditions more strongly in some countries than in others. In the Nordic countries – Denmark, Sweden and Finland – only a small minority of citizens have to deal with material deprivation, economic strain, poor housing conditions and dissatisfaction with life. Even in the lowest income quartile, living conditions and subjective well-being are for the most part better than for a huge share of the population of the NMS/CC3. In contrast, low income, low levels of education, and unemployment affect quality of life much more strongly in the less well-off countries. Hence, in these countries, and especially in the post-communist countries, differences in quality of life between rich and poor, highly and poorly educated, and high-status and low-status occupations are much more marked than in most EU15 countries. Enlargement heightens the problem of traditional social inequalities in the European Union.

Gender gap most obvious in work-life balance

The gender division of responsibilities within households, and the different allocation of time between paid and unpaid work which derives from it, is responsible for the counter-balancing result that women apparently have no greater difficulty balancing work and family life than men. Men usually work for pay longer than women, while women usually perform unpaid family work (housework, caring for children and frail elderly or disabled persons) longer than men. However, when women work full-time – defined as working between 35 and 47 hours a week – they have more difficulties reconciling work and family life than full-time working men; this indicates that their partners do not take equal responsibility for family work. This is also indicated by the fact that women are three times more likely than men to report that they do more than their fair share of housework.

The EQLS data reveal a notable difference in the employment patterns of women in the NMS/CC3 and the EU15. Part-time work plays an important role for women in most of the EU15. Here (and also in southern EU15 countries), women seem to face the choice of either working full-time, or having no paid job at all. Thus, those who are in paid work and also have family responsibilities are likely to have the longest (paid and unpaid) working hours of all Europeans. Hence, there seems to be a great potential for implementing more flexible working time arrangements in the NMS, which would give women more

opportunities to enter, or stay in, the labour market. However, labour market regulations and social security provisions should ensure that people have the opportunity to get back into full-time work in order to reduce the risk of poverty in old age.

The EQLS data also point to the other side of the coin as far as gender imbalances and inequalities are concerned: men work more hours per week, and perform more unhealthy jobs. On average, men have a lower life expectancy and tend to have weaker social support networks than women. They also have less time to fulfil family responsibilities other than providing income. Thus, from the perspective of both equality of opportunity and quality of life, reducing the working time of men and helping them to fulfil family responsibilities might be as important as helping women to stay in the labour force.

A further striking result is that, in some countries, parents with young children participate fully in the labour market and do not report many difficulties reconciling work and family life, whereas, in other countries, they do. This suggests that contextual factors such as parental leave schemes, childcare services and social support networks are a crucial part of the social infrastructure, and help parents to balance work and family. Single parents – more than 80% of whom are mothers – report the greatest difficulties reconciling work and family life, since they often have the dual role of being the principal breadwinner (therefore working full-time) and care provider, without the opportunity of sharing either responsibility. Single parents are the most dissatisfied of all groups.

Older persons in the NMS/CC3: lower standard of living and lower subjective well-being

Differences between age groups are relevant, but not easy to interpret, since age is related to different stages in the life cycle. It comes as no surprise that older people consistently report more health problems than younger people. Other effects, however, vary considerably across the 28 countries. The most striking result is the sharp decrease in household income for persons aged 65 and over, which can be observed in all countries except the Netherlands and Poland. By and large, material deprivation and economic strain are also more frequently experienced by the elderly in the NMS/CC3 than by younger age groups, which points to the fact that the elderly face the risk of poverty. In contrast, home ownership is substantially higher for older people, which reflects the accumulation process of capital during the life cycle.

The disadvantages experienced by older people can be observed most consistently in the post-communist countries. The group which is now aged 65 or older can be considered as the one which suffered most from the economic restructuring which followed the collapse of the state socialist regimes: their life biographies were interrupted and to some part devalued, and unemployment and early retirement led to severe economic losses, since pensions were usually low, and the social security system in general was not capable of dealing with huge unemployment. While older people were exposed to rapid social changes and insecure life situations, combined with a depreciation of their merits in former times, young people were set on a much better opportunity track. This experience ultimately finds its expression in ratings of life satisfaction and happiness. In the post-communist countries, older people are generally least satisfied with their lives, whereas young people are the most satisfied. In contrast, in the EU15, older people are at least as satisfied with their lives as any other age group.

Perceptions of the quality of society

Objective living conditions and subjective well-being are key dimensions of the quality of life of individuals. However, individual well-being is also affected by the social context in which individual lives are embedded. Countries where citizens have little trust in the quality of political institutions, or perceive the societies they live in as conflict-ridden, lack an important element of welfare; a lack of trust in political institutions or in the organisation of society breeds insecurity and promotes worries about the sustainability of the existing level of personal welfare.

In line with their lower levels of material and subjective well-being, citizens in the NMS/CC3 have a much more critical view than EU15 citizens of the quality of public services (education, pension and health care systems, and social services). In the EU15, citizens are most satisfied with the education system and with the health care system. The rating of the quality of social services is almost as high, but there is a distinctly lower level of satisfaction with pension schemes. In the NMS, only the educational system is given a ranking above the mid-point of the scale, while citizens are particularly disappointed with the quality of the pension scheme and with social services. Citizens in the CC3 give the health care system the poorest ranking, while the education system fares best, although it is also given a predominantly negative ranking. When differences in the ratings in both groups of countries are compared, it can be seen that the satisfaction gap is largest for the health care system. In other words, the health care system stands out as the policy field in which the perceived gaps in quality between the old and new

Member States are greatest, and where the need to invest in a more cohesive European Union may therefore prove to be strongest.

A common finding of research into subjective well-being is that people tend to adapt their aspirations to the reality of the situation: hence EU15 citizens may be expected to have higher aspiration levels as far as the quality of public services is concerned. Nevertheless, they are more content with the existing situation than people in the NMS/CC3. The widespread discontent with the public sector in the latter group probably reflects quality gaps in public provision, deficits of which these citizens are obviously painfully aware. Enlargement (and the accompanying increase in comparisons with EU15 countries) will probably make existing shortcomings even more visible. Renewed efforts to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of public services and public management will be required.

Although there is a lower level of satisfaction with the quality of pension schemes, NMS/CC3 citizens have a higher level of trust in the capacity of the pension system to deliver when it is needed. In a reversal of the usual pattern, a higher proportion of EU15 citizens say that they have no trust or hardly any trust at all in the pension system: 55% of respondents in the EU15, compared to 49% in NMS and 43% in CC3 view their pension schemes with severe scepticism. The levels of distrust are very similar across income quartiles, occupational classes or gender, but in the EU15 and the NMS there is a marked difference between older and younger people, with a high concentration of distrust in the youngest group: 61% of the young compared to merely 35% of the older generation distrust the pension system in the EU. This might be explained by the debate that has been going on for some years in many EU15 countries about the unsustainability of the pension system, as well as by the insecurity generated as a result of the pension reforms approved in the past few years. The gap in trust in the pension system between the generations is smaller in the NMS and virtually non-existent in the CC3. The higher level of trust in the pension systems in the NMS should not be overestimated. It may also indicate that the issue of the sustainability of pension policies has not yet come to the full attention of these citizens, even though birth rates have already fallen to levels as low as in the EU15. This lack of awareness indicates a need for future information campaigns which draw attention to the problem of the sustainability of 'pay as you go' pension schemes.

In addition to views concerning the quality of public services, views about group conflicts in society may be considered a second crucial dimension of collective welfare. Clashes of interest and tensions between social groups must be considered a normal element of collective life in pluralist societies. What distinguishes democratic societies from other types of society is not that tensions between interest groups are non-existent, but that people have the opportunity to express the tension. As societies are socially cohesive, one would expect group tensions to be perceived as merely present rather than being perceived as very intense. In contrast to popular opinion, gender conflicts and intergenerational conflicts are not perceived as particularly intense in Europe. However, there is a striking cross-country difference in the perception of other tensions. In the NMS/CC3, people mainly perceive tensions which reflect the image of a class society, i.e. tensions between rich and poor, and between management and workers. In the EU15, in contrast, tensions are perceived foremost between different racial or ethnic groups. Contrary to popular belief, such concerns are not concentrated among people in the low-skilled or low-income sector, who are likely to experience immigrants as their competitors in the job and housing markets, but are evenly spread across social groups in the upper and lower echelons of the status hierarchy. This indicates that the growing concerns about immigration in an enlarged Europe, which are to be found in the EU15, may combine with a revival of ethnic nationalism, and policymakers would be ill-advised to neglect this.

The perception of tensions between racial and ethnic groups clearly varies by age throughout Europe. It is most prevalent among the youngest, and least prevalent among the oldest, respondents. Some 51% of young EU15 citizens (aged 18-24), 41% in the NMS and 55% in the CC3 are convinced that there are a lot of racial and ethnic tensions. The percentages in the oldest age category (65+) are 10 points lower in the EU15 and in the NMS, and 22 points lower in the CC3. Given that younger people are more likely to speak foreign languages, are more influenced by a global television culture, and are presumably also more likely to travel abroad, this perception about multi-cultural societies among the younger European generation should be of special concern to policymakers.

New country clusters in the enlarged EU

Most of the analyses have followed the usual classifications by membership status, which up to May 2004 differentiated between the EU15, the NMS and the CC3. However, the distribution of the results frequently ran counter to this classification. Malta and Cyprus in

particular, but also the Czech Republic and Slovenia, frequently proved to be closer to the old EU Member States than to the rest of the NMS/CC3. The level of income for these four countries comes closer to the EU15 median than to that of the NMS, housing conditions are much better compared to all other countries in the group, deprivation relating to household items is less widespread, and reported health status is much better than in the other NMS. In addition, they also show the highest levels of general life satisfaction within their group. In this sense, these four countries promise to be the vanguard in the attempt to build a more cohesive future European Union.

Likewise, the old EU15 countries Portugal and Greece, and to a lesser extent Spain, have, in many respects, more similarities with the four well-off NMS countries than with the other EU15 Member States. The standards of living and the health situation in these countries are comparable to Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Malta and Slovenia. The level of subjective well-being also differs only slightly.

Hence, three country groups, which are faced with very different living conditions, have become apparent with EU enlargement: 1) The old northern and central European Member States; 2) the old Mediterranean Member States (Greece, Portugal and Spain), together with the most well-off NMS countries (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Malta and Slovenia); and 3) the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The allocation of Italy is not clear. In some respects, such as living standards and working conditions, Italy tends more to the first group. In other respects, such as the quality of its social security system and family support, it is closer to the second group. The three candidate countries which will join the EU later stand clearly apart from these three groups. As highlighted in this report, their quality of life in terms of objective living conditions and subjective well-being is distinctly lower than that of the EU25.

The enlargement of May 2004 means that the NMS will require support from regional and structural funds in the pursuit of greater EU cohesion. Hence, there is the double policy challenge of integrating the new European Member States into the enlarged Union, and continuing efforts to help disadvantaged regions within the old EU Member States to catch up.

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Response rates

The basic sampling design used in all countries was a multi-stage, random (probability) one. Firstly, sampling points were drawn after stratification by region and degree of urbanisation.

Response rates were calculated centrally by Intomart-GfK so that the large variations between the countries cannot be attributed to the use of different calculation methods.

The response rate was calculated as follows:

Eligible households = Gross sample (total number of addresses contacted) – **Non contacts household**

Eligible sample = **Eligible households – Non contacts target person**

Refusal rate = % of eligible sample where household or respondent refused + other non cooperation

Response rate = Eligible sample – Refusal rate

Country	Response rate
Austria	63.9%
Belgium	70.4%
Denmark	52.4%
Finland	91.2%
France	83.4%
Germany	91.2%
Greece	39.6%
Ireland	32.5%
Italy	63.1%
Luxembourg	66.1%
Netherlands	62.0%
Portugal	59.8%
Spain	30.3%
Sweden	53.6%
United Kingdom	79,2%

Country	Response rate
Cyprus	82.4%
Czech Republic	75.1%
Estonia	68.8%
Hungary	75.1%
Latvia	72.8%
Lithuania	64.1%
Malta	91.0%
Poland	66.4%
Slovakia	51.0%
Slovenia	61.6%

Bulgaria	81.0%
Romania	55.7%
Turkey	37.0%

EU15	54.4%
NMS	69.4%
EU25	59.2%
CC3	64.1%
Total	58.4%

Source: Intomart GfK 2003

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?

ENTER NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD : _____

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

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

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

c. (INT.: SKIP FOR RESPONDENT)

d. (INT.: SHOW CARD D) Looking at this card could you tell me your principal economic status?

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) And again using the previous card,
what is this person's principal economic status?

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')

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. **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 Q14

3 ☐ Don't Know → Go to Q14

Q2. **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 EMPLOYEE (CODE 6 – 14 AT Q2 OR Q3)**

Is/was your job …

(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 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 PAID JOB (CODE 1 AT Q1)**

Including yourself, about how many people are/were employed at the place where you usually work/worked?

(INT.: READ OUT)

1 ☐ Under 10
2 ☐ 10 to 49
3 ☐ 50-99
4 ☐ 100-249
5 ☐ 250-499
6 ☐ 500-999
7 ☐ 1,000 - 1999
8 ☐ 2,000 or more
9 ☐ (Don't know)

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

In your main job, do/did you have any responsibility for supervising the work of other employees?

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No
3 ☐ Don't know

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

Q8. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID) OR IF EVER PAID JOB (CODE 1 AT Q1)**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q8)

In which of the following sectors of the economy does/did your company operate? Please indicate one sector that accounts for the LARGEST part of your company's activities.

1 ☐ Agriculture, hunting & forestry
2 ☐ Fishing
3 ☐ Mining and quarrying
4 ☐ Manufacturing
5 ☐ Electricity, gas and water supply
6 ☐ Construction
7 ☐ Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal household goods
8 ☐ Hotels and restaurants
9 ☐ Transport, storage and communication
10 ☐ Financial intermediation
11 ☐ Real estate, renting and business activities
12 ☐ Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
13 ☐ Education
14 ☐ Health and social work
15 ☐ Other community, social and personal service activities
16 ☐ Activities of households
17 ☐ Extra territorial organizations and bodies
18 ☐ Other
19 ☐ (Don't know)

Q9. **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 Q10
2 ☐ No → Go to Q11
3 ☐ Don't know → Go to Q11

Q10. **ASK IF YES (CODE 1) AT Q9**

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) _____

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

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q11)

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)

Q12. **ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID)**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q12)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements describing positive and negative aspects of your job?

(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.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q13. ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PAID WORK (CODES 1-2 AT D IN HOUSEHOLD GRID)

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q13)

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 in fulfilling 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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(INT.: ASK ALL)

Q14. Are you, in your household, the person who contributes most to the household income?

1 ☐ Yes → Go to Q17

2 ☐ No → Go to Q15

3 ☐ Both equally → Go to Q17

4 ☐ Don't know → Go to Q17

Q15. ASK IF CODE 2 AT Q14

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q15)

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

(INT.: CODE IN THE GRID BELOW UNDER Q15)

Q16. **ASK IF CODE 2 AT Q14 AND CODE 1 – 4 AT Q15**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q16)

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

(INT.: CODE IN THE GRID BELOW UNDER Q16)

	Q15 current occupation	Q16 last occupation
NOT WORKING		
Responsible for ordinary shopping and looking after the home, or without any current occupation, not working	1	
Student	2	
Unemployed or temporarily not working	3	
Retired or unable to work through illness	4	
SELF EMPLOYED		
Farmer	5	5
Fisherman	6	6
Professional (lawyer, medical practitioner, accountant, architect etc.)	7	7
Owner of a shop, craftsman, other self-employed person	8	8
Business proprietors, owner (full or partner) of a company	9	9
EMPLOYED		
Employed professional (employed doctor, lawyer, accountant, architect)	10	10
General management, director of top management (managing director, director general, other director)	11	11
Middle management, other management (department head, junior manager, teacher, technician)	12	12
Employed position, working mainly at a desk	13	13
Employed position, not at a desk but travelling (sales person, driver, etc.)	14	14
Employed position, not at a desk, but in a service job (hospital, restaurant, police, fire fighter, etc.)	15	15
Supervisor	16	16
Skilled manual worker	17	17
Other (unskilled) manual worker, servant	18	18
NEVER DID ANY PAID WORK		19

(INT.: ASK ALL)

Q17. **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) _____

Q18. **Which of the following best describes your accommodation?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q18 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)

Q19. **Do you have any of the following problems with your accommodation?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

		(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) DK
1	Shortage of space	☐	☐	☐
2	Rot in windows, doors or floors	☐	☐	☐
3	Damp/leaks	☐	☐	☐
4	Lack of indoor flushing toilet	☐	☐	☐

Q20. **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	☐	☐	☐

Q21. **I am going to read some items a household can possess. Could you tell me whether your household has it, your household does not have it because you cannot afford it, or your household does not have it because you don't need it?**

(INT.: ONE ANSWER ONLY - READ OUT)

	(1) Household has it	(2) Do not have it because you cannot afford it	(3) Do not have because you don't need it	(4) Don't know
a. Car or van for private use	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Home computer (PC)	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Washing machine	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q22a. **Do you rent or own land that you use for farming or productions of food?**

(INT.: THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE A BIG GARDEN)

1 ☐ Yes

2 ☐ No

3 ☐ Don't know

Q22b. **ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q22A**

What is the size of this land?

(INT.: RECORD ACCORDING TO COUNTRY CONVENTIONS IN SQUARE METRES, ACRES OR HECTARES)

(INT.: ENTER 999999 FOR DON'T KNOW)

_____ square metres OR _____ acres OR _____ hectares OR 999999 DK

(INT.: ASK ALL)

Q23. **Over the past month, have you ...?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

	(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) DK
a. Attended a meeting of a charitable or voluntary organisation	☐	☐	☐
b. Served on a committee or done voluntary work for a voluntary organisation	☐	☐	☐

Q24. **Over the past year, have you …?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

	(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) DK
a. Attended a meeting of a trade union, a political party or political action group, attended a protest or demonstration, or signed a petition.	☐	☐	☐
b. Contacted a politician or public official (other than routine contact arising from use of public services)	☐	☐	☐

Q25. **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 ☐ No
3 ☐ Not eligible to vote
4 ☐ Don't know

Q26. **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 Q26 AND READ OUT)

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

Q27. **How much trust do you have in the ability of the following two systems to deliver when you need it?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q27 AND READ OUT)

	(1) A great deal of trust	(2) Some trust	(3) Hardly any trust	(4) No trust at all	(5) (Don't know)
a. State pension system	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Social benefit system	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q28. **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 you can't be too careful and 10 means that most people can be trusted.**

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

Q29. **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 Q29 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	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q30. **Please tell me whether you agree completely, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree completely with each statement.**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q30 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Agree completely	(2) Agree somewhat	(3) Disagree somewhat	(4) Disagree completely	(5) (Don't know)
I am optimistic about the future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In order to get ahead nowadays you are forced to do things that are not correct.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel left out of society.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good luck is more important than hard work for success.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Life has become so complicated today that I almost can't find my way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q31. **All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Please tell me on a scale of one to 10, where one means very dissatisfied and 10 means very satisfied.**

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

Q32. **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)

Q33. **How many children of your own do you have?**

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

Q34. **On average, thinking of people living outside your household how often do you have direct (face-to-face) contact with…**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q34 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 of your friends or neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q35. **On average, how often do you have contact with friends or family by phone, email or by post?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q35 AND READ OUT)

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 know)

Q36. **From whom would you get support in each of the following situations?**

For each situation, choose the most important person.

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q36 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Family member	(2) Work colleague	(3) Friend	(4) Neighbour	(5) Someone else	(6) Nobody	(7) (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 were feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. If you needed to urgently raise €1,000[3] to face an emergency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q37. **ASK ALL**

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

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q37 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Every day	(2) Three or four times a week	(3) Once or twice a week	(4) Once or twice a month	(5) Less often	(6) Never	(7) (Don't know)
Caring for and educating children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Housework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Caring for elderly/ disabled relatives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q38. **ASK IF ANY CODE 1 AT Q37A-C**

How many hours a day are you involved in….?

(INT.: READ OUT ITEMS WHERE RESPONDENT INDICATED 'EVERY DAY' - CODE 1 - AT Q37)

(INT.: ENTER 99 FOR DON'T KNOW)

Enter number of hours

a. Caring for and educating children _____

b. Housework _____

c. Caring for elderly/ disabled relatives_____

3 [In the candidate countries use €500 as a reference.]

Q39. **ASK IF HOUSEHOLD CONSISTS OF AT LEAST TWO 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 ALL)

Q40. **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 Q40 AND READ OUT)

	(1) Too much	(2) Just right	(3) Too little	(4) (Don't know)	(5) (Not applicable)
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. Sleeping	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Taking part in voluntary work or political activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q41. **Could you please tell me on a scale of one to 10 how satisfied you are with each of the following items, where one 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)

a. Your education _____

b. Your present job _____

c. Your present standard of living _____

d. Your accommodation _____

e. Your family life _____

f. Your health _____

g. Your social life _____

Q42. **Taking all things together on a scale of one to 10, how happy would you say you are? Here one 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 ☐ Excellent
2 ☐ Very good
3 ☐ Good
4 ☐ Fair
5 ☐ Poor
6 ☐ (Don't know)

Q44. **Do you have any long-standing illness or disability that limits your activities in any way? By long-standing, I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you for a period of time.**

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No
3 ☐ Don't know

Q45. **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 Q45 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 centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Delay in getting appointment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Waiting time to see doctor on day of appointment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Cost of seeing the doctor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q46. **How old were you when you completed your full-time education?**

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

Q47. **What is the highest level of education you completed? Is this ...?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

1 ☐ Primary education
2 ☐ Secondary education
3 ☐ University
4 ☐ (None)
5 ☐ (Don't know/no answer)

Q48. Have you taken an education or training course at any time within the last year?

1 ☐ Yes → Ask Q49
2 ☐ No → Go to Q51
3 ☐ Don't know → Go to Q51

Q49. **ASK IF YES (CODE 1) AT Q48**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q49)

What kind of course is/was it?

(INT.: READ OUT; ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(INT.: IF RESPONDENT TOOK MORE THAN ONE COURSE ASK FOR MOST IMPORTANT ONE)

1 ☐ General education (leading to formal certificate, diploma, degree)
2 ☐ Computer course
3 ☐ Language course
4 ☐ Training course related to your job or profession
5 ☐ Job training scheme offered in connection with social welfare/employment services (e.g. for unemployed people, women returning to labour force)
6 ☐ Cultural or hobby-related course (e.g. arts/crafts, dance, sports or other leisure related)
7 ☐ Other
8 ☐ (Can't remember)

Q50. **ASK IF YES (CODE 1) AT Q48**

How long is / was this course? Looking at this card, please tell me the number of days, regardless of whether the course was spread out over several days, assuming that a full day amounts to 8 hours.

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q50 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Less than half a day (less than four hours)
2 ☐ Half a day or more but less than two full days (four – 15 hours)
3 ☐ Two full days or more but less than 10 full days (16 – 79 hours)
4 ☐ 10 days or more but less than 40 days (80 to 319 hours)
5 ☐ 40 days or longer (320 hours or more)
6 ☐ (Can't remember)

(INT.: ASK ALL)

Q51. **How well do you read English?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q51 AND READ OUT)

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

Q52. **Which of the following best describes your level of use of the Internet over the past month?**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q52 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Used it 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)

Q53. **About how much time in total does it take you to get to and from work or school using your usual mode of transportation?**

(INT.: THIS ALSO INCLUDES TAKING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL AND PICKING THEM UP FROM SCHOOL)

(INT.: RECORD TOTAL TIME FOR ROUND TRIP IN MINUTES OR 998 FOR NOT APPLICABLE OR 999 FOR DON'T KNOW)

_____ minutes

Q54. **In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following public services in [country]?**

Please tell me on a scale of one to 10, where one means very poor quality and 10 means very high quality.

(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. Social services _____

e. State pension system _____

Q55. **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)

Q56. **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 Q56 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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q57. **How safe do you think it is to walk around in your area at night? Do you think it is…**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q57 AND READ OUT)

1 ☐ Very safe
2 ☐ Rather safe
3 ☐ Rather unsafe
4 ☐ Very unsafe
5 ☐ (Don't know)

Q58. **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 Q58 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)

Q59. **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) DK
a. Rent or mortgage payments for accommodation	☐	☐	☐
b. Utility bills, such as electricity, water, gas	☐	☐	☐

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

1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No
3 ☐ 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 a 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?**

(INT.: READ OUT)

	(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) DK
Earnings from work (incl. income from self-employment or farming)	☐	☐	☐
Pension	☐	☐	☐
Child benefit	☐	☐	☐
Unemployment benefit, disability benefit or any other social benefits	☐	☐	☐
Other income (e.g. from savings, property or stocks, etc.)	☐	☐	☐

Q65. **Using this card, if you add up all of these income sources (for all household members), which letter corresponds with your household's total net income, that is the amount that is left over after taxes have been deducted? If you don't know the exact figure, please give an estimate. Use the part of the card that you know best: weekly, monthly or annual income.**

(INT.: SHOW CARD Q65)

(INT.: PLEASE CIRCLE THE CODE THAT MATCHES THE LETTER GIVEN)

Letter	Q65
D	01
B	02
I	03
O	04
T	05
G	06
P	07
A	08
F	09
E	10
Q	11
H	12
C	13
L	14
N	15
R	16
M	17
S	18
K	19
(Refused)	20
(Don't know)	21

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

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EF/04/105/EN

The European Union of 25 Member States is a diverse and heterogeneous body. Culture, political traditions and living conditions vary within and between the 25 countries and there are large differences in quality of life. Possible further enlargement to embrace up to four more countries will increase this diversity and create an ever more complex Europe.

Information is key in any effort to promote cohesion in Europe. Seeking to address gaps in existing knowledge, the Foundation launched its European Quality of Life Survey in 2003. The first results of this ambitious attempt to explore quality of life issues in 28 countries – the EU25 and three candidate countries, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey – provide a comprehensive portrait of the face of an enlarged Europe.

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