Social cohesion and trust

Achieving upward convergence

Regional convergence

Convergence and gender equality

Putting the spotlight back on cohesion and convergence

Promoting social cohesion and convergence in the EU

The table below shows how social cohesion varies across the EU. The EU measures social cohesion as the quality and extent to which people feel connected and share a sense of belonging to their community. Higher levels of social cohesion are associated with higher levels of trust in institutions and a greater sense of well-being. The data in the table shows that some Member States have made significant progress in improving social cohesion, while others have experienced setbacks.

Change of citizens' trust in the EU during the pandemic

The true picture of economic development in some countries in terms of upward convergence is not fully reflected in the wider data. This highlights the importance of monitoring inequalities at the regional and national levels to ensure a balanced approach to economic development.

Improving social cohesion, reducing income inequalities and moderating social tensions help to build trust. The perception of tension in society and the feeling of social exclusion is associated with low trust in institutions.

Factors affecting trust in national institutions

The average level of trust in national institutions in the years 2009–2011 was 5.3 for the EU as a whole, and is range of 1.90% of the level of trust in the quality of public services as an essential component of improving trust in national institutions.

To boost trust in institutions, addressing the quality of public services such as health and social care is a key area.

Public trust was assessed by using a 5-point scale in addressing the COVID-19 crisis. Those who rated their national response as effective reported higher levels of trust in institutions. Maintaining trust in public institutions is crucial for effective governance.

The perception of tension in society and the feeling of social exclusion is associated with low trust in institutions. The 2008 financial crisis showed how economic and social cohesion are interconnected. Inequalities across the EU have increased with implications for social cohesion and trust in institutions.

Regional convergence

The 2008–2012 period saw a marked improvement in overall social cohesion in the EU. The 2008–2021 period has seen a mixed picture with some regions experiencing an uptick in social cohesion and others maintaining or even decreasing social cohesion.

The Eurofound findings show a record high level of social cohesion in the EU in 2021, up from 2020, with differences between Member States and regions.

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